GSA Graduate Student Research Grant Application

GUIDELINES & INSTRUCTIONS

ELIGIBILITY

To apply for this grant, you must:

- Be a current GSA Student Member.
  - Membership must be renewed or active through the end of the award year, which is the same calendar year in which the application deadline occurs
  - If you need assistance joining GSA, renewing a membership, changing your membership type (such as from "Early Career Professional" to "Student"), or updating the information in your GSA member profile (such as the type of student you are, or your address/country), please contact GSA Sales & Service (+1 303-357-1000, +1-888-443-4472 [toll free], gsaservice@geosociety.org) between 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Mountain Time.
- Be currently enrolled in a graduate program and be working toward a Master's or Doctoral degree.
  - Your GSA Member Profile should specify you are a graduate student
  - Undergraduate students, recent graduates, and postdoctoral researchers are not eligible.
- Be currently enrolled in an institution in North America or Central America.
  - Your GSA Member Profile should specify the country, as part of your address.
  - Applicants do not need to be a U.S. Citizen nor a U.S. Resident Alien.
  - Citizenship status is not taken into account when evaluating applications.
- Agree that if you are selected to receive a grant, and if you have a U.S. Social Security Number (SSN) or U.S. Tax Identification Number (TIN), you will provide it to GSA to facilitate payment of the funds.
  - Applicants who do not have an SSN nor TIN are eligible to receive a grant and will be asked to certify that they have no SSN nor TIN if they are selected for a grant.
  - Applicants are not asked to provide an SSN or TIN with their application; that request will be made separately only for applicants who are selected to receive a grant.
- Be applying as an individual; institutions, societies, and universities are not eligible for grants
- Not have already received **two** GSA Graduate Student Research Grants.
  - If you already received **one**, you must have submitted your progress report on time to apply for a second grant.

ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

- As GSA Members, the students covered by this policy must adhere to GSA's Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, and its associated policies, in writing their research proposals and in carrying out the research. Particular attention should be paid to **Section 3.2**, **Mandatory Standards**, which states "We do not engage in **research misconduct**, including **fabrication**, **falsification**, or **plagiarism**." GSA defines research misconduct in accordance with the U.S. federal regulations (45 CFR 93.103), which includes:
  - **Fabrication** - "making up data or results and recording or reporting them."

- **Falsification** - "manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record."
- **Plagiarism** - "appropriating another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit." GSA interprets this definition broadly to forbid plagiarism in verbal or written communications.

- GSA encourages students to use their research grant proposal as an opportunity to begin practicing ethical scientific research and communication. Special care must be taken to avoid plagiarism. The text of the proposal must represent the original work of the student, rather than the work of an advisor or peer. GSA reserves the right to submit student research proposals through plagiarism-detection software. If a member of GSA staff or the GSA Research Grants Committee observes, through software or other means, that a proposal contains evidence of potential plagiarism, the matter will be reported to the GSA Ethics and Compliance Officer, the GSA Director of Education, Communications, and Outreach, and the GSA Research Grants Committee Chair. In such a case, GSA will take appropriate steps to investigate the situation in accordance with the Society's Policy & Procedures for Handling Potential Ethical Violations. If GSA determines that plagiarism has occurred, the GSA Council may order may order one or more of the following disciplinary actions:
  - Not providing a grant
  - Informing the student's advisor that plagiarism has been committed
  - Not allowing the student to apply for another GSA grant or program
  - Termination of GSA Membership
  - Other consequences, as determined by the GSA Council.

- Many universities offer students resources that describe the various types of plagiarism and how to avoid them. Here are some examples:
  - Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL): Avoiding Plagiarism
  - The Writing Center at the University of Wisconsin - Madison: Quoting and Paraphrasing
  - Duke University: Plagiarism Tutorial
  - Harvard University: Harvard Guide to Using Sources (includes a section about Plagiarism)
  - Chronicle of Higher Education: Plagiarism in Grant Proposals, by Karen M. Markin, 12/10/12

GENERAL INFORMATION

- You must have a valid email address to apply. Once entered, the email address **cannot** be changed by the student. If you want an email addressed changed, please contact GSA.

- It is important enter an email address that you will have consistent access to through the entire grant process, which continues through at least June, with some follow-up messages coming as late as September. If you have a change in your email address, please notify GSA immediately so it can update your records. GSA also recommends that applicants "white list" GSA e-mail addresses, using these "white list" instructions.

