



Dissertation Fellowship Guidelines

Ann G. Wylie & Lee Thornton Fellowships

(FOR AY 2026-27)

The Graduate School's **Semester Dissertation Fellowship program** includes the Ann G. Wylie Dissertation Fellowship and the Lee Thornton Endowed Dissertation Fellowship. Dissertation Fellowships provide support to University of Maryland doctoral candidates who are in the latter stages of writing their dissertations. Awarded students can choose to use the fellowship in either Fall 2026 or Spring 2027. Fellowship benefits include a \$15,000 stipend, a Candidacy Tuition award (899 only), a credit for mandatory fees associated with 899 enrollment, and reimbursement for student health insurance individual plan up to \$1500.

Eligible students will have excellent qualifications and plan to graduate by August 2027. *The specific goal of this fellowship is to provide students with time to focus on writing and completing their dissertation in order to reduce time-to-degree, increase degree completion, and enhance the quality of the graduate student experience.*

Each University of Maryland Ph.D. program may nominate up to 2 eligible students for the semester dissertation fellowship.

NOMINATION DEADLINE: Noon, Wednesday, February 11, 2026*

*Students, please consult with their department about the internal selection process and deadlines.

Semester Dissertation Fellowships: All nominees for the Semester Dissertation Fellowships will be considered for the Wylie Dissertation Fellowship. Nominees in who are doing scholarship or research that “serves the public good” will be considered for the Lee Thornton Dissertation Fellowship.

Ann G. Wylie Dissertation Fellowship

In 2005, the Graduate School inaugurated the Ann G. Wylie Dissertation Fellowship program. The Wylie Dissertation Fellowship is a full-time semester-long fellowship which can be used in Fall 2026 or Spring 2027 semester. Approximately 40 Ann G. Wylie Dissertation Fellowships will be awarded for AY 26-27.

Lee Thornton Dissertation Fellowship

In 2013, Dr. Lee Thornton established this endowed fund to support the writing of dissertations at the University of Maryland that serve the public good. This might include scholarship that addresses issues related to society’s present and future needs, or research that produces findings applicable to those needs. The Lee Thornton Dissertation Fellowship is a full-time semester-long fellowship which can be used in Fall 2026 or Spring 2027 semester. One student will be awarded the Lee Thornton Dissertation Fellowship.

Dr. Lee Thornton was one of the nation’s most distinguished broadcast journalists and worked at the University of Maryland from 1997 – 2013. Professor Thornton held the Richard Eaton Chair in Broadcast News at the Philip Merrill College of Journalism, a first of its kind for the campus and the nation. In 2008, she became interim Dean of the Philip Merrill College of Journalism, the first woman dean of color on the campus. Later, she served as Associate Provost and Ombuds Officer for the Graduate School. A dedicated campus citizen, Professor Thornton was named Outstanding Woman of the Year in 2011 by the President's Commission on Women's Issues.

Eligibility

The Graduate School Dissertation Fellowships are one-semester fellowships that support University of Maryland doctoral candidates who have excellent qualifications and are in the latter stages of writing their dissertations.

Eligible candidates must be advanced to candidacy by June 1, 2026, **AND** expect to graduate by August 2027.

Students may receive a Semester Dissertation Fellowship only once. Fellowships may not be deferred.

Students holding the Ann G. Wylie Dissertation Fellowship or the Lee Thornton Dissertation Fellowship agree not to accept an assistantship, other full-time fellowship, or employment of \$2,000 or more during the period of the Fellowship. Supplemental fellowships may be accepted.

Fellowship Stipend and Benefits

Semester Dissertation Fellows will receive a \$15,000 stipend, a Candidacy Tuition Award (dissertation 899 credits only), a credit for the student's mandatory fees associated with 899 enrollment, and reimbursement of up to \$1,500 for the cost of an individual health insurance plan while on fellowship

Health Insurance

Dissertation Fellows must be off payroll to receive the fellowship stipend, which also means the state health insurance benefits will not be available to Fellows. Wylie Fellows are eligible to enroll in the Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP). For more information about securing health insurance while on the Dissertation Fellowship, please use <https://gradschool.umd.edu/health-insurance/Wylie-Fellows> as a resource. To request reimbursement for the cost of an individual student health insurance (up to \$1500), complete the [Health Insurance Reimbursement Request Form](#). Health insurance for dependents is not reimbursed.

Fellowship Selection Process

The Graduate School appoints a multi-disciplinary faculty panel to review all of Semester Dissertation Fellowship proposals. Because the panel may not include faculty from their field of study, **students should write for a general audience**. Committee members will be instructed to evaluate the proposals based on:

- the student's achievements and promise;
- the excellence of the research proposal and the student's ability to write for a non-specialist audience;
- work done on the project to date (if any);
- the potential importance of the dissertation to the student's field of research; and
- the likelihood of the student's ability to complete the dissertation during the fellowship year and graduate by August 2027.

It is expected that the cohort of awardees will represent university values.

Nominations

All University of Maryland Ph.D. programs are eligible to nominate up to two (2) candidates for the Semester Dissertation Fellowships. Please note, specializations and/or concentration areas within a degree program are not considered to be separate programs.

Nomination Packages

Please visit [Dissertation Fellowship Web page](#) for all necessary forms. Nomination packages from departments or programs must include:

1. **The Dissertation Fellowship Nomination Cover Sheet**
2. **A Student written Proposal** (abstract & one-page statement)
 - a. **Abstract:** Students prepare an abstract (500 word maximum). The abstract should include a) the title; b) a description of the study; c) the significance of the study; and d) sources of information or data, if applicable.
 - b. **One-page statement:** Students prepare a statement of: a) work completed; b) work remaining; c) timeline; and d) expected completion date.

Students are asked to write for an educated lay audience.

3. **The student's curriculum vitae** (two page maximum)
4. **A letter from the student's advisor** describing the quality and accomplishments of the student, the significance of the student's dissertation project, and an account of how this fellowship would have an impact on the student's ability to progress toward their degree by August 2027.
5. **The DGS Questionnaire:** We ask the Director of Graduate Studies to complete the DGS Questionnaire in order to better inform the committee about disciplinary and programmatic differences. *(If the student's advisor is also the Director of Graduate Studies, the Program/Department Chair should complete the questionnaire).*

Programs must gather the above materials, then submit the five (5) files to the Graduate School Awards Portal by the deadline. *(Do not combine the files.)* Submit complete nominations to the Awards Portal at terpengage.umd.edu/gsawards/s/.

Reporting

At the end of the semester, the student will submit a brief but specific report (no more than one page in length) on the work accomplished during the period of the fellowship and plans for graduation.

Contact

Please direct all questions to Program Director Robyn Kotzker for the Office of Funding Opportunities (rkotzker@umd.edu, 301.405.0281)