GRANT HANDBOOK

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1. Introduction

Graduate Student Association (GSA) grants assist the academic and professional development of UNC's graduate students. The grant review process is led by graduate students, who, like other students, have competing academic and personal responsibilities. Due to the limited nature of funding, the grant application process is highly competitive and designed to expose graduate students to the scrutiny and subjectivity of grants in the public and private sectors. Failure to comply with the rules, regulations, guidelines, and/or instructions in the Grant Handbook, and/or the Grant Application may result in denial of the application or a reduction in funding. GSA will not review incomplete applications.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the GSA grant application process, please email gsa@unco.edu. The GSA assumes no responsibility for unanswered questions that may result in grant applications being dismissed or receiving a reduced level of funding.

2. Application Process

- Read the GSA Grant Handbook!

- Download and complete the appropriate grant application form. Email the completed form as a pdf attachment to gsa@unco.edu. The application can be found on the grant funding page of the GSA website. The application must be completed in its entirety. Do not submit more than one grant application for a single conference, research project, professional development, or publication activity. You may submit multiple separate grant applications during the same grant year if you will be conducting multiple research projects, attending multiple conferences, engaging in multiple professional development activities, and/or submitting multiple publications.

  - Grant applications must include a budget of anticipated costs.

    - Errors or omission of any required information may result in dismissal of the application or reduced funding. Re-submissions, corrections, revisions, additions, etc. will not be accepted once your application is submitted, unless done at the instruction of the GSA Grant Review Committee.

    - Applications must for an upcoming activity occurring within the current fiscal year (July 1-June 30).

    - Students cannot apply for funding for events/activities that have already occurred.

    - Grant funding must be completed within the fiscal year in which the activity/event takes place.

- Download the Student Gifts, Prizes, and Awards form, complete the information portion, and answer the question about whether the activity is required for you to complete your degree.

- If your grant application involves travel or hotel expenses, you must complete a **Travel Authorization** form and submit it to the Graduate School for approval at least 2 to 3 weeks BEFORE the event (university policy). See the instructions for how to complete the TA form.

3. Grant Overview

UNC graduate students can apply for five different types of grants:

- Research Grants – **capped at $900 per project**

- Research grants can be awarded to the principal investigator or co-investigator to help cover research-related expenses.
- Only one GSA research grant may be awarded for any one research project during a given fiscal year (July 1 – June 30). Even if the title of the principal investigator or co-investigator is transferred to another student, the same project may not receive additional GSA research grant funding if the project has previously received an award (during the same fiscal year).
- Research-related expenses might include lab supplies, travel, or equipment. If the GSA grant pays for 80% or more of the cost of a piece of equipment (e.g., camera, iPad), that item must be returned to the GSA when the research concludes. If the item is not returned, the funding could impact a student's financial aid package or be reported as taxable income.
- If you intend to use the grant to purchase gift cards or other items for research participant incentives, you must:
  - Complete the [Confidential/Anonymous Research Subject Gift Card Purchase Waiver Request](#) and submit it with your grant application.
  - Download and use the [Participant Disbursement Log – Anonymous Study](#) to document the distribution of the gift cards.
  - If you are not the person listed as the PI on the IRB or IACUC approval letter, you must have the PI complete this [IRB/IACUC Supplemental Statement](#) form and submit it with your grant application.
- Students completing their thesis, scholarly project, or dissertation research will receive funding preference.
- **Research grants are capped at $900 per fiscal year**. Students might receive less than this amount, depending on the application and budget.

- Conference Grants for Presentation – **capped at $900**
  - If you present at a conference, you can request a GSA grant to help cover travel, hotel, student membership to the conference's sponsoring organization, and conference registration expenses. GSA grant applications should not include requests for food (per diem) or mileage because these are considered financial aid.
  - The GSA is aware that a "presentation" can mean different things to different fields. Generally, if the activity in question requires the graduate student to express their knowledge in one capacity or another (e.g. roundtable facilitator, poster presentation, lecture, academic/artistic competition, music/dance performance, artwork display/presentation, invited music/dance audition, etc.) this will be considered presenting at the conference. Presenters must have participated in the creation/research of the material being presented.

