

ABOUT THE GSEF PROGRAM

The Graduate School Exploration Fellowship Program is one of three main components of the Undergraduate and Faculty Fellows Program to Diversify the Professoriate, funded in 2015 by a generous grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The Graduate School Exploration Fellowship is for students who have expressed an interest in pursuing graduate study, research and/or teaching careers in higher and postsecondary education in the humanities, humanistic social sciences, and/or the arts. This program provides students with those motivations and interests an opportunity to cultivate their passion and enthusiasm for continuing their studies in their chosen discipline.

The Graduate School Exploration Fellowship (GSEF) Program consists of both on-campus structured mentoring opportunities for ACM undergraduates with faculty and staff at their home institutions and a paid summer research opportunity following their junior year at one of the Big Ten Academic Alliance member universities or the University of Chicago.

All qualified sophomores from underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply, including: African Americans; Hispanics; Native Americans; Alaska Natives; Native Hawaiians; other Pacific Islanders; first-generation college students; and individuals who have followed non-traditional pathways to college due to exceptional talent and motivation in the face of adversity, such as societal, economic, or academic disadvantages.

All GSEF fellows are expected to attend **two Annual Summits** hosted by the ACM. During the summer between sophomore and junior year, students will take part in workshops, presentations, and panels to prepare them for the summer research experience. During their second summit, at the completion of the summer research opportunity, GSEF fellows are expected to present on their projects.

Anticipated Annual Summit dates (all will take place in downtown Chicago):

- 3rd Annual Summit:
 - o **Cohort 3 – August 13-16, 2018 (Confirmed)**
 - o **Cohort 2 – August 14-16, 2018 (Confirmed)**
- 4th Annual Summit:
 - o Cohort 4 – August 12-15 or 19-22, 2019 (Tentative)
 - o Cohort 3 – August 13-15 or 20-22, 2019 (Tentative)
- 5th Annual Summit: Cohort 5 & 4 – August TBA, 2020
- 6th Annual Summit: Cohort 5 – August TBA, 2021

SUMMER RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAM (SROP) EXPERIENCE

Through a summer research opportunities program (SROP) on a Big Ten university or University of Chicago campus, the Graduate School Exploration Fellowship provides an excellent opportunity for you to become more familiar with graduate studies, including learning about a place where you might like to pursue graduate study. You will have the chance to experience graduate-level work, become acquainted with professors in the departments where you might apply, and learn more about the expectations and rewards of a career in scholarship and teaching.

Big Ten Academic Alliance and ACM program staff will consider all aspects of your application to provide a summer research opportunity that offers a rich experience and formative graduate studies training. Please note that although you are welcome to share your preferences for specific Big Ten universities and faculty

mentors with the ACM Liaison for the Fellows Program, it is unlikely that you will be matched at your preferred institution and/or with your preferred faculty member. All of the participating Big Ten Universities and the University of Chicago have very strong summer programs that will offer you a top-quality research experience and help prepare you for graduate school.

During the 2017-2018 academic year, you *may* be contacted directly by Big Ten or University of Chicago SROP Coordinator and/or potential faculty mentors at participating universities regarding prospective placements. It is also possible, however, that you may not be contacted by any participating programs prior to receiving your official match. Each institution has a different timeline, curriculum, and process for building their program and cohort. Please do not be alarmed if you are not contacted by an institution. **Please do NOT directly contact potential faculty mentors with whom you are interested in working.** Instead, please contact the Big Ten Academic Alliance or University of Chicago GSEF Contact at the faculty mentor's institution to express interest in a potential match.

RÉSUMÉ FOR GSEF SUMMER PLACEMENT

Please send a copy of the most up-to-date résumé that you have to the ACM Liaison for the Fellows Program by July 1, 2018. Visit the career development center on your campus if one is available to you.

A complete résumé should include:

- Contact information (your name, e-mail address, and phone number)
- Educational experience (university, GPA, relevant coursework, honors, academic awards, etc.)
- Research & work experience (research assistant, athletic center front desk staff, English tutor, etc.)
- Volunteer experience(s) and/or other activities (Habitat for Humanity, Red Cross volunteer, captain of the soccer team, etc.)
- Additional skills (e.g. Adobe Photoshop, Excel proficiency, foreign languages, etc.)

WRITTEN STATEMENTS FOR GSEF SUMMER PLACEMENT

Applicants will be required to submit two written statements:

- 1) an academic statement of research interest(s) and
- 2) a personal statement).

