

PUBLIC SERVICE FELLOWSHIP (PSF)

Deadline: first round – 30 November, 2020; second round – 31 March, 2021

Form: Part of tuition payments deferred or forgiven if student works for public sector after graduation

The purpose of the Public Service Fellowships (PSF) is to encourage students from the program to seek public service employment in their countries of origin. The program recognizes that post-communist countries in particular have faced a real need for evidence- and data-based public service, but at the same time a lack of interest by relevant professionals to deliver better public policy. Since the MA in Applied Economics program at CERGE-EI is well suited to develop professionals for these positions, we are setting up a fellowship to encourage public service involvement of our graduates. In addition to receiving a tuition deferment schedule, students will also get additional mentoring from MAE and PhD alumni who work in the public sector.

How does Public Service Fellowship work?

Public service fellows have a substantial part of their tuition payments deferred until after graduation. Fellows who can demonstrate full time employment by a public service organization in an eligible country for **at least 24 months** starting September 1, 2022 will have their tuition payments covered by the CERGE-EI Foundation. Otherwise, fellows will be expected to pay their deferred tuition in full plus a service charge of 500 USD.

We anticipate offering up to 4 fellowships in the 2021/2022 academic year.

Application Process

- **Application deadline:** first round – 30 November, 2020; second round – 31 March, 2021.
- You have to apply to the MA in Applied Economics program by the same deadline to be considered for the fellowship.
- PSF Fellowship decisions will be announced together with regular admission decisions.
- Students need to write a letter demonstrating: 1) their interest in working in the public sector post-graduation, 2) what impact they might be able to achieve in the offered position, 3) how the MAE program will prepare them successfully for the offered position.
- Students also need to supply either 1) current proof of employment in a public service organization with clear indication that the student is to return as an employee after taking a leave of absence or 2) an offer of employment after graduation, or (3) in exceptional circumstances, when a public service organization cannot guarantee a spot one year ahead of time due to internal rules, the applicant can also provide a provisional letter from their desired employer. The letter should state that the desired employer has interviewed the applicant and would be eager and likely to offer them a position if they apply in one year. The applicant has to be aware, however, that in case such job offer does not happen, they will be financially responsible, as described below.
- Awarding fellowships is fully in the discretion of the selection committee and there is no right for the award. The committee may choose to award fewer than 4 fellowships.

Do fellows need to pay anything?

Yes, each fellow needs to pay the tuition deposit by the deadline (1,000 USD). In addition, each fellow needs to cover 300 USD of tuition per semester. The rest of the tuition owed is eligible for the fellowship discount.

For example, if a student's tuition level is set at 9,500 USD upon admission, he/she needs to cover 1,900 USD of the tuition. If the fellow works in the public sector for at least 24 months, the 7,600 USD remaining tuition will be covered by the CERGE-EI Foundation on his/her behalf. Otherwise, the deferred tuition plus a 500 USD service charge must be paid within 12 months after leaving covered employment. Repayments will be due at a rate of 2,700 USD immediately after leaving covered employment and 2,700 USD each six months thereafter until fully repaid.

Timeline for PSF

November 30, 2020	Early bird MA in Applied Economics program admissions deadline. First round PSF application deadline.
December 21, 2020	Early admissions and PSF decision made.
January 31, 2021	1,000 USD tuition deposit due, for early bird applicants.
March 31, 2021	Regular MA in Applied Economics program admission deadline. Second round PSF application deadline.
April 21, 2021	Regular admission and PSF decisions made.
May 21, 2021	1,000 USD tuition deposit due, for regular round applicants.
September 2021	Discounted tuition payment of 300 USD due
January 2022	Discounted tuition payment of 300 USD due
April 2022	Discounted tuition payment of 300 USD due
July 2022	Graduation
September 1, 2022	Start of full-time employment in public sector
September 15, 2022	Proof of full-time employment in public sector due OR First tuition repayment due (1/3 of fellowship amount)
March 1, 2023	- Supervisor evaluation due - Proof of full-time employment in public sector due OR - Second tuition repayment due (1/3 of fellowship amount)
September 1, 2023	- Supervisor evaluation due - Proof of full-time employment in public sector due OR - Final tuition repayment due (1/3 of fellowship amount)
March 1, 2024	- Supervisor evaluation due - Proof of full-time employment in public sector due
September 1, 2024	- Supervisor evaluation due - Proof of full-time employment in public sector due