- You must include proof that you've been accepted to present at a conference with your grant application, along with other information about the specific conference.
- In most cases, Grants for Conference Presentation will be a scholarship credited to the student's university account. There might be cases where a student will need to submit receipts for reimbursement after incurring expenses.
- **Grants for Conference Presentations are capped at $900.** Students might receive less than this amount, depending on the application and budget.
- Other things to note:
  - If a group of students is presenting together at a conference, each member of the group must apply individually for a GSA grant. GSA does not award funding to a group. The university will only make scholarship grants or reimburse the student named on the grant letter for expenses they personally incurred.
  - You cannot receive funding to present another researcher's work if you did not significantly contribute to it.
  - Acceptance of the presentation from the conference should be provided with the application (additional details are contained in the grant application).
  - For questions about proper presentation verification, please contact gsa@unco.edu.

- Conference Attendance Grants – **capped at $700**
  - If you would like financial help to attend a conference, you can request a GSA grant to help cover travel, hotel, student membership to the conference's sponsoring organization, and conference registration expenses. GSA grant applications should not include requests for food (per diem) or mileage because these are considered financial aid.
  - Funding for conference attendees (and non-lead presenters) will be capped at a lesser amount than for students who are presenting (or lead presenters).
  - In the application review process, preference will be given to students presenting at a conference or conducting research for a thesis, scholarly project, or dissertation.
  - In most cases, Grants for Conference Presentation will be a scholarship credited to the student's university account. There might be cases where a student will need to submit receipts for reimbursement after incurring expenses.
  - **The funding cap for a conference attendance grant is $700.** Students might receive less than this amount, depending on the application and budget.

- Professional Development Grants – **capped at $750**
  - If you are attending a professional development class/experience or earning a professional certification, license, etc., you can request a GSA grant to help cover the cost of the professional development, travel expenses, and associated costs.
  - The GSA is aware that "professional development" can mean different things to different fields. To be allowed for GSA grant funding, professional development should be related to the student's academic program and/or graduate assistantship. For questions about allowed professional development activities, please contact gsa@unco.edu.
  - Only one GSA professional development grant may be awarded for any one professional development experience, by a single student, in a single conference/location/series.
  - If groups of graduate students are attending the same professional development experience together, they should make individual applications for a GSA grant. GSA cannot award funding to a group, since each award must be approved by the Office of Financial Aid and University Accounting.
  - In most cases, Grants for Conference Presentation will be a scholarship credited to the student's university account. There might be cases where a student will need to submit receipts for reimbursement after incurring expenses.
  - **Professional Development Grants are capped at $750**. Students might receive less than this amount, depending on the application and budget.

- Publication Grants - **capped at $500**
  - If you are the lead author submitting a manuscript/creative work for publication, you can request a GSA grant to help cover associated costs. The publication grant is intended to help graduate students publish their work in academic journals, but grant funding can also be requested to assist with the publication of program-related works in popular press, online, or other media sources. Decisions to allow publication reimbursement are up to the Grant Review Committee. Do not include research-related writing expenses in publication grant applications (e.g. translation of data, transcription of data, postage / printing for surveys, etc.).
  - Only one GSA publication grant may be awarded for any one publication/article.
  - In most cases, Grants for Conference Presentation will be a scholarship credited to the student's university account. There might be cases where a student will need to submit receipts for reimbursement after incurring expenses.

- **Publication Grants are capped at $500**. Students might receive less than this amount, depending on the application and budget.

The budget for each grant year (July 1 – June 30) is determined by the GSA leadership team. Award money may be budgeted at the discretion of the GSA leadership team to increase/decrease the competitiveness within/between colleges/programs and/or advance the interests of the GSA and/or UNC.

There is no limit to the number of grants a student may receive during the fiscal year. However, a **student cannot receive more than $2,000 in total GSA funding (for multiple grant applications) during the fiscal year.**

Grant applications are reviewed as they are received within a rolling review process. Submitted applications must be **complete** and **free of errors** to advance in the review process. Depending on the competitiveness of the grant cycle, corrections, revisions, additions, etc. may not be accepted once an application is submitted.

Do not submit multiple applications for the same research project, conference, publication, or professional development experience. Submitting additional applications will result in the most recent application(s) being dismissed if they are for the same research project, conference, publication, or professional development experience.

In most cases, GSA grants will be awarded as a scholarship credited to the student's university account. There might be cases where a student will need to submit receipts for reimbursement after incurring expenses.

