

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

# Civil Society Scholar Awards 2018-2019

## Open Society Scholarship Programs

### **When will the results of the competition be announced?**

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application via email by the end of June 2018.

### **My research will be conducted in a local community, rural area or outside of an institution or educational establishment. From whom should I request a letter of invitation?**

If you intend to conduct community-based fieldwork or research which is not based at an institution, you do not have to submit a letter of invitation as long as these activities are taking place outside of the United States. There is a designated space on the application for you to briefly explain this omission. However, if you plan to travel to the United States for your research, your application will only be eligible for CSSA funding if it is supported by an official invitation from a host institution confirming that this host institution is on the list of Designated Sponsor Organizations for J1 visa. Regretfully we will not be able to offer funding to any applicants who do not have a confirmed host organization willing to help them with their J1 visa application. Kindly note that B1/B2 visas are not suitable for CSSA-funded research projects.

### **I am unsure of the exact location(s) of my research at this point. May I change the location(s) after I submit my application?**

CSSA grants are awarded by an independent selection committee based on the information you provide. A key part of that assessment is your clear justification for international travel and the suitability of the location. Requests to change the location of the grant activity after the grant has been awarded are not possible. Please be as accurate as possible with the location and timing of the grant activities when applying.

### **At this point, I am unable to provide a budget, detailed work timeline, and clear explanation of when and how I plan to use the requested funds. Will my application still be competitive?**

No. All successful applications will have a detailed budget, work timeline, and explanation of how and when the requested funds will be used. We understand that research projects are always in flex and that timelines often change, but an application that does not contain a very clear overview of the project and a realistic (although of course, projected) timeline for its completion will not be competitive.

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**What types of proposals do CSSA applicants most often submit, and what are the program expectations for the different types of proposals?**

We see a wide variety of applications. However, CSSA applications often broadly fall into 3 categories:

**1) Research project proposals.**

For research project proposals, applicants (whether PhD students or faculty members) are expected to clearly state their research problem or puzzle as well as explain the potential impact/value of their proposed research. For these types of projects it is also very important to make sure you outline the methodology you will use to explore your research topic. In addition to listing and explaining your choice of academic method(s), please also list specific activities you plan to undertake. If you have specific hypotheses about your study, please list them and explain how you will know if they are being supported or not. The activities listed in your descriptive narrative should be clearly connected to your project timeline and budget.

**2) Proposals for faculty visits to host universities / research institutions to work with colleagues on research and / or to develop new courses (to be taught at home universities),**

We expect that that all proposals falling into this category clearly delineate why a specific university or institution is key for developing a certain research project or course. Please make sure you explain what resources will be available at the selected host university that would not be available elsewhere, as well as why work with a particular professor or a particular department will hold special utility. These types of applications have to be supported by detailed invitation letters from the host institutions confirming the name of the mentor that will be assigned to the applicant. It is also important that you include a list of specific activities you plan to undertake at your selected host institution (such as auditing courses, visiting classes, attending faculty meetings, developing a new course, working on an existing or new research project etc.) If you are planning to work on developing a curriculum, having an endorsement from your home university indicating that the proposed course is approved for development would also be beneficial.

**3) Requests for funds from PhD students based in their home countries and enrolled in doctoral programs abroad who want to use the funds to visit the universities they are enrolled at.**

These students usually request funds for travelling to the institution at which they are enrolled as spending a few months there would give them access to professors and campus resources such as libraries. Please note that applications of this type will not be competitive if they describe such activities in broad terms. In order to be competitive, these applications need to have the same components as other types of applications: a clearly stated research / project goal, a tangible list of specific activities to be undertaken, a clear timeline, and a clear, realistic budget based on local costs.

All of the applicants, irrespective of the type of proposal they are submitting, are expected to follow the program guidelines and clearly outline their work timelines, project goals, and budget.

**Do I have to provide English language translations of official documents such as degree certificates or transcripts?**

Please ensure that any documents you submit that are not in English are accompanied by a notarized English language translation. If you cannot provide a notarized translation by the submission date, please provide the original documents and a cover note explaining your situation. Should your application be successful, you will then be obliged to submit translations at a later date as a condition of your award.

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**I am required to submit an official letter from my institution confirming my enrolment status, department, and expected completion date. My enrolment has not yet taken place.**

We can only accept applications from doctoral students if they are supported by an official enrolment letter from the host university. If you are not enrolled in a PhD program during the CSSA 2018-19 application period, you may wish to consider applying for CSSA the following year.

**The application form mentions a current official school transcript. As a PhD student I am not enrolled in any assessed/graded courses and as such do not have a transcript.**

Please provide a transcript of your most recently completed degree, such as a Master's degree.

**I am unable to submit the application online. What should I do?**

Online applications are strongly encouraged, but if for any reason you are unable to submit your application online you can download a paper application instead. Paper applications should be sent to OSF in New York or London. In certain countries they may be sent to a local administrative office. Paper applications should be sent via email or post by March 31, 2018. Please see the Guidelines for further instructions and a list of countries with participating local administrative offices.

