COE Fellowships Office
Personal Statement Workshop (Part 2)

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Introductions

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Fellowships Office

Mission Statement: Help students find, compete for, and win national and international fellowships / scholarships.

Website: www.coe.utah.edu/fellowships

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Website Resources

- Fellowship opportunities – including postdoc positions

- Application guide

- Upcoming events

- Previous winners

- Information page for faculty

- Contact information

Letters of Reference

- Ask you references EARLY!!! It takes time to write a strong letter.

- Need at least one *very* strong letter

  – May be from your research advisor (hopefully they can write about any of the following: your high level of ambition, creativity, dedication, ability to work with others, ability to work independently, etc.)

  – May be from an internship (statements like, "we want to hire him/her" are good)

  – Others who are aware of your research potential, leadership skills, outreach activities, etc.

- There is an art to writing a strong letter of reference; choose people who can make strong statements about you and are also good at writing letters of reference (or are willing to work at it)

Research Statement

- Your research statement should not look like a regular proposal to NSF or NIH: talk about yourself and your strengths

- Demonstrate passion

- Demonstrate that you are aware of the state-of-the-art in your research area (Include at least 2 references to key papers in your area of research -- can use smallest permissible font)

- Pick 2 or 3 aims of your research that fall under your primary research goal

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Research Statement

- Include intellectual merit and broader impacts sections!!

    - Intellectual Merit: Illustrate how you will improve on the state-of-the-art (need more than incremental advances)

    - Broader Impacts: Address societal relevance, either that your research will directly help society or how others might use your research results to help society

http://www.nsfgrfp.org/how_to_apply/application_materials

Research Statement

- (balance with personal statement content) Discuss your previous research, especially if it is related to your proposed research (or discuss how your prev. research prepared you to perform research as a graduate student and beyond)

- Demonstrate that you possess the technical knowledge and skills necessary for conducting the proposed work, or that you will you have sufficient mentoring and training to obtain the knowledge and skills

- Provide a general timeline for your research progress with goals and milestones (Give an impression that you can reach your proposed research goals within the 4 years of your Ph.D. program)

- Discuss facilities that you require and will have access to

- Discuss what issues / problems could hinder your research progress and how you will overcome them

- Reiterate your career goals

Most Importantly:

- NSF wants foremost to fund you as an individual with high potential, not your actual research project with high potential.

Other Notes:

- Submit your documents at least a day or two early to avoid submission issues

- Follow formatting requirements exactly

- Include details on both intellectual merit and broader impacts!

- No typos!!

- See example winning essays at:

  – coe.utah.edu/fellowships

  – Alex Lang's NSF website