



Curran Fellowships Application Guidelines

See the current awards calendar at <http://rs4vp.org/awards/award-calendar/> for all application and recommendation letter deadlines.

Please note that Officers and Directors of RSVP are prohibited from applying for RSVP grants and fellowships. Please contact president@rs4vp.org with any questions not addressed below.

I. General Information

The Curran Fellowships are research and travel awards intended to support the use of primary sources for the exploration of any aspects of the British periodical press in any of its manifold forms, forms that may range from within Britain itself to the many countries, within and outside of the Empire, where British magazines and newspapers circulated during the “long nineteenth century” (ca. 1780-1914).

The Research Society for Victorian Periodicals (RSVP) intends to grant at least six Curran Fellowship awards each calendar year. Applicants may request any amount of support up to \$5000; the Curran Fellowships Committee may choose partial funding of successful applications.

The Curran Fellowships are intended to provide a researcher with funds to cover only those expenses directly related to research, such as transportation, lodging, photocopies, scanning, database subscriptions, and the like. Indirect expenses are not covered.

The fellowship is named for the late Eileen M. Curran (1928-2013), Professor Emerita of English at Colby College in Waterville, Maine. She taught English at Colby from 1958 to 1992, and was a pioneer of periodicals research, serving as associate editor of the *Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals*, Vols. 1-3. A founding member of RSVP, Professor Curran established the Curran Fellowships in 2009, and bequeathed funds to RSVP for their continuance and expansion. Her vision of the importance of basic research, compellingly presented, animates her namesake competition.

II. Eligibility

The Curran Fellowships are intended to support primary research on the nineteenth-century periodical press: magazines, newspapers, and serial publications of all kinds. Therefore, eligible projects *must* engage with primary sources, whether those sources appear in print, manuscript, or digital facsimile. All else being equal, preference will be given to projects that use or bring to light new or little-known materials about the periodical press.

The fellowship research must begin during the calendar year following the application deadline.

Only one application may be submitted by an individual per deadline.

Only one applicant is permitted per application. (Those seeking support for collaborative projects should consider the [RSVP Field Development Grants](#).)

Those holding academic appointments as well as graduate students and independent or retired scholars are equally welcome to apply. An academic degree or affiliation is not required.

Applicants are strongly encouraged, but not required, to become RSVP members.

Applicants may hold grants or fellowships from other organizations concurrent with a Curran Fellowship. However, a Curran Fellowship winner may not hold other RSVP awards in the same calendar year.

Officers and Directors of RSVP are not eligible to apply.

III. The Application

All applications must be submitted through the online application portal at <https://rs4vp.smapply.io/> no later than 11:59 p.m. US Pacific time on the deadline listed in the awards calendar.

The application portal will open two weeks before the application deadline, at which time applicants may create an account and begin preparing and submitting their proposals. At the application portal you may start your application and finish submitting it at a later date.

As a courtesy to evaluators, RSVP strongly recommends that applicants prepare their proposals using a readable font, not smaller than 11 point, with margins of at least one inch. Documents may be single spaced.

An application includes the following components:

1. An online application form, which collects the following information:

- a) Full name
- b) Postal address
- c) Email address
- d) Telephone number
- e) Affiliation (if applicable)
- f) Proposed period of the fellowship
- g) Amount of request (not to exceed \$5000)
- h) Project title
- i) Brief project description (50-75 words)

2. A c.v. not to exceed two single-spaced pages, uploaded in PDF, .docx, or RTF format. This document should include current and past employment; education; recent publications, awards, and honors; and other information relevant to the review of the proposed project.
3. A narrative proposal not to exceed three single-spaced pages, uploaded in PDF, .docx, or RTF format. This document must explain the nature and background of your project, the specific research you intend to do with the support of the Curran funds, the time frame for conducting that research, and how the Curran-enabled research contributes to the goals of the larger project. Be sure to explain how your research will help to advance scholarly understanding of the nineteenth-century British periodical press more generally. This last is very important. The Curran Fellowships are not intended to support historical or literary research that merely makes some use of Victorian newspapers and magazines as sources, but, rather, to support research that tells us something new about the nature of those publications, their role in the nineteenth-century literary marketplace, and the people who wrote, illustrated, edited, published, sold, bought, and read them.
4. A one-page description of the printed and manuscript materials you want to explore, and why, uploaded in PDF, .docx, or RTF format. Be as specific as you can. For example, if you propose looking at runs of certain periodicals, give specific titles and date-spans for them; likewise, if you want to work in a publisher's or author's archive, indicate what kinds of documents there you intend to inspect. Make sure that all the materials you mention will in fact be available to you at the time of your proposed visit. Make sure that the materials you are proposing to travel to see are not already available to you in microfilm or digital form, or in a repository closer to home. Any archives that you plan to visit with Curran Fellowship assistance need not necessarily be in the UK, as many libraries in other parts of the world have important collections that are of interest to students of Victorian periodicals. If you need to travel to another institution to use an electronic database not available to you locally, or to subscribe to such a resource, please mention that, as well.
5. The name and email address of one recommender familiar with the proposed project. The recommender will receive an email with a link to upload a recommendation letter directly into the application system. The recommendation letter deadline is listed in the award calendar. Applicants are responsible for soliciting the letter of recommendation from someone familiar with their project who can also speak to its contribution to nineteenth-century periodical studies. The letters should address the evaluation criteria below. While the absence of a letter of recommendation from an application will not make it ineligible, a letter that arrives late (or not at all) may make an application less competitive.

IV. How Applications will be Evaluated

A group of interdisciplinary evaluators with knowledge of periodicals in the long nineteenth century will use the following criteria to evaluate applications. Applications and letters of recommendation should be crafted with these criteria in mind.

1. The importance of the project, including its use of materials relevant to deeper understanding of the British periodical press in the nineteenth-century.

2. The quality of the application, including its clarity of expression.
3. The applicant's preparation to pursue the project.
4. The feasibility of the plan of work and the likelihood that the applicant will bring the entire project to a successful completion in due course.

Evaluators will use the evaluation criteria to identify the best applications. Final decisions and award amounts (up to \$5,000) will be based on the overall budget of the program, an applicant's specific requested amount, and the justification of that amount as put forward in the plan of work.

Please note that need is not a criterion.

V. Notification and Award Administration

If quality applications are received, RSVP anticipates naming at least six awardees at the end of the competition.

Award notification will take place by email. Awardees must confirm their acceptance of the award within two weeks' time.

All decisions are final. Unsuccessful applicants may choose to revise and resubmit their applications in future competitions.

Awards are made directly to individuals in USD but may be paid, upon instruction from an awardee, through the awardee's employing institution. Indirect costs are not permitted. Converting the award amount into an awardee's local currency may involve a fee; please budget accordingly.

At the conclusion of the grant period, awardees must submit a narrative report describing grant activities and a financial statement describing the use of award funds. The narrative report may be published on the RSVP website. All publications or other research outputs resulting from fellowship support must include the following acknowledgement: "This publication received support of a Curran Fellowship awarded by the Research Society for Victorian Periodicals and funded from the bequest of the Eileen Curran estate."