

# RISD Maharam Fellowship for Social Justice and Sustainability

## WEBSITE:

Fellows – <https://risdmaharamfellows.com/>

Process - <https://careercenter.risd.edu/risd-managed-grants>

## APPLICATION DEADLINE

**Application Due: Thursday, February 11, 2021, at NOON**

Application opens: November

Awards are announced: March

## DESCRIPTION

The RISD Maharam Fellowship is a prestigious \$5,000 fellowship to support RISD students who have designed a summer internship experience with an organization or a division within an organization in which artists/designers are not usually found. Maharam, a textile producer, is committed to making the art and design world more fair, diverse, and creative. The Fellowship focuses on two of the most urgent issues of our time - social justice and sustainability - and will support projects that aspire to advance social progress and safeguard the environment. The nature of the internship should explore the role of innovative, critical, creative thinkers to solve problems and demonstrate the various ways artists and designers can have a positive impact. The internship organization must be a government organization, non-governmental organization, or non-profit organization (not a for-profit company).

The Maharam Fellowship is an amazing opportunity for RISD students because:

- You will be driven to explore outside of the RISD art and design world.
- You will learn how to articulate and explain your work, and the importance of art and design thinking for finding solutions to problems and having social impact.
- You will build language and communication skills that cross organization types and cultures.
- You will find new avenues for networking and opening doors for future opportunities.
- Your experience and work may receive RISD media support which will give you greater exposure.
- You can receive credit for the internship if you receive Departmental Approval.

U.S. citizens and international students traveling outside of the U.S. will have health insurance coverage provided by RISD.

## ELIGIBILITY

- Students may only receive one Maharam Fellowship during their RISD career.
- Currently enrolled Sophomores, Juniors, Seniors, Fifth Years, and Graduate Students are eligible.
- Recipients must be an enrolled RISD student the semester before the summer of the internship.
- Students are welcome to apply in February even if they're graduating in December 2020. They will engage in this internship beginning summer 2021.
- Non-U.S. Citizens are eligible.
- Students may apply for team projects. Only teams of 2 will be considered. Each student must submit a complete application describing their specific skills, interests, role, and goals. Each team member is eligible for the full Fellowship award.
- Internships that are arranged for by an internship placement service or through a third-party organization are not eligible. This includes any organization that requires fee-for-service, fee-for-materials, or mandatory donations to the organization.
- Applicants must be in good academic and community standing.
- The internship must be unpaid.
- The internship must be at least 8 weeks in length.
- Internships can be local, in the U.S., overseas, or in your home country. If your internship is outside your home country, it will be important to demonstrate a strong support system.
- For 2021, internships may be on-site, off-site, remote, or hybrid.

## SELECTION CRITERIA

### APPLICATION MATERIALS

- Application materials are complete by the due date.
- All requirements must be met and instructions followed.
- Attention should be paid to the quality and presentation of materials. Attachments are formatted neatly and scanned documents are legible.
- Responses must answer the questions asked and must be clear, concise, and comprehensive.

### STUDENT READINESS

- Articulates a solid understanding of and interest in the field, type of work, location, and other matters involved in the proposed internship.
- Demonstrates the ability and desire to undertake the internship and have an impact through past experiences, skills, coursework, research, and mentoring.
- Shows deep interest in applying art/design thinking to an organization where artists/designers are not usually found.
- Demonstrates initiative, innovation, creativity, and critical thinking and practice.
- Demonstrates maturity, a strong work ethic, and interest in stretching beyond ones' current skill set.

### STRENGTH AND FIT OF INTERNSHIP SITE

- Organization is prepared and qualified to create a learning environment and provide appropriate supervision for the fellowship.
- Organization acknowledges an understanding of the student's interests and learning outcomes.
- Organization agrees to take an active role in the student's internship experience in ways that support the Maharam Fellowship's mission.
- Internship provides opportunities for activities and experience outside the applicant's comfort zone where they will be exposed to new processes and ways of thinking.
- Internship is arranged so applicants have a voice in their work and will engage in exploration and problem solving rather than only specific set tasks arranged by the organization.
- Experience aligns with the applicant's intended career interests/goals.

