The d.school
Project Fellowship

Conduct human-scale experiments now to effect systems change in the future

The d.school Project Fellowship is an opportunity to do the hard work of innovation on a project in your domain of expertise. During the fellowship our aim is that you

(i) undertake rigorous exploration through design research (understand users, stakeholders, and systems), and

(ii) begin to execute solutions by piloting real-world interventions (put your work into action).

We are seeking candidates for the fellowship who have a record of remarkable work, and are now looking to innovate in their field by applying design thinking.

Come to the d.school and engage with people for whom you are designing, run human-centered experiments, and synthesize what you learn to develop deep insights that drive your work.

The fellowship is for discovery, intensive experimentation and piloting work; it is not suited for business development or incubation of an existing fully-formed initiative.

The program is a full-time commitment; fellows must not have responsibilities to another job during the fellowship.

Selected fellows will receive a stipend and benefits during the 7-month fellowship. The program requires you to be based full-time at Stanford for four months and then you may work remotely for the next three months, with 2-3 scheduled trips to Stanford during this latter phase of the fellowship.

***There are two area of focus for the 2016-17 Fellowship open call:
Civic Innovation and
K-12 Education Innovation***

We are not accepting applications for projects in other areas at this time.

d.

**HASSO PLATTNER
Institute of Design at Stanford**

THE FELLOWSHIP EXPERIENCE

The fellowship's five major elements:

Bonding with a cohort of mutually-invested fellows;

Development of your design thinking practice;

Experimental and exploratory project work via human engagement (talking to and observing people), synthesis (making sense of your design research) and prototyping (quick experiments to test your ideas and help you learn);

Intensive support and collaboration from design partners, domain experts, and the d.school community; and

Mentorship to develop avenues for your work going forward.

The fellowship schedule:

The fellowship operates in the Fall and Winter quarters of the Stanford University school year. The 2016-2017 Project Fellowship begins September 1, 2016 and ends March 31, 2017.

After an orientation to the d.school and Stanford, and a deep-dive design thinking primer and practice, Fall quarter will be a structured program supporting an experimental phase of your project work. You will work *in collaboration with a design process expert* and be mentored by a domain-specific expert. Cohort building is also a continuous thread throughout the quarter and fellowship. Fall quarter is fully residential at Stanford; there will be in-person programming every week in the Fall.

Winter quarter will be more loosely structured, providing an opportunity to continue to act on the experiments from Fall. Mentorship, collaboration and support will continue. Fellows should work wherever best suits their work in Winter quarter, with 2-3 in-person weeks at the d.school.

WHY DOES THE STANFORD D.SCHOOL HAVE A FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM?

The three big reasons for the fellowship:

We want to support fellows to do the hard work of innovation in their field and advance initiatives that create social change.

We want to spread innovation and design thinking in the world through the fellows; they become the catalysts for innovation in different fields.

We want to advance the field of design thinking by fostering experimentation that shows how a design approach can drive innovation in varied domains.

WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE AND PROJECTS ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

Our fellows:

This program is designed for those interested in designing and advancing innovative solutions to social problems. We are seeking what we call "restless experts" — people with a record of notable work in a domain, now looking to go beyond what they know and innovate new solutions, platforms, initiatives, and ways of working. The solutions can be brought about by the nonprofit sector, philanthropy, government or the private sector, but they are based on deep insights about users and stakeholders and the complex dynamics of systems.

Strong candidates will demonstrate the following:

- Sophisticated knowledge of the sector in which the fellow is trying to bring about a desired change,

- History and commitment to the issue and a proven track record of tackling complex problems,

- Clarity around the questions the fellow is trying to answer and identified avenues for experimentation during the duration of the fellowship,

- Willingness to try new methods, take risks, and question existing assumptions, and

- Ability to make a mean guacamole.

The project stage:

The fellowship is not suited for planning, scaling or business development of an existing fully-formed initiative, nor is it a fit for an applicant with a blank slate.

The program is built for actively exploring to discover the unique opportunities and new insights that drive your work, as well as creating solutions in response to this deep understanding. Thus, the projects that are best suited for the program have a clear intention and direction (not too open) but also will benefit from exploration and discovery work (solutions and approach are not yet too rigidly determined).

The project approach:

