

Travel Grant FAQ

ASUN and GSA have been working with the Office of Graduate Studies, the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, and the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs to develop a system of collecting and disbursing monies for graduate travel grants. In these discussions, we have answered many questions, many of which you may have as well. Below are some proposals that we are suggesting to the Office of Graduate Studies that will ultimately be administering the travel grants.

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- 19. Let's say I'm a grad student in leadership studies. I have the opportunity to travel for research and academic development. Is my program eligible only for one of those? Can I apply for the grant for two different reasons?**
- 20. I still have concerns or questions. Who should I talk to?**

1. What are travel grants?

Travel Grants are intended to support students who will be presenting papers, posters, or creative work at the conferences they attend. Funding would also be available for necessary travel expenses to complete research projects. Funds may be used for registration fees, presentation materials, transportation, and lodging/food associated with the conference, workshop, training, competition, audition, or etc. These are not intended to be a primary funding source, but rather to help subsidized the cost.

2. Who would be eligible to apply?

- Any student enrolled in a graduate level course at the University of Nebraska - Lincoln.
- Applicant must be a student enrolled in graduate level course(s) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln at the time of application as well as the time s/he collects a Travel Fund award.
- A student may apply to more than one deadline per fiscal year. However, an applicant may collect a Travel Fund award only once per current University of Nebraska - Lincoln fiscal year (July 1 – June 30).
- Students must have completed at least one semester that includes a graduate course credit.

3. Do I have to be presenting at a conference?

In our discussions, we have decided that you would be eligible to apply if you are presenting at a conference or doing research that requires travel. Please see the travel grant guidelines for more specific guidelines about what types of travel qualify for funding. Special exceptions are made in some fields that have different types of travel needs.

4. How would I apply?

There will be an online application process through the Office of Graduate Studies. Applicants should start the process early as a letter of support from an adviser and additional documents are needed.

5. How much would I be eligible to receive?

The Graduate Student Taskforce, a collaborative committee from ASUN and GSA, would distribute awards, not to exceed \$500 or 50% of the students' proposed budget whichever is less.

6. How would recipients be chosen?

We are proposing that grant recipients are determined by an anonymous, competitive peer review of the Travel Grant Committee. Members of the committee are chosen both by GSA and ASUN. Applicants should note that their applications may not be read by an expert in their field. Award applications should be written with a general academic audience in mind.

7. Where would the funding for these grants come from?

We are proposing a new student fee of \$1.00 per credit hour that is collected from students enrolled in graduate-level courses at UNL.

8. When would the deadlines be to apply?

There will be three deadlines each academic year. One deadline within the first two weeks of each semester will be posted annually. Exact dates will be posted on the travel grant page on the Office of Graduate Studies website (unl.edu/gradstudies).

9. When would I apply?

Please apply by the deadline within the academic semester that you intend to use the money. The money must be used within the term that it is awarded and no awards will be made retroactively.

10. Say I'm selected as a recipient. How would I get the money?

Once you apply for the travel grant, a committee of your peers will review your proposal. If accepted, you will then be notified by your department, that will be handling the reimbursement upon your return and completion of your conference. Itemized receipts will be required in order to get reimbursed.

11. What if I don't do research?

Special exceptions are made in some fields that have different types of travel needs.

12. I'm a non-degree seeking graduate student, what do I get out of this fund?

You are still eligible to apply for a grant to subsidize the cost of travel needs to further your academic goals.

13. I'm a graduate on the travel grant committee. Can I apply?

No. We trust that the individuals that are applying for the Travel Grant Committee do not intend to receive a grant during their term of service.

14. What steps need to be taken to make this fund a reality?

1. February 22-23, 2012 → Graduate students vote on the initiative/fee increase
2. Senior Vice Chancellor must extend support based on student feedback; shares with Chancellor who recommends to Provost
3. Provost makes recommendation to President
4. President must approve

15. If we create these travel grants, will the departments lessen their support? Will departments reallocate their funds other places?

We hope not and we are going to fight against this. This fund is not meant to replace already existing travel grants. In fact, it is meant to compliment them. The Grad Student Task Force will continue to actively engage with each Department, encouraging them to continue keeping their allocations, if not increasing them, for travel related purposes. Additionally, we recognize that not all departments and colleges offer funding for travel and this will help students within those departments as well.

16. Will these awards be given out proportionately based on department size?

A: No. Each proposal will be given equal attention and consideration, regardless of discipline. Furthermore, there is no quota system on how many travel grants are given based on college or department. Our proposed system rewards travel based on merit, not discipline.

That said, we plan to collect data annually, to identify demographics of applicants and award winners --- including tracking the departments from which travel grants are awarded. If we see a blatant disparity or discrepancy, reevaluation or tweaking will be necessary.

17. How will you make this proposal fit the needs of diverse departments? For instance, Computer Engineering would not benefit from these because we have such short notice about conferences?

Any student who applies for the proposed travel grant can provide a caveat that lets the travel grant committee know that they have applied to present at the conference and are awaiting approval. We will not discriminate applications because of this however we will (if application is approved by UNL Graduate Student Travel Grant Committee) ask the applicant to provide evidence of their presentation approval once they are notified by the conference. The short time period of conference presentation approval notification is common amongst many

disciplines and conferences therefore applicants if approved will be dispersed their funding award pending the approval of their conference proposal.

18. How can you ensure fairness in the review process? Furthermore, I'm a history major; will my proposal be read by another history major?

Your proposal will be read by 3 different reviewers. First, one graduate student will be from your area/discipline; second, somebody out of your discipline will evaluate your proposal; and, finally, your proposal will be reviewed by a faculty liaison. This ensures that you have a fair chance to be scored by a peer in your field of study, a peer outside of your discipline, and a faculty member.

19. Let's say I'm a grad student in leadership studies. I have the opportunity to travel for research and academic development. Is my program eligible only for one of those? Can I apply for the grant for two different reasons?

We do not specify which program travels for what purpose. Instead, we have a very open application that asks you to identify the way the conference/event you are attending fits into your academic future. To answer this specific question, you could apply for an academic development conference, and if awarded, a year later apply for a research travel grant.

We certainly don't want to leave any gaps in eligibility.

20. I still have concerns or questions. Who should I talk to?

Feel free to send your questions or comments to the following:

-Lane Carr

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-Sylvia Jons

GSA President

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