### FEASIBILITY

- Activities and responsibilities are clearly described.
- The timeline and goals articulated and achievable.
- The budget is realistic.
- Applicant has appropriate support in place for the internship experience.

### IMPACT & OUTCOMES

- Learning objectives are articulated.
- Significance to applicant's education and practice is well-described and compelling.
- Potential impact on the internship organization, community, and/or society is identified.
- Consideration of how art and design thinking can have a positive impact on social justice and sustainability issues.
- Fellowship will provide an experience the applicant might not be able to explore without financial support.

### REMOTE INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCES

- Remote internship experiences should adhere to RISD's Guidelines for Remote Internships:  
<https://careercenter.risd.edu/guidelines-remote-internships>

## APPLICATION PROCESS & COMPONENTS

- All items are submitted as PDF uploads to the online application EXCEPT the letter of recommendation. The letter of recommendation must be emailed to Lisa Cramer, [lcramer@risd.edu](mailto:lcramer@risd.edu), by the application deadline. Your recommender must email the letter directly to Lisa. It CANNOT be emailed from the student.
- Students must fill out and submit the RISD Application online by the deadline. The link to the online application can be found at <http://www.careercenter.risd.edu/risd-managed-awards/>. The application components are:

➤ APPLICANT PERSONAL AND ACADEMIC INFORMATION

➤ INTERNSHIP INFORMATION

➤ RESPONSES to the following in 1 PDF. Please include the question text as headers before your responses, and use 1 inch margins, Times New Roman 12-point font, and single spaced rows:

- SUMMARY) A short description of the who, what, where, why, and so what. What is your learning objective? Consider answering: I propose to do X with X by doing X in order to X. (100 word max)
- ESSAY 1) What is the name, location, mission, and services of the organization? And, why are you interested in an internship at this particular organization? (200 word max)
- ESSAY 2) How is the organization impacting change in the areas of social justice and/or sustainability? Are they: affecting change in larger systems or practices? creating educational initiatives? and/or developing advocacy for specific audiences? (200 word max)
- ESSAY 3) How did you find the internship? Describe how you made the connection and your communication. (200 word max)
- ESSAY 4) Explain how this internship puts you in a situation where artists/designers are not usually found. (200 word max)
- ESSAY 5) What is the problem or issue that YOU will address to affect progress in social justice/safeguarding the environment? What do you know about the problem or issue; what have you found in your research? Tell us why you care. (200 word max)
- ESSAY 6) How are you prepared for this experience? How is this the right time in your academic and artistic growth for this experience? What skills do you have now that will help you to be successful? (200 word max)
- ESSAY 7) What will be your main activities and responsibilities? How will you apply your art/design skills and ways of thinking during this internship? (200 word max)
- ESSAY 8) In what ways might you have the opportunity to see how decisions are made at this organization? Will you attend meetings, talk to board members, and/or work with administrative staff? (200 word max)
- ESSAY 9) What are 2-3 specific things you hope to accomplish through this experience? Be realistic! This is an 8 week project. (200 word max)
- ESSAY 10) Describe the impact this grant will have on the internship organization or the community or even the larger society. (200 word max)
- ESSAY 11) Describe the impact this grant will have on you - academically, artistically, professionally, and/or personally. What skills do you hope to gain? (200 word max)
- ESSAY 12) How are you prepared to work and live in the community? Describe your support system. This is particularly important if you are proposing an internship outside of Rhode Island or your home state or country. (200 word max)
- TIMELINE) Provide a general timeline that gives a sense of how your experience will unfold and how your supervisor and co-workers will support you. This could be a weekly calendar outlining activities, meetings, and events, and include who is involved. We understand some of this may be hypothetical and things will change, but having a plan will help you get started and be productive. And it will help us understand your vision. Include the expected number of weeks and hours per week. (1 page max)
- BUDGET) Provide a budget of anticipated costs to include travel, housing, meals, materials, supplies, equipment, or other related expenses. Create a clear budget in a table format with columns for "Item," "Description," and "Amount." AND, do the math – include totals. (1 page max)  
**Note:** Maharam funding should NOT be applied to cover organization program participation fees or materials/equipment that benefit the day-to-day organization such as paper, printing, or items that will be staying with the organization.

