

Sam Nunn Fellowship Program

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the deadline for the Academic Year 2012-2013 Fellowships, and are applications accepted on a rolling basis?

The deadline for next year's fellowships is **5:00pm on Saturday March 31, 2012**. All applications are considered at the same time (i.e. no rolling application system is used.)

What is the Sam Nunn Fellowship Program?

This Program prepares a select group of engineers, scientists, computer scientists, and social scientists with technical research interests to be able to advise policymakers on issues at the nexus of science, technology, and international security. The Program is funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation as well as by contributions from SAIC, the Callahan Memorial Endowment, and Georgia Tech to examine such policy issues as arms control, counter-terrorism, climate change, resource scarcity, military transformation, infrastructure protection, technological innovation, the role of technology in economic development, and the potential for nefarious use of emerging technologies. Achieving solutions to these problems requires individuals with both technical understanding and insight into the political, economic, and strategic realities of crafting and proposing policy.

How many fellows are accepted each year?

A class of 8-12 fellows is admitted each fall.

How many of the fellowships go to Pre-doctoral candidates?

The majority of fellows are pre-docs, with typically no more than one to two post-docs and/or faculty fellows per year. The program rarely fully funds Post-docs, and so it is recommended that individuals interested in such a position talk to program faculty before expending effort in the application process to make sure there is potentially good fit.

What is the ideal time in my course of study to apply?

On average, pre-doctoral Sam Nunn Fellows are third year PhD students. First year PhD students are often better served by deferring their application until they have completed their exams.

Is the procedure for Post-doc or Faculty applications the same as for pre-docs?

The process is similar, **but potential post-docs and faculty fellows are encouraged to speak with the Program faculty before applying** to discuss what opportunities are available and whether there would be a mutual benefit to their participation before they invest too much time in the application process. **The Program is typically unable to support full funding of Post-docs.** Undergraduate transcripts are not essential for post-doctoral candidates, but letters of recommendation are necessary.

Do I have to participate in both semesters (fall and spring) of the graduate seminar?

Yes, generally an applicant who is only able to complete part of the graduate seminar (e.g. graduating in December of the fall semester) would be ineligible.

Do I have to register for both semesters of the graduate seminar?

If you are a pre-doc you will need to register for both sessions for a letter grade, but you will not need to register if you are a post-doc or faculty fellow.

Can I take the seminar if I am not selected as a fellow?

Seminar registration is by permit only and is limited to the fellows. Because field trips are part of the seminar experience, the group must be kept small for both logistical and financial reasons.

Do you accept distance learning candidates from GT Savannah or other distance learning centers?

Currently we do not accept fellows that are unable to attend most of the seminars in person. The seminar is interactive and draws heavily upon guest speakers in various *fora*, and we are presently unable to achieve these objectives via distance learning.

Do you accept foreign nationals into the program?

Yes, we typically have foreign fellows in the program. It should be noted, in rare instances, that foreign nationals may not be able to visit all locations that we travel to on field trips, and almost always must complete additional paperwork and/or provide additional documentation (i.e. copies of passport/visas) for visits to national security related facilities. Efforts are often made to arrange alternate events for those few locations that foreign nationals cannot visit.

Does my participation in the Sam Nunn Fellowship Program exclude me from participating in other fellowships or assistantships?

Not on our end. Our Program does not make any exclusive claims on your time besides the three hour per week graduate seminar, the field trips, and the time needed to complete the project and exercises associated with the seminar. From our perspective, stipend funds are considered supplemental to any awards you may already receive. However, **it is highly recommended that you make certain that any other funders/fellowship programs you participate in will allow you to concurrently participate in our program** before you invest too much effort in applying.

I am a pre-doc who is participating in another Fellowship or government-funded program that will not allow me to take stipend money from other sources, what affect will this have?

This typically will not factor into the decision making to accept you as a fellow one way or another. The Program usually offers support in the way of conference travel funds or reimbursement for research-related expenses to fellows who cannot take stipends up to a maximum of the value that would have been paid in stipend.

If I am not accepted, and am sent a letter suggesting I reapply for a later year, is it worth doing so?

Yes. We always have had a number of fellows who have been admitted on a subsequent submission. Typically, those who receive a suggestion to reapply are considered promising candidates, but, given the limited number of slots and many qualified candidates, may have been passed over based on factors that do not speak to their merit as a candidate (e.g. deference given to applicants that are less likely to be able to reapply in later years, and attempts to have a broad set of academic programs represented.)

Besides scholarly merit, what factors are considered when making determinations about applications?

The applicant's merit, as displayed in his or her CV, transcripts, letters of recommendation, and cover letter, are central to the decision making process. However, often there are more promising candidates than slots, and a number of other factors may come into play. As mentioned, pre-docs at later stages in their program may be favored as they are less likely to be able to reapply, and are likely to have a better idea of the level of additional effort they are capable of performing. All else being equal, there is a preference towards representing a diverse cross-section engineering and scientific disciplines in the Program each year (and, this may result in applicants being rank-ordered within their school/department/lab, as well as against the overall body of applicants.)