Eligibility

Students from post-communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States are eligible for this fellowship. Residents of the following countries are eligible:

- Albania
- Armenia
- Azerbaijan
- Belarus
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- Czech Republic
- Estonia
- Georgia
- Hungary
- Kazakhstan
- Kosovo
- Kyrgyzstan
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Macedonia
- Moldova
- Montenegro
- Poland
- Romania
- Russia
- Serbia
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Tajikistan
- Turkmenistan
- Ukraine
- Uzbekistan

What is considered public service employment?

Employment where graduates can contribute to developing policies is relevant for the program. Eligible employment can be in central, regional or municipal governments at the executive, legislative or judicial levels, as well as in government-run agencies and government-affiliated independent organizations.

Examples of eligible employment:

- Ministries
- Parliament/Senate
- Judiciary (courts, prosecution)
- Central Banks
- Various agencies (Investment agency, Tourism agency, Export agency, Innovation agency, etc.)
- City governments
- Regional governments
- Other organizations may be eligible upon approval, unless they fall into one of the categories below

What is not considered public service employment?

Positions where employees do not directly influence policymaking are not eligible to be covered by this fellowship:

- Work for international organizations, such as UNDP, IMF, World Bank;
- Work for government-owned companies operating as private institutions (e.g., work for a government-owned energy company or transportation company);
- Work for universities or academies of science;
- Teaching elementary or high school;
- Work in health care provision (for example for government-owned hospitals).

How can students demonstrate their public service employment?

- **Official letter from public sector employer** that the graduate is employed there on a full time basis. This letter needs to be on official letterhead by the organization and signed either by the HR Department or the direct supervisor. This letter needs to be written in English. Otherwise, the fellow is responsible for securing an English language translation by an official translator. The original of this letter should be scanned and emailed to the Program Director by each deadline.
- **Short written evaluation** of a fellow's performance provided by the employer, submitted through an official online form, e-mailed directly to fellow's supervisor to their official work email address. Each fellow is responsible for supplying this email address to the Program Director one month prior to evaluation due date. The evaluation should be written in English and submitted by the agreed upon deadlines.
- Both documents need to be submitted **every 6 months**, according to the official timeline.
- In addition, the same documents are necessary every time a fellow changes employers during the 24 months of public service.

Are fellows bound to the job they declared in their fellowship application?

With approval of CERGE-EI, grantees may be allowed to change to another eligible position both before and during the 24-month employment period.

Possible Penalties

The PSF is a prestigious fellowship that the CERGE-EI Foundation is offering only to those who it believes will truly honor and cherish it.

Fellows will sign an enforceable contract with clear penalties if they do not honor their promise to work for the public sector upon graduation:

- Each month where the fellow is late on his/her repayment (if applicable) will result in a monthly penalty of 100 USD.
- The fellow loses his/her alumni privileges when they are late on their repayment schedule.
- The fellow's transcript will include a note that they are not repaying their tuition payment until they are back on track with their repayment schedule.
- CERGE-EI will instruct all affiliated faculty to include that the individual is in default on loan obligations in any letter of recommendation requested for a non-qualifying employer.

What happens if a fellow leaves the public sector before the end of the 24-month period?

The fellowship plus administrative fee becomes due in full according to the terms outlined above.

What happens if a fellow does not submit their proof of employment and evaluation forms on time?

We will consider this fellow as not employed in the public sector anymore. The fellow will be expected to start repaying tuition according to their payment schedule. The payment schedule will assume the worst-case scenario, i.e. that the fellow hasn't worked for the public sector since we've last heard from them. The various penalties will be incurred as described.