

GSA Travel and Research Grants: Policies & Procedures

[Revised on September 2010]

One of the primary goals of the Graduate Student Association (GSA) is to encourage and support graduate student research at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. Therefore, GSA provides travel and research grants for graduate students to aid in their pursuit of academic achievement. Students can use travel grants to present their research or attend conferences, seminars, symposiums, congresses, workshops, sessions, meetings, round table discussions, and other types of academic forums. Students can use research grants to pay for expenses that they incur while working on theses (or the equivalent in masters programs that do not require a thesis) or dissertations.

General Policies and Procedures

1. To receive a GSA grant, full and part-time graduate students must meet the following requirements:
 - a. Be enrolled at UMBC and paying graduate fees for the semester that funds are requested
 - b. If in a combined program, have a bachelor's degree or equivalent
 - c. Be in a graduate program in good standing with GSA
 - d. Be in compliance with GSA procedures for submitting grants
 - e. Be in good academic standing

2. The following are monetary limits to GSA grants:

TYPE OF GRADUATE STUDENT	ELIGIBILITY FOR FUNDING
Masters Student	A maximum of \$1,500 for tenure as a UMBC student
Master of Fine Arts (MFA) Student	A maximum of \$2,000 for tenure as a UMBC student
Doctoral Student	A maximum of \$2,500 for tenure as a UMBC student
Doctoral Student Who Completed Masters at UMBC	A maximum of \$2,500 for tenure as a UMBC student, minus any GSA funds previously used

3. Students are allowed to apply for up to \$1,000 in grant funding per fiscal year*. Each grant is limited to a maximum of \$500 for Travel Grants (Presenters), \$250 for Travel Grants (Attendees), and \$1,000 for Research Grants. Students may apply for more than one grant per semester.

*The fiscal year for grants begins July 1 and ends June 30 of the following year. This applies to the time of travel, not submission.

4. To ensure GSA approval and subsequent reimbursement, students must submit travel and research grant applications at least **TWO WEEKS** before the date of departure for travel or incurring expenses related to research grants. GSA will NOT approve grant applications received less than **TWO WEEKS** prior.
5. The GSA does NOT give cash advances. Students are responsible for paying their own research and travel expenses. The GSA will not reimburse graduate departments or other third parties that fund students' research or travel purchases.
6. Do not assume you have been approved for a grant unless notified as such. GSA will attempt to review grants within two weeks but this is not guaranteed. It is advised that students submit grant applications well before

expected dates of travel/research expenses. Any appeals of grant decisions must be made in writing to the GSA Executive Board.

7. A student will owe **1 hour of community service** for every grant received.
 - a. For example, if a person receives both a travel and research grant, he/she owes 2 hours.
 - b. If service is not completed **within 1 calendar year** of the date the grant was sent to Accounting, future funds will be frozen until such service is completed.
 - c. Service includes but is not limited to:
 - volunteering at GSA or departmental events
 - serving as a GSA senator or GSO officer
 - participating in the Graduate Research Conference (spring semester)
 - d. If service is through a non-GSA department, a signed letter stating the nature of the service must be submitted to GSA by the official organizer of the event.

8. GSA is entitled to use your name, the title of your paper or the subject of your research, and the conference you attended for advertisement purposes.

Generally Allowable Costs:

TRAVEL

- Hotel accommodations and taxes associated with room occupancy
- Conference registration fees
- Meals not included in lodging/conference fees (UMBC per diem rates)
- Bus, train, or airfare to and from conferences
- Car travel per mile, if students travel in their own car (UMBC mileage rates)
- Gasoline, only if students travel in a rental car
- Taxi, shuttle, or limousine service (to/from conference and/or hotel and airport)

RESEARCH

- Research related copying fees (surveys and recruitment mailings or flyers)
- Research related mailing expenses
- Rental equipment not available on campus for conducting experiments
- Dissertations or abstracts pertinent to students' thesis or dissertation research
- Art supplies used for the presentation of thesis or dissertation research
- Payment of human research subjects (in accordance with UMBC's policies and procedures)
- Published monographs pertaining to the student's thesis, dissertation, or enrolled course of study
- Computer software that is unavailable through the university and is necessary for the completion of one's thesis/dissertation (See specific research grant policies regarding software)

Generally Not Allowable Costs:

TRAVEL

- MD Sales tax
- Room service or alcoholic beverages; movie rentals
- Telephone calls or internet access
- Poster materials for presentations
- Attendance at conferences that do not pertain to students' enrolled program

RESEARCH

- Membership in professional organizations
- Hardware (audio, video, computer, or laboratory equipment); exceptions possible with a written request
- Computer software available through the university (See **research grant policies** regarding software)
- Textbooks for class
- Small office supplies (e.g. paper, pens, notebooks, blank CD's/DVD's)
- Copies of one's own dissertation or thesis
- Typists, transcribers, or translators fee. Exceptions possible with a written request
- Lodging expenses incurred while conducting research for theses or dissertations
- Advertisement related costs other than copying fees for flyers or mailings

