

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Click on the following link to [begin the application process](#).

- **How many students apply for the fellowship each year?**  
Historically, about 20 students apply each year; however, 40 students applied in 2019, the first year the application process was made available online. Starting in 2016, two scholarships are awarded annually.
- **Do you have to be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident to apply for the SSSP Racial/Ethnic Minority Graduate Fellowship?**  
With the exception of DACA students, who are also eligible, applicants must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident at the time of application.
- **How far along in a graduate program should applicants be?**  
By the time of the award (September 1, 2020), the student should have defended the dissertation proposal and have achieved advanced status in the doctoral program (completed course work, examinations, and approval of the dissertation prospectus). Masters level students are not eligible for this fellowship.
- **Can the award be used to support the dissertation writing process after the research stage is completed?**  
Yes, the fellowship may be used to support the dissertation writing process after the research stage is completed. The ideal candidate is a student who is in the process of completing a dissertation, whether that be data collection, data analysis, or writing.
- **Does an applicant need to be a student throughout the entire time for which the fellowship applies (2020-21 academic year)?**  
Yes, the distribution of the award occurs twice during the academic year (September 2020 and January 2021). Only applicants enrolled in their respective graduate programs during this period may receive the fellowship.
- **How formal should the dissertation proposal be? How long does it need to be? Does it need to be the official prospectus approved by the graduate program?**  
The dissertation proposal should be as formal as possible. The length of this document will vary dependent upon the protocol of an applicant's graduate program; however, dissertation proposals are usually at least 15 double spaced pages in length. A document approved by a doctoral committee or graduate program is appropriate. While the proposal need not be formally approved by the time of application, it should be approved by the time of the award (September 1, 2020).
- **Is there a requirement for the length of the personal statement?**  
There is no requirement for the length of the personal statement. It should be long enough to convey an applicant's commitment to a career in scholar activism. The average personal statement is around 3-6 pages.
- **Is there a specific form for the letters of recommendation or does it have to be on letterhead?**  
Beginning in 2019, we are accepting references via our online application system only. The online application system allows a document to be uploaded or written using the online text editor. For an uploaded letter of recommendation, letterhead is standard but not required. The letter of recommendation from the advisor should note either that the student already has or should have defended the dissertation proposal and have achieved advanced status in the doctoral program (completed course work, examinations, and approval of the dissertation prospectus) by the end of the Spring 2020 academic year.

**How do you request letters of recommendation?** The online application allows the applicant to enter e-mail addresses (and other contact information) for those being requested to write letters of recommendation. The online system will then send instructions to those references on how to load letters of recommendation for inclusion in the applicant's application. The applicant will not have access to these letters, but will be able to see if they have been submitted. It is the applicant's responsibility to follow-up with references who fail to submit a letter of recommendation prior to the application deadline date.

- **Do application materials need to be completed using the online application process?**

Yes, no other format will be considered. A complete application includes:

- the application form
- official graduate transcript from doctoral program
- resume or curriculum vitae
- three reference letters, including one from your dissertation advisor
- personal statement
- dissertation proposal

Incomplete online applications will not be reviewed. It is the candidate's responsibility to make sure that his or her application meets all requirements to be considered eligible for evaluation. Each application must include the components listed above. Otherwise, your application will not be forwarded to the Fellowship Committee for review.

- **What happens if I forget to include one item in my online application?**

Your online application will not be considered complete unless all required items are included. You have until midnight (EST) on February 1, 2020, to finalize the online application. Only complete applications will be available to the Fellowship Committee for review.

- **When will applicants learn of the Fellowship Committee's decision?**

Applicants will learn whether they were selected for the fellowship by July 15, 2020.

- **Is membership in SSSP required in order to receive the fellowship?**

Yes, applicants must be current members of SSSP at the time of application in order to be eligible for the fellowship.

- **Is conference participation required at the SSSP Annual Meeting?**

Yes. The award recipient should plan to attend both the 2020 and 2021 SSSP Annual Meeting (August 7-9, 2020 in San Francisco, CA, and August 6-8, 2021 in Chicago, IL) as the award will be formally given at the SSSP Awards Ceremony in 2020 and the recipient will be required to present work that was supported during the award year at the 2021 meeting (\$500 will be provided to offset travel expenses for the 2020 and 2021 annual meetings).

- **If I am not selected, may I apply next year?**

Yes, applicants not selected are encouraged to reapply the following year.

- **How can I find more information about the SSSP Racial/Ethnic Minority Graduate Fellowship?**

Visit [https://www.sssp1.org/index.cfm/m/261/Racial/Ethnic\\_Minority\\_Graduate\\_Fellowship/](https://www.sssp1.org/index.cfm/m/261/Racial/Ethnic_Minority_Graduate_Fellowship/). If the information there does not answer your questions, contact the 2020 Racial/Ethnic Minority Graduate Fellowship Committee Chair, Dr. France Winddance Twine, at [winddance@soc.ucsb.edu](mailto:winddance@soc.ucsb.edu). If you have technical questions concerning the online application system, contact IT Specialist Rachel Cogburn at [ssspit@utk.edu](mailto:ssspit@utk.edu).