The Engaged Scholar Initiative: A Texas Model

Call for Applications
Spring 2018

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Engaged Scholar Initiative, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, seeks to provide specialized training and research skills to UT Austin doctoral students in the humanities. The purpose of the initiative is to allow these students to re-conceptualize both the content and form of their dissertations. At the core of the program is the expansion of the research domain of the humanities to problems and genres of presentation not traditionally explored in doctoral humanities research. The initiative, with a collaborative environment at the base of its structural framework, has three elements: specialized training of doctoral students, the expansion and completion of a dissertation project, and a post-doctoral fellowship year.

Research Environment
Doctoral students in the humanities will acquire systematic interdisciplinary training beyond their specific area of interest, and work within collaborative clusters involving faculty, doctoral students, undergraduate students, and, where applicable, representatives of regional public agencies or private organizations (NGOs, non-profits, and others). Students should be prepared to spend part of their summers engaged in workshops and seminars that advance their skills in areas not normally provided through their departmental course work.

Dissertation Projects
The dissertation project will allow for co-authored work with clear delineations of individual responsibilities, as well as more traditional individual projects that grow out of the research interest of the student and the work of a cluster. The project may take the form of a set of original articles, a position paper, an exhibition, a comprehensive curriculum, a plan for action submitted to an agency, and the like. It will maintain the highest standards of scholarship associated with a tier-one institution, capitalize on the resources that are present in our flagship university, and encourage engagement in topics that are of strong social, national, or regional import.

Post-doctoral Support
Following completion of the dissertation and conferral of the doctorate, participants will receive a year-long internal post-doctoral fellowship that will allow for final-product revisions, and, where applicable, the individualization of co-authored projects by fellows who seek a tenure-track position that involves the expectation of a dissertation in the traditional style.

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**PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

**Qualifications**
The Engaged Scholar Initiative (ESI) is open to doctoral students in the College of Liberal Arts at The University of Texas at Austin who are pursuing a degree in a humanities discipline.

Students are expected to complete their studies and dissertation project in five years from the first semester of enrollment in their PhD program.

Students begin the Engaged Scholar Initiative during the summer of the third year in their PhD program, and are expected to be in ABD status no later than June 1 of that year.

Students are expected to remain in-residence for the entirety of the ESI fellowship period and participate in all required activities with the ESI graduate and undergraduate cohorts. Short absences for research trips may be approved in consultation with the ESI Program Director.

**Workshops**
Students are required to participate in the following program activities as well as other training sessions that will be planned over the course of cluster formation and program development:

- Skills based workshops, which may include:
  - Financial literacy
  - Career boot camp
  - Op-ed writing, public scholarship, writing for a non-academic audience
  - Research design (IRB, Copyright, Intellectual Property (IP))
- Workshops developed based on the needs of the cohort, which may include:
  - Computer programming and coding
  - Oral history and ethnography
  - Curricular development and design
  - Public installation and creative design
  - Leadership development

**Timeline and Funding**
Support is contingent upon satisfactory progress, evaluated in the late summer of each year.

Each selected participant will receive support as outlined below. Students may not hold concurrent academic appointments or outside work while receiving fellowship funds (years 3 and 4).

<table>
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<tr>
<th>YEAR 1: April 2018–August 2018</th>
<th>FUNDING</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Spring 2018: Selection of Mellon fellows, Cohort 1 (seven fellows)</td>
<td>• Summer 2018: $5,000 supplement</td>
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<td>• Summer 2018: Specialized training begins</td>
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APPLICATION PROCESS
The Engaged Scholar Initiative supports two cohorts of approximately seven graduate students each. Cohort 1: participants began their work in summer 2017. Cohort 2: participants will begin in Summer 2018.

The Engaged Scholar Initiative is now accepting applications for Cohort 2.

Eligibility and Selection Criteria
- Applicants must be enrolled in a College of Liberal Arts doctoral program in a humanities discipline at The University of Texas at Austin
- Applicants must have entered their PhD program in Fall 2015, and should be on track to complete their 3rd year in Summer 2018, and to receive their PhD no later than Summer 2020
- Applicants should be in ABD status no later than June 1, 2018
- Applicants must be in good standing with their departments

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• Competitive candidates must demonstrate:
  o Sustained writing skills and abilities
  o Strong written and oral communication skills
  o Good time management
  o Commitment to working collaboratively and in teams
• Candidates should also demonstrate some combination of the following:
  o An interest in alternative research projects and/or training-related careers
  o An interest in public scholarship or research that engages social issues broadly defined
  o Some experience with community engagement
  o Some experience with inclusive pedagogy and team-based learning
  o An interest in disciplinary training outside the traditional framework of the humanities i.e.,
    computer programming, archival skills, or organizational studies

Application Requirements
Applicants must submit the following items:

• The Engaged Scholar Initiative Cover Sheet
• Preliminary research statement (limit: 1 page)
• Narrative statement that outlines how the research and career interest of the applicant will benefit
  from this program (limit: 2 pages)
• Curriculum Vitae (limit: 2 pages)
• Letter of support from the applicant’s faculty advisor (dissertation supervisor or, if not
  determined, current mentor) that evaluates the student’s candidacy and dissertation project in
  relation to the program objectives and selection criteria, submitted with signature endorsement of
  the department chair (limit: 2 pages)

Deadline:  Monday, March 19, 2018
Submit to:  Cassandra Shulter, cshulter@austin.utexas.edu
Questions:  Dr. Mia Carter, miac@austin.utexas.edu

Interviews for competitive candidates are expected to be held April 9-13, 2018.
Final notifications are expected to be sent on May 18, 2018.