

Introduction

The primary role of the GSA research grants program is to provide *partial* support of Master's and Doctoral thesis research in the geological sciences for graduate students at universities in the United States, Canada, Mexico and Central America. Grants are intended as an aid to a research project, not to sustain the entire cost. Students may receive a GSA graduate student grant once at the Master's level and once at the Ph.D. level and a maximum of \$4000 per award will be given to an individual student. Since the amount of money requested for grants usually greatly exceeds the amount available, applications are evaluated on a competitive basis.

Eligibility

Eligibility is restricted to GSA members. Grants are awarded only to individuals; institutions, societies, and universities are not eligible for grants. Grants with allowances for institutional overhead costs will not be funded. Grants are awarded to US and non-US graduate students currently enrolled in universities or colleges in the United States, Canada, Mexico and Central America. Applications are evaluated on the basis of the scientific merits of the problems, the capability of the investigator, and reasonableness of the budget. GSA strongly encourages women, minorities, and persons with disabilities to participate fully in this grants program. Gender is not considered in the determination of minority status.

Ethics

The text of the research proposal must originate from the student, not from an advisor. The advisor should be familiar with the proposed research and must read the proposal before filling out the required Appraisal of Applicant Form. The proposed research must represent work for the academic degree in progress; it cannot reimburse a student for past work, augment a project to be completed after the time period for which funding is requested, or provide funding for a secondary research topic.

Applications

Only electronic applications submitted online will be accepted. The application should be concise and should define a research problem of geologic significance. It should detail a research strategy to solve a problem in the field and/or the laboratory. The text must not exceed the space provided; a relevant figure summarizing information is encouraged. The submitted applications are received by the Program Officer for GSA Grants, Awards and Recognition and are forwarded to the members of the Committee on Research Grants for review. The committee members are responsible for evaluating the proposals on the basis of their scientific merits, the practicability of each project, the qualifications of the applicant for the proposed investigation, the reasonableness of the budget, and other pertinent data.

Appraisal of Applicant Form

The applicant must obtain confidential evaluations from the applicant's advisor. The evaluator must complete an electronic Appraisal of Applicant Form as part of the application process. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that their advisor has submitted an appraisal form; incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Small vs. Large Projects

There is no policy favoring small or large projects. The scientific merit of the research is weighed against the cost, in competition with other requests. The sums of money that can be devoted by the Society to grants-in-aid are limited. For this reason, the Committee on Research Grants tends to favor grants for smaller projects, particularly those that will permit promising candidates for advanced degrees to do worthwhile field or laboratory research.

Guidelines for the Use of Funds

GSA gives the highest funding priority to requests that are critical to the success of the student's research. ALL FUNDING REQUESTS MUST BE FULLY JUSTIFIED.

If fully justified, funding can be used for:

- Travel costs to the research area
- Room and board
- Travel in the field
- Services of a technician or field assistant
- Funding of chemical and isotopic analyses
- *Specialized equipment (which must remain with a Department once the research is completed)
- Internal university research expenses (rental of university equipment, supplies, computer time, software, thin sections and in-house charges for analytical instruments)
- External university research expenses (expenses for equipment, expendable supplies, and machine charges will be considered by the committee if fully justified and not available from other sources)

Funding cannot be applied towards:

- *Purchase of ordinary field equipment (cameras, GPS)
- **The purchase of *some* services to conduct research
- Maintenance of the families of the grantees and their assistants
- Reimbursement for work already accomplished
- Travel, registration, or presentation for professional meetings or workshops
- Advisor participation
- Tuition costs

*Purchase of Apparatus

Grantees should furnish their own field equipment. In general, funding will be made only for apparatus new in purpose or design or for apparatus to which the grantee ought to have access in the opinion of the Committee. Justification for the purchase of such apparatus should be given in detail. Wherever possible, the committee encourages contributions from the department, or, at least, a clear indication of assistance in the use of departmental equipment. In no case should funds be sought for equipment, facilities, software, etc., that will be of long-term general use to the department. Certain types of apparatus, including vehicles for fieldwork, may have a useful life extending beyond the duration of the project for which they were purchased. Unless otherwise specified by the Society, title to such apparatus rests with the grantees who should state in their applications how they intend to dispose of it.

