GPSF Travel Awards –
Frequency Asked Questions (FAQs)

GENERAL

Is this a competitive award?
Yes. The process is open and competitive. You should therefore approach the travel award application process in the same way that you would approach an application for any prestigious external award.

Can this travel award be combined with other sources of award funding for a particular event?
NO. Please see the Travel Awards Law for clarification. The GPSF Travel Awards are intended to provide a source of travel funds where no other options exist. If another source of funds will be utilized for an event, GPSF travel awards cannot be used for that event. The GPSF encourages applicants to apply for as many sources of funding for travel as possible and then evaluate the advantages of the various sources if more than one award is offered. However, GPSF awards cannot be used in combination with other awards for the same event.

Can this travel award be combined with internal funding from UNC?
NO. The GPSF Travel Awards Law states that other sources of funding (whether internal from UNC or external) cannot be used in conjunction with a GPSF Travel Award for the same travel. A student may have access to other funding but cannot use it for the same conference they are using a GPSF Travel Award for, but these awards are intended for students without access to ANY other travel funding, of which there are unfortunately many at UNC.

Where do the funds for the travel awards come from?
A portion of the annual GPSF budget is allocated for Travel Awards. The specific amount of this allocation is recommended by the GPSF Finance Committee and approved by the GPSF Senate yearly.

ELIGIBILITY

Who is eligible for these travel awards?
Any fee-paying full-time graduate or professional student in good standing with UNC-Chapel Hill is eligible. The applicant must be enrolled within the semester corresponding to travel.

Are travel awards available for professional students?
Yes. Any full-time graduate or professional student in good standing in a Masters, PhD, or advanced professional school program (e.g., MD, PharmD, etc) at UNC is eligible to apply for a Travel Award.

Are doctoral candidates at the dissertation-only (i.e., ABD) stage of their careers considered to be full-time students and eligible for awards?
As long as a candidate meets the requirements for a full-time student as defined by his/her department, he/she is eligible for a GPSF travel award.

Can groups apply?
Yes, but they must apply for a “group” travel award, NOT an individual award.

I am interested in going to the same conference as a classmate, would it be advisable for us to apply as a group or individuals?
Group awards are $300 per group member versus $400 for individual group member. The applications are reviewed independent of department and are based on the personal and professional impact of attending and the
student essay. In some cases, it may be easier to make a case for the need and professional impact for attending if done individually; in other cases, group awards may be easier to demonstrate need in the essay.

**Can I apply for an award for travel which occurs after my graduation?**
Yes, if travel occurs during the semester of graduation and within the dates of travel stipulated by the travel award application.

**Are students eligible for more than one GPSF travel award during their program?**
If an applicant is awarded a GPSF travel award, he/she will be ineligible to apply for any additional GPSF travel awards for the 2 calendar years thereafter during his/her graduate program at UNC. After 2 years, a student may apply again for a GPSF travel award. However, a student may apply more frequently than once every 2 years if a GPSF travel award is not awarded.

**Are travel awards available for research travel?**
Yes. Research travel awards cover up to $600 of eligible expenses for international research travel and up to $400 of eligible expenses for domestic research travel.

**Can travel award money be used to attend conferences?**
Yes.

**Are travel funds available for summer travel?**
Yes, if travel occurs within the dates of travel stipulated by the travel award application.

**Are pre-conference/event activities eligible for reimbursement?**
Yes, but only if the conference is attended as well. Additionally, the rule against combining funding sources for events still applies.

**Do students have to have a presentation to be eligible for a GPSF travel award?**
No, but among the criteria used to evaluate applications, the committee may more highly value those applications where the student is presenting his/her research.

**Does research travel have to be to an institution to be reimbursable?**
No. Any research-related travel will be evaluated.

**APPLYING**

**Where can I find the Travel Award Guidelines and application?**
Once available, applications, supporting materials and guidelines for the GPSF Travel Awards can be found on the [GPSF website](http://gpsf.unc.edu/gpsf-funding/travel-awards/) at: http://gpsf.unc.edu/gpsf-funding/travel-awards/.

**What are the application periods for the GPSF travel awards?**
Applications are accepted at 4 different times during the year. The following table illustrates the travel and corresponding application periods. Application periods and exact dates may slightly vary depending on the particular year's academic calendar, generally to slightly beyond the specified date in the law (e.g., Sept 4th instead of Sept 1st).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>If travel occurs</th>
<th>Must be enrolled</th>
<th>Apply by</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 1—September 30</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>September 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1—December 31</td>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>November 1</td>
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<td>January 1—March 31</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>February 1</td>
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<td>April 1—June 30</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>March 15</td>
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**When are applications available?**

Updated September 2013
A call for applications will be sent at least 2 weeks prior to that period’s application due date.

