

## Watson Initial Application

### Additional Guidance on the Personal Statement and Project Description

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Bowdoin's Watson campus committee will review all applications submitted by the initial Bowdoin deadline and will invite a subset of applicants – usually eight to ten – to be interviewed by the committee towards the end of September. In this initial review process, the campus committee is trying to discern which candidates have those all-important building blocks of person, project, and fit needed to submit a strong Watson application. Help the committee understand why you, why this project, and why now.

#### Guidance on the Personal Statement

***Instructions included in the Watson application:*** In your personal statement, you should discuss why you chose your topic, how it developed out of previous interests or experiences, and how it represents a new challenge. You may also want to describe your background, your college years, your professional goals and aspirations, and your reasons for seeking a Watson Fellowship. It should be clear from your personal statement why, of all the topics you could have chosen, you chose this one.

#### ***Additional guidance provided by Bowdoin:***

- In telling your story, help the reader to understand why the topic/issue/question at the center of your Watson project matters to you personally.
- Provide evidence of your investment in the proposed project beyond academic coursework.
- The Watson Fellowship uses the term “unusual promise” to mean a collection of characteristics including leadership, independence, resourcefulness, imagination, openness, and integrity. When telling your story, using examples where possible, convey how you embody or have demonstrated “unusual promise.”
- A Watson year can be a very challenging year. Weave into your story an example of when you have been faced with a challenge or had to adapt to unexpected circumstances.
- If you are selected as one of Bowdoin's four nominees, you will have a chance to revise your personal statement.

## Guidance on the Project Description

**Instructions included in the Watson application:** The project proposal is read in tandem with your Personal Statement, so you need not repeat information already provided there. You should describe your plan for the 12-month fellowship year, including a description of your project and details about how you intend to carry it out. In addition to focusing on a topic you are passionate about, the project should be personally challenging (yet feasible), independent, and sustainable over 12 months.

**Additional guidance provided by Bowdoin:**

- Consider beginning your project description by briefly describing the issue/topic/question that you wish to explore during your Watson year. If appropriate, please include a few facts/statistics that underscore why this issue/topic/question is worth exploring for 12 months. Answer the “so what” question.
- Describe what you would do in each country. Dedicating about one paragraph per country, tell us:
  - 1) why you chose that country,
  - 2) where will you go/what place or organization will be your first stop upon arriving in the country, and
  - 3) generally speaking, how you plan to fill your days (e.g., partnering with an NGO, shadowing a mid-wife, working alongside local farmers, etc.)
- Help the reader to understand how/why your project is feasible. For example, if you don't speak the language, how are you going to overcome this hurdle? If your project is centered on interviewing twins, how will you find sets of twins when you arrive in a country? If your project depends on moving your body in some way, what will you do if you break your arm?
- According to the Watson Liaison manual, “The philosophy behind the Watson Fellowship is to remove oneself from the comfort and stability of Home, exploring the world selectively in pursuit of one's passion, and **discovering along the way one's potential for humane and effective participation in the world community**. The Watson journey is a ‘solo’ experience, to be lived independently but shared broadly with humanity. This is the ‘Spirit of the Watson.’” How will your Watson experience be a transformative experience for you? How do you envision your Watson experience affecting your future?
- If you are selected as one of Bowdoin's four nominees, you will have a chance to revise your project proposal.