

## **POLICIES AND GUIDELINES FOR GSG TRAVEL GRANTS**

### **I. PURPOSE**

An award of up to \$400.00 is available for eligible graduate students who are attending an extracurricular academic/professional conference or training activity. The award is offered as a supplemental reimbursement to cover expenses related to transportation, lodging, poster printing, and registration. These awards are not meant to reimburse for required UAB credit generating activities or for activities that are not primarily professional in purpose.

### **II. ELIGIBILITY**

Graduate students are encouraged to apply for GSG Travel Grants to assist with expenses related to participation in professional conferences and/or non-UAB academic training activities. The following are the requirements for eligibility to receive consideration for a travel grant:

1. Applicants must be enrolled as a graduate student at UAB through the Graduate School, in good academic standing, and both **enrolled at the time of travel** and **at the time of reimbursement**.
2. UAB credit generating activities are **NOT** eligible.
3. Undergraduate students, 5th year students who have not completed their undergraduate degree, and non-degree seeking students are **NOT** eligible to apply for GSG Travel Grants.
4. Graduate students enrolled in the following schools are **NOT** eligible to apply for GSG Travel Grants:
  - a. Medicine\*
  - b. Dentistry
  - c. Optometry\*

\*Medical and optometry students (M.D. and O.D. students) are not eligible for travel grants; **Ph.D. students enrolled in the School of Medicine or Optometry are eligible to apply for travel grants.**
5. Any graduate student whose graduate program has their own student government association (SGA) funded by student tuition service fees is NOT eligible to apply for a GSG Travel Grant.
6. Each student is eligible to receive a maximum of **TWO** GSG travel grants while enrolled at UAB.
7. **Eligibility Exceptions:**
  - a. Any graduate student who has been an active GSG senator for six months and is enrolled in one of the schools noted in Part II.4. section of the Eligibility policy will still be eligible to apply for a travel grant.
  - b. Any graduate student who actively participates in a GSG committee will be eligible to apply for a travel grant. "Active Participation" is up to the discretion of the GSG Vice President and the GSG Committee Chair to which the student belongs.
8. Applicants may be approved for **ONE** GSG Travel Grant per academic year, with the academic year counted as Fall Semester to the following Summer Semester. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**
9. Eligibility that is not explicitly defined in this document is determined on a case-by-case basis by the Treasures of GSG and the Travel Grants Officer.

### III. APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Complete and submit the online GSG Travel Grant Application (available on UAB GSG website and UAB ENGAGE <https://www.uab.edu/students/involvement/engage>) during the appropriate application period (see DEADLINES V.2).
  - a. For an application to be considered for selection, ALL fields need to be completed. This includes, but is not limited to, the following information:
    - i. Full name of conference as it appears online or in the registration information
    - ii. Correct estimated dates of travel
      1. The **TRAVEL DATE** is used to exclude applications that are not within the designated travel grant period. If this date is incorrect, your application will not be considered.
    - iii. Tentative or final abstract, including the title and authors OR Full description of the academic activity and the purpose of travel.
  - b. By digitally signing the GSG Travel Grant Application, the student agrees that he/she is willing to comply with the "Student Travel Statement of Agreement" listed in section VI.

NOTE: Due to the volume of applications received by the GSG, we are unable to consider applications that contain errors or are incomplete. Please ensure that your application is accurate before submitting. If you believe to have submitted an error, simply resubmit a new application prior to the closing of the form. Only the most recent application will be considered.

2. Prior to the beginning of the travel period, all eligible and completed applications submitted during the application period are collected and sorted randomly to determine the order in which grants are awarded.
  - a. Example Randomizer: *Urbaniak, G. C., & Plous, S. (2011). Research Randomizer (Version 3.0) [Computer software]. Retrieved on April 22, 2011, from <http://www.randomizer.org/>*

### 3. GSG SENATOR PREFERENTIAL SELECTION

Not exceeding one-third (1/3) of the total awards per semester, active GSG Senators who have exceeded expectations for participation and service to the GSG will receive preferential allocation of the travel grants. Eligibility and granting of the available awards by this mechanism is determined on a case-by-case basis by a vote of the elected GSG Executive Board members and this decision is final. Guidelines for those who would qualify for this selection process are defined as senators who have:

- i. **Attended at least 5 of the 6 previous GSG Senate meetings.**
- ii. **Currently exceeding participation expectations in at least one of the GSG committees** to the satisfaction of the Executive Board member responsible for the said committee.

Examples include, but are not limited to: Regular attendance and participation at the GSG budget meetings, Volunteering to manage/plan a social or philanthropic activity, or Serving as a committee chair or co-chair.
- iii. If a senator declines a travel grant twice in one school year, they will be unable to apply for future travel grants.

- iv. Elected Executive Board members are not eligible for this preferential allocation but remain eligible for travel grants in the general selection pool. If eligible preferential applications exceed one-third of the total awards granted by this mechanism, randomization will be used and senators who do not receive a grant via this mechanism will still be eligible for travel awards in the general selection pool.

Travel grants are awarded to applicants based on the total funds available for each semester as determined by the Treasurer and/or the Travel Grants Officer. After randomization, students are notified prior to the beginning of the travel period if they have received a travel grant or not.

