

2026 IHRP Summer Fellowship Guide

Every summer, the International Human Rights Program (“IHRP”) at the Henry N.R. Jackman Faculty of Law supports students wishing to pursue international human rights law fellowships with organizations around the world. The IHRP has been facilitating summer fellowships for over 35 years and has provided over 500 students the opportunity to work at governmental, non-governmental, and inter-governmental organizations in over 70 different countries. Through IHRP fellowships, students have the opportunity to engage in meaningful social change, which can include participating in human rights research, advocacy, and litigation, often at the grassroots level.

This year, the IHRP will continue supporting students wishing to pursue international human rights law fellowships with organizations globally (and domestically) through two types of IHRP fellowships: student-initiated fellowships (approximately 12-14) and at least one IHRP in-house fellowship position (Toronto). Interested students can apply to either a student-initiated fellowship or an IHRP in-house fellowship, or to both (but must indicate their preference in both applications). This guide provides information to assist you with applying. To learn more about past students’ experiences, check out the fall editions of [Rights Review](#). A list of past summer fellowships can also be found [here](#). This year we are also offering **one** fellowship opportunity with the (UNHCR) in Geneva, Switzerland. For more information on the application process see page 7.

For summer 2026, IHRP summer fellowships are open to all students at the Henry N.R. Jackman Faculty of Law (including J.D., joint degree, LL.M, and S.J.D. students), **as long as students are returning for study in the Fall of 2026**. Graduating 3L, LL.M, and S.J.D. students are ineligible. Fellowships consist of a stipend to cover fellowship expenses. Due to funding constraints, however, the allocation of opportunities is weighted in favor of J.D. applicants who are receiving government (federal and/or provincial) financial aid (including US Stafford or Perkins loans). **Restrictions may also apply to non-Canadian citizens / permanent residents due to funding constraints.** The aim is to grant students \$14,000 CAD for full-time placements (minimum three months in length).

All travel destinations are subject to approval by Safety Abroad. Although exceptions are sometimes made in rare instances, **the University does not normally approve student travel to locations with “Avoid Non-Essential Travel” or “Avoid All Travel” Travel Advisories, as defined by Global Affairs Canada (GAC).** Before applying, please check the [GAC Travel Advisory](#) for your destination.

To apply, you must complete your application(s) on [UTLC](#). **The deadline for in-house fellowship applications is February 6, 2026, at 12:00pm. The deadline for student-initiated fellowship applications is February 13, 2026, at 12:00pm.** Please see Section III below for more details on application requirements as they relate to student-initiated and in-house fellowships.

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I. Information Sessions and Application Deadlines

November 12, 2025 12:30 – 2:00 p.m.	General Law School Student Employment Program (LSSEP) Information Session
January 21, 2026 12:30 – 2:00 p.m.	LSSEP Employer Panel (advice on cover letters, resumes and interviews)
February 6, 2026 12:00 p.m.	IHRP Summer In-House Fellowship Application Deadline Applications should be submitted through UTLC
February 13, 2026 12:00 p.m.	IHRP Student-Initiated Fellowship Application Deadline Applications should be submitted through UTLC
February 17, 2026, at 5:00 pm	IHRP Interview Offers Extended to Students (for IHRP in-house fellowship position(s) only)
February 20, 2026, 9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.	Students Make Interview Selections
February 25 to March 5, 2026	IHRP Interviews (for IHRP in-house fellowship position(s) only)
March 6, 2026 9:30 a.m. (Note: date may be updated depending on international travel permissions)	IHRP Summer Student-Initiated Fellowship Approval Date; and IHRP In-house Fellowship(s) Offer Date Successful students will be notified by email

II. Introduction to the IHRP Fellowship Program

A. Substance

The IHRP fellowship program is meant to support international human rights law related experiences. The host organization may be based in Canada or abroad.

Please note all travel destinations are subject to approval by Safety Abroad. Although exceptions are sometimes made in rare instances, the University does not normally approve student travel to locations with “Avoid Non-Essential Travel” or “Avoid All Travel” Travel Advisories as defined by [Global Affairs Canada \(GAC\)](#). Before applying, please check the [GAC Travel Advisory](#) for your destination.

