SOME BASICS FOR GRANT APPLICATIONS
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Start now! Buy a calendar and put it to work for you. Be sure to check the whole month so you can see what is coming up in the coming weeks as well as the coming days. Look through the binder in the grad lounge, check the Graduate Division website and ***mark all the deadlines on your calendar***. Remember that winning grant proposals cannot be written overnight – they take a ***lot*** of time, and there is no way around that. Allow plenty of time: ***be sure to share your proposal with your colleagues and faculty***. Remember, if you can't show it to them, you shouldn't be showing anybody. The more feedback you can get, the better, and this takes time. Talk to people who have received funding, and ask them for their proposals and their suggestions. After you get the feedback, it will take additional time to incorporate comments into your proposal. ***Budget your time accordingly!!!***

Resources:

First and foremost, look for scholarship and grant opportunities that fit your particular interests. This includes your scholarly interests, but also your background; for example, if you come from a family who has served in the military, or you grew up in a particular region, etc., there are often grants that have been specially tailored to these kinds of things. Be creative but don't apply for something just because it's there – remember you will have to ask advisors to write you letters and they can't pretend you're a specialist on Mayan art if your real interest is in Northern Renaissance painting!

- Graduate Division Financial Support Awards Website:
  www.graddiv.ucsb.edu/financial/awards.shtml

- *Samuel H. Kress Fellowships: Travel Fellowships and Fellowships in Art History with affiliation at foreign institution, designed to complete the final phases of dissertation research. http://www.kressfoundation.org

- *CASVA (Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts) Fellowships: Nine predoctoral fellowships, ranging from one year of support to combinations of two and three years of support, usually including one year in residence at the National Gallery in Washington, D.C. Fellowships cover western and non-western fields. http://www.nga.gov/resources/casvapre.htm

- Fulbright Fellowships: Cover a range of travel and full fellowship grants (including language training, book and research allowances, living expenses). http://www.iie.org/fulbright/

- ▪ *Carter Manny Fellowship: One year stipend for dissertation projects devoted to architecture. http://www.grahamfoundation.org/grants/carter-desc.asp
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- ▪ Other useful financial aid websites: http://www.scholaraid.com; http://www.financial.org ; http://www.fastweb.com

- ▪ *Directory of Financial Aid for Women*

- ▪ *The Graduate Scholarship Book*

- ▪ *Peterson's Grants for Graduate Students*

- ▪ The Grad Lounge has a binder with grant announcements and winning proposals from your colleagues! On the Departmental Website, check the link on Recent Honors and Awards and contact your colleagues who have had success in obtaining grants. They are an invaluable resource.

Applying:

Before you start applying, it is useful to do a little research on the grant you have in mind. If there is a contact number or website, inquire about the kinds of projects the scholarship fund has financed in the past. If you find out that a particular grant usually funds projects on "Old Masters," and you're working on the visual rhetoric of *People Magazine* covers, your chances of success are obviously slim. Make sure you are qualified *and* have a suitable project for the "audience" you are pitching to! Look carefully to see if you must have ABD status at the time of application. If they stipulate that you must be ABD, you must in fact *be* ABD! Don't apply for a "finishing grant," --that is, a grant designed to fund the last push to finish the dissertation – if you've just written your first proposal. If the grant asks that you have spoken proficiency in a language, don't convince yourself that your "German for Reading" course is going to get you through an interview with Herr Deutschmeister.

Look for grants that are for smaller amounts of money, funded by smaller and more specific organizations. For example, many local Rotary Clubs sponsor grants that are regionally based. Remember, as the applicant pool decreases, your chances increase.

Make copies of the relevant forms *before you start* filling them out and type in the answers – *never* write them in! Corrections, especially with white-out, make an application look messy and that reflects on you. Additional copies will allow you to fit in a short answer or the brief summary of the proposal in the space without fear of screwing up your only copy. Attend to the instructions carefully – if they say "double-spaced" they really mean it, and are smart enough to notice if you've got the margins bleeding over the edges. If they ask you to submit several copies of the entire application, *check your copies* and make sure you've got complete sets that are collated correctly. These little things make an impression on the reviewing committee.

Most grants require at least two letters of recommendation. Ask your referees first – never assume this is "their job" so they have to do this for you. ***Give your referees as much***

forewarning as you can – two weeks is the absolute minimum, and remember that if it's grant-application season, chances are they are producing many letters for many people. A more effective letter can be written when there is more time available. Let them know when the deadlines are, the type of grant (e.g. specific emphases if any), to whom the letter should be addressed and any relevant instructions from the application. If there are particular points that should be stressed in relation to the particular grant, let your referee know what they are. Since the letter of recommendation should refer to your project, be sure to **give the referee a draft of your proposal – don't wait until it is in its final form**! Include a CV with your teaching history, g.p.a. and other relevant information. Give the referee the recommendation form (if there is one) and a stamped, addressed envelope as a courtesy. If you are applying for several grants, provide a clear, one-page list to your referees with all the deadlines, addresses and descriptions. Your referee should not have to call you to ask you for any of these things. Remember that the easier you make it for your referee, the happier everyone will be.

