

What you can do *now* to be a great fellowships applicant in the *future*

(P.S. these pointers are also helpful for people applying for graduate school)

1. Get curious. Read the newspaper. Be interested in everything. Fellowships typically invest in people who are curious about the world and knowledgeable about what's happening around them.
2. Diversify. Find extracurricular activities that truly matter to you, and engage with them in meaningful ways. They don't need to relate to your major or your future career. Consider programs like Take Five or E5, which can introduce you to fields beyond your current course of study.
3. Take stock. Once a semester, spend some time writing or thinking deeply about what matters most to you. Where are you headed? Why are you engaging in the activities you have chosen? What problems in the world do you most want to solve?
4. Work on your writing. Every fellowship has a written component. Make sure you can communicate clearly and thoughtfully.
5. Get to know the world. Study abroad. Study a foreign language. Become an international student mentor. Make friends with people from different countries and backgrounds than your own. Attend cultural events on campus. Knowledge of other cultures is especially helpful in applying for international fellowships such as the Fulbright, Schwarzman Scholars, or Yenching Academy Fellowship.
6. Go deep. Seek out opportunities related to your major(s) and future careers. These can include research, internships, graduate level coursework, special seminars, or conferences.
7. Find mentors. You're going to need people to write letters of recommendation. Get to know your faculty during their office hours. It's also great to seek out connections with advanced students, grad students, postdocs, staff members, and coaches.
8. Cultivate resilience. Sometimes things don't work out the way you hope they will. Just keep in mind that failure can lead to future successes. Dust yourself off and try again.
9. Study. While grades alone will never get you a fellowship, strong grades are helpful for all fellowships because they indicate intelligence and seriousness of purpose. For the most prestigious fellowships (such as the Rhodes, Marshall, or Mitchell), a very high GPA is a requirement. For many other fellowships (such as the Fulbright, DAAD RISE, Davis Projects for Peace), there's no cut-off GPA, but solid grades are helpful.
10. Begin your research. See what kinds of fellowships are out there and think about when you might apply. Stop in to the Fellowships Office for a walk-in or a brief appointment. We're always glad to meet future applicants. Send us an email to fellowships@rochester.edu, or stop by Dewey 4-209B to schedule an appointment.