B. Eligibility

For summer 2026, IHRP summer fellowships are open to all students at the Henry N.R. Jackman Faculty of Law (including J.D., joint degree, LL.M, and S.J.D. students), **as long as students are returning for study in the Fall of 2026**. Graduating 3L, LL.M, and S.J.D. students are ineligible. Fellowships consist of a stipend to cover fellowship expenses. Due to funding constraints, however, the allocation of opportunities is weighted in favor of J.D. applicants who are receiving government (federal and/or provincial) financial aid (including US Stafford or Perkins loans). **Restrictions may also apply to non-Canadian citizens / permanent residents due to funding constraints**. In addition, students are eligible to apply to an IHRP fellowship if they have already undergone one in the past, but preference will be given to applicants who have not previously had an IHRP fellowship opportunity.

C. Process

Students must meet all deadlines and requirements associated with applying to become an IHRP summer fellow. Completed applications must be submitted electronically through [UTLC](#). **The deadline for in-house fellowship applications is February 6, 2026, at 12:00pm. The deadline for student-initiated fellowship applications is February 13, 2026, at 12:00pm.** Further details regarding the IHRP application process are set out in Section III below.

Note – for student-initiated fellowships, students without an offer letter by February 13, 2026 may still apply, but they must include the relevant communications with the proposed organization up to that date and note when they anticipate receiving an offer letter (this must be by March 5, 2026 at 9:30a.m., the day before the IHRP Fellowship Offer Date).

D. Selection of Fellows

Applications are considered by the IHRP and assessed based on merit and in accord with the priorities and constraints outlined in Eligibility Section II (b) above.

In assessing proposed student-initiated fellowships, the IHRP considers the following aspects in particular: the host organization, the proposal, the student's strengths and interests, and the student's professionalism in all dealings related to the application process. The IHRP supports fellowships that allow students to gain valuable experiences working in the field of international human rights law, and that contribute to the important work of organizations working in this field.

E. Duration of Fellowship

IHRP fellowships vary in duration, depending on the student's availability, commitments, and funding. Typically, host organizations require fellowships to last a minimum of 12-16 weeks to allow adequate time for fellows to contribute to the organization's work following initial training. The IHRP strongly encourages proposed opportunities that are a minimum of 3 months in duration.

F. Funding

IHRP fellowship funding consists of a stipend to cover fellowship-related expenses. The IHRP fellowship stipend amount is based upon the number of applications and available funding. The aim is to grant students \$14,000 CAD for full-time placements (minimum three months in length). The IHRP will give preference to proposed fellowship opportunities that are unpaid. However, the IHRP will consider applications for paid fellowships where the amount offered by the host organization is less than the CAD equivalent of the IHRP's stipend amount offered. In that case, for successful applications, we will provide a supplementary amount on top of the organization's offer to match the total funding amount that would have been provided by the IHRP.

In addition, as noted above, due to funding constraints the allocation of opportunities is weighted in favor of J.D. students who are receiving government (federal and/or provincial) financial aid (including US Stafford or Perkins loans).

Students who wish to demonstrate financial need, can do so through receipt of:

- Government student financial assistance (i.e., Canadian federal and/or provincial student loans); and/or
- US Stafford or Perkins loans.

If students need any clarity with respect to whether their funding source would demonstrate financial need, please reach out to the financial aid team at financialaid.law@utoronto.ca.

The stipend aims to ensure that financially disadvantaged students have access to these valuable opportunities. The IHRP provides support throughout the application process and during the fellowship.

Students are encouraged to explore outside funding sources as well. Students in joint-degree programs may be requested to seek financial support from their non-law faculty to maximize funding opportunities. Students may also seek financial support from third-party organizations, including government agencies, depending on the nature and subject matter of their fellowship (see below).

G. General Expectations

IHRP summer fellows are required to attend mandatory pre-departure training session(s), including Safety Abroad Training, and to sign several forms and waivers. Fellows are also expected to facilitate contact between the IHRP and their host organization.

Students travelling abroad are required to register and provide information to the University's Safety Abroad database, which allows the University to monitor safety conditions in the fellow's host country. Students will be asked to access the database prior to departure to provide their primary overseas telephone numbers and addresses. If any mandatory information is missing, the IHRP reserves the right to withhold support (including funding, where applicable) until it is provided.

Fellows are required to obtain supplementary travel health insurance and ensure that it is comprehensive and allows for repatriation if required. The IHRP may also require students to obtain trip cancellation / interruption insurance in certain cases.

Students must independently research and obtain the appropriate visa required to undertake an unpaid fellowship in the host country. Students should contact the IHRP regarding visa concerns if they or their host organization feel that obtaining the appropriate visa would unnecessarily jeopardize their safety or security (for example, due to restrictions on human rights work in the host country).

