

## Tips on Tracking Down Money and “Expertise” at Tufts and Beyond

The 4 “F’s” of a Research Project are key to tracking down money and expertise.

1. **F**aculty Contacts/Mentors
2. **F**inancing Your Project
3. **F**ellowship and Thesis Applications
4. **F**ulfilling Requirements

### 1. Faculty Contacts/Mentors

1. As with the research process, the earlier you begin developing relationships with faculty the better off you'll be when it comes time to do research.
2. If you're planning on going abroad, it's best to connect with faculty before you go because while you're abroad, and when you get back, you'll need a core "mentor/advisor" to help you with your research.
3. How you approach faculty matters. Go as well prepared as you can. Know what you want to do (or at least have a clearly devised plan). Know faculty expertise.... Do some background research on the professor. Demonstrate a link to the faculty member between their expertise and your research interests.
4. How you email faculty matters too. Be sure that your sender identification (the name associated with your email account), subject line, and the body of your email are clear, correct, and purposeful.
5. While we strongly recommended that the first meeting take place face-to-face, this might not be possible if you are abroad. If you have to email a professor, make sure that you briefly articulate who you are, where you are, and why you are writing. In 2-3 sentences briefly explain your research topic and governing question, your preparation to undertake the research project (language proficiency, courses taken, previous papers or experience with the topic), the type of project you plan to complete, and what type of advice or support you are seeking from the faculty member.
6. Ask faculty you know to help facilitate the first meeting, including email contact. Another professor can contact with other faculty to help you get connected.
7. Be prepared for your meetings!
  - a. Formulate your research question(s) or 2-3 sentences that describe your research quickly and concisely to faculty.
  - b. Prepare a one-page prospectus (link to information on preparing a prospectus/précis)

*\* The same rules apply to contact abroad and faculty at other universities (call their staff to make an appointment).*

*\* It is not always the case that a professor or researcher at Tufts is working on your topic. You might need to readjust your topic to match the available expertise on campus.*

## 2. Financing Your Project

a. Start planning as early as possible for grants and scholarships. Keep in mind that deadlines often occur in the fall semester for the proceeding year. Figuring out your research plan (review the other tip sheets) early on will help you better prepare when the time comes for scholarships and grants.

b. Many resources exist at Tufts and beyond for funding opportunities.

i. Visit the IRLC to access materials and resources on seeking grants and scholarships and writing application proposals. <http://jupiter.tccs.tufts.edu/ir>

Helpful resources include:

[Grant Seeking and Proposal Writing Tips](#)

[Guidelines for Fulbright Applications](#)

[IR Research Scholars Program Tutorial](#)

ii. Visit the Dean of Undergraduate Education's web site to learn about national and international scholarships and awards administered by the Dean. For some opportunities, Tufts' deadlines are earlier than those set by the foundations. Check with the Dean to learn about the application procedures and deadlines. <http://ase.tufts.edu/deancoll/>

iii. Look into research opportunities available at Tufts. Conducting research, in collaboration with a faculty mentor, will not only help you prepare for a senior thesis or other capstone research project, it can also help prepare you for life after college. The IR Program and the University offer financially-supported opportunities for students to conduct substantive research with faculty mentors:

[The IR Research Scholars Program](#)

Sponsored by the IR Program, the program offers IR faculty-mentored summer research for IR juniors (rising seniors) planning to write a senior thesis or other capstone research project on an international topic.

[The Summer Scholars Program](#)

University-wide initiative that offers research apprenticeships with faculty/clinical mentors to motivated Tufts undergraduates.

## 3. Fellowships and Thesis Applications

Once you find a potential funding opportunity, the question becomes: How do I apply successfully?

No matter what type of application – for a small grant, a Fulbright or a senior thesis proposal, the receiving party will want to know...

1. What is your research question?
2. What specifically do you want to investigate?
  - a. You need a specific research question to propose.
3. Have you done the coursework to prepare for this project?
  - a. Carefully plan your coursework. For example, a senior thesis or other capstone experience is based on building blocks and previous experience and preparation.
4. Have you evaluated the scholarly literature?
  - a. Can you briefly mention the major works that address your research question?
5. What methodology do you propose to employ?
  - a. Exactly how are you going to study this research question?  
Examples: collect statistics, conduct interviews

The Academic Resource Center (ARC) offers support services and resources for student writing, including senior theses. Check out the available resources on the IRLC under “Senior Thesis Support Resources” and visit the ARC in Dowling Hall. <http://ase.tufts.edu/arc/>

Other university writing centers offer helpful tip sheets and online resources. Useful ones include:

[The Writing Center at University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill](#)

[The Online Writing Lab \(OWL\) at Purdue University](#)

*Tip: Do not get overly consumed in “how-to’s” and “writing guides.” Use them as a starting point. Speaking to informed individuals with expertise on the specific scholarships or applications is extremely helpful!*

#### 4. Fulfilling the Requirements

It is important to know ahead of time the procedures and requirements for the type of research project you plan to undertake – whether it is a senior thesis, a directed research project, a Fulbright proposal, a research scholars program, a scholarship or award, etc.

Example: Senior Thesis

- Prepare by the end of the junior year.
- Requirements vary by department so do some research (ask questions, visit web sites, go to the IRLC)
- Most departments, if not all, require a short description of the research project– a statement of preparation (see above for detailed explanation).

- Line up your thesis committee as early as possible – you will need a principle advisor and 2 other readers (for IR, one of these has to be faculty outside of IR).