

Fatima Fellowship: An Open Collaborative Platform for AI Research

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Graduate application support programs have recently gained popularity with the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic. Student led initiatives specifically in top US engineering programs have been successful at supporting prospective applicants during their application process. Graduate international students from the MENA region constitute less than 7% of total graduate international students in the US [1]. Supporting prospective Arab engineering applicants can potentially increase the opportunities for highly skilled human resources in the MENA region. Analyzing recent application support programs can help assess the potential impact of such initiatives. In this presentation, we will introduce Fatima Fellowship as one case study for a global application support program.

Fatima fellowship [2] is an open collaborative platform for AI research and a doctoral application support program for world-wide prospective PhD applicants in Machine learning and Artificial Intelligence. The program aims to create a fellow-centered and an impact-driven global research collective that fosters inclusivity in the research community regardless of race, gender, and background. The program hopes to achieve its aims through: matching aspiring young researchers with expert mentors in top CS PhD programs and leading industry research institutions, providing research skills development seminars, and providing support, advising and one-on-one guidance and feedback on fellows' PhD applications. Around 250 applicants from over 40 countries applied to the program last February. Selected 48 fellows have been paired with 18 mentors are currently working on 23 different projects. The program currently boasts the successful admission of several fellows as well as various publications and open source published tools.

[1] Institute of International Education. (2020). "New International Students Enrollment, 2007/08-2019/20." Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange. Retrieved from: <https://opendoorsdata.org/>

[2] <https://fatimafellowship.com/>