The reimbursement will only be up to the amount paid (with documented proof of payment) even if the award was for a higher amount. If you are required to follow the reimbursement process, remember that receipts must have your name. You cannot use your funding to pay for another student's expenses. If you share a hotel room with another student and split the cost, make sure that you pay your part with your own credit or debit card so that your name is on the receipt. You should submit all receipts together as email attachments to gsa@unco.edu.

4. Eligibility

Any UNC graduate student enrolled in course credits (fall or spring) and in good standing with the University may apply for a GSA grant regardless of program site or delivery mode (Greeley, Denver, Loveland, Online, etc.). The applicant must be enrolled in a UNC graduate program during the current grant cycle (except during summer grant cycles). Applications from those paying the continuous registration fee will be considered but at a lower priority than enrolled students. The GSA will check student enrollment. For those applying in

the summer months but not taking summer courses, applicants' enrollment for the upcoming fall semester will be checked.

- Incoming graduate students, that have yet to begin taking graduate classes at UNC, are not eligible for GSA grant funding until their first semester of enrollment.
- Research, manuscripts, etc. that were concluded before attendance at UNC are not eligible for GSA grant funding.

Graduate students may submit grant applications for conference presentations/attendance, professional development experiences, publications, and/or research projects with a start date that falls within the current fiscal year. Grants as scholarship awards or reimbursements are only allowed for expenses incurred during the current fiscal year. Students who win grant funding and fail to claim their award/reimbursement within the designated timeframe may be denied funding if they reapply in the following grant cycle with the same project, presentation, publication, or professional development.

GSA conference and professional development grants are only for applicants who attend their conference/activity. If an applicant receives a GSA award for a conference/activity but does not attend the conference/activity, the applicant's GSA award is considered void. If an applicant received funding as a scholarship ahead of the conference/activity and then did not attend, the award could be reported as taxable income.

Applicants who do not attend their conference are not permitted to use the award even if the applicant has already incurred some expenses. GSA grant awards may not be deferred or transferred for any reason. If it is determined that a grant recipient did not attend a scheduled conference or conduct research as stated in their application, the GSA reserves the right to deprioritize or dismiss future grant applications from that applicant for the remainder of the fiscal year and the following fiscal year.

If a student applies for and receives an award as a scholarship grant and uses it for any other purpose, this is considered fraud. The student will be reported to the Office of Community Standards for investigation and disciplinary action.

5. Allowed and Prohibited Expenses

Grant funding, whether in the form of scholarship grant or reimbursements, is only allowed for expenses incurred during the current fiscal year. The fiscal year begins on July 1 and ends on June 30.

Grant applications must be made before travel occurs.

The following lists of examples are not exhaustive. Please inquire with gsa@unco.edu if you are unsure if an expense can be reimbursed or not.

Conferences/Professional Development:
- Registration fees
- Organization membership fees
- Airfare
- Transportation (bus, train, shuttle, taxi, etc.)
- Parking (at event or at transportation hub)
- Lodging / Accommodations
- Presentation Materials (posters, handouts, etc.)
- Presentation / Attendance Equipment (headsets, microphones, webcams, etc.)
- Gas (with receipts)

Publications:
- Submission fees
- Organization membership fees
- Editing costs
- Printing of manuscript (not surveys or materials for conducting research)
- Mailing of manuscript (not surveys or materials for conducting research)

Research:
- Organization membership fees
- Airfare to research/subject data collection location(s)
- Transportation (bus, train, shuttle, taxi, etc.) to research/subject data collection location(s)
- Parking at research/subject data collection location(s) or at transportation hub.
- Lodging/Accommodations at research/subject data collection location(s)
- Gas costs (with receipts), if driving to research/subject data collection or analysis location(s)
- Admission fees or expenses associated with research/subject data collection location(s)
- Research materials, supplies, and/or equipment
- Research equipment rental
- Software & website subscriptions:
    - Software must be for personal use on non-UNC owned computers.
- Data collection (e.g. surveys, etc.) printing/mailing costs
- Payments to individuals (including UNC students, staff, and/or faculty) for services rendered in the collection, processing, or analysis of research data
    - It is the responsibility of the researcher to follow all UNC procedures and documentation requirements for all payments to companies or individuals. For more information:
        - UNC faculty or staff: https://www.unco.edu/payroll/pdfs-on-webpage-folder/forms/misc_payroll_forms/psa_agreement_form_rev_2018.pdf