**Purchase of Services

There must be a cogent justification for purchased services; such services include the hiring of other professionals to conduct aspects of the research, the purchase of data sets for pertinent data analyses, or the hiring of an assistant to prepare the final thesis.

Travel Expenses

Rules governing permissible allowances for travel are as follows: In estimating for the use of a personal vehicle, mileage will be calculated on the basis of the IRS mileage rate. Estimated mileage should be reported in the budget description. In fieldwork where four-wheel drive vehicles must be used and must be rented from automobile rental and leasing agencies, reasonable additional charges will be allowed (or considered). For a rental vehicle, use the actual rate per mile. All travel expenses by means other than automobiles must be figured conservatively and thoroughly justified.

Committee Actions and Awarding of Grants

The Committee on Research Grants meets in March to complete the evaluation of the applications and to recommend awards within the limits of the research budget. Results will be securely posted online. An award notification letter and a check will be sent to the grantees in early April. In the review process, each proposal is reviewed twice; reviewer comments are also included in the award notification letter. Award notification will not normally be given by phone or e-mail.

Use of Funds

The recipient of a grant is expected to use grant funds prudently, to conduct the research work in accordance with scientific principles, and to confine the work within the general framework established in the application. Funds shall be expended only for the purposes stated. If a grantee has a change in research plans, the Program Officer of GSA Grants, Awards and Recognition must be contacted to insure that the recipient's plans reflect the original intent of the awarded proposal.

Taxation

The Geological Society of America is required to issue 1099 forms at the end of each calendar year according to rules set by the IRS. Issuance of a 1099 does not necessarily mean the income is taxable to the recipient. You need to make that determination which may require professional advice. GSA cannot offer such advice.

Return of Funding

If the recipient is unable to undertake or complete the project, the recipient must return any unused portion of the grant to the Geological Society of America immediately.

If the recipient receives substantial funding from another source for specific items budgeted in their GSA grant proposal, the Program Officer of GSA Grants, Awards and Recognition should be notified immediately. Funds returned to the Society will be re-awarded promptly to alternate recipients who have been selected by the Committee on Research Grants.

Time Schedule

It is agreed the recipient will commence the project as stated in the application and will continue it diligently throughout the expected duration of the investigation. If the recipient is unable to commence work on the project as stated in the application, the Program Officer of GSA Grants, Awards and Recognition should be notified in writing.

Progress Report

A progress report form is due (electronically) to the GSA Program Officer Grants, Awards and Recognition by March 31 of the year following the award year. No receipts are required. At this time, a report of the work in progress is required. A final report is not required.

Publication of Results

The committee encourages publication of results in scientific journals and presentation of results at professional meetings. The Geological Society of America should be acknowledged for its support.

Specialized Grants

The Committee on Research Grants selects recipients of special awards from applicants to the general research grants program. A student may not apply directly for a specialized grant, however may indicate on the application if he/she would like to be considered for an award.

Division Research Grants

Several GSA Divisions award grants for outstanding student research within the respective division's field of interest. The Committee on Research Grants will select candidates from the general research grant applicants for awards only in the following divisions: Geophysics, Hydrogeology, Sedimentary Geology, and Structural Geology and Tectonics Divisions. All other student awards are selected by the Division directly.

Section Research Grants

Three of the six GSA regional sections award grants for research to students attending colleges and universities within each section's respective geographical boundaries (the South-Central Section, Cordilleran and Rocky Mountain Sections do not currently offer student research grants).

The North-Central Section awards research grants to undergraduate Student Associates within the Section.

Grant recipients from the **Southeastern Section** are selected from applicants to the GSA national research grant program.

The Northeastern Section awards grants to undergraduate Student Associates within the Section.