HEAL Fellowship

Applicant Guide

2026

HEALTH EQUITY ACCELERATOR LEADERSHIP FELLOWSHIP
FOR UNDERGRADUATE APPLICANTS WORLDWIDE

HEAL Society

Supported by SRHIN Slum and Rural Health Initiative

BEFORE YOU APPLY

Read this first

This guide is for anyone thinking about applying to the HEAL Fellowship. It explains what the Fellowship is, what it asks of you, how we select Fellows, and how to write an application that shows us your best work.

Every application question is listed in full near the end, so you can draft your answers offline before you open the form.

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THE PROGRAM

About the HEAL Fellowship

The HEAL Fellowship brings together undergraduate students around the world who are committed to advancing health equity.

Begun as a flagship program of Slum and Rural Health Initiative (SRHIN), the Fellowship has grown into the leading program of HEAL Society, a global student-led movement for health equity, leadership and research-driven action in universities and communities.

Every Fellow brings a health project of their own and leads it through the Fellowship term, supported by mentorship, monthly courses and a community of peers. Fellows present their projects at HEAL Nexus, where the strongest are selected to scale.

What is new this cohort

The HEAL Fellowship has always developed leaders who build and strengthen HEAL Societies on their campuses. From the 2026 cohort, it goes further: every Fellow joins one of five health tracks with a project of their own, leads it through the year, and presents it at HEAL Nexus. The Fellowship is also now open to undergraduates worldwide.

> If you have been a HEAL Fellow before, you are welcome to apply again with a new project.

THE ESSENTIALS

At a glance

Who can apply	Undergraduate students at any university, polytechnic or college worldwide, from first year to final year. Postgraduate students are not eligible.
Your project	Every Fellow leads a health project of their own in one of five tracks. Group applications are not accepted.
Length	One academic session, opening with a 3-month confirmatory phase.
Commitment	A monthly course with a short task, a quarterly Fellows hangout, the annual convening of HEAL Societies, and HEAL Nexus.
HEAL Nexus	An online round, followed by a physical event in Nigeria that all Fellows are expected to attend.
Cost	Free to apply. Fellows cover their own travel to the physical HEAL Nexus, and travel grants may be available depending on funding.
Deadline	This cohort's application deadline is published on the HEAL Fellowship page at healfellowship.srhin.org.

CHOOSING YOUR FOCUS

The five tracks

You choose one track when you apply, based on the main health issue your project addresses. The examples below are only there to show the range. Your own project can look quite different.

Mental health	Projects on mental wellbeing, stigma and access to care. *For example:* A peer support circle for first-year students, or a campaign to reduce the stigma of seeking counselling on campus.
Infectious diseases	Projects on the prevention, testing and treatment of diseases such as malaria, HIV and tuberculosis. *For example:* A hostel-based malaria prevention drive, or an HIV testing awareness campaign run with a campus clinic.
Climate and environmental health	Projects on how climate, air, water and sanitation shape the health of communities. *For example:* Mapping waste and sanitation problems near campus and working with the community to address them.
Non-communicable diseases	Projects on conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, cancer and heart disease. *For example:* Blood pressure screening and referral days for university staff and nearby communities.
Maternal and child health	Projects on maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health. *For example:* Antenatal care awareness with community health workers in a nearby settlement, or text-message reminders for childhood immunisation.

Within your track, your project can use advocacy, research, technology and innovation, or a combination. If it touches more than one area, choose the track closest to the problem you are trying to solve.

HOW THE YEAR RUNS

The Fellowship year

If you are selected, your year follows one path, from onboarding to graduation.

Onboarding
You receive your HEAL Society member ID, the Fellows Handbook and your place in a track.

Confirmatory phase
The first 3 months. You join courses, set up your project and reach your first milestone before being formally recognised as a HEAL Fellow.

The working year
Monthly courses, quarterly Fellows hangouts and steady progress on your project, with updates at each milestone.

