

Summer Adjuncting

Finding summer teaching

Sometimes a summer course falls in your lap, and sometimes it is hard to find. Here are several tips for finding summer teaching:

- Look early and often. Most colleges and universities finish their Spring term at the beginning of May, which means that summer classes start to enroll much earlier.
- Make use of an institution's Human Resources webpage to look for summer adjunct positions. Remember that state-funded institutions are obligated to advertise positions.
- Reach out to the department chair. The chair of a department is responsible for all hiring. It is appropriate to email this person, introduce yourself briefly, and ask if there are openings for summer teaching. Even if there are no openings at the moment, you have started a conversation that could lead to future work.
 - Here is a sample email: Dear Dr. _____, My name is _____, and I am a doctoral student in English at the University of Denver, specializing in _____.

I am writing to ask if your department is in need of summer instructors. I have experience teaching first-year composition, introductory literature courses, and creative writing. I have attached a two-page CV and teaching portfolio with student evaluations.

If there are no openings at the moment, might it be possible to be considered for adjunct teaching during the upcoming academic year?

Thank you for your time,

The pros and cons of summer adjuncting

Pros:

- Summer adjuncting can be a good way to get your foot in the door for Fall/Spring term employment.
- It enables you to work for part of the summer but leaves the rest free for you to engage in uninterrupted research.
- Adjuncts generally teach introductory courses, and these are beneficial to you as a developing teacher. First year composition, an Introduction to Literature course, or a period survey are classes that most colleges and universities want (and need) their faculty to teach. Building this experience and repertoire now can benefit you later down the road in an interview.

Cons:

- Summer adjuncting pays extremely poorly and as a general rule offers no health insurance or other medical benefits. It is exploitative. I cannot overstate this.

Summer Fellowships

Many graduate students hold summer fellowships which enable them to access archives, gain language training, and do fieldwork relevant to their dissertation projects. These fellowships generally include a stipend that covers travel, lodging, meals, and incidentals. Fellowships can last from 1 to 3 months.

Here are few nationally-recognized fellowships:

- [The Huntington Library Short-Term Fellowships](#) (currently suspended due to COVID-19 but well worth keeping in mind for the future)
- [American Antiquarian Society Fellowships](#)
- [American Philosophical Society Fellowships](#)
- [New York Public Library Short-Term Research Fellowships](#)

If you're not sure where you might find research materials that are relevant to your project, the best thing to do is talk with your advisor. They can help you understand how summer research works, when you might need to go to an archive or to do field research, and how to go about finding materials in an archive.

The most important aspect of fellowship applications is that you begin the application process well in advance of the deadline. Summer (and year-long) fellowships are not last-minute projects.

Other types of summer work

Graduate students have a somewhat notorious track record of doing all kinds of things to stay afloat financially during the summer. Here are a few things some of my grad student friends and I (Donna Beth) did to make summer money:

Pizza delivery

Ms. Cleo psychic (If you don't know who Ms. Cleo was, you should ask The Google.)

Bartending

SAT tutoring

Data entry

While any job is a fine way to make money, you might consider options that could lead to part-time work during the academic year and/or serve as resume-building experiences:

- Temping—This can be very steady and can pay well. It is often in low-stress office environments, which enables you to work for some of the day and still feel like you have the energy to write/research once you get home. Temp employees can determine their availability, and a temp job can lead to long-term placement (if you're interested in that).
- Internships—Yes, I know...but internships are not just for undergraduate students. While many internships are unpaid, some do come with a paycheck, and all afford the opportunity for you to develop skills and contacts that may serve you during and after your PhD. For example, you might look for a summer position at a publishing house; at an archive, cultural center, or museum; or in an administrative department of a college or university.
 - A good place to start is [DU's Career Center Internship page](#)

- Large publishing houses often advertise internships through their own websites. As examples, take a look at [HarperCollins](#), [NightBoat Books](#), and [Oxford University Press](#).
- Archival internships can be found on job boards like Indeed, but also try [Archives Gigs](#) (which advertises paid, remote work), or look into working at a specific location like the [Library of Congress](#).
- In Denver, there are a number of museums and cultural institutions that could yield summer employment/internships that pair well with your research interests. Consider the [Museo de las Americas](#) and the [Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library](#) as well as the [Denver Art Museum](#) (which has collections that cover a wide variety of periods, topics, and peoples).
- Freelance writing and editing— Sometimes, graduate students can forget that poetry, fiction, and literary criticism are only a few of the many genres used by academics. Grants, proposals, reports, and indexing are other prose genres important to a variety of organizations and in a variety of online spaces. These types of writing have academic and employment value.
 - Proposal/Grant writing: Your MA or PhD application may have been your first stab at proposal/grant writing. And it paid off: your proposal to our department was accepted, and you received merit-based financial aid. If you have applied for 4th year funding, an OGS conference stipend, or an external dissertation fellowship, you have more experience with writing in these genres. Do you know how proposals and grants should look, though? Maybe not. If you like grant writing (personally, I love this genre and enjoy writing in it), consider a certificate in grant writing as a means of gaining targeted skills and developing work-oriented contacts. Think about talking with [Jennifer Collum](#), the external grant manager for CAHSS, to find out what she does and how she landed her position.
- Indexing is a big, big part of the academic publishing world. Indexers are generally freelance, so they can take on as much or as little work as they like. The [American Society of Indexing](#) not only offers training in the field but also advertises ASI-member indexers.
- Freelance editing: So much of the work world happens because of connections. If you'd like to build a freelance clientele, here are a few places to start:
 - Go to a temp employment office and put yourself in their worker pool. Include editing/proposal writing as part of your skill set. Consider your years in graduate school as years of writing/editing experience; consider your time in the Writing Center as employment experience.
 - Build a LinkedIn profile that advertises your employment with DU's Writing Center and accounts for your graduate writing/editing experience.
 - If you bartend or work in a coffee shop, see these positions as opportunities for writing or editorial work. You don't have to sell yourself from behind the counter, but understand that this social/professional network has value to your writing life. Make the most of it.
 - Use DU's alumni network to your benefit. Make an appointment with Megan Pritchett in Career Services to discover ways that you can reach out and connect with DU alums who may be in need of writing and editing services. A number of English PhDs from DU are professional grant writers and editors. Use this network.
- AP exam reading: While it may make your head spin, this is yet another good option for short-term work in June. Click here for [AP Exam Reader info](#).