

# Predocutorial Fellow FAQs

Spring 2025 RECRUITING ROUND

**1. Is the Predocutorial 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. Writing samples should demonstrate an applicant's ability to think through the issues for a given research question. Although you may submit co-authored papers, optimal writing samples are those in which you have made majority contributions and where your unique contributions are clear. The writing sample does not need to be a published paper.

**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, methods, statistics, 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 other fields, including math, statistics, programming, computer science, and sociology, even with less (though not zero) experience in economics, are 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 predocutorial fellows to begin the following summer. The Predocutorial Fellowship typically begins in July and 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 Predocutorial 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 [hire@opportunityinsights.org](mailto:hire@opportunityinsights.org) with the subject line "Request for Expedited Review - Predocutorial

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 to demonstrate their skills in quantitative analysis and programming. Applicants moving forward in the process will receive an invitation to complete the data task. Data task invites will be sent on a rolling basis throughout the hiring process. To ensure flexibility, applicants will be given a week to complete the data task, however, we do not anticipate the task to take more than 5-6 hours to complete.

**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 is 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 people who can attest to your work quality, interests, and research potential. Applicants should not submit recommendation letters; OI will reach out to references for candidates who make it to final stages of the application process.

**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 (e.g., Real Analysis), though Fellows typically audit other more “elective” courses. Although tuition assistance is a benefit to Fellows, as the fellowship is a full-time paid position, it is not appropriate for full-time or otherwise enrolled students.

**13. Can I apply in both the Fall and Spring hiring sessions?**

OI typically holds Fall and Spring Predoc Fellowship hiring rounds each academic year. Persons may only apply once during the 2024-2025 academic year. If you applied in Fall 2024 and were not selected, you are not eligible to apply in Spring 2025; you may reapply in the 2025-2026 Academic Year (i.e., Fall 2025 or Spring 2026 hiring rounds). We encourage applicants to apply during the hiring round that they feel ready in and when they believe their application will be most compelling.

**14. Does my transcript need to be my official transcript? And what period should cover?**

You may submit an unofficial transcript. Your transcript should cover the entirety of your coursework to date (both undergraduate and, if relevant, graduate).

**15. How can I learn more about Opportunity Insights and the Predoctoral Fellowship program?**

On **Thursday, January 23, 2025, at 2:00 pm ET**, we will host a virtual information session (via Zoom) to provide more information on OI’s Predoctoral Fellowship program and answer potential candidates’ questions. After the webinar, participants can join breakout rooms at 3:00 pm ET for informal Q&A with current predoctoral fellows. To register for this session, please visit OI’s [Join Our Teams](#) page. More information about Opportunity Insights generally, including links to research papers, datasets, and media coverage can be found at [www.opportunityinsights.org](http://www.opportunityinsights.org).

**16. If I still have questions, who should I contact?**

Please email your questions to [hiring@opportunityinsights.org](mailto:hiring@opportunityinsights.org).