**I would like to submit my application online, but one of my supporting documents is not yet available. What should I do?**

You are expected to submit a full set of documents with your online application before the deadline. In exceptional circumstances it may be possible for you to submit your application form without **one** missing document if this document will become available within 2 weeks after the deadline. To stop your application from being rejected automatically please make sure you use the relevant field to upload a brief note (doc., docx., or pdf.) explaining the reasons for omission. You will then have to submit the missing document to [cssa@infoscholar.org](mailto:cssa@infoscholar.org) by April 14, 2018, and failure to do so will result in your application being rejected.

**One of my referees would prefer to send the recommendation letter to CSSA program staff directly. Is there a way to do that?**

Please ask your referee to send the recommendation letter to [cssa@infoscholar.org](mailto:cssa@infoscholar.org) before March 31, 2018. Your surname has to be mentioned in the subject line of the email, and the recommendation letter must include full name, email address and contact number of the person giving the reference.

**Can my proposed budget include an honorarium for myself or expenses for hiring a third-party/sub-contractor?**

CSSA will not cover honorarium payments to the applicant. Honorarium payments to third parties can be allowed in some cases, provided that the need for such payments is clearly justified in the proposal and the total amount to be paid to third parties does not exceed 15% of the award.

**Can my proposed budget include expenses for conference participation?**

Requests for conference attendance are permissible if the conference is clearly part of a coherent series of research activities. Conference participation alone will not be considered. Please ensure you describe how the conference relates to your research project.

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**How flexible can I be with the time period of my grant activity? Is it possible to alter it if I am awarded the grant?**

The dates of the activity should stay as close to the original dates and time period as possible. Successful grantees will however have the opportunity to reconfirm their project dates in late June 2018 when award offers will be sent. All proposed research projects must take place between September 1, 2018 and August 31, 2019, and be between 2-12 months long. If your project does not fall within these dates, it will not be eligible. **(Please note:** Projects with work taking place in the United States *must* be a minimum of 3 months long and start on or after February 1, 2019.)

**I am a current CSSA grant holder or have had a CSSA or other OSF grant in the past. May I still apply, and, if so, how many times?**

Current or former grantees who have been awarded a CSSA grant once may apply for a new grant, but must delineate how their proposed project is a continuation of / is closely related to their original project. Current grantees applying for the award for the second time must also confirm that they are on schedule with their current grant's work timeline. CSSA grant cannot be awarded to the same person more than twice.

Applicants who have or have had other, non-CSSA scholarships from OSF are eligible to apply if they meet the CSSA eligibility requirements, but only if a successful application would not result in their holding two OSF scholarships at the same time.

**Can I be guaranteed to receive the full amount I request if I am successful?**

The selection committee will make a decision on the amount awarded to successful candidates based on a variety of factors, including the availability of funds and the justification of the budget items requested. In this respect, the full amount of the grant may not always be awarded.

**If I am successful in my application, when will I receive my award funds?**

For projects taking place outside the United States, we will aim to transfer the funds to your account before the start date of your project. In these cases we are usually able to give you a clearer indication of when to expect the payment once your grant letter is ready for signature. For projects that have activity in the United States, funds will be transferred after you have obtained your US visa and physically arrived in the US.

If you need a confirmation of funding in order to apply for a visa a few months before the beginning of your project, CSSA staff can provide you with an official letter noting the amount of the award as well as the timing of the payment.

**I am a PhD student at my home university, but I also teach courses there. Should I apply as a doctoral student or as a full-time faculty member?**

PhD students, including those teaching at their home or other universities, must apply as doctoral students. Applicants applying as full-time faculty members must have a minimum of a Master's degree, be teaching at their home institutions, and cannot be enrolled in a doctoral program.

**Some of my activities will take place in the country I live in. Are these expenses eligible?**

CSSA grants enable international academic research activities, and are therefore tenable for projects which take place outside of the place of current study or work only. In this respect, expenses for any activity within the same country where you are studying or teaching are ineligible.

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**In order to successfully complete my project, I would need to travel to more than one international location. Can I get funding for that?**

We may be able to support a project that involves travel to more than one international location if the need for travel to additional locations is clearly justified in the proposal and this travel is vital for the success of the project. Applicants indicating more than one international location in their application **must** include a breakdown of costs per country in their budget.

**Can I submit an application to travel for fieldwork if my research is yet to receive IRB/ethics committee approval?**

You can submit an application based on your plans for fieldwork before you have the necessary approvals. Please have your supervisor note when you expect to receive approvals in the letter of reference they will be submitting for you. We advise you to choose grant dates which are realistic to accommodate for the expected date of approval.

**Do CSSA staff provide any support for obtaining a visa for travel to the country of activity?**

If necessary, we can provide a support letter to help you obtain a visa prior to your grant letter being issued. We cannot offer any further assistance for obtaining a visa. Grantees are expected to make the necessary arrangements themselves.