- You can only submit one application using **one** email address. Multiple applications from the same applicant with various email addresses will not be permitted.
- You may receive a total of two GSA graduate student grants in your entire academic career, regardless of what program you are currently enrolled in.
- No transcripts are required.
- One appraisal from your primary research advisor is required (see below).
- Once you have added your email address to the application, the application will automatically save for later and then log on again. **By starting the application once, this will verify that the application is registered with GSA.**
- All fields are required where there is an asterisk.
- GSA recommends composing your text in a word processor program and then pasting it into the application form. This allows you to use the spell-checking and word/character-count tools that come with those programs.
- Text boxes have character/word limits built in. **Character counts include spaces and paragraph returns.** Some software, such as web browsers and word processors, do not count characters and spaces in the same manner as the GSA online application form.
- Please be sure to save a copy of your application for your own records before final submission. There is a link on the Status Page where you can export the application to a Word document.
- Applications in certain categories, such as "quaternary geology and geomorphology", will be eligible for consideration for certain Specialized Awards and Division Awards. Please see the separate list of Specialized Awards and other grants for more details.
- Applications in certain geographic areas will be eligible for consideration for certain Specialized Awards and Section Awards. Please see the separate list of Specialized Awards and other grants for more details.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

- Race/Ethnicity: In the application's "**Race/Ethnicity**" question, please select one of the provided ethnic groups ONLY if you are a US citizen or a U.S. permanent resident; otherwise, please skip this question. Used for statistical purposes only; not factored into the evaluation of proposals.
- First-Generation Student: A student enrolled in postsecondary education whose parents had not attended college. Used for statistical purposes only; not factored into the evaluation of proposals.
- Non-Traditional Student: Non-traditional is defined by the National Center for Education Statistics as a student who "delayed enrollment in postsecondary education by a year or more after high school or who attended part-time, have family constraints such as dependents other than a spouse, single parent, working full-time, or being financially independent from parents,

and students who did not receive a standard high school diploma." Used for statistical purposes only; not factored into the evaluation of proposals.

- Low-Income Student: Refer to definition here: https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/incomelevels.html. Used for statistical purposes only; not factored into the evaluation of proposals.

COMPUTER AND BROWSER REQUIREMENTS

- This application system works best when using Internet Explorer. Chrome, Firefox, Safari, and Netscape are also compatible but may cause problems (see last three bullets in this section).
- Text boxes have character/word limits built in. **Character counts include spaces and paragraph returns.** Some software, such as web browsers and word processors, do not count characters (especially "special characters" like the Greek alphabet) in the same manner as the GSA online application form. If you experience this problem, and the screen indicates you are under the character limit but you are unable to save or submit your response, keep editing your text to reduce the number of characters until you do not get an error message.
- The system will time out after 4 hours. **Please ensure to save your progress.**
- If you are working on a laptop or home computer, be sure to set your Internet security to "low". To do this using Internet Explorer, go to Tools --> Internet Options --> Security (Tab) --> and then move the slider to as low as possible.
- If you are working on a laptop or home computer, you must allow cookies. Our program writes a cookie to your system that is active until you log out. This cookie lets the system know you are a registered user and it is a security feature for the data contained in the system. To turn on cookies using Internet Explorer, go to Tools --> Internet Options --> Privacy (Tab) --> and then move the slider to Accept All Cookies.
- GSA recommends avoiding superscripts and subscripts in your text, because they generally do not translate properly when copied and pasted from Word and other word processing software. All other mathematical symbols can be copied and pasted from the Word symbol font. In some cases, special characters, such as Greek letters and certain mathematical symbols, may be counted by GSA's system as more than one character. (This is due to the manner in which some characters from Word processing software are translated into a web browser.)
- The online application will not recognize/save certain formatting, such as indention, paragraph breaks, and line spacing. The reviewers are aware of this, and will not judge your proposal based on the formatting of the text. If you have a strong desire to include special formatting, you can try using HTML code (such as <br> for a line break), but the HTML code and tags will count toward the total character count. Be sure to click "View Application" to make sure the formatting and characters you are using appear as intended, to the degree possible.

Withdraw Application

If you have started an application and **do not** want to submit it, please notify GSA to withdraw your application. Once the application has been withdrawn you may not apply again for this year.

Indicates this part of your application is complete. Once you have this icon next to all three parts of the application (application/proposal text, appraisal, graphic file), your application is considered complete and it will automatically receive full consideration. (There is no confirmation email.)

Indicates a part of your application is incomplete. If any of the three parts of the application (application/proposal text, appraisal, graphic file) has this icon, your application will not be considered.

BUDGET

The budget must comply with the **Guidelines for the Use of Funds**, which can also be found in the **Policies and Procedures document**. Some types of costs are allowed, such as a rental vehicle for necessary field work. Some types of costs are not allowed, such as the salaries for you and your advisor. Please be sure to review the full list of allowable and non-allowable costs before completing the budget section.

