

Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies

Student Grants: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

Q: Can I get funding to travel to China/Taiwan?

A: Potentially, if there is an academic purpose to your travel. You are welcome to apply for a Fairbank Center Grant if your proposed research project or language study program is related to the study of China, Taiwan, Greater China or the Chinese diaspora.

Q: Do I have to be an East Asian Studies concentrator or graduate student to apply?

A: Applications are welcomed from students in any field or graduate school/program at Harvard. However your proposed project must be for the purpose of advancing academic work in Chinese studies. Since funding is limited, priority may be given to thesis/dissertation projects in East Asian Studies.

Q: I want to improve my language skills, but programs are expensive. How can I get funding?

A: First identify the language program that suits your level and apply for it separately. Then apply for a Fairbank Center grant for funding towards the program fee and essential travel costs. Be prepared to cover personal costs and meals yourself. Update the Fairbank Center on the status of your admission to the language program.

Q: Does the language program have to be in China/Taiwan?

A: While priority may be given to students needing to travel for immersive language study, we can consider applications to participate in an accredited US-based language program. Please note that we cannot fund private language tutoring.

Q: Does my research have to take place in China or Taiwan?

A: No, we will consider proposals for China-related research in other locations that have the sources you need. Be sure to explain why the proposed destination is important for your project. Please note that Fairbank Center grants are not intended for rent or other living expenses while doing research here on campus.

Q: Can I apply for both a language grant and a research grant?

A: No, students can apply to the Fairbank Center for *either* a Summer Language Grant *or* a Summer Research Grant for the same time period. Please decide your main priority for the summer and apply for the appropriate type of grant.

Q: What does a grant application involve?

A: In addition to your information, resume/CV and transcript, the grant application requires a well-written proposal, a detailed itemized budget, and a recommendation letter from a faculty member endorsing your project. Allow plenty of time to prepare a strong application.

Q: How long should the proposal be?

A: Two to three pages, double spaced. Your proposal or “statement of purpose” is a description of your project for which you are requesting funding. It should state clearly what you intend to study and where, why the project/program is important, and how it fits with your academic goals and degree requirements. Include details about your research project including specific objectives and research methods, or the experts you plan to meet. Include an itinerary of your proposed travel with dates and destinations.

Q: What can I include in the budget?

A: Your proposed budget should provide a detailed breakdown of anticipated costs of essential expenses, based on realistic cost estimates. Research the current costs of flights (economy class) and train/bus for in-country travel and include the from/to cities and average fare in your itemized travel budget. Research the most economical accommodation options for each city and calculate housing costs based on the number of nights. You may budget a reasonable per diem for basic meals, but be prepared to cover food and personal costs yourself. If there is a program fee please clarify what is included in the fee. Additional academic-related costs may be included in your budget, such as museum/archive/library entrance fees or essential materials. Please check that the total amount you are requesting is backed up by your itemized estimates.

Please note: Grant funds cannot be used to pay other individuals such as research assistants, language tutors, or interview/survey participants.

Q: When is the recommendation letter due? What if my professor needs more time?

A: Discuss your plans with your academic advisor well in advance and ask for a recommendation letter several weeks ahead of the deadline. When you submit your application, CARAT will automatically send an email to your recommender requesting they upload their letter. The sooner you submit your application, the more time your recommender will have. CARAT will accept letters from faculty for up to a week after the posted application deadline. If your professor needs additional time, they can email the Fairbank Center.

Q: What percentage of grant applications are successful?

A: This varies for each grant type and cycle. Only the strongest grant applications are selected for funding. Summer grants are generally the most competitive as we receive many more applications than we are able to fund. Successful applications will have a clear plan for research or study that is endorsed as necessary by a faculty advisor or recommender.

Q: Can I apply for grants from other Centers or from my department as well?

A: Yes, students can apply for other Harvard sources of grant funding for which they and their proposed project are eligible. We liaise with other Harvard centers and funding offices to try to support as many students as possible while avoiding overlaps. To be considered for co-funding, you must specify in your application which other grant sources you are applying for.

Q: Can I accept more than one grant?

A: No, not for the same project during the same time period, unless co-funding has been specifically approved by both funding sources. You are required to inform us if you have received other funding for

the same project or time period. Undergraduates should refer to the [Summer Funding Policy](#). The only exception is that undergraduate students may receive funding for senior thesis research in addition to another funded summer experience as long as the dates do not overlap.

If you have a question not addressed in these FAQs, please email harrietwong@fas.harvard.edu