

Graduate Student Government Grants

Application Instructions

Spring 2024

The University of Maine Graduate Student Government will not discriminate on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, citizenship status, age, disability, or veteran status.

The University of Maine Graduate Student Government is proud to provide monetary support for the research and professional development of graduate students. We encourage every graduate student to investigate the GSG Grants program if they have a need for funding to support their work. If there are any questions, comments, or concerns about the grants program please contact the Grants Officer via email (gsg.grants@maine.edu).

Please read each of the sections of this document carefully each semester that you apply to ensure you have not missed any updates or changes and that you can put together the most competitive application possible.

Applicants and awardees of GSG grant funds must reach out to the Grants Officer **PRIOR** to deadlines for petitions, applications, or expense reports for any questions, concerns, or requests. ***The Grants Officer can make accommodations or work with applicants and awardees prior to deadlines.*** They are limited in their ability to do so after the deadline, where they may have to reject applications, or require immediate return of unused/unaccounted for funds.

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Please note:

1. Starting Fall 2021, the GSG will be working along with Graduate School on the grant-awarding process. The Graduate School will facilitate the grant award process, and make the funds available through a graduate school account or the money will be awarded through the Office of Student Aid and applied to student accounts (where the former is not possible).

*2. If you receive the funds directly through your student account and the annual awards are above \$600, those funds are taxable. The appropriate tax documentation will be supplied to you at the end of the year. The GSG Officers are not tax professionals and **will not be able to provide tax advice.** If you have any questions about the taxable grants, please reference our [resources on our website](#) or follow up with a personal accountant.*

I. Deadline

Applications must be submitted online by **5:00 p.m. on Friday, January 26th, 2024.**

If applying for a reimbursement of expenses incurred during the 2023 Fall or Winter semesters, all original receipts must also be received by the Grants Officer by **Friday, January 26th, 2024.** Please mail these receipts as a single PDF to gsg.grants@maine.edu by the deadline.

Deductions are applied for failure to follow instructions, and late submissions are not accepted. The link for the grant application is posted on the GSG Grants website (<https://umaine.edu/gsg/individual-grants/>).

II. Eligibility

1. Graduate Student Status:

You must be enrolled in a graduate-level course for the semester you apply **and** the semester you plan to use the GSG funds. *Please note that as of Fall 2016, non-degree graduate students are eligible to apply in either funding category.*

2. GSG Attendance:

The GSG representative from your department must have attended at least 75% of GSG board meetings during the last grant cycle. Updated attendance information will be posted on the GSG Grants website (<https://umaine.edu/gsg/eligibility/>) as the deadline approaches.

The Grants Officer will accept formal **typed, dated, and signed** petitions of extenuating circumstances regarding departments not meeting the attendance requirements. These petitions must be received by **5:00 p.m. on Friday, January 19th, 2024.**

3. Standing with GSG Grants Program:

If you have been awarded GSG funding in previous grant cycles, you must have properly accounted for those disbursed funds through the submission of an Expense Report by the appropriate deadline. Failure to do so leaves you not in good standing with the GSG Grants program and ineligible for future funding. The expense reports are important to ensure the proper use of funds and for accounting purposes of the GSG. Instructions for expense reports are found in the Obligations section of this document.

III. Categories

You may only apply for funding in **one** of the two categories: Travel to Present **or** Degree Related. Contact the Grants Officer (gsg.grants@maine.edu) with questions about applications to either category.

Travel to Present (TP) Maximum request: \$850	To travel to and present at a conference or professional meeting, or registration for a virtual presentation. Only one individual can be funded per presentation, if there is another student on the same presentation, they should apply in the Degree Related category.
Degree Related (DR) Maximum request: \$850	To support research or activities beyond classroom assignments /requirements. There are three subcategories within Degree Related: A. Equipment & Supplies: Funds for purchasing supplies with direct application to your graduate studies. B. Travel for Research: Expenses to travel to conduct research, to hear a particular presentation, meeting with a researcher in your field. C. Professional Development: Fees or travel to support attending workshops, seminars, etc. for the purpose of developing skills that may support your research or more broadly your professional development.

