THE GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA®

GSA GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH GRANTS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

The primary role of the GSA graduate student 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 total of two GSA graduate student grants in their entire academic career, regardless of what program they are currently enrolled in. (Other GSA-related grants, such as those through the AGeS2 program, do not count against one's total.) A maximum of US$3,000 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

To be eligible to apply for a GSA Graduate Student Research 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
- 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 (United States, Canada, and Mexico) 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.
- 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

GSA strongly encourages women, minorities, persons with disabilities, and other groups that have been underrepresented in the sciences to participate fully in this grants program.

Ethics & 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

Application Submittal

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 proposal should be tailored to the timeframe and budget (up to US$3,000); it should NOT describe the student's entire thesis or dissertation. The text must not exceed the space provided; a relevant figure summarizing information is required.

Subject Matter Categories

When applying for a GSA Graduate Student Research Grant, students are asked to indicate the primary and secondary subject matter categories addressed in their research proposal. Although some proposals will cover more than two subject areas, students should select the two subjects that are most prominent in their proposed research. GSA welcomes proposals in any of these categories, as well as others not listed here. If a student's primary or secondary subject matter is not included in this list, they may select "Other". GSA aims to support a wide variety of research topics; there is no preference for specific subject matter.

Archaeological Geology	Limnogeology
Biogeosciences	Low Temperature Geochemistry
Climatology/Meteorology	Mapping
Coal Geology	Mineralogy/Petrology
Continental Scientific Drilling	Oceanography/Marine Geology
Economic Geology	Organic Geochemistry
Energy Geology	Paleobotany
Engineering Geology	Paleoecology
Environmental Science	Paleoclimatology/Paleoceanography
Geochronology	Paleogeography
Geography	Paleontology
Geoinformatics & Data Science	Petroleum Geology

Geology & Health	Planetary/Space Science
Geophysics/Tectonophysics	Policy/Regulatory
Geoscience Education / Science Communication	Quaternary Geology/Geomorphology
Geothermal	Seismology
Glacial Studies	Soil Science
High Temperature Geochemistry	Stratigraphy/Sedimentology
History, Philosophy & Geoheritage	Structural Geology/Tectonics
Hydrogeology/Hydrology	Volcanology
Karst	Other

Appraisal of Applicant Form
The applicant must obtain a confidential appraisal (evaluation) from the applicant's advisor. The advisor must complete an electronic Appraisal of Applicant Form. The advisor should be familiar with the proposed research and must read the proposal before filling out the Appraisal of Applicant Form. The purpose of the appraisal is not for the advisor to simply further explain the proposal. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that their advisor has submitted an appraisal form; incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Application Evaluation
The submitted applications are received by the GSA Research Grants Program Manager 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. 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 specific elements of a research proposal, and how they are evaluated, are listed below:

- Hypothesis statement
  - Clearly defined?
- Explanation of scientific and societal significance
  - Clearly stated and convincingly significant?
- Description of research plan and how it tests the hypothesis
  - Clearly stated, well-conceived, and success likely?
- Budget and budget justification
  - Clearly itemized, well justified, and meets the guidelines?
- Relevant figure to further illustrate the research
  - Well-presented and helpful to the reviewer?
- Personal Statement
  - Clear description of goals and how GSA funding would help reach the goals? Discussion of obstacles faced is clear and convincing?
- Overall quality of proposal
  - Well presented, organized, clear?

Other elements of the application package include:

- Abbreviated student resume/CV
- List of References
- Advisor Appraisal

Committee Actions and Awarding of Grants
The Committee on Research Grants meets in May to complete the evaluation of the applications and to recommend awards within the limits of the research budget. Results will be securely posted online. Applicants will be notified by email when the results are posted. An award notification will be sent to the grantees by late May. In the review process, each proposal is reviewed by two qualified geoscientists; reviewer comments are

also included in the online award notification.

Taxation
All individuals with a U.S. Social Security Number (SSN) or U.S. Tax Identification Number (TIN) must provide it to GSA in order to receive a grant payment. This includes **all U.S. Citizens**, **all U.S. Resident Aliens**, and some other individuals. This requirement is in accordance with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS); failure to comply will result in no grant being awarded to the individual. If awarded a grant, this money may be taxable by the IRS. GSA 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–the recipient must make that determination, which may require the services of a professional tax accountant. GSA cannot offer tax advice. (Please note that an SSN or TIN is not required to apply; but everyone who is selected to receive grant and who has an SSN or TIN must provide it to GSA.)

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 GSA Research Grants Program Manager 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
The recipient must commence the project as stated in their proposal and continue it diligently throughout the stated duration of the investigation. If the recipient is unable to complete the work within the timeframe stated in the proposal, the GSA Research Grants Program Manager should be notified in writing.

Progress Report
A progress report form and photos are due to the GSA Research Grants Program Manager (researchgrants@geosociety.org) by February 1 of the year following the award year.

Publication of Results
The committee encourages publication of results in GSA scientific journals and presentation of results at GSA professional meetings. The Geological Society of America should be acknowledged for its support. GSA encourages the reporting of publication acceptances back to the GSA Research Grants Program Manager (researchgrants@geosociety.org).

GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF FUNDS

The total amount requested from GSA must not exceed $3,000. The committee gives the highest priority to requests that are critical to the success of the student's proposed research and empower the student to conduct the research. All funding requests must be fully justified; in other words, the student must clearly explain the need for each budget item. Emphasis should be on active student participation in all components of the project, and for conducting the primary phase of research.

