

Thank you for your interest in The National Social Norms Institute Dissertation Fellowship. Please read each question carefully before completing your application. If you have a specific question that is not answered below, please contact jennifer bauerle, Director, National Social Norms Institute, by telephone at 434-924-1512 or by email at [bauerle@virginia.edu](mailto:bauerle@virginia.edu).

### **What is the National Social Norms Institute?**

The University of Virginia, a national leader in alcohol and substance abuse education, established the National Social Norms Institute to conduct ongoing research into the effectiveness of social norms methodology to combat high-risk drinking among students. The purpose of the National Social Norms Institute is to research, evaluate and disseminate information on the social norms methodology to the field. More information about the National Social Norms Institute and the field of social norms can be found at our website, [socialnorms.org](http://socialnorms.org).

### **How is the National Social Norms Institute Dissertation Fellowship program funded?**

The National Social Norms Institute Dissertation Fellowship is funded through a generous gift by the Anheuser Busch companies and its charitable foundation and is administered by the National Social Norms Institute at the University of Virginia.

### **When is the deadline?**

Completed application, two letters of recommendation as well as the graduate transcript must be postmarked by 5pm Eastern Standard Time (EST) on Friday, March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2009 at the National Social Norms Institute. We encourage applicants to request letters of recommendation and transcripts early as late materials will not be accepted. Applicants are asked to collect all documents and mail them together with a cover letter providing their full name, mailing address and email address. These items can be mailed in one envelope, to arrive prior to the deadline to the following address:

**Dissertation Fellowship Program  
The National Social Norms Institute @ the University of Virginia  
943 Second Street, S.E.  
Charlottesville, Virginia 22902**

### **When is the notification of awards?**

Fellows will be notified by May 1st, 2009.

### **When will the award period begin?**

The award period for the current competition will begin July 1, 2009.

### **What is the policy for letters of recommendation?**

Letters of recommendation should come from faculty members familiar with the quality of your graduate work and the dissertation topic, with the expectation that one letter will be from the chair of your dissertation committee. If neither letter is from the chair of your dissertation committee, please provide a brief written explanation, to accompany the letters.

### What if there are difficulties in obtaining my letters of recommendation?

Occasionally applicants face difficulties obtaining a faculty letter in time due to circumstances such as faculty sabbatical leaves or illness. Please contact your faculty referees early to avoid the problem of a late letter. However, in the event that you anticipate this kind of circumstance, please contact the National Social Norms Institute as early as possible to discuss the submission of letter(s) under separate cover.

Because our process moves forward quite quickly, we can make no guarantee that late letters will be included in the early stages of the review process.

### Are there minimum and maximum lengths for the personal statement, narrative discussion and work plan?

Each document should give sufficient detail to enable the review committee to judge the quality of the applicant's approach to the dissertation phase of graduate work. As a general guideline, the expectation is that the personal statement will be one to two pages and the narrative discussion of the dissertation will be three to five pages. The application materials include a form for completion of the work plan.

### Who is on the review committee?

The review committee is a multidisciplinary body comprised of scholars with expertise in the field of the social norms approach and in supervising graduate students.

### Is there an example of a successful application from previous years?

The National Social Norms Institute is unable to make previous applications publicly available. However, we do highly recommend reading "The Art of Writing Proposals" an article published by the Social Science Research Council about crafting a competitive research proposal. Please visit [www.ssrc.org](http://www.ssrc.org) for more information.

We also stress to all candidates that fellowship applications are read by a multidisciplinary selection committee. Applications should be written for a generalist audience. The National Social Norms Institute strongly encourages applicants to have colleagues from other departments and fields read their applications to provide general feedback and ensure that the application can be understood by readers from different disciplinary backgrounds.

### Can I get feedback on my turned down application?

No, it is the National Social Norms Institute's policy not to give feedback.

### Can I apply if I am not in a department or school of public health?

Yes. You can be a doctoral candidate in any field, as long as your dissertation topic relates to the social norms approach and shows promise of contributing to the understanding of the theory, practice or evaluation of the social norms approach.