Fellows are required to complete brief mid-summer reports (student-initiated fellows only) and final publishable reports, on the impact of their fellowship. These reports may be posted online on the IHRP website and/or shared with donors and or partner organizations where appropriate. Upon return, fellows are given the opportunity to share their experiences with the law school community and prospective fellows in a variety of ways. **Students will be asked to contribute to a Rights Review article (which may also be featured in Ultra Vires).** Students may also be asked to attend and participate in faculty events, depending on the subject matter of their fellowship.

H. Geographic Limitations

The University of Toronto cannot allow students to travel to dangerous areas while participating in university-supported programs. The University follows [Global Affairs Canada's \(GAC\) Travel Advice and Advisories](#) to assess the risks associated with travelling to a particular country. GAC uses four levels to identify the risk level of a destination, including countries and when applicable, regions within countries. Fellows should consult the GAC's Travel Advisories before planning their fellowship. Although exceptions are sometimes made in rare instances, the IHRP will normally not approve fellowships to countries and/or areas with "Avoid all travel" and/or "Avoid non-essential travel" advisories, as the University considers these destinations to be high risk.

III. IHRP Fellowships

This year, the IHRP is offering 12-14 student-initiated fellowships and 1-3 in-house fellowships (based in Toronto). Students can apply to either a student-initiated fellowship or an IHRP in-house fellowship, or to both, but they must indicate their preference in both applications.

A. Student-Initiated Fellowships

The majority of IHRP fellowships are student-initiated. These fellowships are unique as they provide students with the opportunity to locate a host organization that interests them and participate in human rights research, litigation, and advocacy, often at the grassroots level, in many different countries. Students propose an organization of their choice, in a part of the world of their choice (keeping in mind security concerns and University travel restrictions following [GAC's Travel Advisories](#)), and indicate the international human rights work they anticipate addressing during the summer. The flexibility of this program ensures that IHRP fellowships cater to students' unique background and interests, and ultimately, that it is a fulfilling and meaningful experience. We encourage students to seek out opportunities that prioritise corporate accountability, Indigenous rights, and/or climate justice (in keeping with the IHRP's [mandate](#)), but this is not a requirement.

Students research and locate suitable host organizations, approach the organization to host them as a fellow, develop a project with the organization (if applicable, i.e. if the organization does not already have an established internship program), and then apply to the IHRP to approve their proposal. This process allows students to create opportunities that capitalise on their past experiences and interests. While it may seem daunting to approach organizations, they are generally open to hosting fellows who are completing a professional degree program and are not seeking stipend support from them. The IHRP is unable to vet proposed organizations during the application process itself; however, previous host organizations can be found on the [IHRP website](#). Please note, that students should be transparent with their proposed organization, throughout this process, regarding the potential of not obtaining funding for the opportunity.

Students are encouraged to reach out to IHRP staff if they wish to discuss possible fellowship opportunities and/or to receive guidance and recommendations in that regard (email ihrp.law@utoronto.ca to request a meeting, preferably prior to December 19, 2025).

A minority of IHRP summer fellowships are based on students applying for a **posted, unpaid position** at an organization through an open recruiting process (where applicants must submit an application that fulfils the host organization's application requirements) and, upon receiving an Offer Letter, applying to the IHRP fellowship.

- Note - if the position is at an inter-governmental organization (i.e., the UN), an international court or tribunal (i.e., ICC, or IACHR), or a leading non-governmental organization (i.e., Amnesty International), competition for positions is intense, application processes may be lengthy, and deadlines may not align with IHRP fellowship timelines. Some organizations, including the International Criminal Court, have early application deadlines (i.e., November 1). For most other courts, tribunals, and commissions, applications must be received at least 3 months in advance of the desired start-date. As such, it may be difficult for students to obtain an Offer Letter for the position prior to applying for an IHRP student-initiated fellowship by the deadline of February 13, 2026, but they are still invited to apply (see the underlined note below).
- Students should also be aware that, in comparison to student-initiated fellowships where they work with the host organization in advance to develop a project, they will have less control over the work they do.
- A general overview of the process is as follows:
 - Students research and locate suitable host organizations and approach the organization to potentially host them as a fellow/intern for the summer.
 - The student completes all application requirements stipulated by the host organization and submits the application directly to the host organization by their specified deadline. (Many deadlines are in October and November, so make sure to check websites early!)
 - The recruiting organization determines whether to present the student with an Offer Letter.
 - If the student receives an Offer Letter from the host organization and the host organization does not provide funding (or a funding amount that would be lower than that which is offered by an IHRP fellowship grant), the student may complete and submit an IHRP fellowship application by February 13, 2026.
 - The IHRP will render its decision regarding the student's application.