In the Budget Table of the proposal, list each individual item in your budget in decreasing order of priority. The first item listed should be the most important. Be as specific as possible. Provide each item's total cost ("Total Amount Budgeted"), the portion of that cost you are requesting from GSA with this proposal ("Amount Requested from GSA"), and the portion of that cost you have requested from other sources ("Amount Requested from Other Sources"). Be sure to total up each row and column of budgeted item costs–the online application does not do the math for you. For each line item (row) in the budget, the "Total Amount Budgeted" must equal the sum of the "Amount Requested from GSA" and the "Amount Requested from Other Sources". The total amount requested from GSA must not exceed $3,000.

In the Budget Justification section of the proposal, explain the need for each item in your budget for which you are requesting funding from GSA. Also, be sure to provide a specific cost breakdown for each item. For example, if you are including the cost of food needed in the field, specify the number of days food would be needed and the daily cost of the food ("10 days at $12/day, for a total of $120"). Another example might be the cost of lab samples—please specify an estimated number of samples and the cost per sample. Similarly, if there are transportation costs, specify the number of trips and the cost per trip, or the number of miles driven and the cost per mile. If expenses or charges to you, the student, are fixed and not negotiable, these fixed rates should be explained in the Budget Justification section.

PROGRESS REPORT FORMS

If you have received a graduate student grant from GSA previously, you will need to indicate the year received and provide a progress report. Even if you have already emailed your report to GSA for your past award, you must resubmit the progress report form with this application. Copy and paste the text

from the report form into the appropriate field in the online application. If you do not have the report, please write up a summary of your research and how the money was spent. You do not need to submit the original progress report form that was emailed to GSA.

GRAPHICS FILES

One graphic with a caption is required. Applications without a graphic will not be reviewed. Upload a pertinent, well-organized figure that enhances the proposal. This figure should illustrate the location, data results, or any other information pertinent to your proposed research. Please be sure to discuss the figure in your proposal text. Successful figures will include at least: title, stand-alone caption, and a citation if not the original work of the student. The figure must be in PDF format; no other file formats will be accepted. The filename must contain a valid pdf extension, such as: "figure.pdf". The file must be no larger than 5 MB in size. It should be one page, one-sided, and sized no larger than 8.5 inches by 11 inches. Landscape and portrait orientations are both acceptable. To upload the figure, please use the link provided in the application form. Once you already have a figure on file, if you upload a new figure, it will overwrite the old one. Please be sure to view your figure in the "View Your Application" page. It is advised that you view your figure in multiple browsers to ensure that it displays as desired.

REFERENCES

Use the REFERENCES section at the end of the application form to properly cite the work of others upon which your research is built. Keep in mind that the reviewers may have published on your topic. If you'd like to connect the references back to the text in your proposal, you can number the references and insert those numbers where appropriate in your text. Remember that superscripts and subscripts generally do not work in our system, so you may want to put the reference numbers in parentheses or brackets. For details on the format for your references, please refer to the Reference Guide that GSA has developed for authors submitting text for publication by GSA.

ADVISOR APPRAISAL FORM

- The applicant must obtain a confidential appraisal from the applicant's primary research advisor. The advisor must complete an electronic Appraisal of Applicant Form as part of the application process. In the appraisal, the advisor should evaluate the student's ability to conduct the research and the validity of the proposal. The purpose of the appraisal is not for the advisor to simply further explain the proposal.
- It is up to the student to request **one** appraisal from an advisor **as soon as possible**, allowing plenty of time for the advisor to complete the appraisal form by the deadline, which will be posted on the GSA website, and is usually approximately two days after the student proposal deadline.
- The student should verify with the advisor ahead of time that the advisor will follow through and submit the appraisal form.
- Be sure that you enter the correct email address of your advisor. Entering your advisor's information will automatically and instantly trigger an email to your advisor with a link to the

appraisal form. GSA recommends that you check with your advisor to confirm they received the email, which should arrive almost immediately after you submit the advisor's information.

- Your advisor must use the **same** email address to access the appraisal form that you entered in your application.
- The appraisal form must be filled in by your primary advisor. If your primary advisor is unable to fill this in, a secondary advisor may be used. This secondary advisor must know you and your work well.
- Advisors do not have to be GSA members or at the same university/organization as the student to complete the form.
- The appraisal form can be saved for later and edited by the advisor.
- In order for the appraisal form to be sent to your advisor, **you must fill out the appraisal request** that appears on the status page of your online application profile. This action will prompt an email to your advisor inviting him/her to fill out the appraisal form. Once your advisor has submitted the form, it will then be automatically linked to your application and shown as complete (with a green checkmark) on your status page.
- Once your application has been saved and you log back in, you will see a status page with information about your application and options for editing or saving your application. If you see that your advisor has not submitted the appraisal form, please contact him/her directly. It is up to the student to make sure that the advisor sends in the appraisal form by the deadline.
- If the advisor did not receive the automatic email request from GSA, ask the advisor to check his/her "Junk Mail" folder, as some university systems will filter the email out as spam. They may also want to "white list" GSA e-mail addresses, using these "white list" instructions.