# Keck School of Medicine of USC

**The Center for Health Equity in the Americas**
Keck School of Medicine of USC
**Ambassadors Brigade Fellowship Description and Application Process**

**About the Ambassadors Brigade Fellowship Program:**

The Center for Health Equity in the Americas (CenHealth) is housed at the Keck School of Medicine (KSOM) of USC under the direction of Dr. Lourdes Baezconde-Garbanati, Associate Dean for Community Initiatives at the KSOM, and Dr. Mary Ann Pentz as Co-Director. They are Professors in the Department of Preventive Medicine, Institute for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Research. CenHealth is possible with funding from the KSOM Dean's Office. The purpose of CenHealth is to conduct and promote student/faculty national and international research on finding solutions to health disparities throughout the Americas (North America, South America, Central America and the Caribbean); that will contribute to closing gaps in vulnerable populations achieving health equity. We are seeking USC KSOM graduate level students to be part of the KSOM CenHealth Ambassadors Brigade Fellowship Program. KSOM students will need to conduct research on health equity with a USC KSOM faculty mentor and an international or national partner/supervisor for a period of approximately 6 weeks. This period can be split between the U.S. and abroad.

Ambassadors Brigade Students may conduct their own original research, clinical practice, or a practicum with research components, or work on faculty research or site-specific research projects that aim at the correction of health disparities. The ultimate goal of the experience is to help students in the development of their academic career, clinical practice, practicum or other, thus moving along the pipeline with a focus on health equity.

**Funding:**

The program will provide students with a one-time research stipend to cover the cost of conducting research (national or international), dissemination of the research at meetings and conferences, living expenses (for those doing research outside of the Los Angeles area or in another country), and travel. The stipend will be determined based on the itemized budget of research expenses submitted with the application, but no more than $3,000 per person. A budget with supporting justifications for the study proposal is required. Funding will not be dispersed until all CenHealth travel requirements (such as vaccinations, medical emergency information, medical and travel insurance, and any USC form requirements associated with student travel abroad) have been completed and proof has been submitted to CenHealth.

**Eligibility Requirements:**
- KSOM graduate level students (masters level, doctoral, and/or medical students)
- Minimum GPA 3.5
- Citizen or resident of the United States with a valid ID and/or current passport (if planning to travel outside of the U.S.)
- International students already conducting studies via USC KSOM or USC KSOM students with Visas may be eligible on a case-by-case basis (Please contact us as soon as possible if interested in applying and before submitting an application).
- Research project must be related to health equity or the correction of health disparities among vulnerable population in the Americas (North America, Central America, South America, the Caribbean, with emphasis on Pacific Rim countries along the Western Hemisphere).
- Appropriate research study design and clear study aims and/or research questions must be explained in the research proposal.
- Plan to conduct research project between November 2019 and November 2020.
- Applicant should not have a pending or funded CenHealth Community Health Equity and Dissemination Scholarship.
- Applications will not be accepted for countries with travel warnings by the U.S. Department of State. Please make sure to carefully review the U.S. Dept. of State's Alerts and Warnings website at http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/alertswarnings.html

**Language Requirements:**

If you are proposing a project in a country/region where English is not the primary language or with a population that is mostly monolingual, you must have a strong proficiency or fluency in the predominant language of the proposed site or a mechanism through which you will include translators.  You may include in-country translation costs in your budget with proper justification.

**IRB Requirements:**

All potential Ambassadors Brigade students that participate in this research program must have a valid Human Subjects certificate from USC, and their project needs to be approved by the USC IRB board prior to collecting data. In many cases students may also need to seek equivalent Human Subjects Research approval in the country where they are conducting the research.  Please submit a copy of your USC Human Subject certification with your application. To complete your human subject certification, visit https://www.citiprogram.org/. To obtain an iStar account to obtain IRB approval of your study project visit https://istar.usc.edu/ (this can be completed after the award has been announced). To submit your study, please work with your USC faculty advisor at USC and your international or national community partner in the selected country, as needed.

