



# OUR GENERATION SPEAKS

*Building a Shared Future for Israelis and Palestinians through Social Enterprise*

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



Brandeis University



MASSCHALLENGE

APPLICATION GUIDE

## Overview

Our Generation Speaks (OGS) is a leadership program and social enterprise incubator that will bring together 20 young Israeli and Palestinian change agents to cooperate on the creation of social impact ventures in the region. Through rigorous leadership training, mentoring, networking, and career advancement, Our Generation Speaks is the key pathway for change agents to realize impact in their communities. We are looking for committed, passionate individuals who will be able to maximize the OGS experience and leverage the skills developed to make longstanding impact in their home communities.

Upon confirmation of acceptance, Fellows are immediately connected to a highly accomplished network of Palestinian, Israeli, and American advisors from the public, private and social sectors. Upon their arrival in Boston, Fellows will begin a three-month summer residency at [The Heller School for Social Policy and Management](#) at Brandeis University. Ranked as a [top ten social policy school by US News & World Report](#), Fellows will participate in coursework covering leadership, operations, strategy, marketing, conflict resolution and financial management. Each Fellow will enter into the cohort with the opportunity to pitch their concept for a social enterprise. While engaged in classes and living at [Brandeis University](#), OGS Fellows will form teams around these ideas. Through a number of pitch rounds from these teams, final ideas (no less than three) will be determined based on the potential for social impact, feasibility and scale. OGS Fellows will be reconstituted to form new teams around these concepts and move to the next component of the program.

OGS Fellows then transfer from a “Top Ten” academic environment to [the world’s largest startup accelerator](#) at [MassChallenge](#). There, teams tap into Boston’s innovation community and receive additional mentoring and infrastructure to take ideas to proof of concept. We expect the program to inspire and establish a set of innovative, impactful, scalable enterprises that generate significant social value, and create a cohort of young community leaders to cooperate across ethnic and political lines to build a shared future for the region.

## OGS Fellowship Benefits

We believe that the most talented and enterprising individuals can achieve what most would consider impossible, overcome obstacles and create innovative solutions to benefit society. To foster that innovation and creativity, we ensure that OGS Fellows are free to ideate, expand their knowledge, build their network and maximize their social impact.

We empower the next generation of leaders by providing Fellows with:

- A **fully funded** three-month summer residency at Brandeis University's [Heller School for Social Policy and Management](#). Ranked as a [top ten social policy school by US News & World Report](#), coursework will range from entrepreneurship, leadership, communications, operations, negotiation, conflict resolution and strategy.
- Personal mentorship from a highly accomplished network of Palestinian, Israeli, and American advisors from the private, public and social sectors. Our Fellows are able to tap into the OGS Network which is comprised of former US Governors, global entrepreneurs, leaders of Fortune 500 companies and individuals named by Foreign Policy magazine as among the [Top 100 Global Thinkers](#).
- An ideal environment to launch and receive seed funding for innovative, impactful, scalable social enterprises. Through our partnership with [MassChallenge](#), the world's largest startup accelerator, Fellows will be able to generate significant social value to build a shared future for the region.

OGS creates a platform that brings together top tier faculty, a tailor made academic program to catalyze social change, mentoring from global leaders and the opportunity to access seed funding to make a social impact idea into a social enterprise.

Due to generous sponsorship from the OGS Network, Fellows also receive the following:

- Travel - round trip from the region to Boston
- Tuition and Fees
- Health Insurance
- Housing and Meals
- Visa Application Fees
- Modest stipend for the summer
- Seed funding for social impact ventures launched from the cohort
- The opportunity to meet fellow leaders from the region
- Access to the OGS Network

If you have any questions regarding the benefits of the OGS Fellowship, you may find additional information on [ogspeaks.com](https://ogspeaks.com) or you may contact us at [ogs@brandeis.edu](mailto:ogs@brandeis.edu).

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## Key Dates

The Application for the 2016 OGS Fellowship will open soon! Click here to [create an account](#) and begin your application.

	Early Deadline	Regular Deadline
Submit Online Application	Feb 14	Feb 28
In-Person Interviews	Feb 18 - 22	Mar 2 - 7
Receive Admissions Decision	Feb 25	Mar 8
Accept or Decline Offer to Enroll in OGS	Mar 3	Mar 14

We strongly encourage applicants to apply within our “Early Deadline. To ensure proper and timely processing of visas, awarded individuals will be asked to confirm the acceptance of their Fellowship. OGS Applicants should be prepared that if accepted to the program, they will need to begin the visa process at the US Embassy **within 7 – 10 days upon their confirmation.**

Participants should plan to arrive at Boston Logan Airport on May 26, 2016. The program runs from May 27 to August 31, 2016. Participants will depart September 1, 2016.