Is it ok if my travel occurs before the GPSF application due date?
Yes, because of the constraints of the academic calendar and the budget, travel may occur before the GPSF application due date. In all cases, if accepted for an award, the GPSF will reimburse students for the amount awarded for travel after the travel has occurred. The GPSF Travel awards are intended to be reimbursements for travel, and therefore a budget is not required at the time of the application submission.

Is the essay a required component of the application?
Yes, applications with no essay will be automatically disqualified.

What if I have submitted an abstract to a conference but have not yet received confirmation of its acceptance?
You should clearly state in your application that an abstract has been submitted but not yet accepted. The fact that the abstract has not yet been accepted shall not count against you in the ranking process.

Will confirmation of the application receipt be issued?
Upon submission of the application, the webpage itself will provide notification of successful submission. We recommend printing this page for your records. Unfortunately the application tool that the GPSF uses does not have the ability to automatically provide email notifications of successful submission.

Can applications be updated after the application deadline has passed?
No, to update your information, you must submit an entirely new application. If you do this, please email gpsftravel@unc.edu to inform the Travel Awards chair.

What amount of money should be requested in the award application?
A full estimate of expenses is not required at the time of application. Awards reimburse actual expenses up to the maximum amount awarded.

REVIEW PROCESS

How long is the review period for applications?
Review times are dependent on the number of applications received for review and the constraints of the Senate meeting calendar, but generally run about 4-5 weeks. The committee cannot release the names of the individuals recommended to receive an award until the Senate has confirmed.

How many individual travel awards will be awarded?
There is no set number of awards to be given. The total number of awards depends on available funding, which varies from semester to semester. The GPSF has recently doubled the amount of available funding beginning in the year 2011-2012.

If I submit an application, am I guaranteed to receive an award?
These awards are competitive, and submitting an application is no guarantee of receiving an award.

Typically, how many applications are submitted for the travel awards?
The number of applications varies from semester to semester. The GPSF has received as many as 80 applications in 1 application period, but the number of awards given out has also increased.

What criteria are used to evaluate travel awards?
All applications must adhere to and follow the guidelines set forth in the Travel Award Law. It is the responsibility of the applicant to demonstrate the overall value of his/her travel to his/her education at UNC. The GPSF Senate awards committee will evaluate the personal and professional impact of the award as well as the applicant’s communication skills.

Updated September 2013
When will application decisions be made, notifications sent, and awards issued?
Notifications are sent as soon as possible after completion of the application review process for each period, which typically takes about 4-5 weeks. Award monies will be issued after submission of travel receipts by the award recipients.

Who should be contacted to determine application status?
Please contact the GPSF Travel Award committee at gpsftravelawards@unc.edu no earlier than 4 weeks after the application deadline.

REIMBURSEMENT

Should I register for the conference or event for which I am hoping to be reimbursed before I am notified of my application's status?
Applying for a travel award does not guarantee receipt of an award. Payment of conference or event fees should therefore be considered to be entirely the responsibility of the individual.

If accepted, what items must be submitted to be reimbursed?
Within 30 days following the conclusion of travel or notification of the award (whichever is later), the student must submit the following: 1) copy of conference proceedings or letter of acceptance demonstrating that the awardee is attending conference or research travel; 2) a short report (maximum 1 page) of the conference or research experience; and 3) itemized receipts for all expenses for which the awardee is requesting reimbursement.

What constitutes proof of attendance or acceptance of a presentation at a conference?
Acceptable proof of attendance includes letter or email confirmation of conference registration.

What are itemized receipts?
Itemized receipts list and describe each item purchased. A credit card receipt which lists only the total amount charged is not an itemized receipt and will not be accepted. It is the applicant's responsibility to request an itemized receipt at the time of purchase.

What can be done about missing receipts for travel or combined receipts with other individuals?
No funds can be disbursed without an itemized receipt. Lost receipts must be replaced by the issuing agency. A copy of receipts for expenses shared with other individuals must be submitted along with an explanation of how the expenses were shared.

Are there restrictions on lodging and meal costs?
Yes. The reimbursement policies of the UNC Student Activities Fund Office (SAFO) apply to reimbursements under these awards. In addition, the GPSF cannot reimburse alcohol purchases or items considered to be personal gain.