



Anna Julia Cooper (AJC) Fellowship: Program Guidelines

Document Audience and Use: For departments preparing applications, school/college faculty affairs partners, Faculty and Staff Affairs, and program implementation partners.

Program Definitions

The Anna Julia Cooper (AJC) Fellowship is a recruitment-linked opportunity for incoming assistant professors selected through the faculty search process. The fellowship provides a structured, protected pre-tenure-track year before the faculty appointment begins.

During the fellowship year, AJC Fellows hold Academic Staff appointments in the Scientist II title. Selection as an AJC Fellow is tied to a confirmed tenure-track faculty appointment, with the fellowship year providing protected time for scholarly and research advancement before the faculty appointment begins.

Award Availability: Awards are limited and subject to available funding.

Overview of the Fellowship Model

- 12-month Academic Staff fellowship appointment in the Scientist II title
- Compensation at 90 percent of the agreed-upon Assistant Professor starting salary stated in the faculty offer
- Protected time for research, publication, scholarly advancement, and program development
- No formal instructional or service responsibilities during the fellowship year
- Primary faculty mentor and defined departmental support
- Transition into the tenure-track Assistant Professor role after the fellowship year
- Minimum one academic year of UW–Madison employment as a tenure-track Assistant Professor following the fellowship

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- OVCR faculty start-up funding negotiated as part of the offer will be available during the fellowship year
- Anna Julia Cooper fellows are eligible to serve as PI on extramural grant proposals

Fellowship start dates are established through the approved appointment documentation and should align with the candidate's transition timeline, department needs, and the revised Assistant Professor start date. While many fellowship appointments may align with the academic hiring cycle, start dates may vary when consistent with program approval, appointment requirements, and campus hiring processes.

Anna Julia Cooper Legacy and Program Rationale

The Anna Julia Cooper Fellowship is named in honor of Dr. Anna Julia Cooper, a pioneering scholar, educator, author, and activist whose life and work reflected the relationship between rigorous scholarship, educational opportunity, public purpose, and institutional responsibility. Cooper's intellectual legacy is especially relevant to a fellowship designed to support incoming faculty as they develop scholarly momentum, build institutional connections, and prepare for long-term success at UW–Madison.

The fellowship reflects three principles connected to Cooper's legacy:

1. Protected time for scholarly development.

Cooper's life and work reflected the value of deep intellectual preparation and sustained scholarly contribution. The fellowship provides a dedicated year for research, publication, scholarly advancement, and program development before the tenure-track appointment begins.

2. Mentorship and institutional responsibility.

Cooper's career as an educator and public intellectual underscores the responsibility institutions have to cultivate scholarly talent. The fellowship requires department-based mentorship and integration planning so that fellows are supported as emerging members of the UW–Madison faculty community.

3. Scholarly contribution and institutional uplift.

The fellowship supports incoming assistant professors whose work has the potential to contribute meaningfully to their fields, departments, and the broader intellectual life of the university.

The naming of the fellowship is therefore not symbolic alone. It reflects the program's substantive commitment to protected scholarly time, structured mentorship, institutional belonging, and faculty success.

Eligibility Criteria

- Degree Conferral: PhD or terminal degree must be fully conferred prior to the start of the fellowship.
- Appointment Window: Fellowship start date must align with the approved appointment documentation and program approval.
- Recency of Degree: Degree must have been conferred within the last five years.
- Prior Postdoctoral Experience Limit: Must not exceed four years of cumulative postdoctoral experience. This is an eligibility criterion only and does not define the fellowship-year appointment structure.
- Faculty Experience Restriction: Must not have previously held a tenure-track or permanent faculty appointment.
- Mentorship Requirement: A qualified faculty mentor must be identified within the hiring department at the time of application.

Appointment and Policy

AJC Fellows hold Academic Staff appointments in the Scientist II title and are governed by UW–Madison policies and procedures applicable to Academic Staff appointments. The fellowship appointment is separate from the tenure-track Assistant Professor appointment and does not count toward the tenure clock.

