



GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL  
STUDENT FEDERATION

# GPSF Travel Awards

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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Last Updated March 29, 2016

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## GENERAL QUESTIONS

### **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. ([Menu](#))

### **Can this travel award be combined with other sources of award funding for a particular event?**

NO. 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 travel to 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. ([Menu](#))

### **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 they cannot use it for the same conference for which they are using a GPSF Travel Award. *These awards are intended for students without access to ANY other travel funding.* ([Menu](#))

### **Where do the funds for the travel awards come from?**

A portion of the annual GPSF budget, which comes from graduate student fees, 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. ([Menu](#))

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## ELIGIBILITY QUESTIONS

### ***General Eligibility Questions***

#### **Who is eligible for these travel awards?**

Any fee-paying graduate or professional student is eligible. The applicant must be enrolled during the semester associated with the appropriate travel cycle, as defined by Travel Law. ([Menu](#))

#### **Are these travel awards available for professional students?**

Yes. Any fee-paying graduate or professional student in a Masters, PhD, or advanced professional school program (e.g., MD, PharmD, etc) at UNC is eligible to apply for a Travel Award. ([Menu](#))

#### **Are doctoral candidates at the dissertation-only (i.e., ABD) stage of their careers eligible for these awards?**

Yes. As long as the candidate is a fee-paying student, they are eligible for a GPSF travel award. ([Menu](#))

#### **Are students eligible for more than one GPSF travel award during their program?**

Yes. If an applicant is awarded a GPSF travel award, they will be ineligible to apply for any additional GPSF travel awards for the **two years** thereafter during their graduate program at UNC, where two years is calculated as the eight cycles following the cycle in which the applicant received their last award. After two years, a student may apply again for a GPSF travel award. However, a student may apply more frequently than once every two years if they do not receive a GPSF Travel Award. ([Menu](#))

**Are those who were awarded an award but declined it still eligible?**

Yes. A student only enters into the two year ineligibility period once they accept the award and receive money from the GPSF. ([Menu](#))

**Can a student apply for an award for travel which occurs after their graduation?**

Yes. A student may apply for an award if travel occurs after the semester of their graduation but within the dates of travel stipulated by the travel award application. For example, with Spring Cycle 2 (travel between April 1 and June 30), applicants graduating in May remain eligible for travel through June 30. ([Menu](#))

**Are travel funds available for summer travel?**

Yes. Currently, summer travel is split between Spring Cycle 2 (travel through June 30) and Fall Cycle 1 (travel from July 1). Applicants must be fee-paying students of the appropriate semester to be eligible. ([Menu](#))

***Group Travel Questions*****Can groups apply?**

Yes Applicants must apply for a group travel award, NOT an individual award. ([Menu](#))

**If applying as a group, how many applications should we submit?**

One. GPSF Travel Law stipulates that there should be only a single application for groups. ([Menu](#))

**If classmates are interested in going to the same conference, would it be advisable for them to apply as a group or individuals?**

The maximum group awards are \$300 per group member versus \$400 for individual awards. The applications are reviewed independent of department and are based on the personal and professional impact of attending. 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, it may be easier to demonstrate need and impact as a group. ([Menu](#))

***Awards Use Questions*****Can travel awards be used to attend conferences?**

Yes. ([Menu](#))

**Are pre-conference/event activities eligible for reimbursement?**

Yes. However, the awardee must attend the conference as well. Additionally, the rule against combining funding sources for events still applies. ([Menu](#))

**Do students have to be presenting to be eligible for a GPSF travel award?**

No. However, among the criteria used to evaluate applications, the Committee may more highly value those applications where the student is presenting their own research. ([Menu](#))

**Are travel awards available for research travel?**

Yes. Research travel awards cover up to \$400 of eligible expenses for domestic research travel and up to \$600 of eligible expenses for international research travel. ([Menu](#))

**Does research travel have to be to an institution to be reimbursable?**

No. Any research-related travel will be evaluated. ([Menu](#))

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## APPLICATION QUESTIONS

### *Process Questions*

#### **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 at: <http://gpsf.unc.edu/gpsf-funding/travel-awards/>. ([Menu](#))

#### **Will a confirmation receipt for the application 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. ([Menu](#))

#### **Can applications be updated after the application deadline has passed?**

Yes. Changes may be emailed to the GPSF Travel Awards Chair at [gpsf-travel@unc.edu](mailto:gpsf-travel@unc.edu). However, due to the application system we use, applicants will not be able to see or alter the application on their own, and if their application requires major changes which the Chair feels cannot be solved via email, they may ask the applicant to submit an entirely new application. ([Menu](#))

#### **Is the essay a required component of the application?**

Yes. Applications with no essay will be automatically disqualified. ([Menu](#))

