



**Graduate Student Association**

**GRANT HANDBOOK**

Carter Hall, Room 2007

Campus Box 135

Greeley, CO 80639

970-351-1089

<http://www.unco.edu/gsa>

[gsa@unco.edu](mailto:gsa@unco.edu)

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## 1. Introduction

Graduate Student Association (GSA) grants are supplemental in nature to aid in the academic and professional development of UNC's graduate students. Due to the limited nature of grant funding, each application cycle 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 dismissal of the application or a reduction in funding.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the GSA grant application process, please email [gsa@unco.edu](mailto:gsa@unco.edu). If questions or concerns are received by the GSA within two business days of any deadline, those questions may not be answered by the deadline. The GSA assumes no responsibility for unanswered questions that may result in grant applications being dismissed or receiving reduced levels of funding if those questions were submitted within two business days of any deadline.

If you are having problems with the online GSA grant application, you should submit an email to [gsa@unco.edu](mailto:gsa@unco.edu) immediately to begin an electronic record that can be used to verify the date and time of your incident. The email should be sent from your official UNC email address and must contain information that specifically details the problem you are having.

## 2. Grant Overview

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

- Research Grants
  - Research grants can be awarded to either 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 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).
  - You may be eligible for a research grant if:
    - You are the principal investigator or co-investigator of a research project.
  
- Conference Grants
  - If you present at a conference, you can request a GSA grant to help cover travel/conference expenses. 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. However, presenters must generally have participated in the creation/research of the material being presented (up to the discretion of the GSA Grant Review Committee). Presenting another researcher’s work, without having significantly contributed to it, may cause an application to be rejected. 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](mailto:gsa@unco.edu).
  - If attend a conference, you can request a GSA grant to help cover travel/conference expenses. Funding for conference attendees (and non-lead presenters) may be reduced or denied at the discretion of the reviewer(s). Applicants with undergraduate understudies may be given higher funding priority than applicants who are attending alone. This preference is due to the educational experience involved in mentoring undergraduate students.
  - You may be eligible for a conference grant if:
    - You are presenting at or attending a conference.
    - Note: For groups of graduate students that are presenting together, it is the responsibility of the grant applicant(s) to decide if they want to divide

grant award(s) among group members. Decisions and coordination of the division of grant funds is up to your group. The GSA will not arbitrate the division of an award among group members. Please remember that the UNC Student Business Office will only reimburse the student named on a grant award letter for expenses that they have personally incurred. You may not be reimbursed for a fellow group member's expenses if they made a purchase on their own and the grant winner's name is not listed on the receipt. Please plan accordingly.

- Professional Development Grants

- If you are attending a professional development class/experience or getting 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](mailto: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.
- You may be eligible for a professional development grant if:
  - You are attending a professional development class/experience or getting a professional certification, license, etc. associated with (but not required by) your academic program or UNC graduate assistantship.
    - Approved professional development is up to the discretion of the GSA Grant Review Committee.
- For groups of graduate students that are attending the same professional development experience together, it is the responsibility of the grant applicant(s) to decide if they want to divide grant award(s) among group members. Decisions and coordination of the division of grant funds is up to your group. The GSA will not arbitrate the division of an award among group members.
  - Please remember that the UNC Student Business Office will only reimburse the student named on a grant award letter for expenses that they have personally incurred. You may not be reimbursed for a fellow group member's expenses if they made a purchase on their own and the grant winner's name is not listed on the receipt. Please plan accordingly.

- Publication Grants

- 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 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.
- You may be eligible for a publication grant if:
  - You are the lead author of an article, or
  - You are the lead author of an alternative form of research publication (e.g. popular press, online, or other media sources)
    - Please remember that the UNC Student Business Office will only reimburse the student named on a grant award letter for expenses that they have personally incurred. You may not be reimbursed for a fellow group member's expenses if they made a purchase on their own and the grant winner's name is not listed on the receipt. Please plan accordingly.

