



MADISON & LILA SELF GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP

Call for Nominations | Spring 2025

The Madison and Lila Self Graduate Fellowship offers a unique opportunity for students seeking a Ph.D. at the University of Kansas. The Self Graduate Fellowship (SGF) supports outstanding doctoral students in biological and biomedical sciences, business, economics, engineering, mathematics, pharmaceutical sciences, and physical sciences fields. SGF seeks student nominations from 22 eligible departments for those who will begin work on a Ph.D. in the 2025 fall semester and first-year doctoral students who began their Ph.D. during the 2024-2025 academic year. Students who have been enrolled more than one year in a Ph.D. program at the time of nomination are not eligible. Contact the Self Graduate Fellowship staff regarding eligibility questions.

Nominations must be submitted by noon CST on January 29, 2025.

AWARD AND PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Self Graduate Fellows receive a support package that in total exceeds \$200,000. New Self Graduate Fellows for 2025-2026 will receive \$36,000 each year for four years. Payment is through appointment as a graduate research assistant. The fellowship covers tuition, fees, and the employer's share of student health insurance costs. Fellows will also have access to a \$5,500 professional development award over the course of their four years in the program as well as a \$5,000 start-up award (year 1) and a \$1,000 textbook and technology award (year 2,3,4).

The Fellow Development Program is a distinctive feature of the fellowship. It provides general education and training in communication, management, innovation, leadership, and policy to assist Self Graduate Fellows in preparation for future leadership roles, complementing the specialized education and training provided in Ph.D. programs. Fellow Development Program topics include oral and written communication, negotiation, teamwork, advocacy, ethics, leadership, business planning and development, financial management, project management, and more. The topics listed above occur over a four-year sequence.

Program activities include two week-long skill sessions, biweekly luncheons, communication coaching workshops, lectures on public policy topics, poster sessions, an alumni mentor program, a government and science policy seminar in Washington, D.C., and an international seminar. Fellows are expected to participate in the Fellow Development Program for four consecutive years. The time commitment is approximately 80 hours each year, plus preparation and travel time.

ELIGIBILITY

The Self Graduate Fellowship seeks individuals whose academic preparation, vision, and commitment to career goals match the Self Graduate Fellow profile. The donor-written Guidelines direct the SGF Board of Trustees to select an entering cohort with a variety of career goals in the industry, government, medical, or higher education fields.

Fellowship nominees must:

- Be U.S. citizens
- Have been admitted into one of the 22 SGF eligible disciplines
- Received their first bachelor's degree within the last eight years (January 2017-2025)
- Be an incoming or first-year Ph.D. student at the time of nomination

Students invited to interview will be required to submit proof of U.S. citizenship prior to the interview. Acceptable documents are a copy of a birth certificate, a passport, or proof of naturalization.

Self Graduate Fellow profile

Please read this paragraph thoroughly because the success of nominations - both the written portion and the oral interview - depends on the nominee's response to how the nominee fits these attributes.

The ideal candidate possesses unusual motivation, passion, and potential to make significant contributions to their profession and to society. In addition to a strong academic record, the candidate has leadership, communication, and decision-making skills. Should display personal attributes including self-awareness, emotional maturity, initiative, tenacity, energy, vision, risk-taking, and interpersonal effectiveness. The ideal candidate is interested in personal development and lifelong learning and is committed to participation in the Fellow Development Program.

NOMINATION INSTRUCTIONS AND MATERIALS

Please send the "Prospective Fellow Information, Spring 2025" document to your student nominees as soon as they have been identified. This will allow students to begin preparing their nomination materials to be submitted alongside the department nomination. A checklist of the student materials required for nomination can be found on the "Faculty and Staff Resources" tab on the Self Graduate Programs website.

All nomination materials must be sent directly to the academic departments for compilation and final submission. Nomination materials should not be emailed to SGF. SGF nominations are submitted by department staff using the Slate System. Departments may set their own deadlines for requesting student materials.