### What if I'm not sure whether my topic relates to social norms?

The National Social Norms Institute supports projects related to the social norms approach **broadly conceived**. It is incumbent upon the applicant to clearly and explicitly state the connection between the proposed research and the improvement of the field of social norms. In addition, all applications should demonstrate that social norms research will continue to be a high priority for the researcher subsequent to doctoral completion.

If you can make a case that your research is relevant to social norms and if your own research interests, both short and long term, are with social norms issues, you should certainly consider applying. If you feel social norms is a stretch, you will probably have difficulty writing a competitive application.

### **Does my dissertation topic have to relate to the consumption of alcohol?**

No, the only requirement is that the dissertation topic and research must focus on social norms theory, research, evaluation and/or interventions, as applied to any relevant issue.

### **I am not a US citizen. Am I eligible?**

Yes - if you are a candidate for the doctoral degree at a graduate school in the United States. Foreign universities with charters in the United States do not meet eligibility qualifications.

### **What if I currently have funding from another source?**

Please check with the institution from which you are already receiving funding to determine if there are regulations in place regarding duplication of benefits.

### **What are the specifications for finishing candidacy requirements in accordance with the National Social Norms Institute timeline?**

Applicants must document that they will have completed all pre-dissertation requirements by *June 1, 2009*. These pre-dissertation requirements include: course requirements, qualifying paper or comprehensive exams, official approval of the dissertation proposal, and any other program-specific requirements. The National Social Norms Institute's intent is that our fellowship funds the final stage of doctoral work - the writing of the dissertation. It is our expectation that fellows will complete their doctoral studies by the end of the fellowship period, or soon thereafter.

### **How long is the tenure of the National Social Norms Institute Fellowship?**

The tenure of the fellowship is not less than one academic year (9 months) and not more than two calendar years (24 months). In applying for the fellowship, you are asked to designate in a Work Plan the amount of time you anticipate needing to finish your dissertation. The Fellowship cannot start any earlier than *July 2009* and must be completed by the end of *May 2011*.

### **May I work during the Fellowship year?**

The National Social Norms Institute Fellowship is designed to provide you with support for the write-up phase of your dissertation and to alleviate the need for significant other employment. However, we recognize that individuals have unique needs and circumstances. In the case of a single year fellowship, the National Social Norms Institute rule of thumb is that fellows may have "reasonable" outside employment during the fellowship year, which we typically define as employment related to their professional development as a scholar at a level up to (or the equivalent of) one-fourth time teaching assistantship per semester. In the case of a two-year fellowship, the applicants must demonstrate that they are devoting at least half of their time over the two years to dissertation writing. Applicants are asked to describe any anticipated employment in the Work Plan section of the application. If a fellow wishes to accept any additional employment (not originally listed in the Work Plan) during the tenure of the fellowship, written permission must be obtained from the National Social Norms Institute. The Selection Committee must have ample evidence to demonstrate that a candidate will be able to finish the dissertation by writing full-time for one year or part-time over two years.

### **May I accept other awards?**

Applying for other funding will not, in any way, hinder your eligibility for a National Social Norms Institute Dissertation Fellowship award. You must, however, notify the National Social Norms Institute if you are offered another fellowship and discuss the nature and terms of the award.

### **Are there rules for how funding is spent?**

The only stipulation is that the fellowship be used to support a student while writing his or her doctoral thesis. Exactly how that money is spent is up to each fellow's own discretion and individual need. For example, expenditures the fellowship might cover include (but are not limited to): living expenses, medical/dental insurance, research equipment and/or expenses, books, workshops or conferences, and university tuition or fees.

The fellowship will be dispensed in the following manner. \$15,000 will be given at the beginning of the award period. The final \$5,000 will be disbursed after an article on the dissertation topic is approved by the National Social Norms Institute review committee and has been submitted for publication in a peer reviewed journal.

### **Does the National Social Norms Institute provide 1099 Forms to Fellows?**

The National Social Norms Institute does not withhold any funds from fellowship payments and does not issue any 1099 forms. If questions arise regarding the tax implications of payments, it is the National Social Norms Institute's policy to suggest that a tax professional is contacted.