

## The International American Studies Association's Emerging Scholars Fellowships

### Framework

#### Definition

The Emerging Scholars Fellowships is a mechanism facilitated by the scholars and IASA and its scholarly journal *RIAS – Review of International American Studies* for the acquisition of experience and the honing of skills of academic, scholarly and administrative leadership.

(Note that *RIAS* works autonomously, but is linked to IASA in several major ways. Below, when referring to IASA, we may also mean *RIAS* when the fellowship candidate has a specific interest in scholarly publishing and editorial work.)

#### Eligibility

The main working language of IASA and its official publication *RIAS* is English. Applicants for the IASA Emerging Scholars Fellowships should have a professional working proficiency in English. Additional languages are welcome as a boon to the work of the international association and its journal.

Eligible for an Emerging Scholars Fellowships are anyone in their early career stage, usually of scholarship and academia, but also reasonably related (incl. “alt-ac”) professions, such as faculty/staff at liberal arts colleges, community colleges, early colleges, public education, museums, libraries, archives, national historic sites/memorials, the digital humanities or social sciences, publishing in the arts, humanities and social sciences, and other fields. It is important for the scholars to understand that IASA and *RIAS* are scholarly/academic associations and publishing, and cannot be reasonably expected to be preparing them for distinctly different professions.

An “early career” professional is defined as someone in their advanced PhD studies (usually within a year or two of foreseeable graduation/defence/viva), through their 1-7 years after PhD in the field. Grasping the implications of a periodically challenging jobs market, waves of economic recession, and a pandemic in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, this criterion of eligibility can be revisited on a case-by-case basis.

All applicants for the IASA Emerging Scholars Fellowship must become IASA members. For this, please contact the IASA Treasurer at [fees@iasa-world.org](mailto:fees@iasa-world.org)

#### Application process

The candidates for the IASA Emerging Scholars Fellowship apply by providing the necessary information on themselves, their previous experience/training in academic management and administrative leadership, and their interest in participating in the programme. These are completed in a questionnaire and one cover letter written by the candidate, and sent to the designated IASA address.

The applications are screened by a committee of IASA (and, as relevant, *RIAS*), who decide on the year's intake of Fellows. As with other acceptance, factors other than the candidates' suitability may influence such decisions, and – while some may volunteer to – the committee cannot be expected to provide constructive feedback to those accepted or rejected.

#### The Fellowship process

The Fellowship process is a mechanism of training with a light touch. Since no participant is paid, it is important to keep a balance of gain for the time and energy invested. While the Fellows are

encouraged to be proactive in their engagement with the IASA, they are also asked to understand the serious limits of the energy and time invested by the IASA official in their training.

Accepted Fellows are matched up in groups with one or more IASA or *RIAS* administrative manager/s or leader/s, whom they will meet a few times over 12 months (length has some flexibility). During their meetings they interact with the IASA official, while in between their meetings they should be working on specific tasks, self-study, or immersion in IASA or related topical materials. Depending on the candidate's focus and priorities – matched with the IASA official's – the fellowship can be more of an internship, a shadowing, or even an understudy. Should the circumstances or priorities of either party change, the content and form of the training can be modified.

### The Fellowship form and structure

The form and structure of the training should follow a few rules. Remote technologies can and will be used for some activities. However, in-person meetings are strongly encouraged wherever possible, to allow for the building of trust and rapport. Should the parties live and work in the same region, in-person meetings are preferred over remote ones. This can further help fellows hone people and personal communication skills, which are often neglected when we overly rely on remote technologies of communication.

In any Fellowship process, there should be an initial briefing. This should be by IASA officials, incl. the one in charge of that specific group of Fellows, and should include information on the history and intellectual approach/es of IASA and *RIAS*, their structures and main mechanisms, and bi/annual cycles. The next part of the briefing should include information on the position and duties of the specific IASA official in charge of the group of Fellows.

After the initial briefing, it is up to the IASA official and the fellows to work out some schedule of projects. These can include shadowing – online or in-person meetings, when the Fellow learns from the IASA official about their tasks and their choices – specific exercises or tasks assigned by the IASA official to the Fellow (not menial or merely clerical/secretarial) – the reading and discussion of publications relevant for the projects/issues, or even the observation of teaching.

It is important for the parties to understand that the fellowship is not free labour for IASA officials' projects, but is about the priorities and needs of the Fellow and the experience of the leader, and requires supervision and feedback. Hence, on specific dates in the fellowship process, there must be an exercise of self-reflection by the Fellow, and feedback by the IASA official. While there should be room for expression of personalities, the fellowship's communication between the parties should be kind, constructive, and honest. In general, be kind, encouraging, and nurturing in your interactions – we subscribe to positive reinforcement, not harsh criticism. Be open to reciprocal influence – keep your mind open to questioning your own received wisdom and training and considering different ways of doing things.

However comfortable it seems to match and have collaborate fellows with an IASA official from their own region, it is recommended that such matches not be the rule. Being from different geographical regions, and just as importantly, different academic and administrative traditions helps the parties identify, question, communicate about, reflect on, and develop approaches to the differences that they experience. All fellows are also likely to have been socialized into their own regional academic and administrative traditions, which they may not question and critically appraise without working through difference with the IASA official.

It is advised that in the middle or at the end of the fellowship process/tenure, the parties meet at a regional symposium, but even better, a world congress of the IASA. This should provide a setting and occasion for their reflection and summation together – and the next stage of the fellowship, if there is more left.

While we do not consider it particularly important to be issuing certificates or confirmations of completion for the IASA Emerging Scholars Fellows, we can do so in simple terms.

Nota bene:

This fellowship is not paid and carries no monetary value; it is voluntary and only provides experience and training for sufficiently proactive candidates. Since the IASA Emerging Scholars Fellowships are not paid for the candidates or the mentors, all parties have to be reasonable in their expectations of how much time and energy each side can invest in the process.

The IASA Emerging Scholars Fellowship and membership in the IASA Emerging Scholars' Forum can overlap, but are not co-dependent. The Forum is a voluntary association for networking and discussing issues of scholarship, careers and mutual support; the Fellowship is a structured programme that provides its participants with experience and training in academic management and administrative leadership.

All IASA-related information that our Early Career Fellows get access to, are confidential. All such information should remain confidential until that information is published or publicly communicated by IASA officials. Adhering to this is itself a skill set for our Scholars to develop and hone. First and foremost, IASA and *RIAS* leaders will abide by GDPR and their institution's professional standards.

Acceptance to, status in, or completion of, the IASA Emerging Scholars Fellowship is no guarantee for an ability to run, get elected, or fill a position of administration or leadership in the International American Studies Association or its associated journal *Review of International American Studies*. (None of these positions are paid.) While the Fellowship's training is provided by IASA in collaboration with the scholar, the experience acquired and skills honed are not confined to IASA and *RIAS*, and should be applied in any academic, scholarly, and associational environment.