The nomination file that is submitted by departments includes a letter of nomination from the department chair or other faculty member, the student's graduate school application, academic letters of recommendation, transcripts of all college work (and KU Advising Report for first-year Ph.D. students), application statement to the department, resume or CV, and other supporting

materials from the student's graduate application file. The department must request additional documents specifically for the Self Graduate Fellowship including SGF personal statement, SGF specific resume or CV, signed access/waiver form, and letter(s) of recommendation.

Self Graduate Fellowship Personal Statement

The SGF personal statement is critical to student success in the Self Graduate Fellowship selection process. This is their opportunity to demonstrate how they fit the profile of a Self Graduate Fellow. The statement should be authentic and tell the student's story in their own words. The SGF Personal Statement should be two to three pages long, in 12-point font, and double-spaced. Students must address the following points:

- The academic and professional choices you have made to date and why
- Career goals, both short-term and long-term, and specification of intended career field (industry, government, medical, higher education)
- How you envision yourself in a leadership role expanding human knowledge, contributing to your profession, and benefiting society as a whole
- How you match the Self Graduate Fellow profile (see below)

Self Graduate Fellow Profile

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Student Resume or CV

All nominees must submit an updated resume. This should be distinguished from a traditional academic vita, as this document should highlight a variety of leadership experiences and significant achievements from work, school, volunteer projects, and extracurricular activities. Include awards, honors, memberships, positions held, and research experience.

Letter of Recommendation

Students are required to include one SGF specific letter of recommendation in their nomination. This provides additional materials for reviewers to refer when determining student fit to profile. It also provides students with the option to include letter writers who may not traditionally be included in graduate admissions but can offer information on SGF attributes and program fit.

The person being asked to write the letter may be given the following:

Outstanding Ph.D. students may be nominated for the prestigious Madison and Lila Self Graduate Fellowship at the University of Kansas. Please describe this individual's motivation, passion, and potential to make significant contributions to their profession and to society. A successful nominee will have strong record of leadership and decision-making

skills. They will display personal attributes that include self-awareness, emotional maturity, initiative, tenacity, energy, vision, risk-taking, and interpersonal effectiveness.

Departments may also choose to add a similar statement on their own application forms.

Access/Waiver Form

A completed access/waiver form from the student is required. A form submitted to the department via your email address will be accepted in lieu of a signed hard copy. The access/waiver form is the last page of the “Prospective Fellow Information” document on the Self Graduate Programs website, located in the resource block.

Final Nomination Submission

All files will be submitted electronically through the Slate System. The nomination file must accurately reflect the student’s fit for the Self Graduate Fellowship and alignment with the fellowship mission.

TIMELINE

January

- Ensure department admission decisions are submitted to KU Graduate Admissions 1-2 weeks prior to SGF nomination deadline so that the Letter of Admission is uploaded to Slate.
- **Nominations are due by noon CST on January 29, 2025.** Nominations will be submitted electronically through the Slate System by the nominating department. Nomination files are reviewed by a team of faculty members and SGF staff.

February

- The SGF Board of Trustees reviews recommendations from the evaluation team and will decide who to invite for an interview
- Students selected for interviews will receive invitations via email by mid-February
- **February 21, 24-28, 2025: On-campus interviews are conducted**
- If invited to an on-campus interview for the SGF, the interviewee’s travel to Lawrence and two nights of lodging expenses will be paid. The interviewee will be hosted by their academic department. The SGF interview will be one hour and conducted by a team of faculty interviewers

March

- Mid-March, Self Graduate Fellowship extends Self Graduate Fellowship offers. Candidates will be notified by email

April

- The deadline for student acceptance of offers is **April 15, 2025**. Students are strongly encouraged to notify SGF and departments of their decision as soon as possible as this may affect other student offers. Departments should maintain communication and regularly update SGF with nominee information or decisions collected within the department.