

HRW Fellowships in International Human Rights - FAQs

The logo for Human Rights Watch, consisting of the words "HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH" in white, uppercase, sans-serif font, arranged in three lines within a solid blue square.

HUMAN
RIGHTS
WATCH

Q: How many fellowships does HRW offer?

A: Human Rights Watch currently offers three fellowships:

- [Alan R. and Barbara D. Finberg Fellowship](#) – a one-year fellowship open to recent graduates, from any institution, domestic or foreign;
- [The Leonard H. Sandler Fellowship](#) – a one-year fellowship open only to recent J.D. graduates of Columbia Law School; and
- [The NYU School of Law Fellowship at HRW](#) – a one-year fellowship open only to 2018 JD graduates of New York University School of Law and recent J.D. graduates who would begin the fellowship immediately upon completion of a judicial clerkship.

Q: Do you accept non-US nationals to be considered for HRW fellowships?

A: Yes. The fellowships are open to everyone who meets the eligibility criteria, regardless of nationality or immigration status. Human Rights Watch will assist prospective fellows in obtaining the necessary work authorization; citizens of all nationalities are encouraged to apply.

Q: Can I speak to someone from the Fellowship Committee?

A: The Fellowship Committee is unable to respond to individual requests for information. Applicants should not call Human Rights Watch under any circumstances with questions concerning their application. You can send inquiries by email for the Finberg, Sandler, and NYU Fellowships to fellowships@hrw.org.

Q: When the year is over and one has completed the fellowship program, are there possibilities of full-time employment at Human Rights Watch?

A: Some fellows do go on to long-term employment with HRW. If there is an employment opportunity that opens up for which the fellow is qualified, fellows are encouraged to apply. However, there is no guarantee of future employment with HRW. Fellows often find employment with other human rights organizations, international organizations, or academic institutions, depending on their qualifications.

Q: What are the chances of getting a fellowship?

A: The Human Rights Watch fellowships are highly competitive. Last year, we received roughly 1,100 applications. Out of these, we were able to interview only 12 candidates, for three fellowship positions. We expect a similar number of applicants and interviewees this year.

Q: May I apply for more than one fellowship?

A: You may apply for more than one Human Rights Watch fellowship in any given fellowship year. You should submit separate, complete applications for each fellowship for which you intend to apply (the application materials may be identical).

Q: What degree is required to be eligible for the fellowships?

A: For the Sandler Fellowship, prospective fellows must be recent law graduates. Preference will be given to 2018 graduates and recent graduates who are completing a judicial clerkship (LL.M.s are **not** eligible).

For the NYU Fellowship, prospective fellows must be 2018 law graduates or recent J.D. graduates who would begin the fellowship immediately upon completion of a judicial clerkship (LL.M.s are **not** eligible).

For the Finberg Fellowship, applicants must be graduates of law, journalism, international relations or other relevant studies at the Master's level. Graduates with LL.B. degrees or advanced degrees in other relevant disciplines may also be considered. LL.M.s are also eligible.

Q: What do you mean when you say fellowship applicants must have experience conducting interviews?

A: The strongest applicants for the Human Rights Watch fellowships have direct experience interviewing victims of human rights abuses. All applicants must be able to demonstrate some kind of interviewing experience. Interviewing experience may take different forms, including: interviewing victims of human rights abuses for human rights reporting; interviewing for news articles; interviewing clients through legal aid clinics or similar settings; conducting interviews as part of refugee status determination; conducting interview-based academic research or other research, etc.

Q: To whom should I address my cover letter?

A: Applicants may address their cover letter to the Human Rights Watch Fellowships Committee.

Q: Should I propose a specific project/area of interest in my application?

A: Your application should describe your areas of experience, expertise, interest, and your qualifications for the fellowship. Human Rights Watch will assign you to a regional or thematic division based on institutional needs and the strengths of your application.

Q: Are there any guidelines on the content or form of the writing sample?

A: Applicants should submit one writing sample only. The writing samples should be no longer than 15,000 characters. The writing sample may be an excerpt from a longer work. You should submit a piece of writing which you feel reflects your commitment and experience in the field of human rights. Whether or not it contains citations, footnotes, etc., is up to you. Please **do not** submit a legal brief as a writing sample.

You may submit any document which has been edited only by you. If you wish to submit a document which has been published, for example in a law review or magazine, you must submit your original version, i.e. the article as it was before anyone else edited it.

Q: When do I submit the letters of recommendation and what is required for them?

A: A letter of recommendation is a letter written by someone who knows you in a professional or academic capacity testifying to your suitability for a fellowship position. Your recommendations should come from any individual who can testify as to your qualifications for the fellowships. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted at a later stage in the application process to submit two letters of recommendation.

Q: When do I submit my school transcripts and what is required for them?

A: Official transcripts are stamped or signed documents from your university confirming what grades/marks and degrees you earned. Please do not include copies of diplomas or degree certificates. Please note that if transcripts of your graduate work are not yet available, you must include an official transcript of your undergraduate work and an official letter from your graduate program confirming your enrollment. (Applicants currently in one-year graduate programs should supply an undergraduate transcript with a list of their graduate school courses). Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted at a later stage in the application process to submit their transcript.

Q: Does my transcript need to be translated into English?

A: Yes. If the transcript is not in English, please provide the original and a certified translation.

Q: What happens if I am invited for an interview?

A: In the event that you are offered an interview, Human Rights Watch will make the necessary arrangements and cover reasonable travel costs.

Q: When will I hear the results of my application?

A: Interviews will be held in late November to mid-December for the Finberg, Sandler, and NYU Fellowships, and final decisions will be announced in early to mid-January. Please note that short-listed candidates will be contacted directly by phone or e-mail.

Q: If I receive a fellowship, will Human Rights Watch pay for relocation and work authorization costs?

A: Yes. Human Rights Watch will assist with and pay for obtaining work authorization. If an employee is asked to relocate by the organization, Human Rights Watch may pay certain relocation expenses in particular cases, upon prior approval of the Director of Global Human Resources, such as:

- Economy travel (including meals and lodging) to the new location
- The cost of shipping personal belongings and business files to the new location
- Temporary, short-term living expenses at the new location