



United Government of Graduate Students Travel Grant Policy

Revised: August 2016

I. Purpose

The United Government of Graduate Students (UGGS) is committed to increasing the quality of graduate education at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Therefore, UGGS will award funding to individual graduate students each academic semester to support travel to academic conferences, meetings, or other events related to a student's studies. The purpose of these awards is to facilitate graduate student travel that is beneficial to their academic and/or career development.

II. Qualifying Criteria

- A. All CU graduate students who have not previously been awarded an UGGS travel grant are eligible to apply. *Graduate students may only receive one UGGS travel grant during their entire CU career.* This is meant to ensure that UGGS travel grants support the greatest number of CU graduate students. UGGS travel grants may NOT be used for International Travel (Updated policy from CSI).
- B. Travel Grants must be submitted online no later than 5:00 PM on the due date posted on the UGGS website. The Travel Grant Committee will not accept any applications after the posted deadline.
- C. Applications must contain all of the following elements and adhere to all requirements indicated in the online application:
 - ii. Complete online cover sheet including applicant information and travel description.
 - iii. Upload additional materials
 - iv. One page essay, single-spaced, one inch margins, 12 pt. font, Times New Roman with your name in the top right corner for record keeping purposes. Identifying information will be redacted for scoring.
 - v. Unofficial transcript (obtained via myCUinfo with name blacked out anywhere it appears)
- D. Travel Grant Applications must be the sole effort of an individual graduate student. Graduate students may not submit identical essays as part of a group. Applications found in violation of these criteria shall be immediately disqualified at the discretion of the UGGS Executive Board.

- E. Funding is limited to membership and registration fees, transportation, and lodging costs. **Per diem (meals/ incidentals) cannot be covered by a Travel Grant.**
- F. Students from all disciplines are encouraged to apply. All disciplines are given equal preference.
- G. Applicants are required to answer all questions. Incomplete applications will not be considered.
- H. All application materials must be anonymous. DO NOT include identifying information in your essay or transcript (e.g., advisor's name, publications, etc.). See instructions above on how to remove your name from transcripts. Any remaining names on any documents will be redacted before submission to those scoring the essays.

III. UGGS Responsibilities

- A. The application form and evaluation criteria will be made public on the UGGS website at least three weeks before the application deadline. UGGS should notify each department of the call for applications through the UGGS Representatives and/or department program assistants. Once evaluation criteria become public, changes can only be made toward next semester's criteria.
- B. Additional information for applicants, including examples of previously funded applications and a section of frequently asked questions, may also be included on the UGGS website. .
- C. Identifying information will be separated from other application materials such that the only information transferred to the reviewers is the student ID number and department. The information is recombined after all proposals have been reviewed such that anonymity is preserved during the judging process.
- D. The Travel Grant Committee consists of current graduate students. All graduate students from all departments are welcome to participate, with the exception of graduate students who have currently applied for a Travel Grant. The committee is usually formed at the beginning of each semester.
- E. At least two, preferably three, members of the Travel Grant Committee will review each application. Committee members may not review applications submitted by students in their own departments.
- F. Regardless of the outcome, UGGS will notify all applicants of the result of their application through an anonymous e-mail (sent by UGGS).
- G. UGGS will make the names of funded graduate students public on the UGGS website.
- H. The Travel Grant Committee may meet after completing the funding cycle to review the process, identify problems, and make recommendations for changes to the

application form, review criteria, or any other part of the process they consider lacking.

- I. Graduate students are encouraged to voice their suggestions/concerns about the funding criteria. They can write to UGGS travel committee members at uggsinfo@colorado.edu (attn: Travel Grant Committee), talk to their department representative, or stop by an UGGS Assembly meeting or the UGGS office (UMC 127) during office hours.