Funding amounts for each grant cycle are determined by the GSA Grant Review Committee. Award money may be budgeted at the discretion of the GSA Grant Review Committee for the purposes of increasing/decreasing the competitiveness within/between colleges/programs and/or advancing 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.

Grant applications are reviewed as they are received within a given grant cycle. 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/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/professional development experience.

All grants are awarded on a reimbursement basis and will be reimbursed with proof of payment (as necessary), such as a receipt or invoice, by the UNC Student Business Office. The reimbursement will only be up to the amount paid (with documented proof of payment) even if

the award was for a higher amount. For specific questions about reimbursement or acceptable proof of payment, please contact the UNC Student Business Office: Emily Hutchison ([emily.hutchison@unco.edu](mailto:emily.hutchison@unco.edu)) or Austin McCracken ([austin.mccracken@unco.edu](mailto:austin.mccracken@unco.edu)).

### **3. Eligibility**

Any UNC graduate student who is in good standing with the University may apply for a GSA grant regardless of campus (Greeley, Denver, Loveland, Colorado Springs, Online, etc.). The applicant must be enrolled in a UNC graduate program or paying the graduate continuous enrollment fee during the current grant cycle (except during summer grant cycles).

- SUMMER GRANTS (cycles 1 and 4): For summer grant cycles, applicants not taking summer courses can include their upcoming fall course schedule to demonstrate continuous enrollment at UNC.
- Students paying the graduate continuous enrollment fee may include proof of payment.
- 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.

For students in the Master of Public Health program or other multi-campus graduate programs, a UNC course schedule from [ursa.unco.edu](http://ursa.unco.edu) must be provided. A course schedule from any other institution may result in the application being dismissed.

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 grant cycle. If a student misses a grant application deadline, or is denied funding, they may apply/re-apply during the following grant cycle, but reimbursements are only allowed for expenses incurred during the current fiscal year. Students that 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/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 actually attend the conference/activity, the applicant's GSA award is considered void. Applicants who do not attend their conference may not 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 up to 3 consecutive grant cycles.

#### **4. Allowed and Prohibited Expenses**

Reimbursements are only allowed for expenses incurred during the current fiscal year. The fiscal year begins on July 1 and ends on June 30.

The following lists of examples are not exhaustive. Please inquire with [gsa@unco.edu](mailto:gsa@unco.edu) if you are unsure if an expense can be reimbursed or not. If questions or concerns are received by the GSA within two business days of a deadline, those questions may not be answered by the deadline.

##### **Conferences/Professional Development:**

- Registration fees
- Organization membership fees
- Airfare / Cruise fare
- 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.)
- Mileage, if driving
  - Mileage rates are determined by the State of Colorado
  - Mileage can be calculated by using online trip mapping software
- Meals & Incidental Expenses (M&IE) Per Diem
  - Use the M&IE per diem amounts listed on the appropriate website(s) for your travel destination:
    - [U.S. General Services Administration](#) (for U.S. travel)
    - [Department of Defense](#) (for Alaska, Hawaii, U.S. Territories/Possessions travel)
    - [U.S. Department of State](#) (for foreign countries travel)
  - When calculating travel per diem, the first and last days of travel must be calculated at 75% of the location's M&IE per diem rate.

##### **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 / Cruise fare 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)
- Mileage, if driving to research/subject data collection or analysis location(s)
  - Mileage rates are determined by the State of Colorado
  - Mileage can be calculated by using online trip mapping software
- Meals & Incidental Expenses (M&IE) Per Diem
  - Use the M&IE per diem amounts listed on the appropriate website(s) for your travel destination:
    - [U.S. General Services Administration](#) (for U.S. travel)
    - [Department of Defense](#) (for Alaska, Hawaii, U.S. Territories/Possessions travel)
    - [U.S. Department of State](#) (for foreign countries travel)
  - When calculating travel per diem, the first and last days of travel must be calculated at 75% of the location's M&IE per diem rate.
- 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](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](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 copy and binding costs
- UNC tuition/fees

**PLEASE NOTE:** students conducting research or traveling under a faculty/staff secured grant (such as 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 may be suspended.