- **INTERNSHIP OFFER LETTER.** The offer letter should be a formal invitation from the internship supervisor and include: the specific time period (weeks and hours), indication there is a position and appropriate work for the student, a list of activities, a description of the hopeful outcome, and agreement to mentor/support the student and provide appropriate resources. For remote experiences, the organization should review RISD's Guidelines for Remote Internships: <https://careercenter.risd.edu/guidelines-remote-internships> - and include details for these guidelines in the offer letter. Documentation must be official and include contact information and the contact's title. Ideally, the letter should be on official organization/business letterhead and signed by the letter writer. Email communication in place of formal documentation is discouraged.
- **RESUME.** Include most recent employment, community involvement, volunteer service, exhibitions, awards, achievements, and other accomplishments.
- **Unofficial TRANSCRIPT.** Go to your RISD Student Planning account and download an "Unofficial" transcript. Your submitted transcript should include the courses you are registered for in the spring 2021 semester. (If you are graduating in December, your transcript should be complete through graduation.) Check the size of this document. The transcript file you receive is often quite large. You will likely need to compress this file considering your application cannot exceed 25MB in uploads. Upload this PDF into your application. Make sure the PDF is legible.
- **LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION.** One – and only one - letter of recommendation from a faculty member or supervisor addressing your preparedness for the internship and feasibility of the project. This letter should not be from someone at the proposed internship site. The letter should be emailed directly to Lisa Cramer, [lcramer@risd.edu](mailto:lcramer@risd.edu), from the recommender by the application deadline. The letter should ideally be a PDF scan of the letter with a signature.  
**Note:** This requirement is included not only as a factor, amongst many, to determine selection, but this is a significant part of academic and professional life in the U.S. and abroad. This is a learning and networking step. If this process makes you nervous or you don't know who to ask or where to start, reach out to a RISD Career Center Advisor. We are happy to guide you through this process.

*TIPS FOR APPLICANTS:*

- **Each attachment can be up to 3MB, however, please note that the TOTAL upload cannot be over 25MB.**
- **Avoid submitting at the last minute. Incomplete or late applications will not be accepted.**
- Review the guidelines and required materials carefully before you begin the application.
- Follow all directions carefully.
- Prepare your application in advance in a word document and check your spelling. **The application form will not save your answers once you leave the page.**
- Documents/Responses within a PDF should be in the same order as listed in the guidelines. Please include the question text as headers before your responses, and use 1 inch margins, Times New Roman 12-point font, and single spaced rows.
- Attachments should be named in the following way: FirstnameLastname.Documenttype. So Jane Smith would name her files JaneSmith.Reponse, JaneSmith.Transcript, etc.
- After you submit you will see a submission screen and receive an email confirming a successful submission.

## TIMELINE

### November/December

- Attend the RISD Maharam Fellows Information Session **November 12, 2020.**
- Review the application guidelines and application form carefully.
- Explore the RISD Mahram Fellows' blog to be inspired by previous projects: <http://risdmaharamfellows.com/>
- Gain further inspiration for potential opportunities through sites like Idealist, USA Jobs, DotGov Design, and the National Science Foundation.
- Review the potential organizations' website and materials carefully to understand their mission, services, and language in order to articulate why you are a good fit and why they might need you.
- Prepare either a project summary or an outline of your skills/interests showing the value of your work to submit to the organization.