TRAVEL GRANTS: SPECIFIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CHECKLIST FOR TRAVEL GRANTS:

- A. Apply within 2 weeks of departure**
- B. Complete application**
- C. Transcript for the semester of travel**
- D. If attending, a brochure/flyer;
if presenting, proof of acceptance**
- E. Community Service for any previous GSA grants**

- A.** Grants must be submitted at least **two weeks** prior to travel departure (see above stated policy). GSA will not accept grants submitted later than **two weeks** prior to departure.
- B.** The application can be downloaded from this website or obtained in the GSA office.
- C.** Students must submit an unofficial transcript for the semester during which they will travel so that GSA can see students are registered for the semester of travel and paying graduate fees.
- D.** If **presenting** research at an academic forum (e.g. a conference), students must attach a copy of their letter/email of acceptance to present with their application. If presenting a research paper that lists their faculty advisor as first author, students must submit a letter from their advisor stating that the research they will present is theirs or is partially theirs. The maximum funding allowance for students to present at a forum is **\$500**.

If **attending** an academic forum (e.g. a conference), then students must attach a brochure or advertisement showing the dates and location of the forum. The maximum funding allowance for students to only attend a forum is **\$250**.
- E.** Students should have no outstanding community service for any previous grants.

It is strongly advised that receipts are submitted **WITHIN 10 BUSINESS DAYS OF RETURN** from travel. Any receipts submitted after 10 business days must be accompanied by a letter explaining the delay. Accounting reserves the right to deny reimbursement of expenses submitted more than 10 business days following return from travel.

Please see the **Reimbursement Process** for Travel Grants for complete reimbursement information.

Please contact the GSA Grants Administrator if you have any further questions that are not addressed here.

RESEARCH GRANTS: SPECIFIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

GSA only reimburses research that students conduct for their thesis, or its equivalent, or dissertation.

CHECKLIST FOR RESEARCH GRANTS

- A. Apply within 2 weeks of expenses incurred**
- B. Complete application & attachments**
- C. Transcript for the semester of research**
- D. Community Service for any previous GSA grants**

- A.** Grants must be submitted at least **two weeks** prior to incurring expenses (see above stated policy). It is recommended that grants be submitted well in advance as there is often the need to clarify items in the application. Any purchases made prior to notification of grant acceptance will not be reimbursed. If there are any changes to your projected costs, you must write a letter to GSA requesting approval of such a change.
- B.** When submitting a research grant application, students must attach a one page description of their research and itemized estimates of the costs involved in the research, along with the application.
- C.** Students must submit an unofficial transcript for the semester during which they will research so that GSA can see students are registered for the semester of travel and paying graduate fees.
- D.** Students should have no outstanding community service for any previous GSA grants.

*****Software/Hardware Policy*****

The GSA will reimburse students for the cost of software/hardware only if they cannot complete their thesis or dissertation without it and it is not provided anywhere on campus, or through any of UMBC's services or departments. Software that makes writing a dissertation easier but is not necessary, for example EndNote, is not an allowable expense.

Research related receipts should be submitted **on a monthly basis up to 6 weeks** before the expiration date of the grant. If students' research involves human subjects, they must fill out **Receipt for Funds Disbursed to Study Participant**. Click on the "Interview Receipt" button for interviewing of human subjects. Click on the "Survey Receipt" button for surveys.

Please see the **Reimbursement Process** for Research Grants for complete reimbursement information.

Please contact the GSA Grants Administrator if you have any further questions that are not addressed here.

REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS

If the total cost involved exceeds the year or grant allotment, students will only receive up to the allotted amount in any given year or grant.

TRAVEL GRANT REIMBURSEMENT

1. Student should complete the **Reimbursement Form** when submitting receipts and statements. Please click the button “Reimbursement Form.”)
2. Students must submit **ORIGINAL ITEMIZED RECEIPTS within TEN business days**. The UMBC Accounting Office does not accept copies or faxes, but it will accept students’ email receipts for registration confirmations or airline travel. Hotel bills need to be itemized on a daily basis.
3. If students use a credit card or check, then they must submit their **CREDIT CARD/BANK STATEMENTS**, a printout of their online credit activity with their name, and/or cancelled checks to show that they paid for their purchases. The **cardholder’s (student’s) name** must be visible on the statement in order to be accepted as proof of purchase. To protect personal information, students can black out account numbers (except the last 4 digits) and other sensitive data.
4. Students’ receipts (not statements) should show a \$0 balance and the method of payment.
5. If students share travel costs with someone else, they must obtain a separate receipt(s) showing their personal expenses in order to be reimbursed.
6. Once the GSA receives their receipts and processes their forms, students can expect to receive a reimbursement check (or direct deposit if a university employee) **within four to eight weeks of paperwork submittal**. Students can track their reimbursements by clicking on “Tracking Grant Reimbursements.”

