Guide for CLIR Postdoctoral Fellowship Candidates

Compiled by several current and former fellows from 2017-2018

The CLIR postdoc

- CLIR Fellowships are “postdocs” in the sense that they are awarded to recent doctoral grads. Postdoctoral fellows usually focus a significant amount of time (50-100%) on institutional projects, with some fellows dedicating time to teaching or independent/individual research. The nature of the work is determined by the hosting institution. Almost all postdoctoral fellows are appointed through an institution's library, and as such are held to its standards and expectations. Most CLIR fellows are held to the standards and expectations of a library employee.

- CLIR offers various kinds of postdocs. Positions funded by grant foundations like Mellon generally have a fixed salary and a thematic focus; recipients of these positions often form a single cohort. Other positions are funded by the hosting institution (i.e. the library you'll be working for), but receive other CLIR benefits, including orientation, training workshops, and (in some cases) some extra funds.

- CLIR guidelines state that candidates must have ‘permission to work’ in the USA, meaning you must have a visa in hand. However, a number of CLIR postdocs have been hired on J1 visas - it varies by institution, and often the institutions don’t know whether they can provide a visa until late in the hiring process. For that reason, it can be worth pursuing a CLIR position even without a visa in hand. If you are pursuing a CLIR postdoc with a specific institution, you can also contact them in advance to find out whether they are able to provide visas.

The Application Process

- All applications go into a single pool. If you are interested in a specific position(s), make sure to note this in your application. Be aware you may be considered for positions you didn't specify, or positions that weren't announced by the application deadline. CLIR shares your application with host institutions, trying to give each application as much exposure as possible, while still respecting candidates’ expressed preferences.

- The hiring process is conducted entirely by awarding institutions. That means that each university will have put together a hiring committee (usually) who will be responsible for deciding which applicants to interview, when to conduct interviews, and what the interview process will look like. This can vary quite widely - sometimes universities even
ask candidates to fill out additional application materials.

- There is no set timeline for interviewing, but interviews often occur late in the application cycle: April or even May. At some universities, the process is a single Skype call; at others, it may include a campus visit. There is no active coordination among universities in terms of hiring for separate CLIR positions, even though many are considering the same set of candidates.
Negotiations

- Some salaries are fixed in advance, including those of some grant-funded postdocs, and those coming from institutions with fixed regulations or grant funding for the positions. In other cases, it is possible to negotiate salary.
- Fellows have negotiated for various things, some of which are listed here. It is unlikely that any one fellow will get *all* of these things, but we hope this list is useful in identifying the priorities that matter most to you and your circumstances:
  - Joint Appointments: CLIR postdocs are often based in a library, but a joint-appointment with a department/center is sometimes required if you want to teach (or, on occasion, receive extra money for teaching.)
  - Moving expenses (Can range from 0-5k, depending on institution and circumstances.)
  - Conference/travel/professional development funds
  - Laptops and other equipment
  - Working remotely
  - Research time: there is no obligation for the institution to give research time, but in the past fellows have received 10%-50% research time.
  - Field research time: If your research requires you to be in the field, you can sometimes negotiate extended research time away.
  - Orientation pay: All CLIR fellows attend an orientation. While expenses are covered, this is not paid time unless the fellowship term has already begun, or you have negotiated with your granting institution to count the time within that term.

Orientation

- In late spring, fellows are invited to an orientation webinar where they have the opportunity to meet one another, learn about the program, and ask questions remotely.
- The summer orientation consists of discussion-based sessions that center around subjects such as the history of the library and archives, how the library fits into the structure of the university, navigating university business politics and policies, and the ethics of archives.
- Speakers from various institutions (previous/current CLIR fellows, digital humanities scholars, and alt-ac professionals) will talk to the fellows about a variety of topics, which will then lead to discussions.
- The orientation is not a DH tools or data curation bootcamp, but it does allow fellows to network with DH scholars and data curators.
- At the end of the orientation, the fellows typically participate in an Un-Conference (in the style of THATcamps). Here, the participants can suggest topics (or even workshops) and
vote on the ones they find the most interesting. The selected topics will then be arranged into sessions throughout the day.

- The curriculum changes significantly year-to-year! This is just a general outline.