

Guidelines for Graduate Students Applying for Travel Funding

Near the beginning of each fall semester, the English Department's Research Resources Committee (RRC) solicits travel funding requests from all graduate students for the academic year. The budget for such funding changes from year to year, and funding for graduate student travel is never guaranteed. However, the RRC welcomes requests from students who are interested in traveling for academic purposes.

What We Fund

Eligible travel requests generally fall into two categories. The first regards travel to undertake research relevant to one's graduate work. Such research might require a trip to an archival repository (in a research library, historical society, museum, or private collection) or a journey to a specific location for a creative writing project. The second category would include travel to an academic conference, meeting, workshop, or symposium in order to present one's own work. In order to receive reimbursement for travel to such an event, a graduate student must offer proof of participation (an email indicating the acceptance of a paper proposal or a name and title in the conference program); mere attendance is not enough.

The RRC will certainly consider requests for other forms of academic travel. We recognize, for instance, the professional importance of attending the Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP) Conference and the Modern Language Association (MLA) Convention. Our funding, however, is usually very limited, and we privilege requests to conduct research and to present original work at conferences.

Every request, in order to be considered, must include the name of a faculty sponsor who is overseeing the graduate work relevant to the trip.

How We Weigh Requests

As indicated above, requests regarding research projects and conference presentations will receive priority. Additionally (though secondarily), depending on available funding, we prioritize graduate funding for students in the PhD program, followed by students in the MFA program, followed by students in the MA program. All students, however, are eligible to apply.

How Much We Fund

Our budget changes every year, so we do not have a regular fixed amount for graduate requests. In recent years, the maximum amount we have awarded to a single PhD student for travel during the academic year was \$750.00. We are unlikely to award significantly more than this in the near future. Expenditures that the university is able to reimburse include conference registration (but *not* membership in a society, which is a separate cost); transportation (airfare if flying, mileage if driving, cab fare, and parking); lodging; and per diem (meals and incidental expenses). Other expenses cannot be considered for reimbursement.

How to Apply

At the beginning of the fall semester, the chair of the RRC (currently Prof. John Bowers) will solicit travel funding requests for the entire academic year. If you anticipate travel but are not yet sure (e.g. you hope to attend a conference in the spring but do not yet know if your paper has been accepted), please indicate these plans to the RRC chairperson in an email. Each fall, the

Research Resources Committee budgets its funding distribution based on expectations for the entire year, so we need to acquire an accurate sense of funding requests for the entire year.

If you know your travel plans, please fill out the “Graduate Student Research Resources Request Form” and send it to the RRC chairperson. This form will ask you to indicate expenses for various facets of your travel. A few areas may require explanation:

Reimbursement rates for lodging (staying at hotels or motels) are set by the federal government and vary according to date and destination. (For example, the maximum nightly overnight rate for Atlanta, Georgia, in April 2016 is \$138.00.) This information can be found at the following website: <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877> (also listed at the bottom of the “Graduate Student Research Resources Request Form”).

Reimbursement rates for per diem (meals and incidental expenses—“M&IE”) are also set by the federal government and vary according to destination. This information can be found at the same website: <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104877>. The university will not reimburse you for expenses beyond the maximum rate.

You must indicate, on the “Graduate Student Research Resources Request Form,” where you are traveling and for which reason(s). If you are traveling to a conference, you must provide the name of the conference, the name of your presentation or paper, and the current status of your presentation or paper (invited, proposed, or accepted). If you are traveling to conduct research (or for any other reason), you must include a proposal that indicates which institution(s) you will visit and how your research project contributes to your graduate work.

For full consideration, completed forms should be given to the RRC chairperson in advance of the RRC fall meeting. Travel requests will continue to be considered throughout the academic year, but available funds will diminish over time. If you have informally indicated to the RRC chair that you anticipate future travel, be sure to fill out and submit (to the RRC chair) the official “Graduate Student Research Resources Request Form” as soon as your plans solidify.

Note: You may request travel funds for more than one trip during the academic year. If you do so, you must fill out a request form for each trip. However, keep in mind that the RRC sets a maximum amount for funding for any individual graduate student; once that amount has been reached, the RRC will not provide funding for additional requests from that same student.

What Next?

If your request is approved (in part or in full), the RRC chairperson will let you know via email. Once this happens, you should fill out a “Travel Document.” You should then take both your “Graduate Student Research Resources Request Form” and your “Travel Document,” along with any relevant receipts (airfare, conference registration, etc.), to Brianna Silverio in RLL 221 *before you depart for your trip*. Bree will begin a file for your account. When you return from your trip, you should immediately give Bree all remaining relevant receipts (e.g. hotel bill) accrued during your travel. (*Note:* Receipts for meals are not required.) Bree will add them to your file and begin the reimbursement process. Be sure to turn in all relevant receipts absolutely no later than four weeks from the end of your trip—preferably much sooner. Once your file is completed, the reimbursement process generally takes from four to six weeks.

Other Options

In addition to applying for funding from the English Department’s Research Resources Committee, you should also consider applying for funding from GPSA. More information can be found here: <https://www.unlv.edu/gpsa/sponsorship-awards/sponsorships>.