**Letters of support:**

Two letters of support for your project are required, one from a USC faculty member who will be your advisor on the project and one from your international or national community partner/supervisor supporting your research.  Both will need to include an explanation of how they will provide support to you while you conduct your study. The letter of support from your international or national community partner/supervisor will need to be submitted in their respective letterhead and can be submitted with the online application. The research partner needs to agree they reviewed the proposed project and agrees to supervise the applicant. The letter from your USC faculty mentor can also be attached to your online application and will confirm their participation in your project as a faculty mentor or can be sent as an email to the main contact person in CenHealth (Yaneth Rodriguez) ylr@usc.edu.

**Application Process and Deadlines:**

Please submit your application along with a 1-page cover letter explaining why you think you are an optimal candidate for this fellowship, your resume/CV, your two letters of support, and other materials listed below no later than 11:59pm on October 4, 2019.  Please email ylr@usc.edu the complete packet application and include in the subject line: "USC Health Equity Ambassadors Brigade Application."  You will receive an email confirmation that your application has been received within 1-2 days of submitting. Applications will be reviewed by a selection committee.  Notice of awards will be announced October 18, 2019.

*Materials to be submitted by student applicant:*
- 1-2 page Cover Letter describing the individual student's: 1) Research interest and goals, 2) Relevant skills and experience, 3) Reasons for USC KSOM student's interest in the country selected and health equity topic, 4) Reasons why they are an optimal candidate for this fellowship, 5) Type of application (clearly indicate whether its original research, clinical practice or a practicum with research components), 6) Estimated research project timeframe, and 7) Length of time of the research project abroad or in the U.S. If the time will be split between the U.S. and a foreign country, please specify.
- Resume or CV
- Application – Details below
- Research Project Proposal
- USC Faculty Mentor letter of support or email of support
- International or National Community partner/supervisor letter of support
- Copy of Human Subject Certificate
- Copy of unofficial transcripts (Cumulative GPA must be clearly visible)

**Application Review and Selection:**

A selection committee composed of faculty, staff, and student/s will systematically review each student applications using a score-card with scores from 1-9 (1 being the highest). The review criteria includes: overall impact of the project (how it will help eliminate or reduce a disparity or alleviate a health inequity), significance of the project, qualifications of the student, mentor and international or national community partner/supervisor, innovation, approach, dissemination potential and feasibility of completing the program within the specified timeframe. The selection committee will convene to select final candidates, and the announcement of award will be made October 18, 2019.

**Project Requirements (After Acceptance):**

- Completion of research minimally in 6 weeks to 1 year. Please note if you plan to use this research project as your MPH Practicum, please consult with the practicum advisors and/or Practicum Director as there is a specific minimum requirement of 6 weeks for this research project, but practicum requirements may be different). **The time period to start as early as November 2019**. The Practicum Director or Practicum Coordinators will sign your application, stating that you are eligible to conduct your practicum at the time you apply.
- Plan for dissemination of the research (such as journal articles, conferences, poster presentations, meetings nationally and/or internationally). Contribute to the CenHealth website with a weekly blog that also includes pictures highlighting the research project and your experiences.
- Picture, bio, and research interest of the student ambassador to be posted on the CenHealth Website.
- Copy of iStar IRB study application. Appropriate documentation of in-country IRB study approval (if applicable).
- If traveling out of country, all CenHealth travel requirements should be completed and proof should be submitted to CenHealth prior to travel.
  - Travel vaccinations will need to be processed prior to travel. Documentation to this effect needs to be submitted to CenHealth prior to travel and will be kept on file.
  - Medical Emergency Information
  - Confidential Medical Information document with any important medical information or conditions that CenHealth needs to be aware off will need to be submitted prior to travel. This includes chronic conditions such as diabetes, asthma, HIV, mental health conditions, such as depression, or other, especially if person is taking medication or condition is not in control for any reason.
  - Medical and travel insurance information. Proof of insurance will need to be submitted to CenHealth and will be kept on file.
  - Medical information can be provided via email or in-person. Medical information provided will be kept confidential in a lock and key cabinet.

