



Fairbank Center Student Grants - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

Q: Can I get funding to travel to China/Taiwan?

A: Yes, potentially, if there is an academic purpose to your travel. Apply for a Fairbank Center Grant if your proposed research project or language study program is related to the study of China/Greater China/Chinese diaspora.

Q: Do I have to be an East Asian Studies concentrator or EALC graduate student to apply?

A: No, applications are welcome from students in any field or graduate program/school at Harvard.

Q: I want to improve my language skills, but programs are expensive. How can I get funding?

A: First identify the language program that suits your level and apply for it separately. Then apply for a Fairbank Center grant for help towards the program fee and essential travel costs not included in the program fee.

Q: Does the language program have to be in China/Taiwan?

A: No, we can consider applications to participate in an accredited US-based language program, or an online program if there are reasons you cannot travel. Please note that we cannot fund private language tutoring.

Q: Does my research have to take place in China?

A: No, your proposal can be for China-related research in other locations that have the sources you need. Be sure to explain why the proposed destination is important for your project.

Q: I want to spend the summer at Harvard, can I still apply for grant funding?

A: You can apply for a summer grant for a local program or project. However, please note that Fairbank Center grants are not intended to cover rent or other living expenses. Priority will be given to applicants needing to travel to advance their language or research.

Q: Can I apply for more than one grant, if I want to do language study and research next summer?

A: No, students can apply to the Fairbank Center for *either* a Summer Language Grant *or* a Summer Research Grant. Please decide your priority for the summer and apply for the appropriate type of grant.

Q: What does a grant application involve?

A: In addition to your information, resume/CV and transcript, the grant application requires a well-written proposal, a detailed budget, and a recommendation letter from a faculty member. Allow plenty of time to prepare a strong application.

Q: How long should the proposal be?

A: Two to three pages, double spaced. Your proposal or “statement of purpose” is a description of your project for which you are requesting funding. It should state clearly what you intend to study and where, why the project/program is interesting or important, and how it fits with your academic goals. Include details about your research project including specific objectives and research methods. Include an itinerary if proposing to travel to more than one destination.

Q: What do I include in the budget?

A: Your grant application budget should provide a detailed breakdown of anticipated costs of essential expenses, based on realistic cost estimates. Research the current costs of flights (economy class) and show the from/to cities and average fare in your itemized travel budget. Research in-country train/bus fares and itemize expected ground transportation costs between locations. Research the most economical accommodation options for each city and calculate housing costs based on the number of nights. You may include a reasonable per diem for basic meals. If there is a program fee, please clarify what is covered by the fee. Additional academic-related costs may be included, such as museum/library entrance fees or essential academic materials or software. Please check that the total amount you are requesting is backed up by your itemized estimates. Most important, do not pad your budget with inflated estimates – reviewers can tell!

Please note: Grant funds cannot be used to pay other individuals such as research assistants or interview/survey participants. Even if you include compensation or monetary incentives in your budget, these line items will not be funded.

Q: When is the recommendation letter due? What if my professor needs more time?

A: Discuss your plans with your academic advisor well in advance and ask for a recommendation letter several weeks ahead of the deadline. When you submit your application, CARAT will automatically send an email to your recommender(s) requesting they upload their letter. The earlier you submit your application, the more time your letter writer will have. Faculty may contact the Fairbank Center if they need more time.

Q: What percentage of grant applications are successful?

A: This varies for each grant type and cycle. Only the strongest grant applications are selected for funding. Summer grants tend to be the most competitive as we receive many more applications than we can fund.

Q: Can I apply for grants from other Centers or offices as well?

A: Yes, students are encouraged to apply for other Harvard sources of grant funding for which they are eligible. We coordinate with other Harvard centers and funding offices to try to support as many students as possible. To be considered for co-funding, you must state in your application which other grants you are applying for.

Q: Can I accept more than one grant?

A: No, not for the same project or during the same time period, unless co-funding has been specifically approved by both funding sources. Undergraduates should refer to the Harvard College [Summer Funding Policy](#). The only exception allowed by the policy is that undergraduate students may receive funding for senior thesis research in addition to another funded summer experience *as long as the dates do not overlap*.

Q: When will I hear the result of my application?

A: Applications for each grant type and cycle are reviewed by a committee. This can take some time. Please allow several weeks for review. You may be asked to provide additional information if the committee has questions about your proposal or budget.

Q: What if my plans change *after* submitting my application?

A: Please notify us as soon as possible via email to fairbankcenter@fas.harvard.edu explaining the change of plans. You may be asked to submit an updated travel itinerary or budget. If you have decided to accept another opportunity or other funding instead, please write to withdraw your Fairbank Center grant application so that funding will be available to other students who need it.