Annual convening
Every HEAL Society meets once a year for capacity building, games and team challenges.

HEAL Nexus online round
Every Fellow presents their project online, ahead of the physical event.

HEAL Nexus physical event
Fellows present in person in Nigeria. Projects are judged and the strongest are selected to scale.

Graduation
Fellows who meet every requirement receive the HEAL Society credential, certificate and lifetime badge.

THE DEAL

What you receive and what we expect

What you receive

- Mentorship from experienced health leaders
- Monthly courses in people management, volunteer management and project delivery
- Free entry to the SRHIN Research Academy
- The chance to apply for SEED funding and compete for prizes at HEAL Nexus
- A HEAL Society member ID at onboarding
- On graduation, a verifiable HEAL Society credential for LinkedIn, a certificate from HEAL Society and a lifetime social media badge
- Features in the HEAL Society newsletter and Ambassador Update for outstanding Fellows and societies

What we expect

- Complete a 3-month confirmatory phase before being formally recognised as a HEAL Fellow
- Attend the monthly course and complete its task
- Join the quarterly Fellows hangout
- Attend the annual convening of HEAL Societies
- Take part in the HEAL Nexus online round and attend the physical event in person
- Submit project updates at each milestone and a final project report

> Your progress is recorded on a personal scoresheet that you can view at any time. Fellows who become inactive receive a warning first, and fellowship status is withdrawn if participation does not improve.

> Fellows cover their own travel and accommodation for the physical HEAL Nexus. A limited number of travel grants may be awarded depending on available funding. Grants are not guaranteed, so please plan to fund your own attendance.

SELECTION

How we select

What we look for

Commitment to health equity	You care about who gets left behind in health, and you can tell us why it matters to you personally.
Leadership in action	You have already taken initiative, and you can show what you did and what changed because of it.
A project with promise	You have a clear health problem, a community you want to serve, and a realistic plan to make progress within the Fellowship term.
Showing up for others	You will attend, contribute and help the Fellows and members around you.

The stages

1 Application	Submit the online form before the deadline. Every application is read and assessed against the same four criteria.
2 Decision	Every applicant hears from us by email, whether or not they are selected.
3 Onboarding	Selected applicants receive their HEAL Society member ID and the Fellows Handbook.
4 Confirmatory phase	The first 3 months. Fellows who meet its requirements are formally recognised as HEAL Fellows.

ADVICE

Writing a strong application

The strongest applications are specific, honest and written in the applicant's own voice. You do not need perfect English or a long list of titles. You need to show us clearly who you are and what you will do.

Before you start

- Read every question first, then draft your answers offline in a document you can save.
- Keep within the word limit for each answer. Shorter and clearer is better than longer and vague.
- Write in your own words. We want to hear you, not a template.

About you

Describing yourself. Lead with what you do rather than a list of qualities. "I run a weekly health talk in my hostel" tells us more than "I am passionate and hardworking".

What health equity means to you. Start from a real moment or experience that made it personal, then connect it to what you want to change.

Initiative and leadership. For each example, say what the situation was, what you did yourself, and what changed as a result. Use "I" for your part, so we can see your role clearly.

Checking your answers

- Would someone who has never met you understand what you did and why it mattered?
- Have you given a real example, not a general claim?
- If you used any figures, can you say where they came from?

ADVICE

Writing about your project

Your project section matters most. Reviewers want to see that you understand the problem, have a realistic plan, and know how you will tell whether it worked.

The problem. Name the health issue and the specific community you will work with. Tell us what you know about it, whether from data, from what you have seen, or from people affected. If you use numbers, say where they come from.

Your solution. Describe what you will actually do, in the order you will do it, and why it suits this community.

Your milestones. Make each milestone something you could clearly say you have or have not done.

> LESS CLEAR
> Create awareness about hypertension in my community.

