College of Education
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

SPRING AND SUMMER 2027 DISSERTATION COMPLETION FELLOWSHIPS

Dissertation Completion Fellowships are funded by the Graduate School at Michigan State University and are intended to expedite the completion of strong dissertations by providing students additional funding and thus time to dedicate to the completion of their dissertations. The College may provide a small number of additional College-funded DCFs.

Associate Dean Kristine Bowman will host an information session about DCFs on October 12, from 2:00-3:00 pm. Register for the info session.

Eligibility:

- College of Education and PRIME Program doctoral students must be positioned to submit the final versions of their dissertations to the Graduate School within one year of receiving the fellowship (for a Spring 2027 DCF, the dissertation must be submitted by Spring 2028).
- Students must have their "comprehensive exam passed date" entered in Grad Plan by Friday, November 6, 2026 at noon to be eligible for a spring or summer DCF via this competition.
- Traditionally, students have an approved dissertation proposal before applying for a DCF. This is still recommended. However, a DCF can be provisionally awarded to a student who has not yet passed their proposal. If this is the case, such a student must pass their proposal by December 15 to receive a spring DCF or April 1 to receive a summer DCF.
    - The deadlines for proposal defense were new in 2024. Please note we are sharing these deadlines well in advance so that all are aware. If a student is not going to be eligible for a DCF, these deadlines allow them time to make arrangements for other funding. They also allow funds to be disbursed on the timeline required by the Graduate School.
- Students must be writing a solo-authored dissertation, not a collaborative dissertation.
- Students who have already defended their dissertation and are engaged in revisions at this time are *not* eligible for a DCF.
- Students who plan to defend their dissertation in late spring and complete revisions during summer are only eligible for a DCF in spring, *not* a summer DCF. Summer 2021 was the last summer where that practice was permissible.

Terms of award:

- Spring DCF: $9,000 fellowship.
- Summer DCF: $7,000 fellowship.
- Both Spring and Summer fellowships are funded by the Graduate School and disbursed by the College in Spring or Summer semester. The funding differential between Spring and Summer reflects length of time for work.

- Under federal law, a student must be enrolled in at least one credit during the semester they receive the fellowship.[1]
- While receiving a DCF, a student may not hold more than a quarter-time assistantship or other appointment **consisting of more than 10 hours of work/week. Additionally, a student who works full-time, whether at MSU or elsewhere, is welcome to explain how this funding will create additional release time for them from their full-time employment, during which they will focus on their dissertation.**
- A student may receive only one DCF during their time at MSU.
- Students are not simultaneously eligible for a DCF and an SRF.

Submission, selection, and key dates:

- Students submit an application to the College via this link by Friday, October 30, 2026, at noon.
- Departments review and rank the applications; departments submit these rankings to the College by Friday, November 20, 2026, at noon.
- The Office of the Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs selects recipients based on departmental ranking and allocation of fellowships across the College.
- By early December, the Office of the Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs notifies recipients and departments/programs of decisions.
- The College makes the award in Spring or Summer

Application requirements:

1. Executive Summary (1300 word maximum) including:
    - An introduction that orients the work for an audience that is not within your field;
    - Text (main body of the summary) that addresses: How the work builds onto, extends, or challenges existing literature, and how your methodology is the most appropriate for pursuing this line of research
    - A conclusion that explains the potential significance of the work.
2. Draft or approved dissertation proposal. Maximum 7000 words (roughly 25- 30 pages double spaced). The word count excludes frontmatter, appendices, reference lists, and transcripts. A representative section of a longer document is acceptable. The proposal should:
    - Discuss the dissertation research, overall
    - Include a timeline for completion with major benchmarks
3. MSU transcript for all PhD program coursework.
4. Statement from dissertation director required for students in the Counseling, Educational Psychology & Special Education; Educational Administration and Kinesiology departments. (This statement is not required for students in the Teacher Education department or the PRIME program). Maximum 250 words. This statement should:

[1] If a student plans to receive the fellowship during summer semester, the student must be enrolled during summer semester. If a student will not be enrolled during summer, then the fellowship will be initiated in late spring for use during the summer. If and only if issuing the fellowship during the spring would have an adverse impact on the student's financial aid, the College will pay for 1 credit of summer enrollment so that the fellowship may be disbursed during summer.

- Reaffirm (a) the proposal and (b) the timeline for completion
- Summarize the dissertation's strengths

5. Save requirements in one PDF document with the file name: DCF27Prop[Applicant'sLastNameFirstInitial].[2] Exclude your name/identifying information on your dissertation proposal and executive summary.

Selection criteria:

- Please inquire with your department for more information used in ranking decisions.
- The Office of the Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs reviews select applications to confirm their completeness as indicated above in "Application Requirements."
- The Office of the Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs allocates awards roughly proportionally to the number of full-time doctoral students in each department; the Office defers to departments' rankings of nominees within departments.

11.5.26

[2] For example: DCFD27PropBowmanK.pdf.