It is important to follow up on your recommendations for every grant and every deadline. After you convey the material to your referee, leave nothing to chance. Many grants turn people down because the recommendations didn't arrive on time. Don't let this happen to you!!! A friendly reminder by e-mail or a short note is perfectly acceptable and often appreciated. Contact the grant organization to be sure they have received all the relevant materials. Remember that deadlines apply to you as well – and that the Post Office on campus no longer guarantees overnight mail service to some areas. If you must rely on Federal Express, be sure you know how much lead time is required *before* 4 pm on deadline day!

Some grants require departmental nomination. The information and deadlines on applying for these grants can be found in the Graduate Student Handbook. The major national grants include the Kress Travel Grants; the CASVA grants (administered through the National Gallery, Washington D.C.); the Kress Institutional Grant (for research abroad, affiliated with a scholarly institution); the Luce Foundation Grants (projects in the Americas) and so on. Most of these grants require applicants to be ABD, and based on previous track records, they prefer students who are more advanced in their research. The specific areas for CASVA and Kress grants can be found in the descriptions in the grant binder.

The Proposal:

This is the meatiest part of any application and you want to be sure that it is clear and succinct. Remember that people on grant boards often read hundreds of applications, and when they finish with yours, they will be summarizing it for themselves in some way so they can remember it. They don't want to wade through introductory flourishes and every exciting detail of your research. An opening that commands the attention and interest of a reader is desirable, but by the end of the first paragraph the reader should be able to say what your project is about. You don't want to be referenced as "the one who works on paintings that nobody cared about even then" or "the project on horse-without-a-tail sculptures". Compel you reader to *want* to know more about this project, to get *excited* about it!

Your proposal should make clear what questions your project seeks to address. This is important because you don't want to appear to have all the answers – it's a proposal, remember, not a finished work! It can be useful to present the object(s) or concept(s) you are focusing on as presenting a *specific problem* that your scholarship intends address. Think

about why you got interested in the project – this can often help you convey that interest to others. The objects of study should be clear, and the way you will be addressing the problems/questions you posed at the outset should also be clear. As you are describing the methods and materials you will be using for your research, be sure to make it evident that this particular approach is best suited to the task.

Your plan of approach should be included in the proposal. This means conveying the multiple aspects of your project in a clear fashion that makes logical sense. One thing should flow logically from the other. This can be structural ("chapters") or conceptual ("The project is organized by three avenues of inquiry: gender, myth and politics"). By building this kind of structure into the proposal, you make "signposts" for the reader. Don't forget about that mental summary the reader is producing on the basis of your proposal – you want her to be able to create a soundbite that includes the topic, the themes or organizational structures. Make it clear how you're going to conduct the research. Include a few names of institutions with specific archival information so that it is clear that you know what you are looking for, and where you expect to find it.

The language you choose to use is important and it should convey confidence. Avoid the conditional: "I would like to," "I hope to" and write instead "I will." Absolutely **no** wishy-washy language, e.g. "Perhaps" "I need to find" "I hypothesize" – instead "I will look at…" "I argue" etc. Be positive and use language to convey how the world simply cannot be complete without your project!: "This is an important element of…" "the project is a crucial contribution to…" "An essential aspect of my study…" Watch for word repetition ("image" and "work" are two of the worst offenders!).

Your conclusion should recapitulate the basic project, what sort of contribution it will make to your specific field, and to the discipline as a whole. Remember that the old "this has never been done" is not a compelling reason on its own – you need to make sure that you convey why it's really *important* to pursue this project, and why you're the person to do it.

Don't forget to ***proofread every aspect of your application***. Have someone else look it over as well. Read the proposal out loud to make sure you haven't repeated words, or left some out. Make a copy of the entire proposal before you send it off.

Whether you win or lose…

It may sound obvious, but be sure to *thank all the people who have helped you*. It is common courtesy to let your referees know what happened. Remember that they have invested time in your applications too, and they are interested in your success. Knowing how you fared helps them help you in the future.

Try, try, try again!

Do not be discouraged if you are not successful in your first attempts. Every round of applications produces an improved grant proposal, which in turn increases your chances of success. You will get better at applying, and faster at it, as time goes on. Save your grant proposals, and make copies of all the forms, putting them in a specific file folder. This

provides not only backup if something should get lost in the mail, but also will save you tremendous amounts of time in the future (you won't have to continuously count back to figure out what year you started college, you will have the relevant addresses readily at hand, etc.).

Once you get that grant…

Don't forget your fellow colleagues! We are working to compile winning proposals so that others can learn from your successes. Please be sure to get a copy of your winning proposal into that binder. Share your knowledge and experience with others. If you have information about a grant – e.g. you know someone who got a particular one, or you heard that so-and-so was on the reviewing committee, spread the word! This kind of information is invaluable in tailoring future proposals.

GOOD LUCK!