Note - applicants who were not able to obtain an Offer Letter before the IHRP fellowship deadline due to the host organization's varied timeline, may still apply for an IHRP fellowship (through UTLC by February 6, 2026) but they must include a detailed project proposal (including proposed duration), a copy of communications with the proposed host organization to date, and the expected date of a forthcoming offer. Students are then expected to keep the IHRP posted and promptly

provide an Offer Letter (by emailing ihrp.law@utoronto.ca). If the Offer Letter is received by 9:30 am, March 5, 2026 (day before the IHRP Fellowship Offer Date) the IHRP may still consider such applications.

To apply, please complete the application form and requirements at **Appendix A to this Guide**. You can also find and download the standalone Application Form [here](#). **Applications should be submitted through UTLC by 12:00pm February 13, 2026**. Applications to student-initiated fellowships will consist of a C.V., law school transcripts, Offer Letter from host organization, a letter of recommendation (to be sent directly to ihrp.law@utoronto.ca from the referee), and proof of financial aid assessment, provincial loans/grants, or other needs-based funding (if applicable). A list of past summer fellowships can be found [here](#). To learn more about our students' experiences, check out the fall editions of [Rights Review](#).

Students are expected to contact organizations and obtain an offer themselves prior to applying to an IHRP fellowship through UTLC by the prescribed deadline of February 13, 2026, following the information and templates provided in this Guide. To take full advantage of this opportunity, **students are encouraged to begin researching early** (see the "Tips" section below).

More information about summer fellowship opportunities can be found in the [IHRP/CDO's International Human Rights Career Guide](#) (2017). Students are encouraged to attend the IHRP's information sessions and [sign up for the IHRP student listserv](#) to receive further guidance and keep informed about potential opportunities.

i. Fellowship Opportunity with the UNHCR:

This year we are offering **one** fellowship opportunity with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Geneva, Switzerland. The application process is similar to the application process for student-initiated fellowships. You must apply directly to UNHCR, and if you receive an offer, you must then submit an application for a student-initiated fellowship through UTLC by February 13, 2026.

To apply to UNHCR, please email a Cover Letter, CV and 500-word writing sample (in one PDF document) to Kelleen Corrigan (CORRIGAK@unhcr.org), Senior Legal Officer and Head of Human Rights Liaison Unit Policy & Law, Division of International Protection and Solutions at UNHCR. Please copy both the IHRP Director (sandra.wisner@utoronto.ca) and the IHRP Program Coordinator (estefania.rueda.torres@utoronto.ca) in your application email.

Applications will be received, and decisions will be made by UNHCR on a rolling basis, with a final application deadline of January 23, 2026. We encourage you to apply early.

B. IHRP In-house Fellowship(s)

The IHRP will be hiring 1-3 summer fellows to assist with its general research and advocacy work this summer. This position is based in Toronto, with possible travel abroad. **Interested students (preference for upper year students) may reach out to the IHRP (ihrp.law@utoronto.ca), as they would any other host organization**, to receive further details. Students may be interviewed in-person for this in-house position(s).

Applications for an IHRP in-house fellowship position will consist of a cover letter (please include your Student ID number), C.V., undergraduate and law school transcripts, one reference letter (to be sent directly to ihrp.law@utoronto.ca from the referee), a brief unedited writing sample (500 words), and proof of financial aid assessment, provincial loans/grants, or other needs-based funding (if applicable). **Applications should be submitted through UTLC by 12:00pm on February 6, 2026.** The job description and application requirements can be located on UTLC. Please clearly indicate the position for which you are applying. **Please note, the application form and requirements at Appendix A to this Guide apply only to the student-initiated fellowship applications** and not the in-house fellowship applications.

To learn more about the experience of our 2025 IHRP in-house fellows, check out this [report](#) from one of our fellows.

