



# Harvard College

## Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship (MMUF)

### 2023-2024 Application Instructions

#### PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

The Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship (MMUF) is committed to supporting a diverse professoriate and to promoting the value of multivocality in the humanities and related disciplines, amplifying the voices, perspectives and contributions that have been marginalized within the scholarly record and that further the realization of a more social just world. The name of the program symbolically connects the mission to the stellar achievements of Dr. Benjamin E. Mays, educator, president of Morehouse College, and civil rights activist. The Harvard program was founded in 1989. Since the early 2000s, Harvard's program has been jointly supported by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and by funds from Harvard College. This co-funding by Harvard has enabled more talented students (Harvard-funded/ Associate Fellows of MMUF) to participate in activities of this program. In this two-year research fellowship program, fellows are expected to attend weekly workshops and lectures with their cohort for the duration of their junior and senior years. They receive financial support for independent research and advice on graduate school preparation and have a cohort community with whom they may share ideas, feedback, and resources during their scholarly journeys at Harvard.

#### PROGRAM COMPONENTS

The following program components facilitate participants' learning about academic life and are required unless noted as optional. **Applicants should note that participation in this program is a serious time commitment.**

- **Research with a faculty member:** Program participants are expected to conduct independent research, mentored by a faculty mentor during their time as fellows. Independent research almost always results in a senior thesis. The bulk of this research takes place in the summers, but some research activity – such as preparing literature reviews, learning about research skills, identifying interviewees, structuring research plans, identifying resources etc. – can be conducted during the term-time. Sometimes, these preparatory activities are folded into one's concentration curriculum; other times, this training is provided by academic resources such as the Library or by direct faculty mentoring. While doing research and planning to do research, fellows are expected to maintain regular check-in meetings with a faculty mentor. (This mentor may change, if the fellow's interests shift over the course of being in the program.) Along with enriching the student's academic life, these research experiences also enhance graduate school applications.
- **A community of scholars:** One of the missions of the program is to establish a community of scholars who can share undergraduate research experiences and support one another throughout the fellowship and hopefully, in graduate school. Dedicated time is set aside at regular MMUF meetings for participants to share and learn about each other's research and reflect on the experience of research itself.
- **Weekly seminars and workshops:** Attendance of weekly cohort meetings, which occur 1.5 – 2 hrs per week, on Wednesday evenings (unless otherwise specified) is a requirement. Meetings feature faculty, graduate students, and other speakers and support various aspects of students' personal and professional development, including the graduate school application process.
- **Program deliverables:** Fellows are required to submit program deliverables. These include, research progress reports, draft statements of purpose, research abstracts, curriculum vitae/expanded academic resume and final capstone papers/theses.
- **Research Symposium:** Seniors present their research at the end of senior year in a MMUF Research Symposium open to members of the Harvard community.
- **MMUF Regional Conferences:** Throughout each academic year, the MMUF Northeast Regional Conference enables fellows to interact with MMUF students from other campuses.



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#### ELIGIBILITY

- Domestic students (U.S. Citizens, Permanent residents, DACA recipients, and undocumented students).
- International students are welcome to apply to be participants of the program but are *not eligible* for Mellon Foundation grant funding and associated post-graduate benefits.
- Students in their sophomore year of study at Harvard, concentrating in the humanities or in the social sciences and intending on pursuing *independent research*\* during their junior and senior years within their concentration
- Students considering graduate study toward the Ph.D. in fields in which people of color have been the most severely underrepresented, primarily the humanities and social sciences. For a list of approved fields, please visit the Mellon Foundation [website](#).
- Students who demonstrate commitment to the goals of MMUF:
  - to reduce the serious underrepresentation on faculties of individuals from minority groups
  - to address the consequences of racial disparities in the educational system and society at large
  - to promote multivocality in the humanities and related disciplines

The Mellon Mays Fellowship Program is part of the Higher Learning program of the Mellon Foundation which aims to “amplify the perspectives and contributions that have been marginalized within the scholarly record, and that promote the realization of a more socially just world.”