## Eligibility and Criteria

To qualify for the OGS Fellowship, we request that Palestinian and Israeli candidates be between the ages of 21-29 and have:

- a commitment to stay for the entire duration of the program;
- completed an undergraduate degree by February 2016\*
- a valid passport;
- a working knowledge of English;
- evidence of leadership;
- a demonstrated commitment to service;
- high aspirations to lead; and
- the highest ethical standards and respect for others.

\*If you are currently a senior at a university or college in the US and hold a valid student visa you are strongly encouraged to apply.

If you do not meet the above criteria but you still feel that you would contribute to the program (i.e. you are 30 years old), please send an introductory email to [ogs@brandeis.edu](mailto:ogs@brandeis.edu). In your email, please include a 50 word response on why you would like to apply to the Fellowship.

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## Application Process

These 20 Fellows will be selected through a four stage application process and be assessed on the following five (5) qualities:

- 1. Demonstrated Leadership:** Candidates must have prior experience in establishing a viable venture, leading teams or developing innovative concepts. The OGS Fellowship is designed to build upon the existing skillset of our Fellows to set them on an accelerated trajectory to maximize their impact in the community.
- 2. Commitment to Social Impact:** OGS Fellows should be passionate about bridging communities, fostering cooperation and creating access to opportunities.
- 3. Entrepreneurial Mindset:** OGS Fellows are individuals who actively seek positive change, rather than those who await change. They are problem solvers who pursue innovative solutions and process improvement.
- 4. Ability to Motivate Others:** Truly effective leaders are distinguished by a high degree of emotional intelligence. Through essay responses and letters of recommendation, candidates will be assessed on self-awareness, self-management, personal motivation, empathy and social skills.
- 5. Social Impact of the Proposal:** As part of the application packet, each candidate will be asked to submit a proposal for a social enterprise that they wish to launch. For more information, please refer to the OGS Application Instructions below.

## Application Instructions

You may begin your application [here](#). We are looking for the next wave of leaders in the region and we take a 360° approach to identifying and assessing prospective OGS Fellows. We review the overall composition of your submission materials to assess your success as an OGS Fellow. Due to the competitive nature of the OGS Fellowship, we will be able to only award 20 spots to our applicant pool. However, we will waitlist compelling candidates and they will be notified of their status. To facilitate the process, please see our Application Checklist at the end of this document.

The OGS Application should not take more than 2-4 hours to complete and is comprised of:

- Essay Responses (will be announced in online application)
- Proposal for a Social Enterprise (guidelines are presented on p.6)
- Academic Transcript(s) from your undergraduate degree
- Test Scores (if applicable – see details on p.7)
- One to Two Letters of Recommendation
- One Phone Reference
- CV or Resume

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## 1. Essay Responses

- Why and how are you committed to social impact in your community and/or the region? (ideally 250 words but no more than 450 words)
- Why do you need OGS to accomplish your personal and professional goals? (no more than 200 words)
- (Optional) Please describe a situation where you demonstrated leadership. (no more than 200 words)

## 2. Social Impact Venture Proposal

As part of your application, we would like to see the proposal of a future venture that you would like to initiate. If you are accepted, you may change the idea you propose in the incubator. **The idea may be a for-profit or a non-profit entity.** Initiatives can directly address the conflict or work towards other causes showcasing the power of cooperation. If a candidate has demonstrated a strong ability to succeed in the program and catalyze social impact but does not have a strong idea for a social impact venture, they may still be considered for the Fellowship.

Please answer the following:

*Assume you have a small, highly trained team, and three months to transform an idea into a viable social enterprise, which type of venture would you establish?*

You may use two options to express your idea:

- A proposal (not to exceed one page)  
11 pt. font and double spaced
- A “pitch deck” (not to exceed 5 slides)  
You may use PowerPoint, Prezi, Keynote or any other presentation software. You may submit slides that express your idea’s content through bullet points or you may use images and graphics with supplemental presentation notes.

In your selected option, we ask that you identify the target audience, mission/goals, products/services offered and how this social impact venture will be able to move the needle on issues within the community. We would also like to see your logic behind how your entity will sustain operations, but this is not mandatory.

We want you to surprise and inspire us with your ideas, creativity and passion for social impact in the region. For your reference, you may find examples of possible ways to submit these options at [www.ogspeaks.com](http://www.ogspeaks.com).

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### 3. University Transcript(s)

For visa purposes, we must be able to confirm that you will have received an undergraduate degree by February 2016 to be eligible for the OGS Fellowship. We encourage you to submit scanned, electronic copies of an unofficial transcript with your online application to ensure the quickest review. In the event that transcripts are not in English, applicants may translate their transcripts for the Selection Committee. If your college or university does not use a traditional 4.0 grading scale, please provide an explanation of the grading system, including systems of designation for honors and distinction. Please send the unofficial transcript and attach your translated version. If accepted, we will ask for an official transcript.