IV. Tips for Putting Together a Successful IHRP Student-Initiated Fellowship Proposal

Step 1: Identify your Strengths and Interests

Before you approach a host organization, think carefully about your strengths and interests. A strong proposal capitalises on the qualities and experiences that make you unique. Consider the following questions when determining your strengths and interests:

- What were you interested in and what did you study before coming to law? What work experience or volunteer experiences do you have?
- What interests have you developed in law school? What topics have grabbed your attention? Could topics, courses, or volunteer experiences form the basis of an interesting fellowship?
- Have you travelled internationally? If so, where? What did you like about the places you visited? What did you not like?

- What are your personal and professional strengths? Do you like working in groups or do you tend to work alone? Are you well-organised? Do you like predictability or “flying by the seat of your pants”?
- Do you want to be on the “front lines” (field work) or do you prefer to be “behind the scenes” (policy work)? Do you want to have direct contact with victims or with policy leaders?
- Do you have particular life experiences that may be useful in terms of advocacy on behalf of particular vulnerable groups?
- Can you speak another language?

Step 2: Identify Potential Host Organizations

At this stage, you should identify 2-3 potential host organizations. Students often find this the most difficult step in the process. Here are some ways to identify hosts:

- Look at the list of past IHRP summer fellowships [here](#) and determine whether any of the organizations on the list share your interests.
- Consider people you already know who work in public interest organizations. Approach these contacts and ask them for information about potential hosts.
- Do research to identify organizations that are working on the issues in which you are interested.
- Contact previous fellows to learn more about the organization they worked for and other organizations that they may have developed connections with.

An ideal host organization will have at least some of the following attributes:

- A portion of their work will focus on international human rights law or advocacy;
- They will appear credible (to determine credibility check out who funds them, who is on their board, who is their staff etc.); and
- They will have hosted fellows before and/or understand the responsibilities involved.

Step 3: Approach Potential Host Organizations

Where you are applying for a student-initiated fellowship, you will be required to approach the potential host organization. Before you do, you should understand the type of work the organization undertakes, consider why you want to work with them, and be able to articulate how you will add value to their existing work.

Bear in mind the following when you approach a potential host organization:

- Approach the organization with enough time to ensure that you can obtain an Offer Letter prior to applying to the IHRP fellowship by the February 13, 2026, deadline.

- Try to identify the person(s) at the organization who would most benefit from or be interested in your fellowship proposal and address your correspondence to that person. If you cannot identify such a person, address it to the Executive Director and Legal Director.
- If you know someone who has a contact at the organization (i.e. a former fellow, the Director, a personal contact), request that he/she facilitate your introduction to the organization.
- You may wish to send an initial email outlining your interest in the organization and then suggest a follow-up phone call to discuss details. Do not underestimate the power of speaking directly to someone versus communication exclusively through email.
- Once you have solidified your partnership, request a letter of support to include in your application package. If it is the case, mention to the organization that you will be accepting any offer obtained through the host organization regardless of the outcome of your application for funding through the IHRP fellowship.
- All correspondence should be professional in tone and content.
- Students should be transparent with their proposed organization, throughout this process, regarding the potential of not obtaining funding for the opportunity.

Step 4: Draft the Proposal

The proposal is one of the most important parts of your application (A sample fellowship application is included as Appendix B to this guide.)

A strong proposal will answer the following questions:

- What are the issues or problems that you hope to engage with? Why are these issues important? Why are you interested in these issues?
- What is the goal of your project? Is the goal realistic given time, financial, and other constraints?
- How does your project relate to your particular skills or experiences?
- Who is your host organization? Does this organization have particular expertise with the issue? Are they credible? What is their previous track record? Have they hosted past fellows? If so, what have these fellows done?
- What kind of contribution can you make to the host organization? How will your work contribute to a solution to these problems?
- What are some potential problems or obstacles you may encounter? How would you address these?
- What do you hope to take away from the experience?

You may wish to ask your host organization to review your proposal to ensure that it reflects their understanding of the project. Staff in the [Career Development Office](#) may be available to review proposals and give you feedback.

Step 5: Create a Budget

As noted above, the IHRP provides a fellowship stipend to successful applicants. Students must disclose all other funds that they have received or expect to receive in relation to the fellowship.

Your budget should include line items for:

- anticipated living expenses (including housing, food, phone, transit, personal expenses);
- the cost of travel to the fellowship site or sites;
- fees for visas or other required travel documentation;
- fees for travel inoculation; and
- fees for travel and medical insurance.

Appendix A

2026 IHRP Summer Fellowship Application Form (Student-Initiated Fellowship)

A.