> CLEARER
> By the end of the confirmatory phase, agree a partnership with the campus health centre and hold our first blood pressure screening day.

Measuring success. Choose indicators you can actually count or observe.

> LESS CLEAR
> Many people will benefit.

> CLEARER
> Number of people screened, number referred for care, and number who return for a follow-up check.

Funding and support. Link each cost to an activity, and tell us about support that is not money, such as partners, venues or advice.

Scaling. Say what would grow if your project is selected: more sites, more people reached, or a partner taking the approach on.

DRAFT OFFLINE

The application questions

These are the questions in the application form, with their word limits. Draft your answers here first, then copy them into the form.

Eligibility and personal details

1 Are you currently enrolled as an undergraduate student at a university, polytechnic or college?

2 First name

3 Last name

4 Email address

5 Phone number, including country code (WhatsApp preferred)

6 Date of birth

7 Sex

Education

8 Name of your university, polytechnic or college

9 Country where your institution is based

10 State, province or region where your institution is based

11 Course of study

12 Current year of study

13 Expected year of graduation

14 Is there a HEAL Society at your institution?

15 If you currently hold a role in a HEAL Society, what is it? (optional)

About you

16 Describe yourself in 2 sentences. (50 words)

17 Rate your experience in team building, written and oral communication, research writing, grant or proposal writing, project planning, community mobilisation, IT or innovation skills, and social media communication.

18 What does health equity mean to you, and why are you interested in it? (180 words)

19 Describe one or two times you took initiative on a project or in an organisation. (180 words)

20 Describe one or two times you used your leadership skills to solve a challenge or problem. (250 words)

Your project

21 Project title

22 Which track is your project in?

23 Which approach will your project mainly use?

24 What stage is your project at?

25 The problem: what health issue will you focus on, which community is affected, and why does it matter? (200 words)

26 Your solution: what will you do, and what makes your approach different or innovative? (250 words)

27 Your milestones: what will you have achieved by the end of the confirmatory phase, by the HEAL Nexus online round, and by the physical event? (200 words)

28 How will you measure success? Name 2 or 3 specific indicators. (120 words)

29 If you received SEED funding, how would you use it, and what other support would your project need? (150 words)

30 If your project is selected to scale after HEAL Nexus, what would scaling look like? (120 words)

31 A link to any supporting material, such as a concept note or pitch deck. (optional)

Leadership

32 Would you like to be considered to lead a HEAL Society at your institution as President or Co-President?

33 If yes: why are you the right person, and what would you do in your first 90 days? (150 words)

Availability and commitment

34 Confirm you can meet all of the Fellowship commitments, including attending HEAL Nexus in person.

35 Would you like to be considered for a travel grant if one becomes available?

36 If yes: why would you need support to attend HEAL Nexus? (80 words)

37 What time zone are you in?

38 Anything that could limit your participation during the Fellowship term. (optional)

39 Any accessibility needs or support requirements. (optional)

Online presence and referee

40 Link to your LinkedIn profile

41 Link to another social media profile. (optional)

42 A referee who can speak to your leadership. (optional)

Final questions

43 If you were an animal, which ONE would you be, and why? (50 words)

44 How did you hear about this opportunity?

45 Commitment declaration

46 Data and media consent

47 Rate the application form

48 Any questions or comments? (optional)

BEFORE YOU SUBMIT

A final check

- You are currently an undergraduate student
- Every required answer is complete and within its word limit
- Your project sits clearly in one of the five tracks
- Your milestones and indicators are specific
- Any links you share open for anyone, and your LinkedIn link is correct
- You have read the commitments, including attending HEAL Nexus in person

Questions

Write to **healfellowship@srhin.org** or visit **healfellowship.srhin.org**.

LinkedIn: linkedin.com/company/healsocietyglobal X: @HEALSociety_ Instagram: @wearehealglobal

HEAL Society

HEAL Society is supported by its parent organisation

SRHIN Slum and Rural Health Initiative