### *Application Timeline Questions*

#### **What are the application periods for the GPSF travel awards?**

Applications are accepted at four different times during the year. The following table illustrates the travel and corresponding application periods. Application periods and exact dates may vary slightly depending on the particular year's academic calendar, though any variations will always fall on a later date after the listed travel cycle period. ([Menu](#))

| Travel Cycle   | If travel occurs between | Apply by    | Must be enrolled |
|----------------|--------------------------|-------------|------------------|
| Fall Cycle 1   | July 1 – September 30    | September 1 | Fall             |
| Fall Cycle 2   | October 1 – December 31  | November 1  | Fall             |
| Spring Cycle 1 | January 1 – March 31     | February 1  | Spring           |
| Spring Cycle 2 | April 1 – June 30        | March 15    | Spring           |

#### **When are applications available?**

The new application will be available thirty days before the listed deadline. A call for applications will be sent out in the GPSF Newsletter at least two weeks prior to that period's application due date. ([Menu](#))

#### **What if my travel occurs before the GPSF application due date?**

Sometimes, because of the constraints of the academic calendar and the budget, travel may occur before the GPSF application due date. However, the occurrence of travel prior to the deadline is irrelevant. *The GPSF Travel awards are intended to be reimbursements for travel*. In all cases, if accepted for an award, the GPSF will reimburse students for the amount awarded for travel after the travel has occurred. ([Menu](#))

#### **What if my travel overlaps between two award cycles?**

If an applicant's travel overlaps between two award cycles, they may apply to both cycles. If they should receive an award for one cycle, they become ineligible for the other. ([Menu](#))

**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. ([Menu](#))

***Questions concerning the Application and Budget***

**What are the current maximum awards?**

The current maximum travel awards are \$400.00 for domestic travel, \$600.00 for international travel, and \$300.00 per individual group member for domestic group travel (\$450.00 for international travel). ([Menu](#))

**If I receive an award, will I automatically receive the maximum award?**

No. The size of award depends on a number of factors, including where your application ranked among the applicants, the amount of money the Committee has allocated per cycle, and the nature and location of your travel. ([Menu](#))

**What amount of money should be requested in the award application?**

Not all applications will be required to submit a budget, and you should not do so unless (1) you are asked to do so by the committee or (2) you expect your travel costs to be less than the maximum award. If you do present a budget, you should present the Committee with a clear and honest estimation of your projected costs and how you plan to apply the GPSF Travel Award if you should receive an award, keeping in mind the award limits as the Committee cannot award more than the limits. ([Menu](#))

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## **REVIEW PROCESS QUESTIONS**

***General Review Process Questions***

**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. ([Menu](#))

**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 cycle to cycle. ([Menu](#))

**Typically, how many applications are submitted for the travel awards?**

The number of applications varies from cycle to cycle, with some cycles typically having a greater number of applications than others. The Committee has received as many as 80 applications in a single application period. ([Menu](#))

**What criteria are used to evaluate travel awards?**

The Committee uses those criteria set forth in the GPSF Travel Awards Law in their evaluation of applications, including the eligibility of the applicant, how the travel will impact the applicant, how the travel will impact the applicant's field, and their communication skills. In addition, for specific types of applications, additional factors may be considered. For conference travel, the Committee considers how the travel impacts the University, and for research travel, the Committee considers the applicant's methodology / intentionality / preparedness for the research and/or their proposed budget. Other factors considered are outlined in the Travel Law, Parts 1 and 2. ([Menu](#))

## ***Review Process Timeline Questions***

### **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 the Committee's decisions.

[\(Menu\)](#)

### **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. [\(Menu\)](#)

### **Who should be contacted to determine application status?**

Please contact the GPSF Travel Award committee at [gpsf-travel@unc.edu](mailto:gpsf-travel@unc.edu) no earlier than **four** weeks after the application deadline. [\(Menu\)](#)

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## **REIMBURSEMENT QUESTIONS**

### **Where can I find information on the reimbursement process?**

Most relevant information on the reimbursement process may be found in the GPSF Travel Law and on the GPSF Travel Award Reimbursement page (<http://gpsf.unc.edu/gpsf-funding/travel-awards/travel-award-reimbursement/>). [\(Menu\)](#)

### **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 the responsibility of the individual. [\(Menu\)](#)

### **If I receive an award, 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) proof of participation; (2) a short report (maximum 1 page) of the awardee's conference or research experience; (3) a travel awards expense report; and (4) itemized and physical receipts for all expenses for which the awardee is requesting reimbursement. [\(Menu\)](#)

### **What constitutes proof of participation?**

Proof of participation is a copy of conference proceedings, a letter of acceptance to the conference/event, or a signed letter from the awardee's research advisor or supervisor confirming the details of their travel. [\(Menu\)](#)

### **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. [\(Menu\)](#)

### **What are physical receipts?**

Physical receipts are the original receipts given to you by a vendor. Photocopies or scans of receipts will not be accepted unless the only version provided to you was digital, such as an email for the purchase of airfare. In such cases, the email receipt must be provided in printed form. [\(Menu\)](#)

**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. Receipts for expenses shared with other individuals must be submitted along with an explanation of how the expenses were shared. ([Menu](#))

**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. ([Menu](#))