*\*Independent research projects proposed by applicants should ideally align with the following research themes which reflect Mellon's goal toward "elevating the knowledge that informs more complete and accurate narratives of the human experience and lays the foundation for more just and equitable futures."*

Some research themes that fulfill this goal, may include, but are not limited to, the following: historical and contemporary treatments of race, racialization, and racial formation; intersectional experience and analysis; gender and sexuality; indigenous history and culture; questions about diaspora; coloniality and decolonization; the carceral state; migration and immigration; urban inequalities; social movements and mass mobilizations; the transatlantic slave trade; settler colonial societies; and literary accounts of agency, subjectivity, and community. While it is not required that applicants work within the above or related themes, preference may be given to applicants who do.

All students who meet the above criteria are eligible to apply. Applications are encouraged from students of color, students from marginalized backgrounds, and students with demonstrated commitment to furthering the goal of a diverse academy and multivocality in the humanities and related disciplines.

#### IMPORTANT NOTES:

- The fellowship is not intended for students who wish to pursue law school, medical school or other professional degree education. The program does not provide the specialized conversations and preparation required for applications for graduate professional degrees like JD, MD, or other professional degree.
- Students concentrating in the life and physical sciences are not eligible to apply.



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#### BENEFITS

In addition to programming and research support, the MMUF provides financial assistance, enabling students to devote time to academic pursuits that might otherwise have been spent on part-time jobs. All MMUF participants are eligible to receive the following forms of financial assistance, contingent upon maintaining active enrollment and good standing in the College (students cannot receive funding while on leave.) and completing core program requirements (cohort meeting attendance, doing research, considering and engaging in conversations and preparation towards graduate school and submission of key deliverables)

- **Term-time funding:** \$4,000 per academic year during their two-year tenure as fellows (junior and senior year). This is meant to cover term-time expenses and is disbursed to fellows in installments, provided they are consistently attending cohort meetings and submitting key program deliverables.
- **Summer funding:** Fellows conducting research related to the MMUF project in the summers after their sophomore and junior years are also eligible to receive up to \$4,500 per summer. To be eligible for summer funding, fellows must provide a detailed research plan for their summer research endeavors. If research involves traveling outside of the U.S., fellows must comply by all travel policies and complete pre-departure requirements for Harvard-sponsored/funded undergraduate travelers – before receiving any funding.
- **Community of undergraduate scholars for two years in college.** The program provides a supportive community of scholars for the fellows' tenure. The cohort is key to providing support, resources and feedback in the fellows' journey.
- **Advice on the graduate school application and preparation process.**

**Additional financial support is available for Mellon-grant funded fellows**, such as possible loan repayment for undergraduate and graduate loans, which are drawn directly from the foundation grant.

#### SELECTION CRITERIA

Up to ten fellows are chosen in the spring of their sophomore year based on the following criteria:

- Academic performance and promise
- Well-articulated research interests/proposal/plan\*
- Interest in pursuing graduate study toward the Ph.D.
- Demonstrated commitment to the goals of MMUF
- Availability for, and commitment to, full and enthusiastic participation in all aspects of the MMUF program

\*It is understandable that your research interests will shift in your studies, but for the application we ask applicants to as clearly as possible describe research interests, topics and plans as well as potential faculty mentors who may be helpful toward furthering the plans.

In addition to submitting applications for the program, semi-finalists are interviewed before the final cohort is formed.



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The Committee is comprised of faculty, graduate students, and administrators throughout the University who are focused on issues of access and opportunity for underrepresented voices and perspectives in the academy. Winners will be notified in late March/early April and are expected to attend the **Welcome Reception & Research Symposium** held shortly thereafter.

### PLEASE READ CAREFULLY AND ORGANIZE THE FOLLOWING MATERIALS FOR YOUR APPLICATION:

- **APPLICATION FORM**

Complete the online CARAT information, which will be compiled and displayed as your application cover sheet.

- **CURRENT RESUME (no more than two pages)**

Indicate significant activities, achievements, and experiences in college that demonstrate your interests and potential achievements.