- UNC students: http://www.unco.edu/payroll/pdfs-on-webpage-folder/procedures/sudent_EPAFs_user_guide_05_2017.pdf
- Non-UNC individuals: https://www.unco.edu/general-accounting/accounts-payable/hiring-independent-contractors.aspx
- Research subject incentives (food, gift cards, etc.)
  - It is the responsibility of the researcher to follow all UNC procedures and documentation requirements for the use of any and all research subject incentives. For more information: http://www.unco.edu/general-accounting/gifts-prizes-awards/

Below are expenses not covered by GSA funds, regardless of grant type:
- Spouse/child/friend travel expenses
- Alcohol purchases
- Thesis/dissertation processing costs
- UNC tuition/fees
- Meals/Per Diem (considered financial aid)
- Mileage (considered financial aid)

PLEASE NOTE: students conducting research or traveling under a faculty/staff secured grant (such as a federal or state grant) will not be eligible for any GSA monies for that project or conference. The UNC Student Business Office will cross-check to ensure that students do not receive funding more than their actual expenses. If you are unsure if this pertains to you, please contact the GSA. If you receive reimbursements that the UNC Student Business Office determines to be in excess of your expenses, your GSA award will be withdrawn and your grant eligibility will be suspended.

PURCHASE OF EQUIPMENT WITH GSA FUNDS: if students use GSA grant funds for purchase of equipment where the funding (including reimbursement) covers 80% or more of the cost, the student is required to return the equipment to the GSA or Graduate School at the conclusion of the research project or use of purchased equipment. This policy aligns with university policy and standard practice of grant agencies. Alternatively, the student may purchase the equipment from GSA. Students purchasing equipment with a grant must first purchase the equipment and then submit receipts for reimbursement.

6. Review Process

The review process is handled by graduate students who are just as busy and stressed as you are. GSA leaders work with the grant process but have additional responsibilities related to their role. They do not have administrative staff assisting them with email communication or award letters. You might not receive a response to your grant application for several weeks, depending on the number of applications and the schedules of the reviewer(s).

Applications will first be reviewed by the GSA grant reviewer(s) to see if the applicant followed the directions provided and paid attention to details. This is an initial review for completeness and technical accuracy. Depending on the competitiveness of the grant cycle, applications with errors, omissions, typos, insufficient documentation, etc. may be dismissed at this point of the review process.

Grant applications that pass the technical review will then have their written responses reviewed. Your written content is evaluated according to a rubric with points given for your role (primary investigator, co-presenter, etc.), quality of writing in description of research, and quality of writing in explanation of impact. If you do not answer the questions adequately, your application may be dismissed, or your funding reduced at the discretion of the reviewer(s).

The written responses will be used by the reviewer(s) to form an overall impression of your work and value/impact as a graduate student of UNC. You must write clearly and concisely to convince a non-academic/non-specialist audience of your work's (and your) importance and impact. You are competing against many other graduate students for a limited supply of funding. The written response section is your opportunity to convince the Review Committee to provide funding. If your writing is too vague, confusing, and/or does not hold the Committee's interest, it will likely receive a low score or be dismissed.

The following is not an exhaustive list of review criteria, but merely a list of suggestions to make your written responses more competitive (not all suggestions may be applicable to every grant application/question):
- Does it grab the reader's attention?
- Is there enough background provided?
- Does it explain the research question?
- Are subjects and methods explained?
- Are results/conclusions/outcomes or hypothesized outcomes explained?
- Is it within the allotted word count?
- Free from scientific jargon / terminology?
- Does this thoroughly explain the work?
- What makes this work special/difficult/innovative?
- Why should anyone care?
- Is the description clear and presented in logical sequence?
- Does the description convey enthusiasm for the research?
- Does this make the reader want to know more?
- Does the response provide sufficient details?

At the end of the review period, applicants will receive an email at the UNC email account

provided in their application, notifying them if they have been awarded any grant funds. Email notifications will be sent out by the deadline listed on the GSA webpage.

7. Funding Process

If you are awarded a grant, you will receive an award letter from the GSA Grant Review Committee with detailed instructions on next steps.

In most cases, the grant will be applied to the student's account as a scholarship by the Office of Financial Aid. If the student has an unpaid balance owed to the university, the grant will automatically be applied to the amount owed (per Bursar's Office policy).

In some cases, the student will need to follow the university's reimbursement process.

All grant awardees must submit a budget of their expected and actual expenses to receive an award.