**Project Requirements (After Research Has Been Completed):**

- Dissemination of the research (such as journal articles, conferences, poster presentations, meetings nationally and/or internationally).
- Involvement in Center for Health Equity in the Americas Summit (date to be determined) via a poster or oral presentation.
- Periodic updates to CenHealth regarding your progress will be required.
- A final program and financial report to close out the account will be needed at the end of the project.

**For more information contact:**
Yaneth Rodriguez, [ylr@usc.edu](mailto:ylr@usc.edu) or call at 323-442-8210

# CenHealth Ambassador Brigade Fellowship Application

| Applicant Information | |
|---|---|
| KSOM Student Name | |
| USC ID Number | |
| Mailing Address | |
| E-Mail Address | |
| Home Phone # | |
| Cell Phone # | |
| Year in School | |
| Department/Program | |
| Is your program a residential or online program? | |
| Expected graduation date | |
| Dates of proposed project time frame | (Month/Year - Month/Year) |

| Country where research project will take place and predominant language spoken? | Country | Language |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

| If predominant language of the country is not English check plan for translation. | __ I am fluent in the predominant language<br>__ I plan to use a translator/translation agency<br>__ Other (please specify:_____) |
|---|---|

__ Check if there are any warnings issued on the U.S. Dept. of State's Alerts and Warnings website for the specific country where you plan to do your research ( http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/alertswarnings.html)

| USC Faculty Mentor Information | |
|---|---|
| Mentor Name | |
| Position Title | |
| School | |
| Department | |
| Mailing Address | |
| Phone Number | |
| E-Mail Address | |

| Intended International or National Research Community Partner/Supervisor's Information (outside USC partner) | |
|---|---|
| Partner/Supervisor Name | |
| Position Title | |
| Degree | |
| Institution/Department | |
| Mailing Address | |
| Phone Number | |
| E-Mail Address | |

## Letters of Support (2 letters required)

__ Check if a USC Faculty Mentor Letter of Support has been attached to the application.

__ Check if an International or National Research Community Partner/Supervisor Letter of Support has been attached to the application.  The research/community partner is agreeing they reviewed the proposed project and agrees to supervise the individual.

| Person in the U.S. to Notify in Case of Emergency | |
|---|---|
| Name | |
| Relationship to applicant | |
| Home Phone # | |
| Work Phone # | |
| E-Mail Address | |
| Mailing Address | |

## Research Project Proposal

The research proposal should be typed in Times New Roman font with a font size of 11 points or larger. Use at least one-half inch margins (top, bottom, left, and right) for all pages. No information should appear in the margins. The proposal cannot exceed 3 pages; excluding the budget and budget justification section, and the mentor/partner/supervisor qualifications section.

*The research proposal should include the following:*
- Title of Proposed Project
- Significance of Problem (1/4 page)
- Overall Impact: How will this study help alleviate an inequality in health? (1/4 page)
- Specific Aims (hypothesis or research questions, no more than 3) (1/4 page)
- Innovation (Why is this study innovative?) (1/4 page)
- Approach (Study design and recruitment) (1 and 1/4 page)
- Feasibility of completing the proposed project within the proposed timeframe (up to 1/4 page)
- Timeline (1/4 page)
- Dissemination plan (1/4 page) (Specify audiences, potential partners, strategy, channels, names of conferences you plan to submit abstracts to, be specific).
- Mentor and International or national partner/supervisor qualifications (up to 1/2 page) (Description of the organization you will be working with. What are the qualifications of the primary organization outside USC you will be working with?) (pages not counted towards the 3 page maximum research project proposal)
- Budget and Budget Justification (2 pages) (pages not counted towards the 3 page maximum research project proposal)

## Key Dates:
- *Application Submission deadline is **October 4, 2019**.*
- *Notice of awards will be announced **October 18, 2019**.*