RESEARCH GRANT REIMBURSEMENT

1. Students must submit **ORIGINAL ITEMIZED RECEIPTS within TEN business days**. The UMBC Accounting Office does not accept copies or faxes, but it will accept students’ email receipts. Students’ receipts (not statements) should show a \$0 balance and the method of payment.
2. If students use a credit card or check, then they must submit their **CREDIT CARD/BANK STATEMENTS**, a printout of their online credit activity with their name, and/or cancelled checks to show that they paid for their purchases. The **cardholder’s (student’s) name** must be visible on the statement in order to be accepted as proof of purchase. To protect personal information, students can black out account numbers (except the last 4 digits) and other sensitive data.
3. Receipts should be submitted **on a monthly basis up to 6 weeks** before the expiration date of the grant. At the latest, students must submit all original itemized receipts **within 10 business days of the expiration of their research grant** (6 months after approval date). Otherwise, students must submit a letter explaining the lateness of submission. The Accounting Office reserves the right to deny reimbursement for any late submissions.
4. If students’ research involves human subjects by interview or survey, they must fill out **Receipts for Funds Disbursed to Study Participants**. Please contact the GSA Grant Administrator for more information.
5. GSA will not reimburse students for travel costs that they incurred for research conducted prior to their enrollment in a UMBC graduate program or academic department.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT GSA TRAVEL GRANTS

Where can I find the travel and research grants application?

Both applications for travel and research grants can be found on this page. You can click these 2 buttons on the left side: "Travel Grants Application" and "Research Grants Application."

What needs to be turned in with my application?

- Your application filled out and signed in its entirety.
- A copy of your transcripts (unofficial from your my UMBC account is fine) showing enrollment for the semester in which you will be traveling (exceptions for summer and winter terms)

If you are presenting:

Proof that you will be presenting either a poster or giving an oral presentation. This must explicitly show that you will be presenting some of your work in order to be funded at the presenter level.

If you are attending:

A copy, brochure, or web print off as proof of the conference showing its title, location, and dates.

What does the Travel Grant cover in terms of food?

- Reimbursement of meal costs is offered as per diem for each day the student traveled at UMBC's meal rates.
- UMBC's meal rates will be according to the current University Policy.
- Receipts are not needed to receive per diem but the exact dates and times of travel (each day) must be submitted upon return.
- The purchase of alcohol and room service will not be reimbursed.

If I drive to a conference (or use a rental), am I eligible for reimbursement for gas/rental?

- The cost of renting a car is reimbursable.
- If a private car is used the GSA can reimburse for mileage at UMBC's current travel rate according to the current University Policy. For this the traveler must submit an online print off of the directions to the conference showing the distance traveled.

How long before the conference should I turn in my application?

- As soon as possible!
- The deadline for applications is TWO WEEKS before the date of travel.
- To ensure reimbursement and allow time for making travel arrangements the traveler should plan ahead and submit as soon as they possibly can.

When can I purchase my plane ticket/reserve hotel room?

- Research purchases must NOT be made prior to your grant's review and approval.
- Travel purchases can be made at any time for travel grants. Please note though that if purchases are made prior to your grant's approval there is no guarantee that said purchases will be reimbursable or that your grant will be approved.
- Please contact GSA if you have specific questions regarding any purchases.

Do you need original receipts or are copies okay?

Accounting requires original receipts; copies will not be accepted. Online confirmations of purchases for airfare and pre-paid hotel stays are acceptable.

Other than receipts, what do you require for reimbursement?

- If a personal car was used for travel then an online print off of the directions to the conference showing the distance traveled is required if asking for reimbursement for mileage.
- If purchases were made with either a bank or credit card, the statement or a print off of the online activity must be provided to back up the purchases. Your name must be shown on either of these to prove that you are the one who made the purchase. If you cannot find a page with your name on it a legible photocopy of the card with your name and the last 4 digits shown can be accepted.

What if I do not have online banking/credit card information?

If online banking activity is not an option for you please submit all of your receipts along with a letter stating that you must wait for your next monthly statement to arrive to complete the process before the deadline for submittal (see below).

How long do I have to turn in my receipts?

- You have 10 business days following your return from travel to submit all of your receipts and supporting documents.
- Submissions after this date must be accompanied by a memo addressed to accounting stating the reason for late submittal.

What happens after I turn in my receipts?

- The Grants Administrator reviews and tallies your receipts and creates an expense statement
- Following review from the GSA's Executive Director, you will be asked to come in to sign this document.
- After you have signed, your expense statement and receipts will be sent off to accounting.

How long will it take for me to receive my reimbursement?

Following submission to accounting, it can take anywhere from 4-8 weeks for them to process your reimbursement. Please click on **Tracking Reimbursements** for tracking information.

How will I receive my reimbursement?

- If you are an employee of the university and have signed up for direct deposit, your reimbursement will be deposited into the account you signed up with.
- If you are not, a check will be sent to the address you provided on your application.

Whom do I contact if I have problems, questions, and concerns?

The Grants Administrator can be reached either by phone (410-455-2773) or email (gsa@umbc.edu).