SAVE YOUR RECEIPTS

Do not upload your receipts with your GSA grant application. By University regulations, the GSA Director cannot disperse money. If you are awarded funding, you must email your receipts to the GSA for reimbursement. Receipts must have your name on them if you are the grant recipient.

The most efficient way to receive your funds is through direct deposit. Please note that the UNC Business Office cannot, and will not, write you a check. It may take several
weeks or even several months for a reimbursement to be distributed after you have turned in your receipts. GSA cannot control the length of the process.

Applicants who are found to be rude or hostile to GSA leaders, Graduate School staff, Financial Aid staff, and Business office employees will have their GSA grant revoked by the GSA Advisor (Graduate School Associate Dean) and reported to the Office of Community Standards. Be courteous with everyone involved in the grant process. GSA leadership and UNC staff who have a role in the grant awarding or must follow University procedures.

 To ensure reimbursement delays do not occur please ensure that the following are provided when submitting documentation.

	• Receipts for hotel, vehicle rental, conferences, gas, etc. contain the awardee's name. o If a

credit card was used to reserve a hotel room and it does not have the awardee's name, it may cause delays. Usually, a credit card statement/bank statement is needed as proof that funds came from their account.

• A breakdown of the budget at the bottom of the award letter is needed to ensure timely reimbursement.

• Travel Authorizations need to route to the Graduate School for review. These should come through at least 2-3 weeks before travel occurs.

8. Budget Expense Sheet

A budget of anticipated costs is part of the application process. If you are given a grant award, you will then be required to create a detailed budget that is consistent with your activity dates and receipts. **Be sure to give the exact name of any equipment (brand, model number)**. Include a total of all expenses.

Do not use of acronyms. Give the full title of the expense item (e.g. Figural Intersection Test instead of "FIT"). Due to the variety of programs applying for GSA grant funding, using the full title of research expense items ensures that the reviewers know exactly what items you are requesting funding for. Do not list any items with ambiguous names (e.g. "Online Survey"). Be as exact with the title as possible. If it is an item you created yourself, list that title as whatever you would label the item for your experiment (e.g. "Feelings Response Survey" instead of "survey"). Try to be as exact as possible about your expenses, what exactly they were for, and exactly how much it costs for each item.

9. Grant Award Caps

At the start of the fiscal year (July 1), the GSA leadership sets a budget for each grant year. GSA may set deadlines for applications, reimbursement submissions, and funding deadlines to ensure grants are distributed before the end of the fiscal year.

Grant caps for 2024-25 are:
- Research Grants - **$900 per project**.
- Conference Grants for Presentation – **$900.**
- Conference Attendance Grant - **$700.**
- Professional Development Grant – **$750.**
- Publication Grant - **$500.**

While students can apply for and receive multiple grants during the fiscal year, **the total amount an individual receives in a fiscal year cannot exceed $2,000.**

10. Grant Process Steps – Overview

Application
- Student reads the GSA Grant Handbook.
- Student downloads and completes grant application and Gifts, Prizes, and Awards Form; other forms may be needed depending on grant type.
- Emails completed application form and Gifts, Prizes, and Awards form to GSA

Travel Authorization
- If the grant application involves travel, the student completes a university Travel Authorization form following instructions in the GSA Grant Handbook.

GSA
- GSA leadership does an initial review to ensure applications are complete. Incomplete applications are not reviewed.
- Graduate School staff reviews student enrollment.
- Application is reviewed according to review rubric by a review committee or GSA leadership.
- If GSA decides to provide a grant, there is a preliminary check with Financial Aid to ensure the grant won't negatively impact a student.
- Student will receive a grant award letter with the award amount and additional information.

Financial Aid
- The Office of Financial Aid will receive a list of students and the amounts of their awards.
- Award will be applied as a scholarship to a student's account.
- In the case of research lab supplies ordered by a department or faculty member, a FOAP for reconciliation can be provided upon request.

Reimbursement
- If a student must follow the reimbursement process that will be noted in the award letter with a deadline for submitting receipts.
- Student must submit a budget of actual expenses.
- Student must submit all receipts for approved expenses.
- Reimbursement information goes to Financial Aid and then to the University Accounting Office. **This part of the process can take weeks to months to complete.**

Verification
- GSA may ask for proof of attendance, travel expenses, research expenses, or any other item covered by a grant. If a student cannot provide proof of the funded activity, GSA may withdraw the award.