## V. REIMBURSEMENT

1. Immediately following the completion of the travel and **no later than the 60 (sixty) days after the travel is completed**, the student is responsible for submitting reimbursement documentation to their department.
  - a. Depending on the student's employment/student classification at the University, regulations regarding travel can vary. It is the responsibility of the student to check with their department to confirm their classification and the regulations around their particular travel situation.
    - i. UAB regulations must be followed for all travel and can change without notice. Please refer to the Financial Affairs Travel Guidelines for more information (<https://www.uab.edu/financialaffairs/traveling>).
  - b. Once reimbursement is sent to the student's department, the reimbursing coordinator for the program should contact the Graduate School (Cynthia Ballinger [cknight@uab.edu](mailto:cknight@uab.edu)) in order for the GSG travel grant to be debited from the reimbursement. It is the student's responsibility to communicate this to both their department coordinator AND the Graduate School.
2. If the total reimbursement is less than \$400 or if the student's department is not reimbursing for expenses greater than \$400, then the reimbursement can be sent directly to the Graduate School (Cynthia Ballinger [cknight@uab.edu](mailto:cknight@uab.edu)).
3. The timeline to getting your reimbursement is dependent on the speed at which your department processes the reimbursement paperwork. Under usual circumstances, you should be reimbursed within a couple of weeks. Questions regarding missing reimbursement should first be referred to your department since they are the reimbursement initiating entity.
4. **DO NOT SEND REIMBURSEMENTS TO THE GSG.** Reimbursements sent to the GSG email account will not be reimbursed.

## V. DEADLINES

1. As of May 1, 2010, **only electronic applications** will be considered. A current schedule listing the travel periods and their corresponding deadlines for applications are available on the GSG website (<https://www.uab.edu/gsg/funding/travel-grants>).
2. The application period occurs approximately two months prior to each travel period and is open for approximately two weeks. Exact dates are determined by the GSG Travel

Grant Officer and are published on the GSG website (<https://www.uab.edu/gsg/funding/travel-grants>).

- a. No applications will be considered prior to the application period nor will any late applications be considered. NO EXCEPTIONS.
3. The travel period for each semester extends from approximately 7-14 calendar days prior to the last day of classes for the previous semester to approximately 7-14 calendar days prior to the last day of classes for the travel period semester. Exact dates are determined by GSG Travel Grant Officer and are published on the GSG website (<http://www.uab.edu/gsg>).
  - a. Eligibility for a given travel period is determined by date at which travel will be COMPLETED (END DATE of travel on the application).
  - b. Summer semester travels grant end dates shall be based upon the end of classes for the second summer session.
4. Complete reimbursement documentation for each travel period must be processed by the student's department or the graduate school **no later than sixty days after the travel is completed**. You must be enrolled during the period of travel and at the point you submit the reimbursement documentation.

## VI. STUDENT TRAVEL STATEMENT OF AGREEMENT

1. As a graduate student travelling with financial assistance from the University of Alabama, Birmingham, (UAB) Graduate Student Government (GSG) I do, by my electronic signature on the GSG Travel Grant Application, acknowledge understanding that the GSG is intending to support the educational benefits of this event.
2. The expectation is that I will use these funds to attend the conference meetings, participate in the conference/training session processes, and contribute to the conference/training session aims. I understand I am a representative of my graduate program, UAB and the UAB GSG, and I agree to exemplify the professional nature of both the University and GSG while on my travels.
3. As a graduate student, I will include the GSG logo as a financial supporter and have the GSG logo on my poster or oral presentation. As well has provide proof in the form of a picture with my poster or oral presentation with the GSG logo within two weeks following travel. The picture will be emailed to the current Travel Grant Officer.
4. I also agree that UAB GSG will not be held liable for any damages to persons or property related to this travel.
5. By electronically signing the GSG Travel Grant application, I indicate that:
  - a. I have read and understood the UAB GSG Travel Grant Policies and Guidelines listed on the GSG website.
  - b. I understand that failure to conform to the policies and guidelines of this document as well as the UAB Financial Affairs department could result in rejection of my travel reimbursement and/or loss of eligibility for future GSG

Travel Grant funding.

- c. I understand that providing false information to the GSG is a violation of the UAB Honor Code and could result in disciplinary action and/or dismissal from the University.

## **VII. COVID-19 Travel Grants Amendment for Fall 2020**

Due to University Travel Restrictions, Fall 2020 Travel Grant funding will be repurposed for Educational Expenses. An award of **up to \$400.00** will be awarded to eligible graduate students. Eligibility criteria will be as previously stated in **Section II**. The application will be available on ENGAGE. The application period will be open for two weeks. No late or incomplete application will be accepted. Student must justify purchase and how it will contribute to advancement in their academics/research. This grant cannot be used to purchase lab equipment or lab supplies.

Some specific examples the grant will cover:

- Software systems that are required to complete graduate work virtually (the software needed could vary by department and program).
- Virtual conference membership and fees.
- Textbooks / E-books.
- Virtual training and professional education opportunities.

GSG Travel Grants Officer with the GSG Budget Committee reserves the right to evaluate each application individually for validity. In order for the application to be considered complete, student must have filled in every single required field and must provide detailed justification for request (written paragraph). As stated in **Section III**, all eligible and completed applications submitted during the application period are collected and sorted **randomly** to determine the order in which grants are awarded. See **Section III.3**, for GSG Senator preferential selection.

Once student has completed purchase/registration/conference/training student has **no later than 60 (sixty) days after** to submit reimbursement documentation. See **Section V** for more details.

Budget Committee approved: 07/09/14

Senate approved: 08/06/14

Revised: 04/21/2020 by Silviene Sint Jago

**COVID-19 Travel Grants Amendment for Fall 2020**

Senate approved 09/02/2020