



application guide

open society internship for rights and governance

2019

OPEN SOCIETY INTERNSHIP FOR RIGHTS AND GOVERNANCE
APPLICATION GUIDE
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PROGRAM BACKGROUND

About the Open Society Foundations

The Open Society Foundations (OSF) work to build vibrant and tolerant democracies whose governments are accountable to their citizens. To achieve this mission, the Foundations seek to shape public policies that assure greater fairness in political, legal, and economic systems, and safeguard fundamental rights. On a local level, the Foundations implement a range of initiatives to advance justice, education, public health, and independent media. The Foundations work to build alliances across borders and continents on issues such as corruption and freedom of information. In addition, the Foundations place a high priority on protecting and improving the lives of marginalized people and their communities.

What is an “open society”?

The concept of “open society,” first popularized by the philosopher Karl Popper in his 1945 book *Open Society and Its Enemies*, is based on the recognition that all societal constructs are fallible and thus merit constant amendment. An open society is generally characterized by a respect for human rights, a reliance on the rule of law, the existence of a democratically elected government, a diverse and vigorous civil society, and respect for minorities and minority opinions.

About the Open Society Internship for Rights and Governance program

Individuals committed to advancing human rights, democratic governance and justice constantly confront new and unforeseen challenges. Today, authoritarian and illiberal push-backs, entrenched inequality, the accumulation of power by transnational corporations beyond the reach of national legislation, technological innovations, as well as other developments, require us to not only question common assumptions, but also to identify new opportunities. To protect and advance human rights, democracy, as well as justice, we need fresh ideas for civil society actors and creative policy proposals for governments.

The Open Society Internship for Rights and Governance (OSIRG) is specifically tailored to invest in promising individuals who are poised to foster and sustain open societies. We train them to contribute to a more strategic, impactful human rights practice.

OSIRG combines practice, in the form of an internship, with a skills-oriented two-week seminar, to help prepare grantees for their future work. The program takes a broad definition of human rights and governance inclusive of promoting fundamental freedoms, expanding public access to information, challenging inequalities through development and rights, and advancing approaches that ensure transparency and accountability of state institutions.

In 2019, master’s candidates from the following universities will be eligible to participate in OSIRG:

American University of Beirut, Faculty of Arts & Sciences

Beirut, Lebanon

Birzeit University Muwatit Institute for Democracy and Human Rights

West Bank, Palestine

Harvard Kennedy School of Government

Massachusetts, United States of America

Makerere University, Master of Arts in Human Rights

Kampala, Uganda

Makerere University School of Law

Kampala, Uganda

School of Public Policy at Central European University
Budapest, Hungary

Sciences Po Paris School of International Affairs
Paris, France

The University of Chicago, Harris School of Public Policy
Illinois, United States of America

University of the Andes Alberto Lleras Camargo School of Government
Bogota, Colombia

University of the Andes Masters in International Law
Bogota, Colombia

The University of Hong Kong Faculty of Law
Pok Fu Lam, Hong Kong

The University of Hong Kong Journalism and Media Studies Centre
Pok Fu Lam, Hong Kong

University of Toronto Munk School of Global Affairs
Toronto, Canada

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

OSIRG allows grantees to immerse themselves in the ideas and practice of open society by participating in an intensive clinical seminar hosted by the Global Public Policy Institute (GPPi) in Berlin, Germany. The seminar is followed by an 8- or 12-week internship at an OSF-selected non-governmental organization, where grantees will complete a project developed by one of OSIRG's partner host institutions. Grantees admitted to the program and their hosts are expected to work in collaboration to further develop and refine the project in the months leading up to the internship.

Clinical Seminar in Berlin

Taught by leading practitioners and professors from universities around the world, grantees will examine both the applied and conceptual practice of public policy in a rigorous course on human rights and governance. The clinical seminar will utilize tailored curricula, informal discussion, and group work to explore themes ranging from civil society and public policy to implementation of international law. In 2019 the seminar will be directed by Katrin Kinzelbach, Associate Director of the Global Public Policy Institute (GPPi) in Berlin and Visiting Professor at the School of Public Policy, Central European University. Cameran Ashraf, Assistant Professor at the School of Public Policy, Central European University, will serve as deputy director.

The Clinical Seminar will take place from **10 June to 23 June 2019**. All grantees participating in OSIRG must be available during these dates without exception.

Internship

Following the seminar, interns will disperse to one of several dozen host institutions around the world. OSIRG partners with leading international non-governmental organizations as well as innovative, local and regional organizations. The internship experience provides an opportunity to put the skills and theories developed during the clinical seminar into practice. It is a chance for grantees to build connections with key players in the field, and challenge their notions of what constitutes effective human rights practice.

Grantee and Host Institution Matching

Effectively matching grantees' interests and expertise with the objectives and capacity of OSIRG host institutions is an essential element of the internship program. OSIRG staff will create matches based on the following criteria:

- **Application form essays:** The issues and topics described in essays A, B, and C of the application form. See page 6 of this guide for more information.
- **Host institution project descriptions:** Each host institution will provide OSIRG staff with a project proposal outlining a focus area and activities that they would like an intern to undertake during the course of the internship term.

