



Graduate School Founder's Fellowships

The Graduate School Founder's Excellence Fellowships contribute to our commitment to advancing Cornell's founding principle of "... any person ... any study."

The concept of "... any person" meant that people from all walks of life, all income levels, races, religions, and genders could attend Cornell University. Similarly, "... any study" underscored the freedom to pursue academic interests wherever they lead. For more than 150 years, talented scholars representing the full, diverse spectrum of humanity have come to Cornell for a world-class educational experience unlike any other.

Overview

The Founder's Excellence Fellowship Portfolio includes recruitment fellowships funded by the Graduate School and SUNY System, as well as others co-funded by colleges within Cornell and the Graduate School. The fellowships in the Founder's Excellence Fellowship Portfolio are awarded on a competitive basis to nominated domestic doctoral applicants from all backgrounds applying for Fall admission. Eligible candidates include U.S. citizens, U.S. permanent residents, Indigenous peoples of Canada who qualify as domestic students under the Jay Treaty, or students with DACA status. Nominees must demonstrate excellence in their academics, leadership, and service. They must also demonstrate the potential to contribute meaningfully to Cornell's founding principle and [core values](#) of providing a **community of belonging** where scholars representing different backgrounds, perspectives, abilities, and experiences can engage in **purposeful discovery** together in an environment of respect.

Applicants who wish to be considered for these fellowships must indicate their interest within the Graduate School application. Admitted students awarded any of the fellowships within the Founder's Excellence Fellowship portfolio are recognized as [Graduate School Dean's Scholars](#) and invited to participate in community and professional activities sponsored by the Office of Inclusion and Student Engagement and its partners.

How to apply:

- Prospective doctoral students apply for a fellowship within the Founder's Excellence Fellowship Portfolio through the Graduate School admissions application.
- To be considered for nomination for a fellowship within this portfolio, eligible applicants must respond "yes" to the question on the admissions application asking whether they would be interested in being considered for a Founder's Excellence Fellowship.
- The director of graduate studies for the graduate field to which the applicant is applying must submit a letter of nomination and a mentoring plan to support the nominee's transition into and progression through their graduate studies.