### 4. Test Scores (if applicable)

The OGS Fellowship is an intensive experience and program offerings are conducted in English. Applicants must have a strong working knowledge of English to be successful. English proficiency will be determined through applicant essays and online interviews. If available, applicants may submit a scanned copy of your results of the Test of English Language (TOEFL) or of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS.)

### 5. One to Two Letters of Recommendation

One letter of recommendation is required, a second letter is optional. The first letter should be a professional assessment from a supervisor at the institution where you are employed or were recently employed. If you feel that your current work experience is not representative of your abilities and potential, you may request that a professor provide this recommendation. In the event that you would like to submit a second letter, it should be an academic assessment from a former professor or advisor. If you attended university more than five years ago, a professional letter of recommendation will suffice. Please upload a PDF file of your recommendation letter(s) through the online application. All letters of recommendation must be on official letterhead from the recommender's organization and must include the recommender's complete contact information: name, professional title, name and address of the organization, email and phone number.

### 6. One Phone Reference

Please submit the contact information for one person who would be willing to speak to us regarding your candidacy to OGS. Please list their name, contact information, relationship to you and their spoken languages. We will only contact this person in the event that we would like to better understand you apart from your application materials. Excluding family members, this person may be an employer, a colleague, a mentor or someone that has known you for longer than two (2) years.

### 7. CV or Resume

The resume or curriculum vitae should detail your professional and academic background as well as highlight relevant skills and accomplishments. Our Generation Speaks does not place limits on the length of your resume/CV, but applicants should make every effort to present relevant information neatly and succinctly. If you are unable to upload documents in PDF format, you may also use .doc, .docx, and .rtf. For tips on constructing a resume or curriculum vitae, please visit the [Brandeis University Career Center website](#).

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## Next Steps

After you have submitted your application to OGS, you will receive a receipt of confirmation from our admissions program. When an application is complete, the applicant is notified promptly by email and receives a link to the Applicant Status Page and instructions on how to access it.

To check the status of your application, you may check the status of your submitted application and any associated materials by accessing your online Applicant Status Page. Due to the amount of applications, we ask that you do not reach out to OGS to receive individualized updates on your status. As we move forward in reviewing applications, we will update your Applicant Status page. After a first review conducted by OGS Admissions Staff, we choose the most promising candidates to be reviewed by our Selection Committee.

## Interview with the Selection Committee

A select group of candidates will be invited to participate in an in-person assessment that will happen in the region. Interviews will be conducted by leaders from the area with a demonstrated record of success in enacting global change. This interview gives candidates an opportunity to demonstrate their leadership aptitude, entrepreneurial spirit and commitment to excellence.

- **Logistics:** We will reach out to candidates with dates in February to conduct their interview. We ask that candidates be flexible and generous with their availability in February. With your availability, you will be matched with time and date. The interview lasts for thirty minutes.
- **Content:** Applicants should be prepared to articulate why they are a good candidate given our criteria (see p. 5). During the interview, candidates and interviewers will discuss a number of scenario-based questions. More information about how to prepare will be provided upon invitation to interview.
- **Frequency:** For Early Decision applicants, interviews will take place in February. Those that apply in our regular application cycle will be conducted in early March. Dates TBD.

## Acceptance

Please be patient as you await your admission decision. At this time, we will also notify candidates who have been waitlisted. To ensure proper and timely processing of visas, awarded individuals will be asked to confirm the acceptance of their Fellowship within a week of being notified. If you decline or fail to contact the program within the timeframe, we will move to our waitlisted candidates. As an additional reminder, OGS Applicants should be prepared that if accepted to the program, they will need to begin the visa process at the US Embassy **within 7 – 10 days upon their confirmation**.

As spots are limited, we are only able to accept 20 Fellows. If you do not hear from OGS after our admit dates, please log into your applicant page for more information. As long as applicants still meet the eligibility criteria, we encourage individuals to reapply the following year. Unfortunately, we are unable to provide feedback on previously submitted applications.

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact Our Generation Speaks at [ogs@brandeis.edu](mailto:ogs@brandeis.edu). We look forward to reviewing your application!

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## Application Checklist

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- Proposal for a Social Enterprise

Applicants may check the status of their submitted application and any associated materials by accessing your online Applicant Status Page. When an application is complete, the applicant is notified promptly by email and receives a link to the Applicant Status Page and instructions on how to access it.

If you have any questions, please contact Our Generation Speaks at [ogs@brandeis.edu](mailto:ogs@brandeis.edu). During the application round, please allow for a 48 hour response time. We will not be able to comment on the strength of your application until all materials have been received.

Thank you for your interest in Our Generation Speaks! We look forward to reviewing your application!

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