

Gilliam Fellowship Application Support

Before applying

Before starting, please read about the fellowship [here](#) to learn about eligibility and nomination requirements, to see if this aligns with your interests. If you are interested, it's important to identify your institutional nominator and have a conversation with your advisor before beginning the application process. This fellowship is awarded to mentor and student pairs, so they will also have a portion of the application to work on.

Introduction

The goals of the Gilliam program are to ensure that students from groups historically excluded from and underrepresented in science are prepared to assume leadership roles in science and science education, and to foster the development of a healthier, more inclusive academic scientific ecosystem by partnering with faculty and institutions committed to advancing diversity and inclusion in the sciences.

If you're interested in applying to this fellowship but you're unsure of where to start, this guide is for you! Here, I'm sharing how I went about writing each fellowship prompt alongside reflection prompts that helped me center my thoughts on creating each statement. While this may not necessarily be a comprehensive resource, I hope that they will be helpful for thinking about storytelling and sharing your experiences in the context of this fellowship. Feel free to reach out with any questions!

Prompts for the 2020-2021 Application

Career Statement

Provide a Career Statement that articulates your professional career goal and personal aspirations. Describe your plan for identifying and working towards short- and long-term career goals. How are you working with your adviser, other mentors and career sponsors to achieve your short- and long-term career goals? (2 pages)

Research Plan Instructions

Upload up to a 5-page Research Plan citing relevant literature (single-spaced, ≥0.5" margins, 11-point Arial font) that describes your research in a manner that can be understood by a scientist who might not be a specialist in your field. The Research Plan should be suitable for a typical Ph.D. training period. All figures and descriptions for the figures must be included in the 5 page limit of the research plan. The full citations should be uploaded in the Citations section and are not included in the 5 page limit.

Provide a research proposal that:

- Clearly places the project in the context of the field;
- Describes the significance of the research project; and
- Clearly describes a plan for approaching the problem including assumptions, rationale, feasibility, limitations and alternative approaches.

Scientific Leadership

Please provide a leadership statement that describes your leadership approach, how the approach informs the science you do and how you have and will lead efforts to advance science through research and/or

science education for the benefit of a diverse society. (500 words)

Journaling prompts based on application prompts

Career Statement

- What are short term goals you have for yourself during your graduate studies? Do you feel that there are particular resources that you wish you could cultivate with proper support and funding?
- Do your short term goals intersect with how you view your field of study?
- Think back to a moment where you did outreach and communicated your research outside of your institution. How did this experience make you feel?
- Do you have any lab experiences prior to graduate school that brought you energy? Describe it. What made you feel authentic?
- What does a long term career goal look like for you? Are there particular questions that motivate you? Do your scientific goals align with how you wish to build supportive communities?
- Describe a time in the lab where you overcame a hurdle or obstacle in your research. Now describe a time you overcame a challenge not directly related to your academic work in grad school.
- How would having access to a scientific community outside of your institution inform and develop your skills as a researcher and advocate?
- When you envision how uplifting science research and mentorship could be, what do you dream of?

Research Proposal

- Think about your research as three aims. How would you linearly tell the story of what you're studying, intended findings, and alternative methods.
- How did you get interested in this research topic? How has your research advisor and other mentors supported your learning?
- If you were to summarize your research in four to five sentences, what key takeaways would you want others to know about your work?
- Write an introduction to your research question like you would to a peer who is unfamiliar with what you do? How do you get them as hyped up as you are about your work?

Scientific Leadership

- What does advocacy for others vs self advocacy look like for you? Describe this within the context of science and in non-science spaces.
- How does advocacy inform spaces you build or create?
- What are the resources you wish you had in your training lab? If you were to start a research group later, how would you cultivate that for other trainees?
- What does taking space for yourself and your needs look like in academia?
- What are ways in which communities (can be academic or non-academic) ground you? How does this inform and shape your ability to mentor others?
- Describe a time when you had to say "no" to take space for yourself. How did you feel and did you learn something from that moment?

- Describe initiatives and resources that have uplifted you. Now do the same for initiatives that have made you feel exhausted or burned out. What helped you step back and identify these feelings?

Structuring Application Prompts

Career Statement

- Introduction and anecdote. What is an experience that demonstrates your perspective and potential?
- Background. What labs or research experiences have you done and how did your work (within and out of science) inform your perspectives on STEM accessibility?
- When you began graduate school, how did your perspectives change? Were there challenges that led you to act and become an advocate for yourself or others?
- How has your work in science and beyond informed your perspectives and views on mentorship and community?
- Thinking about the future. How are your mentors within and outside your program supporting you? How do you see yourself realizing your short term goals and how do they lead to the long term. How would this fellowship fundamentally help you achieve and surpass your long term goals?
- Conclusion. How your goals aligned with HHMI's fellowship and your aspirations for how you want to lead spaces that are supportive, attentive, and mindful of the needs of trainees.

Research Proposal

- Background and Significance. Should be 2-3 paragraphs that describe your interesting research!
- Approach
 - Split into three aims where preliminary research is described if available. Expected results, pitfalls, and alternatives should be described. If you have images, figures, sketches of your proposed aims, be sure to include illustrations with helpful captions to convey your work.
- Final summary. 3-4 sentences about your entire proposal and its significance.

Scientific Leadership

- Be direct about how you view leadership roles as a part of your scientific career. How do they intersect, coincide, and play out in your current work and future goals?
- Describe how working with community informs the science you do.
- Next, think about the best research environment you've encountered and your most supportive mentor. How can you use your leadership and skills that you've developed if you were awarded the fellowship to make that a reality for trainees? Fundamentally, why is this important to you and why is this fellowship in alignment with your goals?

Tips and Resources for Organizing Writing

- Change up your writing space. If you can try brainstorming in different places outside of the lab that might energize you differently.

- Make a writing mood playlist if you like to
- Have your mentors read over your application materials and goals. Remember, this application is also awarded to student and faculty pairs so it's important to make sure that your project and outreach goals align.
- Don't be afraid to scrap drafts and write out different stories, anecdotes, and memories. Sometimes it takes time to find the story that resonates with you.
- Consider using tools like Notion to breakup writing times and put ideas into notebooks and folders. Other resources include GoodNotes, Evernote, and OneNote.
- Have peers within and outside of your lab that you trust read your essays. Does the research statement make sense to someone who doesn't work immediately on what you do?
- Join a journal club or make a writing group with friends who are also writing fellowships.
- I have writer's block, help! Here are tips I've used to overcome the wall:
 - Block out routine times to write. Even if it's not your essay, jot down other thoughts and your headspace.
 - Find time to chat with loved ones and your communities that ground you.
 - Read other personal statements you've previously written. What were parts that you could reframe if you had to adjust to a new prompt?
 - Take time to work through a reflection prompt.
 - Working through outlines. If you make a general template of your story, sometimes it's easier to fill in the gaps as you go.