THESE WRITTEN STATEMENTS ARE A CRUCIAL COMPONENT OF THE APPLICATION AND THE FACULTY MENTOR MATCHING PROCESS. Please take the time to proofread and edit these two documents before submitting them as word documents (.doc) or portable documents (.pdf). Visit the writing center on your campus if one is available to you. Share drafts with your advisors and/or professors. Your written statements must be submitted to the ACM Liaison for the Fellows Program by July 1, 2018.

1. GSEF ACADEMIC STATEMENT OF RESEARCH INTEREST (500 – 1000 WORDS)

It is a good idea to consult your advisors or professors for advice as you prepare your research statement. Your professors can help you formulate questions or topics. **Your statement should be specific and concise, but not too narrow in focus.** If you have had other research or apprenticeship experiences, please include a description of the project(s) and your role in them. You can explore areas of inquiry by visiting the web

pages of some of the participating summer research institutions, and individual department or faculty pages, to find out more about the kinds of research and projects being done in those areas of study.

In order for the Big Ten Academic Alliance staff to identify faculty mentors for GSEF fellows, they will need to have a good understanding of your research areas of interest. You should explain as clearly as possible the areas that you would like to research and why this research appeals to you. The challenging aspect of writing a research statement is to balance general interests with specific research questions. One strategy is to nest your specific research interest or topic within a broader area of study. All graduate students and faculty have general areas of interest from which specific research topics and questions stem. (For example, you may be interested in African history generally and the history of land tenure systems in apartheid-era South Africa specifically.)

A good strategy for writing a research statement is to identify a general interest, and then to express a more narrow focus. You should address why you are passionate about the area of research and how your experiences thus far (e.g. course work, research experiences, study abroad) have prepared you for a summer research experience working within your general area.

Please note that it is unlikely that you will work on your specific, narrow research question during the summer research experience. A nested research statement will ease the process of finding faculty or graduate student mentors whose general interests intersect with yours.

Some question/prompts you might consider answering in your statement of research interest:

- In which broad academic discipline(s) or sub-discipline(s) would you like to conduct research?
- Why is this discipline (or disciplines) of greatest interest to you?
- What are two or three specific research topics or questions, in this discipline, that are of interest to you?
- Do you have any research experience (in this or any other academic discipline)? If yes, please describe your experience. Feel free to mention the work you've done or are doing with faculty members (especially if they have written you a letter of recommendation).
- Do you have any experience making presentations on your work? If yes, please describe your project or presentation.
- Do you have any experience in internships, or doing volunteer work in communities that relates to your proposed area(s) of study?
- Describe your best project(s). Indicate who you worked with, the title of the project, your responsibilities, and the outcome.

2. PERSONAL STATEMENT (500 – 1200 WORDS)

The Graduate School Exploration Fellowship is intended to help students from diverse backgrounds learn about and prepare for graduate study in the humanities, humanistic social sciences, and/or the arts. This program is especially for students from groups that have been historically underrepresented in higher education including low-income and first-generation students, non-traditional students, and students from non-White racial and ethnic backgrounds.

The personal statement is your opportunity to explain why you want to engage in a summer of research. It is an opportunity to demonstrate your communication skills, to show your personality, and to share some

of the experiences that have shaped your journey as an emerging scholar. The personal statement is also an opportunity to expand upon your background, to highlight unique experiences, challenges, and triumphs, and to describe how the fellowship or graduate school might advance your academic and career goals.

Some questions you might consider answering in your personal statement:

- What are your academic aspirations?
- What are your graduate school goals?
- What are your career goals?
- In what ways have your experiences and background influenced your goals?
- What courses have you taken that influenced you to want to pursue this fellowship or graduate school? How have these courses led you to focus on the areas of interest you have chosen?
- How will the Graduate School Exploration Fellowship help you accomplish your goals?
- What do you hope or expect to gain from a Graduate School Exploration Fellowship?
- If you have worked a lot in high school or college, what have you learned (leadership or managerial skills, for example), and how has that work contributed to your growth?
- What personal characteristics (for example: integrity, compassion, and/or persistence) do you possess that would improve your prospects for success in academia?
- How will you contribute to the diversity of the community of GSEF fellows?

QUESTIONS?

Please consult our Frequently Asked Questions page on the ACM [GSEF Website](#), contact your ACM Campus point person, or contact Lilly Lavner, Liaison for the Fellows Program to Diversify the Professoriate, at llavner@acm.edu.

Contact information for the Big Ten Academic Alliance GSEF Coordinators can be found at www.btaa.org/GSEFcontacts.

Graduate School Exploration Fellowship (GSEF) Written Statements Guide

Written Statement Guide Last Updated: September 21, 2017