The fellowship is designed to push you into both exploration and experimentation. Both are valuable. Exploration: rigorously engage in empathy work (design research) and exploratory prototypes, and allow the insights you gain to alter your path. Experimentation: put your ideas into action, with 'live experiments' affecting real people with the real interventions. Particularly in the first quarter, we will try to keep you out of the middle ("planning"): a space where you are neither learning, nor actualizing your initiative. The typical project will start in exploration and move into experimentation during the fellowship. But it is also possible to start by jumping right into experimentation.
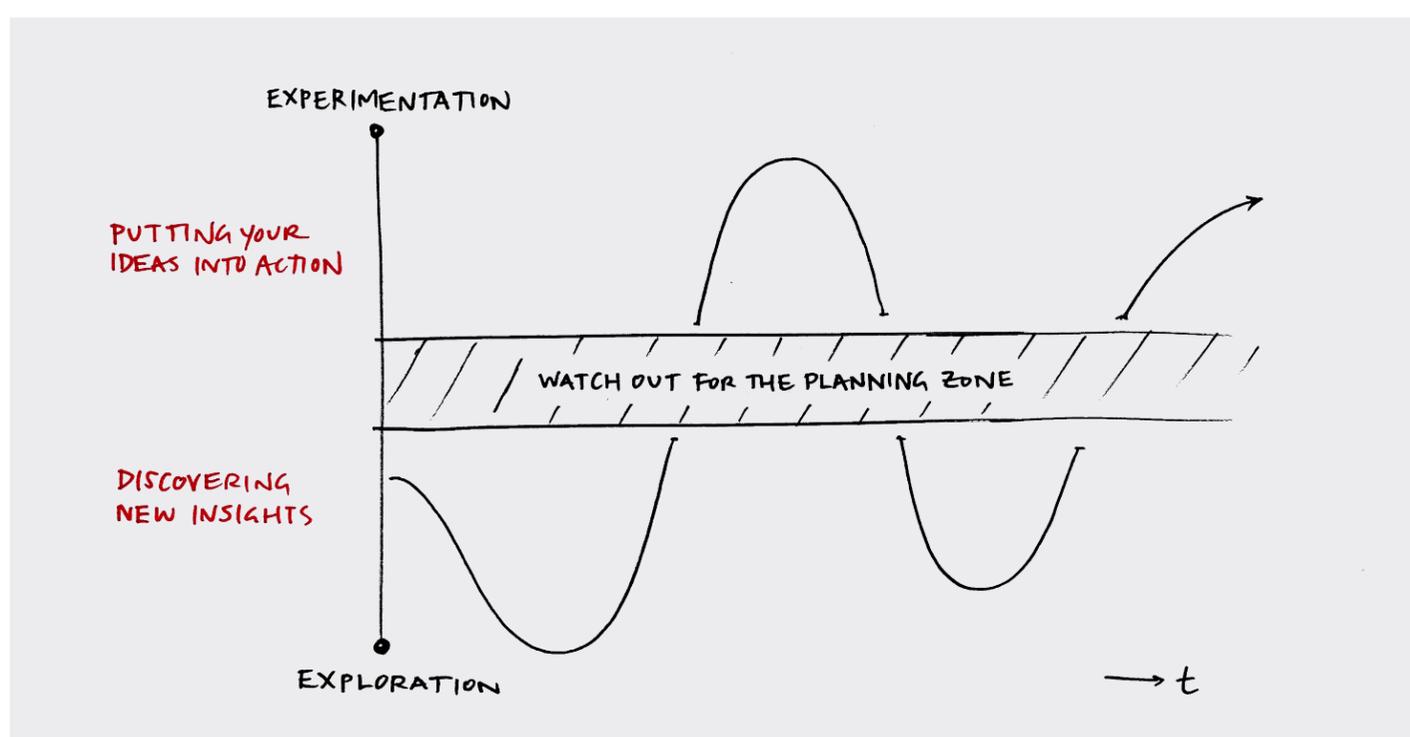
The project domains:

We are creating a cohort divided among fellows focused on civic innovation and education. The two focuses are described below.

Civic Innovation

Civic innovation could include multiple dimensions involving economic development, governance, philanthropy, community building and more.

Innovators can target the way people share, acquire, and produce information, resources and goods. They can explore how organizations, funders and government entities can more effectively increase participation, transparency and collaboration internally and externally.

Innovations can also include how communities create and share goods and knowledge. Innovations can be physical, digital, programmatic or a combination of the three, and are not limited to technical solutions.

We are not prescribing any particular sub-questions within the civic engagement track.

K-12 Education

In 2016-2017 there are several opportunity areas for @K12lab fellows. We seek fellows with edu innovation projects and are particularly interested in folks with a strong equity lens working on design for any of the following:

- Design of #NextGen high schools

- Innovative professional development

- Design thinking challenges and curricula

- Parent engagement beyond the early years

- Ways to use cities as learning ecosystems

If you would like to discuss your project with the @K12lab team, we are offering **office hours on 4/4, 4:30-6pm** at the d.school or via hangout.

HOW TO APPLY

The application has two phases.
You need to complete only the initial application at this time.

The initial application (phase one):

What we need from you now:

1. An up-to-two-minute **video** describing your project and how the Fellowship and design thinking fits into your innovation work.

2. A current **CV**, including two professional references with their titles and relationship to you.

3. An up-to-500-word **story** about who you are and what's led you to our doorstep. Show us your path and demonstrate your experience and passion for your domain of work.

4. An up-to-1000-word **statement** explaining two things:

   a. Your vision for the impact you want to have in the education or civic sector. You should identify a specific opportunity or area of need to will pursue; you may or may not have a 'solution' determined.

   b. The experimental work you will do in the fellowship. Focus on the first three months of fellowship work: Articulate the human-centered empathy work (with whom/where/why to talk to and gain new insight) and experiments (ways to put your ideas to the test in the real system you wish to impact) you would do. (We understand this could change in the next five months.)

Submit your application at dschool.wufoo.com/forms/dschool-project-fellow-application/

THE DEADLINE TO APPLY IS 11:59 pm PST on April 14.

Please title each document your application with your last name and name of the document.
For example, "YOUNG, Story".

Finalists will be chosen by the end of April. All applicants will be notified at that time.

For Finalists (phase two):

If you become a finalist, we will ask you to take on a Challenge Mission designed by us (scoped to take no more than eight hours). This challenge will be useful to your project, regardless of acceptance into the Fellowship. You will have at least three weeks to complete the challenge before the in-person interview day.

We will then hold finalist interviews in May.

We aim to make final decisions in early June 2016.

All the materials submitted in the application will be used solely for the purpose of reviewing the application and will not be used in any other way or shared with other parts of the university.

———

Diversity is a fundamental part of excellence at Stanford. A wide range of opinions, perspectives, and experiences is essential, as a diverse community asks unexpected questions and contributes divergent insights, pushing the forefront of knowledge further and faster. Diversity includes, but is not limited to, categories of culture, socioeconomic background, race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disabilities, religion, and life experience. ***Applicants of all backgrounds are encouraged to apply.***