

Frequently Asked Questions (Predoctoral Fellowship Application) Fall 2022

1. Is the Predoctoral Fellowship open to international candidates? Do you sponsor visas for international candidates?

Yes, we encourage international applicants to apply. We sponsor J-1 and H-1B visas.

2. What kind of writing sample should I submit?

The writing sample should ideally be an economics research paper, however, you may submit whatever piece you feel best demonstrates your analytic and writing abilities. It can be any length.

3. What should I include in my CV?

Your CV should highlight your work experience, publications, education, awards, and research projects. Specific information about relevant courses and skills is encouraged.

4. Can I get feedback on my application?

Given the number of applications we receive, we are sorry that we cannot provide individual feedback.

5. What are you looking for in an applicant?

Successful applicants have 1) strong transcripts including advanced courses in economics, math, and/or computer science, 2) a strong background in economics research, communicated through the writing sample and CV, and 3) a passion for our mission. Students with strong backgrounds in programming and computer science, even with less (though not zero) experience in economics, are particularly encouraged to apply. Harvard University views equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging as the pathway to achieving inclusive excellence and fostering a campus culture where everyone can thrive. We strive to create a community that draws upon the widest possible pool of talent to unify excellence and diversity while fully embracing individuals from varied backgrounds, cultures, races, identities, life experiences, perspectives, beliefs, and values.

6. Are there any summer research assistant opportunities?

Our group only hires full-year pre-doctoral fellows to begin the following summer. The predoctoral fellowship typically lasts for two years.

7. Do I need a Master's to apply? Is this program open to undergraduates in their junior year?

We encourage students to apply to the Predoctoral Fellowship in the final year of their undergraduate or master's program. Applicants must have completed their undergraduate degree but do not need to have completed a Master's degree.

8. If I have another offer with an upcoming deadline, can my application review be expedited?

If you have a conflicting deadline, we will do our best to accommodate review of your application. Please email hiring@opportunityinsights.org with the subject line "Request for Expedited Review - Pre-Doc Fellowship Application" and include your deadline. Note that because of the depth of applications for our program, offers are made via expedited review only for exceptional candidates.

9. How much time will I have to complete the coding task, and when would this be?

We ask a subset of applicants to complete an empirical coding exercise in order to demonstrate their skills in quantitative analysis and programming. We typically reach out in the weeks following the application due date (October 5, 2022), at which point you will be able to choose a 48-hour period within a one week window in order to complete the task.

10. I'm still trying to decide if a PhD is for me. Can I still apply to the program?

Yes! The OI Predoctoral Fellowship is an opportunity to get hands-on research experience and as an opportunity for Fellows to understand more about whether pursuing a PhD (in economics or another field) is a fit for them. Because of the nature of the work, the fellowship is typically the best fit for people who have some interest in potentially pursuing a PhD. Graduates of the program have gone on to pursue doctoral degrees in economics, public policy, sociology, and other fields as well as careers in industry and policy.

11. Who should I ask to be a reference?

Applicants should submit the name and contact information for three references in the Online OI Application. (Please note that reference information can be left blank in the Harvard application.) It is not necessary to submit more than three references. The best references are persons who can attest to your work quality, interests, and research potential. OI will reach out to references for candidates who make it to final stages of the application process. There is template for reference letters.

12. Can I take classes for credit as a predoctoral fellow at Opportunity Insights?

We encourage fellows to participate in the thriving intellectual environment at Harvard University and more generally in the Boston area through courses, seminars, and other events. Fellows may take certain courses for credit that are necessary for Ph.D admissions, like Real Analysis, and can audit other more “elective” courses. Fellows are eligible for subsidized tuition for courses at Harvard University.

13. Is there a Spring hiring session for predoctoral fellows? Can I apply in both the Fall and Spring hiring sessions?

While we cannot guarantee a Spring hiring round, Opportunity Insights typically holds predoc fellowship hiring sessions in the Fall and Spring of each academic year. Applicants may only apply to the OI predoc fellowship once per academic year. We encourage applicants to apply as soon as they feel ready. For Fall applicants, we understand that applicants will not yet have completed Spring coursework and we will take this into consideration in application assessments

14. How can I learn more about Opportunity Insights and the predoctoral program?

Please [view](#) a recording of our virtual information session about the Predoctoral program that was held on September 22, 2022. More information about Opportunity Insights generally, including links to research papers, datasets, and media coverage can be found at www.opportunityinsights.org.

15. If I still have questions, who should I contact?

Please email your questions to hiring@opportunityinsights.org.