Items for which Funds may not be Requested

You may **NOT** apply salary for graduate students, cost of travel for someone other than the applicant (unless that person is an undergraduate research assistant) personal items like digital cameras, video cameras and laptops. Certainly, some of these electronic items might be necessary for research but it will be difficult to ensure that they remain on campus.

Exceptions that could be made include electronic items that could be irreversibly modified for research use such that they no longer serve the intended (original) consumer purpose like a video camera that is irreversibly modified and made a permanent part of a laboratory or field equipment.

Additionally, you may **NOT** use your GSG funds to purchase society memberships or passports, but you may use them to purchase visas. Other personal documents will be assessed by the grants officer on a case-by-case basis. Society memberships are seldom required, although they may make attendance less expensive. If you do end up purchasing a professional membership as part of a conference attendance, this **cannot be included in the budget request** from GSG. A passport is a personal document that should be maintained by the applicant, thus not acceptable to be purchased with GSG funds. A visa is an allowable expense.

If funds are requested from any of these excluded items, any award you receive from the GSG will be reduced by the requested amount.

IV. Instructions and Formatting of Grant Application PDF

Deductions are applied for failure to follow instructions. Read directions carefully before submitting your application. Be sure to refer to the scoring rubric on the individual grants page (<https://umaine.edu/gsg/individual-grants/>) to ensure your grant application meets all scored requirements. Sample grant applications are also posted on the website. You are encouraged to seek advice and assistance from your advisor, graduate students in your department who received GSG grants in the past, the Writing Center in Neville Hall, or the GSG Grants Officer (gsg.grants@maine.edu).

Abstract (two-page maximum)

Grant readers are from a wide range of disciplines, so write to an educated general audience. All abstracts should include a description of your research or area of concentration, your proposed use of grant funds, and the significance of your work in your field/the University of Maine/the state of Maine. The significance of this work should be well reasoned and be clear in its broader implications. Be explicit; grant readers will not assume anything about your work or its importance. Their focus will depend on the category of the grant, so follow all relevant instructions. **Points are deducted if your abstract is too technical or too colloquial.** Refer to the examples of excessive jargon and informal writing posted on the GSG Grants' website (<https://umaine.edu/gsg/individual-grants/>).

We do not encourage the use of citations in your applications. However, if you do choose to use citations note that you must use a consistent citation style, and your full citation list will be considered part of the abstract page count.

- **Travel to Present:** Describe the conference/meeting where you are presenting. Explain the importance of attending to your degree program, future career, AND the University of Maine/state of Maine/your field.
- **Degree-Related:** Explain how this purchase or attending this talk/workshop will benefit your graduate education and/or research AND how it will help further the goals of the University of Maine/state of Maine/your field..

Itemized Budget

Deductions are applied for failure to follow instructions. Your budget sheet should be clear and easy to read with correct margins and fonts. A sample budget is available on the GSG Grants' website (<https://umaine.edu/gsg/individual-grants/>). Your total expenses for your grant request may exceed the amount you can request from GSG, but **you should include all expenses incurred on the budget sheet.** GSG reserves the right to verify all costs.

NOTE: All supplies purchased with solely GSG grant funds become the property of the University of Maine. You may use grant funds to purchase a personal item (such as an ergonomic desk chair) and if you receive matching funds from your advisor, another grant, etc. you may retain that item. If you purchase a personal item without matching funds, you will be required to return it to the GSG upon your graduation from the University of Maine.