## 5. Application Process

Download and complete the appropriate grant application form. Email the completed form as a MS Word attachment to [gsa@unco.edu](mailto: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/publication activity. You may submit multiple separate grant applications during the same grant cycle if you will be conducting multiple research projects, attending multiple conferences, engaging in multiple professional development activities, and/or submitting multiple publications.

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.

Grant application deadlines are published on the GSA website (<http://www.unco.edu/graduate-student-association/>). Only applications submitted within the appropriate period will be accepted. Any applications received before or after the designated period will be automatically dismissed and the applicant may not be contacted regarding their application status.

## 6. Review Process

Applications will first be reviewed by the GSA Grant Review Committee to see if the applicant followed the directions provided and paid attention to details. This is an overall application

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. Review of your written content is highly subjective. If you do not answer the questions adequately, your application may be dismissed, or your funding reduced at the discretion of the Review Committee.

The written responses will be used by the Review Committee 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. Appeals

If a grant application is denied, the applicant can appeal the grant decision. For grant cycles 1-3, the applicant must submit an email request to the GSA Director ([gsa@unco.edu](mailto:gsa@unco.edu)) for appeal within 10 business days of being notified of their grant status. For grant cycle 4, the applicant must submit an email request to the GSA Director ([gsa@unco.edu](mailto:gsa@unco.edu)) for appeal within 5 business days of being notified of their grant status (due to the end of the fiscal year). All appeals must be submitted to the GSA Director by email. Appeals submitted by any person other than the applicant will be automatically dismissed and may not receive a response.

The written request for appeal must outline the basis for the grievance and how the decision was either arbitrary or capricious. The GSA Director will then discuss the appeal with the GSA Grant Review Committee, GSA Council, and/or the Dean/Assistant Dean of the Graduate School within 20 business days of receipt. A decision may take longer than 20 business days to conduct research on the appeal.

## 8. Process to Receive Your Reimbursement

If you are granted an award, you will receive an award notice from the GSA Grant Review Committee with detailed instructions to receive reimbursement.

### 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. Per diem reimbursements are made at the daily rate for a given location and do not require submission of receipts.

The most efficient way to receive your funds is through direct deposit. Please note that the UNC Student Business Office cannot, and will not, write you a check on the spot. It may take several weeks for a reimbursement to be distributed after you have turned in your receipts.

Be courteous with the UNC Student Business Office employees. They are bound to follow University protocols and procedures. Applicants who are found to be rude or hostile to the UNC Student Business Office employees may have their GSA grant revoked by the GSA Director.

The UNC Student Business Office contact information is as follows:

Emily Hutchison: [Emily.Hutchison@unco.edu](mailto:Emily.Hutchison@unco.edu)

Phone number: 970.351.1308

Austin McCracken: [Austin.McCracken@unco.edu](mailto:Austin.McCracken@unco.edu)

Phone number: 970.351.1309

## 9. Budget Expense Sheet

Detailed budgets are not part of the initial grant application. 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. You are not eligible to receive more reimbursement than your grant award during grant cycles 1-4.

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.

## 10. Grant Award Caps

At the start of the fiscal year (July 1), the GSA Director sets a budget for each grant cycle based on the number of grant applications received during that cycle of the previous fiscal year.

At the end of the fiscal year, if any grant funding remains, the Grant Review Committee may allow grant applicants from cycles 01 - 04 to apply for supplemental funding awards. These awards can go above the original award (if any was received) and will be distributed in priority of:

- A. Bringing grant applicants to parity with one another as funds are available (to original cycle award amounts or the funding amount requested, whichever is lower).
- B. Distributing remaining funds equally (until funds are depleted or to the funding amount requested, whichever is lower).