Student Contact Information: _____

Student ID: _____

Name: _____

Year of Studies: _____

Sessional Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

E-mail: _____

B. Financial aid information for the academic year 2024-25:

_____ I am receiving government student financial assistance (i.e., OSAP, BC Student Assistance Program,

US Stafford or Perkins loans). Please specify from which province/jurisdiction you are receiving funding: _____.

_____ I am not receiving government student financial assistance (i.e., OSAP, BC Student Assistance

Program, US Stafford or Perkins loans).

C. Funding

Please check:

_____ I am applying for an IHRP stipend

_____ I can cover some expenses of the fellowship through _____ (and indicate amount)

D. IHRP Fellowship for which you are applying

Please check off the fellowship for which you are applying:

_____ Student-Initiated Fellowship

_____ Student-Initiated Fellowship **and** IHRP In-house Fellowship, with my preference being:

_____.

Have you applied for or received IHRP Summer Fellowships in the past? _____

E. General Statement of Interest in International Human Rights Law and/or Public Interest Law and Related Skills

In no more than 500 words, please provide a description of your interest in international human rights (or public interest law if none) and any related skills (language, work in high pressure environment, organizational etc.). Reflect on what about the particular fellowship appeals to you.

Please include information regarding any particular substantive interest (i.e., women's rights, labour rights, business and human rights, aboriginal rights, climate justice, international humanitarian law, international criminal law, children's rights, economic and social rights etc.) and/or past related experience (i.e., past employment, volunteer positions, courses, extra-curricular activities, publications etc.).

If you have not yet had the opportunity to demonstrate your interest in international human rights, please explain what factors informed your decision to apply for this fellowship.

F. Courses, Transcript, and Curriculum Vitae

Please list all courses that you will be taking during the current academic year (and any courses you have taken previously). Please **attach** your transcript, if available, and your curriculum vitae.

G. Fellowship Proposal (*Only for Student-Initiated Fellowship Applications)

In no more than 700 words, please describe your proposed fellowship. A strong proposal will answer the following questions:

- What are the issues or problems that you hope to engage with? Why are these issues important? Why are you interested in these issues?

- How does this fellowship fit within your career plans (if known)?
- What is the goal of your particular project? Is the goal realistic given time, financial, and other constraints?
- How does your project relate to your particular skills or experiences?
- Who is your host organization? Does this organization have particular expertise with the issue? Are they credible? What is their previous track record?
- What kind of contribution can you make to the host organization? How will your work contribute to a solution to these problems?
- What are some of the potential problems or stumbling blocks you may encounter and how would you address these?
- What do you hope to take away from the experience?

H. Proposed Host Organization Details (*Only for Student-Initiated Fellowship Applications)

Please provide the full name of the host organization, a description of its work or mandate, its mailing address, telephone number, the name of your proposed supervisor and their email address, and the anticipated length of the fellowship. Note, a minimum of 3-month duration is strongly encouraged, and applications for this length or more will be given priority.

I. Offer Letter

Please attach to your application a letter or email message of support from your proposed host organization.

J. Safety and Security Issues

Please indicate the current Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Travel Warning for the country and specific city/region in which you propose to work and provide a realistic assessment of any safety/security issues you may encounter and how you will mitigate against them.

K. Project Budget

Please include a projected budget for your fellowship.

Your budget should include line items for:

- anticipated living expenses (including housing, food, phone, transit, personal expenses);
- the cost of travel to the fellowship site or sites;

- fees for visas or other required travel documentation;
- fees for travel inoculation;
- fees for travel and medical insurance; and
- any other costs associated with the fellowship.

L. Short Biographical Paragraph

M. Letter of Recommendation

Please provide one reference letter from a graduate or undergraduate supervisor, or current/previous employer. Please note all reference letters must be sent directly to the IHRP (ihrp.law@utoronto.ca). The applicant is not permitted to see them.

Appendix B

2026 IHRP Summer Fellowship Application Example (Student-Initiated Fellowship)

A. Student Contact Information (redacted)

B. Financial Aid Information

☒ I am receiving government student financial assistance (i.e., OSAP, BC Student Assistance Program,

US Stafford or Perkins loans). Please specify from which province/jurisdiction you are receiving funding: Ontario (OSAP).

☐ I am not receiving government student financial assistance (i.e., OSAP, BC Student Assistance

Program, US Stafford or Perkins loans).