OSIRG staff will make a good faith effort to provide up to **three options** for the internship placement. If an applicant refuses all three options, OSIRG is not obligated to provide additional options, and can withdraw the offer to participate in the program.

Mentorship

As part of the internship, one or more staff members at the host institution will be responsible for overseeing the grantee and the development and execution of their project. During the months prior to the start of the clinical seminar, hosts will assist grantees in preparing for their project. It is the responsibility of each individual, however, to maintain communication with their mentor(s).

Cost and compensation

The OSIRG program is fully funded. The cost of grantee travel and accommodations during the clinical seminar and internship period will be covered by OSF. The grantee will receive a stipend to cover both the seminar and internship. The stipend is comprehensive and will include a per diem as well as visa costs, travel insurance, and currency conversion fees. OSF will not be responsible for any costs that exceed the allocated stipend.

APPLICATION

OSIRG uses the *Grantee Community Portal*, an intuitive, user-friendly online platform that enables applicants to submit their applications directly to the Open Society Foundations.

Applicants who have limited access to the Internet are encouraged to contact OSIRG staff (osirg@opensocietyfoundations.org) to make alternate arrangements.

Applicants may contact their university's OSIRG point of contact for access to the application link.

Application Structure

The OSIRG application is comprised of eight sections. Applicants do not have to complete their application in one sitting. The Grantee Communities Portal allows applicants to save and return to their applications up until the deadline. You will be unable to edit the application once you have finished submitting. **Please be advised that an application cannot be submitted unless all fields marked with a red bar or asterisk are completed.** The following includes further information on each component of the application:

I. Personal information

All contact information should be current.

II. Emergency contact information

All emergency contact information should be valid until the end of the internship term.

III. Academic history

Applicants are required to provide information about their bachelor's degree and the master's program in which they are currently enrolled. There is also space to provide information about one additional degree or certification.

IV. Professional history

Only information that is **relevant** for the application should be listed in this section. Previous positions, volunteer work, or activities that are unrelated to the project should **not** be included. Applicants will need to provide a comprehensive curriculum vitae or professional résumé in addition to this abbreviated listing.

V. Language skills and additional information

Applicants should only list those languages in which they are **fluent**.

VI. Essays

Applicants are asked to answer all essay questions. Please remember that the response to **Essay B** will assist OSIRG staff in matching accepted candidates and host institutions. **Also note that applications with essays that are longer than the maximum length will not be considered.**

A. Personal Statement

In **500 words maximum**, applicants should write a personal statement discussing their interests, life experiences, goals, and commitment to human rights and governance.

B. Statement of Interest in Human Rights and Governance

In **1,000 words maximum**, applicants should describe a policy area, related to the field of human rights and/or governance, where they believe some reform can be made to improve the lives of relevant populations. The essay should include a specific illustration of the policy problem, describe potential solutions, and present what actions might be taken to reach the proposed resolutions.

C. Internship Experience Preference

In 200 words maximum, please describe your top priority for this internship experience and why from the following options: **a)** exposure to a specific geography or region (i.e.

France, South East Asia) **b)** experience working on a specific thematic area (i.e. migration policy, LGBTQ+ rights) **c)** experience working in a specific professional environment (i.e. large international NGO, small grassroots organization)

VII. Required attachments

Applicants are required to attach a print-quality (300 dpi or higher) passport-sized photo or headshot of themselves, as well as a copy of their passport identification pages.

VIII. Signature

In order to complete the application, applicants must certify that all information provided is true to the best of their knowledge.

SELECTION

Applicants applying for the 2019 internship will be subject to two phases of selection. These include:

Phase 1: University nomination

Each university is required to rank and submit applications from up to **eight** candidates to OSIRG. Universities are encouraged to consider not only students' academic abilities but also their potential for success and their compatibility with the program's goal to support emerging human rights practitioners and civil society professionals.

Phase 2: OSF selection

Following the submission of nominated applications, a selection committee composed of OSF staff and OSIRG alumni will review each submission. The committee will then interview selected applicants beginning winter 2019. It is important to note that applicants who are granted interviews are not guaranteed admission to the program, as the selection process is highly competitive. The program will announce finalists on a rolling basis. **As per OSF policy, finalists are only considered OSF grantees upon countersignature of their grant agreement. For more information on this policy, please contact OSIRG staff.**

Selection criteria

The criteria listed below will guide the selection process. All criteria will be weighed equally during the review of applications.

- Applicant demonstrates strong interest in human rights and governance.
- Applicant demonstrates professional and academic achievement and potential.
- Applicant demonstrates a strong commitment to pursuing a career that advances human rights and/or good governance.
- Applicant demonstrates the ability to work effectively with others while maintaining a professional demeanor.
- Applicant demonstrates the ability to work in a multicultural environment.

Timeline

Please contact your university's OSIRG point of contact for a brief outline of the selection process timeline. A more comprehensive program timeline will be provided to accepted applicants once selection is complete.

The Open Society Internship for Rights and Governance is an initiative of the
Open Society Foundations.

NON – DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Open Society Foundations and the Open Society Internship for Rights and Governance do not discriminate based on race, color, religion, gender identity, gender expression, political beliefs, national origin, disability, age, or sexual orientation.

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