IV. Suggestions

- A. The UGGS Travel Grant Committee has developed a merit-based system with objective and subjective criteria, weighted toward the latter.
- B. Due to limited funding to award for Travel Grants, all grants are evaluated competitively.
- C. You are encouraged to take full advantage of the full page allotment for the essay (i.e. applications with one-paragraph essays have never been funded.)
- D. For English language learners, UGGS encourages you to have your application reviewed by the English Language Learning center: <http://www.colorado.edu/sasc/ell>. Additionally, students may have their application reviewed by the staff at the Program for Writing & Rhetoric Writing Center: <http://www.colorado.edu/pwr/writingcenter.html>
- E. Know your audience. Do not be overly technical as students from other disciplines and departments will evaluate your essay. Avoid jargon graduate students outside your department would not understand.
- F. Please make sure to emphasize why this conference is important for your graduate studies and academic career.
- G. It is helpful to mention why attendance at the proposed conference/event is beneficial to the funding organization (UGGS), its constituency, the University, etc.
- H. Please remember that everyone is applying because they need funding. UGGS will not and cannot discriminate based on financial need; justifying your proposal based on financial need is not sufficient.
- I. Feel free to email UGGS with any questions: uggsinfo@colorado.edu

V. Travel Grant Scoring Procedures

- A. Travel grants are scored by three separate individuals in the Travel Grant Committee, and are either UGGS officers or UGGS representatives. These evaluators will not be from the same home department as the student who submitted the Travel Grant or

from the same home department as other scorers. Exceptions may be made to the latter when necessary to ensure the appropriate number of scorers.

B. Travel grants are scored on three general criteria, and will receive additional points for graduate GPA and participation by the applicant's home department in UGGS. These grant criteria are summarized below but may be subject to minor changes based on the consensus of the scoring committee. They account for up to 90% of the final score.

- i. **The Purpose of Travel: (35%)** Applications receiving the highest scores will typically include oral conference presentations, followed by poster presentations. Travel Grants may be awarded for individuals who simply attend the conference and/or are co-authors on paper/poster presentations, but given the typical competition, such requests are unlikely to be funded. Other types of appropriate travel will also be considered (i.e., workshops or visits to other universities for research purposes) based on the type of event or nature of the trip. Other factors influencing this score may include the impact of the meeting/conference itself and how well the applicant justifies their trip (e.g., higher scored applications typically explain the importance of the conference and work presented there rather than summarizing in too much detail the background work that inspired the paper itself).
- ii. **How Travel Will Help Degree/Career (35%):** Applications receiving the highest scores should motivate the importance of travel in terms of completing the graduate degree and furthering their career. It is important to explain why this opportunity for travel will benefit the student above and beyond simply attending the conference. Other factors influencing this score may include whether this is the first opportunity for the student to present work (or attend the workshop etc.) and/or whether it is likely to be the last chance to receive such funding from UGGS. However, these factors influence the score much less than the explanation of why the grant is necessary to help further school/career goals.
- iii. **Overall Quality of Submission (15%):** Applications who receive high overall scores are those that stand out above and beyond the others. They include some of the factors described in the suggestions section above (e.g., applications that are not far too short or excessively detailed), but can also include the quality of writing, innovation in the funded conference presentation, and good explanation of how the grant will help not only the student, but their department, university, and even our own UGGS organization.
- VI. **Grade Point Average (10%):** One tenth of the final score is calculated based on the graduate student's current GPA. If a graduate student does not currently have a GPA (i.e., it is their first semester), then 100% of their score will be based on the scoring criteria above.
- VII. **UGGS Representative Activity:** Students receive 5% within their Travel Grant application if their home department is frequently represented at the

UGGS assembly meetings during the most recent academic semester. In order to qualify, departments must be represented at greater than 70% of the assembly meeting from the previous semester. (Typically there are 7 or 8 meetings per semester, so departments can usually miss up to 2 meetings total and still qualify). For more information about UGGS representation, email uggsinfo@colorado.edu.

Note: Grants applications will be **immediately disqualified** if the applicant's name appears on either the essay or transcript, or if we cannot verify that the student is enrolled as a graduate student for the semester in which the grant is funded (i.e., the GRAD designation on the unofficial transcript).