C. Funding

Please check:

☒ I am applying for an IHRP stipend

☐ I can cover some expenses of the fellowship through _____ (and indicate amount)

D. IHRP Fellowship for which you are Applying

Please check off the fellowship for which you are applying:

☒ Student-Initiated Fellowship

☐ Student-Initiated Fellowship and IHRP In-house Fellowship, with my preference being:

_____.

Have you applied for or received other IHRP Summer Fellowships?

 X I have not applied for other fellowships with the IHRP

E. General Statement of Interest in International Human Rights and/or Public Interest Law and Related Skills

I have long held a strong interest in international development work, as evidenced by my undergraduate degree in International Development Studies. My work and volunteer experiences only further confirm my commitment to this field. For one year, I worked in Sri Lanka as a Junior Program Officer for X. I have also conducted research for organizations such as X, X and X (see resume attached for more details). More recently, my interest has evolved to focus specifically on the role of law in international development.

My motivation in applying for IHRP fellowship lies in my commitment to furthering global equity through the law and more specifically, my concern for refugees and the challenges they face. My experiences working with Afghan youth in Toronto, many of whom previously lived in Pakistan within refugee camps, have underscored the vulnerability of these populations and their need for legal protection. With this in mind, I recently became involved with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) X (through Pro Bono Students Canada). Under the auspices of this program, I underwent training to conduct legal rights education for asylum seekers held in detention centers around Toronto and will be leading a legal education workshop in March. Undergoing a fellowship with UNHCR will be an excellent opportunity to make further contributions in this field and develop my legal skills.

F. Courses, Transcript, and Curriculum Vitae (redacted)

G. Fellowship Proposal

It is not always possible for refugees to return to their homes or settle in countries of first asylum. In these situations, third country resettlement is frequently the only viable long-term option, making it a critical element of international refugee law. The UNHCR Regional Office for X has offered me a summer fellowship with their Resettlement Unit. As a fellow, I will assist in all aspects of the resettlement process, including assessment of eligibility, preparation of referrals and coordination of submission and selection. The specific terms of reference are as follows:

- Determining whether resettlement is the most appropriate solution for individual refugees, taking into account available information and established UNHCR resettlement criteria outlined in the Resettlement Handbook;
- Interviewing candidates for resettlement, completing Resettlement Registration Forms and preparing case documentation for submissions. Case documentation must

- demonstrate knowledge of country-of-origin information as well as receiving country quotas and procedures;
- Providing counseling to individual refugees, explaining the process, prospects and problems involved in resettlement in order to enable individuals to be realistic about their future prospects;
- Working closely with UNHCR staff, NGOs, and resettlement country representatives to identify vulnerable cases for resettlement submission as priority cases;
- Following-up on the outcome of decisions for each case submitted for resettlement consideration and providing additional information or documentation if necessary;
- Any other assigned duties related to resettlement efforts.

With my background in international development and familiarity with refugee issues, I am in a strong position to make such contributions to UNHCR. Prior to commencing my legal education, I completed a multi-disciplinary undergraduate program that allowed me to achieve a broad understanding of international development issues, including the myriad of factors that create refugee flows and the complex issues that arise thereafter. I have had the opportunity to study the evolution and effects of the 1951 UN Convention on Refugees, the role of the UNHCR and other elements of the international refugee regime through courses such as Global Governance and Citizenship & Immigration.

In addition to my academic qualifications, professional experiences have also prepared me to make substantial contributions. My work with Afghan refugee youth has developed within me an understanding of, and sensitivity towards, the challenges that refugees face. Recently, my knowledge of refugee law has further expanded through the training provided by the UNHCR Detention Center Program. In addition, my one-year placement in Sri Lanka with X has given me an appreciation of how development work unfolds in practice in overseas contexts.

What I will gain from this fellowship is further international work experience and most importantly, an opportunity to develop legal experience in an area that I am considering pursuing as a long-term career. Interviewing and counseling resettlement candidates as well as assessing cases and preparing documentation for submission will provide me with valuable legal experience. It will also deepen my understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the international refugee legal system. This fellowship will allow me to learn a great deal about international human rights work from those more experienced in the field as well as the nature of working for an international organization. In summary, a fellowship with the UNHCR is an important step for me in the process of creating a meaningful career in international human rights law.

H. Proposed Host Organization Details

Name: UNHCR Regional Office for X

Project Supervisor and email:

Length of fellowship: The fellowship will be for 3.5 months in line with requirements set out by the organization.