- **CURRENT UNOFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT**

Download your unofficial transcript from [my.harvard.edu](http://my.harvard.edu), including your fall course grades.

- **ESSAY RESPONSES**

In a separate document, please provide two double-spaced essays and save as one PDF file to upload in CARAT. Please be sure to include your name at the top of the page(s).

- **ESSAY 1 (750 words maximum)** Explain your reasons for seeking this fellowship and the plans you have for using it. This essay should address your background and connection to the MMUF mission to increase diversity among college and university faculty and to promote multivocality in the humanities and related disciplines as well as your academic interests, possible career plans, and intended contributions to and benefits from the Harvard MMUF community.
- **ESSAY 2 (1,000 words maximum)** Discuss the research project you plan to undertake if selected as an MMUF. Please be as specific as possible and describe the research in your own words. Discuss particular topics of interest, what you hope to learn, experiences and ideas that have shaped your interests. Offer some approaches and examples of how these research ideas can be pursued, and finally, discuss briefly three (3) possible Harvard faculty who might serve as your faculty mentor and why any one of them (or all of them) may be good mentor fits for you and/or your ultimate research project.

Note:

- Know that the faculty mentioned in your essay are just suggestions and not firm commitments to mentorship.
- When mentioning the faculty, please use their full names and put their academic department in parentheses next to their name.
- Faculty do not need to be contacted in advance of the application.

- **LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION**

**Two letters of recommendation are required. Both letters should be academic letters. At least one of these should be from a professor who has taught you/mentored you in an academic context at Harvard.** The second letter may be from another member of the Harvard academic/research community



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who may not be a member of the full-time faculty, for instance, a graduate teaching fellow, a post doc, librarian, scholars who are Radcliffe fellows, visiting researchers, members of Harvard's society of fellows. Alternatively, students who have pursued research or other academic-related activities outside of Harvard may choose to have mentors from those experiences serve as writers of the second letter. Please share the MMUF Program Description with recommenders who may not be familiar with the program.

Letter writers should explain in what capacity they know you and address the following important points:

- your fit for the program and how the program will help you grow,
- your ability to pursue research independently,
- your determination, initiative, motivation toward understanding a topic, building an argument, and follow through, etc. (your research potential!)
- how you would contribute to and benefit from being in the program and MMUF scholarly community.

### **PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION AS FOLLOWS:**

1. **LOG IN TO CARAT USING YOUR HARVARD KEY** at <https://apps2.registrar.fas.harvard.edu/carat/> and confirm that your profile information is correct.
2. **"APPLY" TO THE APPROPRIATE "FUNDING SOURCE"**  
Fill out all required fields.
3. **REQUEST RECOMMENDATIONS (via "References" tab)**  
You are **STRONGLY ENCOURAGED** to solicit recommendations at least three weeks ahead of the application deadline. Once you have provided name (Last, First) and contact information for your recommenders, **YOU MUST CLICK "Send Reference Request"** under each recommender's entry in order for CARAT to send the notification to your recommender's email. **"Save and Next" will NOT submit your recommendation requests.**
4. **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**  
Use the "Project Description" section to give a brief description of your research interests and possible topics for future research if selected. Under "Project Dates," enter the dates for your Junior and Senior academic years. E.g. Start: 09/01/24, End: 05/01/26. Under "Primary Location of Project," enter "Cambridge, MA."
5. **UPLOAD YOUR DOCUMENTS**  
All documents must be submitted concurrently, in PDF format. No supplementary materials will be accepted.
6. **SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION (via "Submission" tab)**  
Enter your HUID and click "Submit". The date and time of your submission will be noted, and late applications will not be accepted. Please note that you do not need to wait for your recommenders to submit their letters to submit your materials.



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2023-2024 Application Instructions

If you or your recommenders have questions about this application or the online submission process, please contact the Office of Undergraduate Research and Fellowships at (617) 495-5095 or [undergradresearch@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:undergradresearch@fas.harvard.edu) or [mmuf@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:mmuf@fas.harvard.edu)

■ ■ ■ **DEADLINE: SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2024, 11:59PM EASTERN TIME** ■ ■ ■