Budget Explanation (two-page maximum)

Explain clearly and succinctly why each item on your itemized budget sheet is the best option within the context of your application. Provide grant readers with a clear understanding of how you will use any GSG funds by presenting a detailed explanation for each item in your budget. Demonstrate that you have adopted the most economical approach to your project/trip by describing how you reduced prices (e.g. volunteering at a conference). Please be **extremely explicit as to why you chose the price option you did** (i.e., flying to a conference vs driving vs taking a bus). If you are purchasing equipment or supplies, demonstrate that these purchases are central to your project, and are not otherwise available; also describe any potential uses beyond your project. **Be explicit as to why this expense is needed for your project.** For example, a conference attendance fee is non-negotiable. Explain the necessity of funding from GSG and **be sure to include explanation of alternative sources of funding to avoid deductions.**

Adhere to the University's expense limitations, and do not request more than allowed:

- **Meals:** \$50 per diem rate.
For partial days use \$10.20 for breakfast (20%), \$13.50 for lunch (25%), and \$26.30 for dinner (55%) as per <https://www.maine.edu/apls/apl-iv-b/>
- **Mileage:** \$0.655 per mile.

PDF Formatting

Your uploaded PDF must:

- Be titled “2024Spring_XX_#####” where XX indicates the funding category, and ##### are the last **five** digits of your MaineStreet ID number
For example: 2024Spring_DR_12345.pdf for the degree-related category or
2024Spring_TP_12345.pdf for the travel-to-present category
- Be a single **PDF** that includes your abstract, budget, and budget explanation
Applications not submitted in pdf format will be automatically rejected
- Include a **right-justified** header on **ALL** pages with the semester, grant category, subcategory (if applicable), and the last **five** digits of your MaineStreet ID number
For example: “2024 Spring, Degree Related, Equipment & Supplies, 12345” for degree-related category or “2024 Spring, Travel to Present, 12345” for travel-to-present category
- Be in your own words
- Be double spaced (except for the budget sheet)
- May use headings and subheadings
- Use 12-point, Times New Roman font
- Have one-inch margins on each side
- Include a **maximum** two-page Abstract
- Include an Itemized Budget (Budgets may be landscape if the page is rotated in the PDF)
- Include a maximum two-page Budget Explanation

Do NOT:

- Use your name or any other identifiable information in your uploaded pdf. The five-digit ID number in your document header is used for anonymous reference.
- Using your advisor's name or others, including lab names, can affect your anonymity.

- **Submit supplementary materials**, such as cover letters, meeting invitations, accepted papers, etc.

****Any grant containing personal identifiers or your advisor's name will be automatically rejected****

V. Submission Form

Submit the following data online in the appropriate fields:

1. Biographical information as prompted
2. If you've received previous GSG funding, a maximum 250-word explanation of prior funding will be reviewed by the Grants Officer. You cannot receive money for the same portion of a project nor for the same presentation expense(s) twice.
3. Upload a single pdf that includes your abstract, budget, and budget explanation. Your pdf contains the only information reviewed by grant readers.

If you are requesting reimbursement:

- Complete the online submission form
- Send the original receipts to the Grants Officer in a single PDF to gsg.grants@maine.edu before **5:00 p.m. on Friday, January 26th, 2024**

NOTE: You must have incurred all expenses requested on your form, purchased the equipment, and/or attended the event to request reimbursement.

Reimbursement

Only submit an application for reimbursement when **ALL** expenses listed in the itemized budget are incurred by the date of submission. If you have not incurred all of your expenses, you cannot request reimbursement. If you are applying for reimbursement, you must submit original receipts to the Grants Officer by the submission deadline. **Failure to submit original receipts prior to the submission deadline will result in application rejection.**

Prior Funding (maximum 250 words)

Describe how prior GSG funding was used and include a brief description of the project and items or services purchased as compared to what you plan to use the funds for in this grant cycle. GSG will fund different stages of research but will **NOT** fund the same proposal twice, so explain the different phases of the project if applicable. Enter prior funding in the appropriate field of the application form. **Do not include it in the uploaded pdf.**

VI. Reviewing and Scoring

Grant Identification Number

To facilitate the anonymous review process, readers will only see the last five digits of your MaineStreet ID number, the category you are applying to, and the amount of money you are requesting. This number is used solely to identify your application.

Grant readers span all disciplines. Therefore, it's best to write to an educated audience who may not be familiar with the jargon from your field of study. Grants are reviewed by graduate students currently enrolled in diverse graduate-degree programs at the University of Maine. Readers will read for abstract clarity, budget explanation, formatting, and professional **AND** University benefits.