The fellowship appointment must be documented through the appropriate Academic Staff appointment letter and, as applicable, a revised offer letter, offer addendum, or other approved appointment documentation. Appointment documentation must specify the official university title, appointment type, operational area, supervisor, salary and pay basis, start date, percentage of appointment, responsibilities, and any applicable appointment-specific terms required under Academic Staff policy.

- Instructional and Service Restriction: Fellows may not serve as the instructor of record for any course or hold formal service responsibilities during the fellowship year.
- Primary Activity Requirement: Fellowship time must be used for research, publication, scholarly advancement, and program development.

- Concurrent Employment: Fellows may hold additional employment only if it does not interfere with fellowship expectations and is approved through the appropriate school/college or dean-level process.
- Leave and Benefits: Fellows are subject to leave, benefits, and employment policies applicable to their Academic Staff appointment and title.

Cohort Development and Support

The AJC Fellowship includes a required beginning-of-fellowship welcome event and optional cohort-based development opportunities delivered in partnership with the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs. These opportunities support, but do not replace, protected research time and department-based mentoring.

Application Review Process and Timeline

AJC information should be included in eligible faculty Job Requisitions so candidates are aware of the opportunity during the search process. Candidates who wish to indicate interest may do so by including a brief statement in the cover letter.

Suggested candidate language: "I would welcome consideration for the Anna Julia Cooper Fellowship if the department determines that fellowship consideration is appropriate as part of the recruitment process."

Formal AJC application occurs when the department and candidate jointly determine that fellowship consideration is appropriate. Applications should not be submitted for all finalists or for candidates whose appointments remain uncertain.

AJC Fellowship applications must be compiled into a single PDF and submitted via email to vpfsa@provost.wisc.edu. Applications are reviewed through three designated spring review cycles. Departments should submit applications in the review cycle that best aligns with the candidate's appointment timeline, fellowship planning needs, and anticipated Assistant Professor start date.

- Round 1: Late February submission, March notification
- Round 2: Early April submission, late April notification
- Round 3: Mid-May submission, late May or early June notification

Selection Committee and Charge

The Selection Committee evaluates complete applications based on alignment with the AJC Fellowship model and the proposed use of the protected fellowship year.

- Review evidence of scholarly trajectory as documented through the curriculum vitae and letters of recommendation or external evaluations collected through the faculty search process.
- Evaluate fit for the fellowship model and proposed use of protected time.
- Assess the strength, specificity, and feasibility of the mentorship and integration plan.
- Confirm institutional readiness, eligibility, and tenure-track commitment.

The Selection Committee relies on the candidate's CV and letters or evaluations collected through the faculty search process as evidence of scholarly trajectory. The committee does not independently assess disciplinary merit.

Mentoring and Reporting Requirements

- A primary faculty mentor must be assigned at the time of appointment.
- Fellow and mentor must develop an Individual Development Plan within the first 60 days of appointment.
- Mentor and fellow must meet at least quarterly, with more frequent engagement strongly encouraged.
- Mid-Year Progress Report is due January 31 or within the first six months for fellows with later start dates.
- Year-End Fellowship Report and Transition Confirmation is due within 30 days following completion of the fellowship year.

Funding Activation

- Hiring unit uploads the fully executed offer letter, revised offer letter, approved offer addendum, or other required documentation into the Recruitment and Retention Tool (RRT).
- The Provost's Office verifies that required fellowship language is present.
- Upon verification, funds are released to the unit.

Required Offer/Addendum Language

The following language is to be added to the candidate's official offer letter, revised offer letter, or approved offer addendum:

The Office of the Provost is pleased to offer you an Anna Julia Cooper Fellowship for academic year 20XX–20XX, beginning [date] and ending [date]. During the fellowship year, you will hold an Academic Staff appointment in the Scientist II title.

During this fellowship year, your salary will be set at 90 percent of the Assistant Professor starting rate (\$XX,XXX) for a twelve-month Academic Staff appointment. This fellowship provides one year of protected time with no formal instructional or service responsibilities, allowing you to focus on scholarly research, publication, scholarly advancement, and program development.

Because this fellowship year is a dedicated research development period separate from your tenure-track Assistant Professor appointment, it does not constitute faculty probationary service and will not count toward your tenure clock.