- Contact organizations to discuss opportunities for creating an internship within their structure. Earlier conversations with your supervisor will ensure that you develop a strong understanding of their needs, they develop a strong understanding of your skills and interests, and you both develop a strong understanding of your role. It takes time to develop together a plan that includes activities, appropriate supervision, and goals that are impactful, yet feasible.
- Consider identifying a faculty member to act as your mentor and assist you in the proposal development to help you solidify your project ideas and outcomes, and strengthen your proposal.
- Make an appointment with a RISD Career Advisor to talk about your project idea.
- Make an appointment with a RISD Career Advisor to get feedback on your resume. You will need an excellent resume, both to secure your internship and to complete your Maharam Fellowship application.
- If you have any questions or concerns about securing a letter of recommendation, reach out to a RISD Career Advisor. See Note above under Letter of Recommendation.

### January

- Continue conversations with organizations to secure an offer letter
- Draft responses to essay questions. Keep in mind the key factors in selection: readiness, strength and fit, feasibility, and impact.
- Make an appointment with a RISD Career Advisor to discuss your essay responses. If writing is not your strong suite, we suggest you reach out to the RISD Center for Arts & Language.
- Find a faculty member or former supervisor (not someone at the internship site) willing to write your letter of recommendation.

### February

- Finalize essays, budget, and all application materials.
- We recommend that you have a verbal offer from an internship site by **February 1**. This gives you time to work with your supervisor(s) on the offer letter.
- We recommend that you have the letter in hand by **February 8**. This gives you time to fine-tune and upload to the application by the deadline.
- Confirm with your reference that their letter of recommendation will be emailed to Lisa Cramer at [lcramer@risd.edu](mailto:lcramer@risd.edu) by **noon on February 11**.
- Complete the online application by **NOON on Thursday, February 11, 2021**. Incomplete or late applications **WILL NOT** be accepted.
- Applicants are notified **in late February** if they have been selected to proceed to the interview stage.
- Selected candidates will be invited to interview and must sign up for an interview date/time **in late February**.

### March

- Interviews will be held **in early March**. Interviews will be 30 minutes. Candidates will provide a brief overview of their project and then the RISD Selection Committee will ask questions to determine feasibility, and internship fit and impact. The Committee will also help you further develop your project objectives, activities, and outcomes.
- Fellowship awardees will be notified of the RISD Selection Committee's decision **by the end of March**.

### April

- Fellows must submit the grant agreement and acceptance materials.
- Fellows must attend the Maharam Orientation & Dinner **in mid-April**.
- International students should check in with RISD's Office of International Student Services (OISS) and have their I-20 signed.
- Fellows wishing to receive credit for the internship must get approval from their Department Head.

### May

- All Maharam Fellowships are internships and must be registered in Artworks by mid-May.
- After you have registered in Artworks and have submitted your grant agreement and acceptance materials, RISD Careers will issue your grant payment. It is your responsibility to budget your grant funding as needed throughout the summer.
- Internship timeline and schedule for internship check-ins with the RISD Career Center Director, Kevin Jankowski must be determined.

**June-August**

- Fellows engage in their internships.
- Fellows are required to provide regular blog posts about their experiences on the RISD Maharam Fellows website. Fellows are required to blog at least every two weeks, at least 4 per the 8 week experience.
- Fellows are required to participate in three check-in meetings with the Director of the Career Center, Kevin Jankowski, via phone or Skype during the summer – at the beginning, middle, and end of the experience.
- Fellows should take notes throughout their experience in order to complete a detailed final report.
- Fellows submit a final evaluation in Artworks by August.

**October**

- Fellows submit a final narrative report by the end of October.

**RISD CONTACT**

Lisa Cramer, RISD Grants & Residencies Manager, [lcramer@risd.edu](mailto:lcramer@risd.edu), 401.454.6669

Kevin Jankowski, RISD Career Center Director, [kjankows@risd.edu](mailto:kjankows@risd.edu), 401.454.6619

Scott Malloy, RISD Senior Career Advisor, [smalloy@risd.edu](mailto:smalloy@risd.edu), 401.454.6615

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