

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. A maximum of US\$2,500 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 student members. Applicants must currently be enrolled in a graduate program and be working toward a graduate degree (Master's or Doctoral). Undergraduate students, recent graduates, and postdoctoral researchers are not eligible. 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 proposal should be tailored to the timeframe and budget (up to US\$2,500); 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. 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 sums of money that can be devoted by the Society to grants are limited.

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. 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 the applicant's responsibility to ensure that their

advisor has submitted an appraisal form; incomplete applications will not be accepted.

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. Applicants will be notified by email when the results are posted. An award notification letter and a check will be sent to the grantees by the end of April. In the review process, each proposal is reviewed by two qualified geoscientists; reviewer comments are also included in the online award notification.

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—he or she must make that determination, which may require the services of a professional tax accountant. GSA cannot offer tax 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 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

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 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. No receipts are required.

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 \$2,500. 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. 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
- Reimbursement for work already accomplished
- Publication costs
- Institutional overhead, or "indirect" costs

***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\$2,500. 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.