Institute for Research in the Humanities

August 6, 2026

Open-topic Resident Fellowships

Call for Applications for 2027-2028
DEADLINE: Friday, October 2, 2026

Access application information and link to digital application on the IRH fellowships webpage: https://irh.wisc.edu/irh-fellowships/ (scroll down to "internal fellowships").

The Institute for Research in the Humanities (IRH) at the University of Wisconsin–Madison is pleased to announce its annual competition for up to six one-semester Open-topic Resident Fellowships for UW–Madison faculty in the College of Letters & Science who are working on a project of significance for the humanities. These Open-topic Resident Fellowships will be granted for one semester within the 2027-2028 academic year. UW–Madison faculty budgeted outside the College of Letters & Science may also apply for Open-topic Resident Fellowships, contingent upon agreement from their deans or department chairs to continue their salary during the duration of the fellowship. Resident fellows receive their regular salary and are released from teaching and service duties for the semester of the fellowship so that they may undertake full-time research and participate in the intellectual community of IRH. Fellows with additional funding (e.g., sabbatical, other grants) are invited to remain at IRH for the full academic year. However, the fellowship may not be deferred for any reason. These fellowships are prestigious appointments and represent one of the ways the College of Letters & Science seeks to strengthen opportunities for concentrated research by faculty in the humanities.

Open-topic Resident Fellows are required to be in residence in Madison during the semester of their fellowship and expected to participate in the intellectual life of IRH by attending the weekly Monday afternoon seminar (3:30 - 5:00 pm), utilizing their IRH office regularly (if receiving office space), and giving a seminar presentation at IRH. Fellows are also encouraged to join the weekly afternoon teas and other IRH events as time and interest permit. Please consult the IRH website for more information about events.

Individual faculty members on the tenure track or tenured at UW–Madison are encouraged to apply. IRH seeks the most exciting research projects from candidates who can contribute to and benefit from the multi-disciplinary dialogue in the humanities that IRH fosters.

Eligibility

- Open-topic Resident Fellowship applicants must be tenured or tenure-track members of the UW–Madison faculty, must be engaged in scholarship in the humanities, and must be prepared to commit themselves to full participation in IRH seminars for the period of the appointment.
- UW–Madison faculty budgeted outside the College of Letters & Science may also apply for Open-topic Resident Fellowships, and, if selected, will need to provide

evidence of funding through their own college or school.

- All applicants must have completed two years on the tenure track or as tenured faculty at UW–Madison before applying.
- Projects should be situated clearly within the humanities, which we define broadly to include disciplinary and interdisciplinary scholarship on history, literature, visual and performing art, visual and material culture, philosophy, religion, politics, and language. In addition to applications in the humanities, applications in the social and natural sciences will be considered if they demonstrate potential for comparative, theoretical, and/or interdisciplinary conversation with the humanities. Proposals in the performing and creative arts, including works of fiction, are not generally supported, but such projects with a substantive research component in the humanities may be considered. Contact the IRH Director if you have questions about the definition of "substantive research" as it relates to your project.
- Proposals involving a revision of the doctoral dissertation should involve major expansion, extensive new research, and/or substantive reconceptualization.
- Projects that are primarily translations, anthologies, or preparation of editions are not eligible.
- IRH accepts applications from former Open-topic Resident Fellows or Race, Ethnicity, and Indigeneity (REI) Resident Fellows after seven years from the end date of their prior IRH fellowship. Those who were Open-topic or REI Resident Fellows in the 2019-2020 season or before are eligible to apply this fall for 2027-2028 fellowships.
- Former Senior Fellows are eligible to apply for an Open-topic Resident or REI Resident Fellowship after ten years from the end of their senior fellowship. Senior fellowships that ended in the 2016-2017 academic year or before may apply this fall for 2027-2028 Open-topic Resident or REI Resident Fellowships.
- Somewhat higher standards will be applied for previous recipients of IRH fellowships.

Application Materials

- Project Proposal. Up to 1,500 words (about 5 double-spaced pages of 12-point font). The proposal, written to be accessible to readers outside your discipline and free of jargon, should address the significance of the project. Clearly state the intended product of your research, whether it is a book or an article (or series of articles). For book projects, an outline of chapters is highly recommended. For revisions of dissertations, substantive change is expected; explain how the book will differ from the dissertation. The proposal should also state how the project will be accomplished, and the specific work plan for the period of the grant.
- Project Bibliography. Publications (not your own) relevant to the project, up to 2 pages.
- *Curriculum Vitae*. Including work forthcoming and in progress.
- Completed Open-topic Resident Fellow Interfolio questionnaire. Note: required entries in the Interfolio application "form" will include a reduced 100-word project abstract (separate from your uploaded project proposal); please prepare this shortened abstract before beginning the Interfolio application.

Abstracts over 100 words will be cut off in review materials submitted to the selection committee.

- Note: As of the 2025 competition season, letters of recommendation are no longer required for the REI and Open-topic Resident fellowship competitions.

Application Submission

- Applicants must access the online application through Interfolio. The Interfolio application link is found in the Open-topic Resident Fellowship section of the IRH fellowships webpage: https://irh.wisc.edu/irh-fellowships/ (scroll down to the expandable "internal fellowships" menu).
- You must complete your online application and upload all required materials to Interfolio by 11:59 pm Eastern Time **(10:59 pm Central Time)** on Friday, **October 2, 2026**. Interfolio operates out of Washington, D.C. and deadlines are set at Eastern Time, NOT Central Time. Deadline is **10:59 pm** if you are in Madison.
- You do not need to complete your application in a single session. You may start it, save changes, log out, and return to it later. (To see your saved applications, go to the Interfolio dashboard and click the "*Deliveries*" button; un-submitted applications will appear as "*in-progress*.")
- Please press the "**submit**" button on your portion of the application as soon as possible. Even after submission, you may return to an application repeatedly to make edits and changes until 10:59 pm CT/11:59 pm ET on October 2nd. (Again, to see an application you have already submitted, go to the Interfolio dashboard and click the "*Deliveries*" button; submitted applications will appear as "*sent deliveries*.") **The selection committee will not review or read any of your submitted materials until October 3rd.**

Deadlines

- Application materials submitted through Interfolio (by applicant): **Friday, October 2, 2026.**
- Notifications from IRH: **Mid-January 2027.**

Inquiries

- For substantive questions about projects and proposals, contact Susan Ridgely, IRH Interim Director for 2026-27 (susan.ridgely@wisc.edu).
- For all other questions about this fellowship and the application process, contact Katie Apsey, IRH Associate Director (apsey@wisc.edu; 608-262-3855).
- For help using Interfolio, please contact Interfolio's help desk (help@interfolio.com; 877-997-8807).