

# A Competitive Funding Time-line

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## PRELIMINARIES: RESEARCH

Due Date  
is in

**Have a passion for research and inquiry! If you are already funded through your department, you are probably an excellent candidate for external funding as a committee has already decided to invest in you as a researcher and teacher. Why apply if you already have funding? Federal and private fellowships are highly prestigious, provide substantial benefits, and independence to aspiring scientists and engineers. Fellows are recognized long after their degree is completed (increased job opportunities, leadership, security, and salary).**

18 months

**Schedule meetings** with Dr. Jodi Lehman ([jglehman@mtu.edu](mailto:jglehman@mtu.edu)) and your advisor to begin to discuss applying for funding. You will need full support from your advisor (letter of recommendation).

**Think about your graduate work so far and your goals.** Are you cultivating the skills and expertise you need to do your dissertation work? Does your c.v. and transcript reveal you are becoming an expert in your field and that you apply that expertise in ways that benefit/educate/motivate a broader audience? Have you published and presented? Has industry invested in your research? If you answer no to any of these questions, now is the time to strategically build your c.v. and work towards a competitive profile for external funding.

17 months

**Research funding options.** Begin to understand funding opportunities (<http://www.mtu.edu/gradschool/admissions/financial/>) and funders: why they exist and what they are looking for (<http://www.mtu.edu/research/administration/sponsored-programs/enhancement/>). Talk to students who have been funded by the funding agency of interest – Dr. Lehman can provide a list of fellows who are willing to talk with future applicants. Ask to see past applicants' proposal essays.

16 months

**Begin to cultivate your research network.** Set up a time to meet with your advisor to discuss applying for external funding and connect this with your degree plan. What do you need to do to be eligible to apply for funding and to have a well-conceived project in time for the application? Develop with your advisor a detailed work plan for the next three years (this will be a required part of your external funding application). Explore what other faculty in your discipline and outside of your discipline are doing – many have graduate lines written into their own grant proposals. Read the Research Magazine (<http://www.mtu.edu/research/>), Tech News (<http://www.mtu.edu/news/>), subscribe to Tech Today (<http://www.admin.mtu.edu/urel/ttoday/>). Establish relationships across campus (<http://www.mtu.edu/d80/>) and in the community (<http://wupcenter.mtu.edu/index.html>). Become civic-minded.

15 months **Assess what you will need to do to do the proposed project** and develop a plan for putting these resources in place in time for your funding applications (<http://www.mtu.edu/research/administration/vpr-office/centers-institutes/>).

14 months **Build your research profile and begin preliminary work.** Use COS (<http://www.cos.org/>) as a template and benchmark. Register and familiarize yourself with FastLane (<https://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/index.jsp>) or grants.gov ([http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get\\_registered.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp)).

Are there any small or preliminary research grants that you can apply for in the near future to support a pilot study and help you begin to build a good funding track record.

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## NETWORKING AND PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

13 months **Speak with the program officers** to learn about the funding programs you are interested in. Learn as much as you can about the application and review process by asking the program officer a series of questions such as:

- What are the goals of this funding program?
- How competitive is this program?
- What percentage of applications are funded?
- What are you looking for in a competitive application?
- What is your review process like?
- Will an expert in my field review the proposal?
- When will you notify applicants of the results?
- If I win a grant or fellowship, how soon can I use the money?
- May I hold more than one grant or fellowship with your award?

12 months **Meet with Dr. Jodi Lehman ([jglehman@mtu.edu](mailto:jglehman@mtu.edu))**

11 months **Meet with your advisor.** Are you making good and timely progress through your degree requirements? How is your research project developing? Are you building your research network and skills to do your project? Are you encountering any problems? What will your problem-solving solutions be? Is there any need to re-adjust the course at this point.

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## PREPARING APPLICATION

6 months **Begin to write a draft of the proposal.** You should be able to begin to answer the question of why your research is important or novel, how it will be in a conversation with the literature of your field and why your work is significant (<http://www.mtu.edu/research/administration/sponsored-programs/enhancement/proposal-development/>).

5 months **Continue to work on a draft of your proposal, seek feedback** from your advisor, mentor, Dr. Lehman and other colleagues and graduate students. Your research methods should be formulated and clear. Note you are allowed to change both your method and research focus if funded. The goal is to demonstrate you can organize and carry out a valid research plan.

4 months	<p><b>Attend workshops</b> sponsored by Sponsored Program Enhancement (<a href="http://www.mtu.edu/gradschool/administration/academics/resources/">http://www.mtu.edu/gradschool/administration/academics/resources/</a>).</p> <p><b>If your application requires a c.v. or personal statement, begin to draft the document</b>, keeping in mind the funder's goals and their profile of a successful applicant. Remember that it is important to <i>show</i> and not <i>tell</i>. <b>Identify three people who know you well as a researcher to write a letter of recommendation:</b> Inquire if the people you identify are GOOD recommendation writers. Ask if they will write a letter for you <i>at least 4 weeks before they are due</i>. Provide writers your cv, information about the funding opportunity with important parts you would like them to address highlighted. Ask if they know you well enough to write a GOOD letter of recommendation. Provide all the information they will need to submit the letter. Follow-up to make sure they did submit the letter if receipt is confirmed (i.e. Fastlane or Grants.gov will send confirmation).</p>
3 months	<p>Continue to work on a draft- seek feedback, review, and revise. Attend workshops. If your proposal requires one, <b>begin to work on your budget</b> (<a href="http://www.mtu.edu/research/administration/sponsored-programs/office/proposal-preparation/develop-budget/">http://www.mtu.edu/research/administration/sponsored-programs/office/proposal-preparation/develop-budget/</a>). Keep in mind your essays should corroborate with your budget projections.</p>
2 months	<p>Continue to work on a draft of your proposal, c.v. and/or personal statement and budget. Seek feedback from your advisor, mentor, Dr. Lehman, and other colleagues and graduate students. <b>Examine the application forms</b> and determine what needs to be completed and how the application should be processed. Is it an on-line application? Do you need any special software or technology to process the application? Will the application be submitted by the university or you? If the application will be submitted by the university contact.</p>
Due Date:	<p><b>SUBMIT APPLICATION</b></p> <p>Provide thank you notes (the old fashioned type, not a quick email, text or wall post). You will most likely need other letters, mentoring, and consultations down the road - it will serve you well to show appreciation...plus it makes those who have been helpful smile! More likely than not you will see your thank you the next time you visit their office.</p>