Description of Work: The UNHCR leads and coordinates international efforts to protect the rights of refugees. It strives to protect these rights by upholding the right to seek asylum and find refuge. It also supports refugees in their efforts to voluntarily return home, integrate locally or resettle in a third country.

I. Offer Letter

Please find the **attached** email (or letter) that confirms support for this fellowship from X.

J. Safety and Security Issues

The current Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Travel Warning for [The Netherlands](#) is green (“Take normal security precautions”). The location of my proposed fellowship would be in the Hague with no required travel to other locations. My research indicates that there are minimal precautions to take to ensure my safety/security during my fellowship and I have spoken with past fellows regarding the safety/security situation when they travelled there. Regardless, I plan on taking the following precautions:

K. Budget (Sample)

Item	Cost in CAD	\$ Multiplier	Total
Rent	500 / month	3	1,500
Food, Transportation, Phone & Personal Expenses	400 / month	3	1,200
Flight	1850	1	1,850
Travel & Medical Insurance	150	1	150
Visa	80	1	80
Vaccinations	200	1	200
			TOTAL = \$4,980

L. Short Biographical Paragraph

Jane Doe is a 2nd year JD candidate at the Henry N.R. Jackman Faculty of Law. She completed a B.A. (Hons.) in Psychology from the University of Toronto. In 2003, Jane spent a year living and working in India with the NGO X. At NGO X, she was responsible for organizing workshops for

migrant workers on international human rights instruments. Jane previously completed a summer fellowship program with X and Y where she conducted election monitoring during the Ugandan elections. At the law school, Jane is involved in XYZ and is a member of XYZ. Jane is proficient in English and French.

M. Letter of Recommendation

My reference letter (from an academic supervisor or previous employer) has been sent directly by the referee to the IHRP (ihrp.law@utoronto.ca).

Appendix C

Sample Email to Prospective Host Organization (Student-Initiated Fellowship)

** This is a sample email that can be used as a template when contacting potential host organizations to explore the possibility of a summer fellowship. You are by no means required to use this email and can modify it as you see fit. The key is to appear professional and knowledgeable about the organization. This should not look like a form letter that you have sent to several different organizations!*

You should address the email to a specific person (i.e. fellowship coordinator, Executive Director, staff lawyer etc.) and avoid sending it to a general mailbox.

Dear [NAME OF RECIPIENT – AVOID “TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN”]:

I am a [YEAR]-year law student at the University of Toronto Henry N.R. Jackman Faculty of Law in Toronto, Canada. I am very interested in completing a fellowship at [FULL NAME OF ORGANIZATION] during the summer of 2026 and am writing to explore the possibility of that with you. Indeed, if you are interested in hosting me as a fellow, I may be able to obtain funding to support my fellowship through the University’s International Human Rights Program (“IHRP”).

Established in 1987, the IHRP serves as a centre for international human rights work at the University, through which experienced lawyers, Faculty, and law students engage in meaningful social change. The IHRP’s work aims to encourage the country’s adherence to its own international human rights commitments by ensuring accountability of its harms across the globe and those of third parties to which it is meant to regulate. The cornerstone of the IHRP’s work is their renowned international human rights clinic, the first clinic of its kind in Canada, which partners with international and domestic social movements in the areas of corporate accountability, climate justice, and Indigenous rights.

The IHRP has been sending fellows into the field for over 35 years. [Indeed, I understand that you hosted an IHRP fellow in YEAR: NAME OF FELLOW]. You can learn more about the IHRP and past fellowship placements by visiting the [IHRP website](#) or contacting the Director.

I am confident that I would contribute positively to your organization for the following reasons. [PROVIDE OUTLINE OF YOUR PAST EXPERIENCES, SKILLS, EXPERIENCE AND LINK THIS DIRECTLY TO THE ORGANIZATION’S WORK]. Please find attached my curriculum vitae, which provides additional information about my experience and background.

I look forward to hearing from you about the possibility of a fellowship at [NAME OF ORGANIZATION]. Please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss further or if you require additional information. I can be reached via email or by telephone at [ADD NUMBER – INCLUDE

INTERNATIONAL AREA CODE IF NECESSARY]. I understand that you must be very busy; therefore, if I do not hear from you within two weeks, I will follow up once more. Also, please feel free to forward my email to your colleagues if someone else at the organization may be better able to assist me.

Sincerely,

[YOUR FULL NAME]

J.D. Candidate, Expected 20[XX]