

Application Procedure

UC San Diego Campus

Human Rights Center Fellowship 2026

Deadline: February 23, 2026

Human Rights Center Fellowship (Grad Students)

The International Institute and Human Rights and Migration Program are pleased to announce the annual competition for student fellowships in partnership with organizations working for human rights. Fellowship is available to students from several UC Campuses. Registered students at UC San Diego, UC Berkeley, Hastings College of Law, UC Santa Cruz, UC Davis, and UC Irvine are eligible, with priority given to graduate students. Prior recipients of Human Rights Center fellowships are not eligible. The amount of the fellowship stipend will be \$8,000.

These awards will enable students to carry out clearly defined international fieldwork, with organizations working on human rights issues related to a student's area of interest. Applicants must plan to spend at least 6-8 weeks full time or its equivalent part-time working with a partner organization to qualify for the fellowship. Because of funding constraints, domestic (US based) cases cannot be considered.

The purpose of the fellowship is to provide students with an opportunity to contribute to the organizations' work while also gaining practical experience that may influence the students' areas of research, academic focus, or career trajectory. Partnerships with both governmental and non-governmental organizations are acceptable, so long as the application enables the proposed human rights work. Multi-disciplinary approaches to human rights fieldwork are welcomed.

The Fellowships

The human rights fellowships are student-initiated. Applicants must identify the organizations they will work with, the human rights issue to be addressed, and the parameters, objectives, goals, and expected outcomes of their proposed fieldwork. Fundamental changes to accepted proposals (e.g., different human rights topic, new partner organization, alternate location) are not permitted.

Human Rights Fellowship benefits and expectations:

- Receive a \$8,000 stipend to support their work.
- Reimbursements for Travel and Accommodations to Berkeley* (3 trips – up to \$1,225)
Attend an orientation at UC Berkeley to prepare for summer fieldwork (Mid April, 2026)
- Submit an informal mid-term report from the field (May-September 2026)
- Attend an informal gathering upon return from the field (Mid September, 2026)
- Present at a formal conference held during the fall semester at UC Berkeley (Mid October, 2026)
- Membership in a lifelong alumni community

A complete application includes:

1. A completed application cover sheet and signed application checklist.
2. A curriculum vitae/resume, indicating all experience (academic studies, fieldwork, volunteer work, and paid work) relevant to the fellowship.

3. Statement of purpose (2–5 pages, doubled-spaced, 12-point font), describing your interest in the award. This section of the application should address the following questions:
 - What human rights issue will be addressed during the fellowship? Does an article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights address the issue and, if not, how do you think the issue relates to human rights? How will your work contribute to the field of human rights scholarship?
 - How will you work with your partner organization to address this issue?
 - How will your fieldwork contribute to the partner organization's ongoing mission/goals?
 - Why are you interested in addressing this issue? Do you have a particular interest/expertise/experience in this area?
 - What are the objectives/goals/expected outcomes of your proposed fieldwork?
 - How will these outcomes be measured or evaluated?
 - How will the fellowship build on your current academic interests?
 - What role will the fellowship play in your long-term career or study plans?
 - Have you spent time in your proposed geographic area and/or working on your proposed topic? If so, outline your previous experience that specifically pertains to your proposed fellowship work. If not, describe how you will prepare yourself for your proposed fellowship work. Address any issues related to fluency in a language other than English.
4. Two letters of recommendation from persons (at least one UC professor, preferably your advisor if you have one) in a position to affirm the value of the fellowship in the context of your academic work and interests. Letters may be addressed to International Institute Director Juan Pablo Pardo-Guerra and Human Rights and Migration Co-Director, Elana Zilberg, and sent directly to iiprogram@ucsd.edu.
5. A letter of support from the partner organization detailing the mission/goals of the organization and how your proposed fieldwork will contribute to its work. This letter should address the following points:
 - Who will be your main point person at the organization?
 - In which ways will you be supporting the organization?
 - In which ways will the organization be supporting you?
 - What are you expected to accomplish during your fellowship?
 - How will the organization benefit from your accomplishments?
6. Applicants are strongly encouraged to meet with Professor Elana Zilberg, ezilberg@ucsd.edu, and Professor Juan Pablo Pardo-Guerra, jpardoguerra@ucsd.edu. Professor Elana Zilberg and Professor Juan Pablo Pardo-Guerra will host one in-person and one zoom information session.
 - In-person Session: **Wednesday 1/14/2026 at 11 a.m.** (Gildred Room LASB4)
 - Zoom Session: **Tuesday 1/20/2026 at 5 p.m.**
 - Register [In-Person](#) – [Zoom Registration](#)
7. For all other questions on the application submission process please contact Fellowship Coordinator Zoe Catz Johnson at iiprogram@ucsd.edu.

Some additional information:

- This information and a set of FAQs can also be found online at: internationalinstitute.ucsd.edu.
- The deadline for applications and all supporting documents is **February 23, 2026**

- Applicants must submit their complete application in PDF format by the deadline through the [application Kualif Form](#). The letters of recommendation must be sent by the deadline directly by the recommenders to iiprogram@ucsd.edu. Incomplete applications will not be considered.
- Applicants will be notified by mid-March 2026.

Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects:

If you intend to use the fellowship grant to conduct research that you will include in your thesis or dissertation, you should consider whether approval from the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS) is necessary. For more information, please speak with your faculty advisor or visit your campus's CPHS website. IRB review can be a very lengthy process. We encourage applicants to start the process as soon as possible.