Grants are awarded only to individuals; institutions, societies, and universities are not eligible for grants. Once awarded a grant, an individual may elect to have the grant "re-designated" to an institution. However, grant proposals with allowances for institutional overhead or "indirect" costs will not be funded.

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. The proposed research must represent work for the academic degree in progress, and funds shall be expended only for the purposes stated. If a grantee has a change in research plans, the GSA Grants Program must be contacted to ensure that the recipient's plans reflect the original intent of the awarded proposal.

Some items, such as salary for the student and the student's advisor, are not eligible for funding. Applicants should carefully review the below lists of allowable and non-allowable budget items. In the student's research proposal, the student must provide an itemized budget that meets all of these guidelines. If expenses or charges to the student are fixed and not negotiable, these fixed rates should be explained in the proposal.

If fully justified, funding CAN be used for:

- *Travel costs to the research area
- *Travel in the field
- **Per diem (during research-related travel)
- Room and board (during research-related travel)
- Services of a technician or assistant in the field or laboratory (may include salary, stipend, travel, etc.)
- Funding of chemical and isotopic analyses
- ***Specialized equipment not normally available to the student
- Internal university research expenses (equipment usage, rental of university equipment, film, 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:

- ****Salary/stipend (for student or advisor)
- Advisor participation
- Maintenance of the families of the grantees and their assistants
- *****Tuition costs (for normal coursework)
- ***Ordinary field equipment (cameras, GPS, basic software)
- ******The purchase of some services to conduct research
- Travel, registration, or presentation for professional meetings
- Publication costs
- Institutional overhead, or "indirect" costs
- Reimbursement for work already accomplished
- Augmenting a project to be completed after the time period for which funding is requested
- Funding a secondary research topic not directly connected to the student's graduate thesis

*Travel Expenses

Costs for research-related travel, such as to a field area, are allowable. Costs for travel to present research results at professional meetings are not allowable. 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.

**Per Diem

Basic living costs within the U.S. cannot exceed the amounts posted by the IRS. Basic living costs outside the U.S. cannot exceed the amounts posted by the U.S. Department of State.

***Purchase of Equipment

Grantees should furnish their own "ordinary" field equipment, such as cameras, GPS, and basic software. In general, grants will be made only for equipment new in purpose or design or for specialized equipment normally not available to the student. Justification for the purchase of such equipment 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

equipment, 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 equipment rests with the grantees who should state in their applications how they intend to dispose of it.

****Salary/stipend (for student or advisor)
The Society does not award grants to fund the employment of persons to conduct primary research; this includes the student and any advisors. However, the costs to support a technician or assistant in the field or laboratory will generally be allowed (may include salary, stipend, travel, etc.). The use of a field assistant is often recommended for safety purposes.

*****Tuition
The Society does not award grants to defray the costs of tuition for normal coursework taken in pursuit of a graduate degree. However, if fully justified, costs for specialized training workshops that are necessary to carry out some aspect of the research may be allowed. (For example, the costs for a one-day workshop that provides training in the use of a specialized piece of equipment that is essential to the research may be allowed.)

******Purchase of Services
There must be a cogent justification for purchased services. Such services include but are not limited to: hiring other professionals, such as technicians and field assistants, to conduct aspects of the research, the purchase of chemical and isotopic analysis, and the purchase of data sets for pertinent data analyses. It is the responsibility of the student to distinguish in the proposal what work is being completed by the outsourced service and what work is being conducted by the student. For the purchase of data, there must be a clear statement of how the data are linked to the study, and why it is not possible to collect the data through direct research.

AWARDS ASSOCIATED WITH A GRANT

Specialized Awards
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, if he/she would like to be considered for an award it may be indicated on the application. These are generally recognition awards only, with no additional funding. However, some specialized awardees may be funded for an amount greater than US$3,000. The current list of Specialized Awards may be found in other Research Grant documentation.

Division Research Grants
Several GSA Divisions award grants for outstanding student research within the respective division's field of interest. For these Division grants, students apply through the general GSA Graduate Student Research Grant program. The GSA Research Grants Committee will identify the proposals relevant to the Divisions. Copies of these proposals will be forwarded to the respective Division management boards for final award selection. In some cases, the Research Grants Committee forwards just the top ranked proposals related to each Division or award, but in other cases, the Committee forwards all eligible proposals. Each of these Divisions sends a letter of congratulations and a certificate to the recipient(s) with the best proposal(s) in their field. For some other Division grants, the Research Grants Committee is not involved; instead, students apply directly to the Division, and the Division manages the entire review, selection, and award process. The current list of Division grants may be found in other Research Grant documentation.

Section Research Grants
Some of the GSA regional sections provide student research grants. Currently, only one section (Southeastern) provides graduate student research grants, which are chosen from the overall GSA Graduate Student Research Grant pool. Proposals from students in states (AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, PR, SC, TN, VA, WV) that are part of the Southeastern Section are considered. The current list of Section grants may be found in other Research Grant documentation.

Other Student Grants and Awards

Other grants and awards are offered by GSA Divisions or Interdisciplinary Interest Groups (IIG) outside of the general GSA Graduate Research Grants program. Please refer to the Division and IIG web pages for details. The current list of other student grants and awards may be found in other Research Grant documentation.