Deductions are applied for failure to follow instructions. Grant readers will use a scoring rubric supplied by the Grants Officer to evaluate each application. The scoring rubric is available on the GSG Grants website (<https://umaine.edu/gsg/individual-grants/>). Although readers may vary in their emphasis on different areas of the grant, there is consistency in the scale of scoring across applications. If you would like more information about the scoring process, contact the Grants Officer via email (gsg.grants@maine.edu).

PLEASE NOTE - The following offenses will result in automatic rejection of your application:

1. We have a **ZERO** tolerance plagiarism policy. All grants will be run through anti-plagiarism software. Grants containing plagiarized material will automatically be rejected and the applicant will lose all eligibility to apply for grants in the future. Each student is entitled to one (1) appeals process with the GSG Executive Committee and a representative from the Graduate School where eligibility may be reinstated.
2. Any grant containing identifying information (name, advisor's name, lab name, other identifiers) will be rejected. This includes submitting your full ID number in the google form submission, as it states only the last five digits of your ID number should be included.
3. Any grant not submitted in PDF format will not be reviewed.

VII. Supplementary Grant

Following the awards process for the GSG Grant Cycle, the Grant Officer may disburse additional funds to applicants. If there are any funds remaining that have been allocated to the grants process in the GSG Budget, not awarded to applicants, supplementary grants may be offered. Through these supplementary grants, awardees that have demonstrated a need beyond the \$850, may be awarded up to \$250 in additional funding. The allocation of funds will be based on the final scores from the review process. However, please note that in recent years the GSG grants process has been extremely competitive and we have not been able to award supplemental funds.

There are two components to applying for the supplementary grant: (1) Indicate interest on the submission form, (2) Explanation of budget and need.

Submission Form

As described in section “V. Submission Form” above, there is a single question of the form about the supplementary grant. Answering “yes” to that question will indicate that you would like to be considered for the additional \$250 if funds are available. Then the supplementary grant explanation should also be uploaded.

Supplementary Grant Explanation

A brief explanation (no more than 250 words) should be provided to elaborate on your budget explanation. The items for which the additional \$250 must already be in your budget and described in your budget explanation of the primary grant application. This supplementary grant explanation should identify those items for which the additional \$250 will be used. The supplementary grant explanation will not be scored. The Grants Officer will review the supplementary grant explanations to ensure there is an additional need for funding.

****Note: Your budget explanation in your grant should not include the supplementary grant funding and only describe requests up to the \$850. Mention of the additional funding will result in deductions for failure to follow instructions and reduce your chances of getting both the \$850 grant and the \$250 supplementary grant**

The supplementary grant explanation should be in a separate PDF file and uploaded on the submission form. It should follow the same formatting guidelines as the primary application PDF, listed in the section “IV. Instructions and Formatting of Grant Application PDF” above.

VIII. Obligations

If you are awarded GSG grant funding, note the following obligations and requirements:

- **Tax Liability:**

Awardees are responsible for understanding if the award will be taxable. The GSG and Graduate School work together to minimize this burden on awardees by issuing the funds to the student's department where possible. This is not possible in all cases, and the funds may be issued to the student directly. In these cases, tax documents will be issued to the students at the end of the year. The GSG Officers are not tax professionals and **will not be able to provide tax advice**. If you have any questions about the tax responsibility of the grants, please reference [our resources on our website](#) or follow up with a personal accountant.
- **Use of Funds:**

Funds can only be used for the items specifically approved in the application budget. However, we understand that circumstances permit themselves and we will work with you. ***Please contact the Grants Officers prior to making spending adjustments.*** Be sure to include the semester, funding category, and your ID number on all correspondence to facilitate a response.
- **Submit an Expense Report:**
 - Awardees must submit all receipts and a **typed, dated, and signed** letter as one single PDF file to the GSG Grants Officer by email (gsg.grants@maine.edu) by **Friday, August 30th, 2024 by 5:00 pm**, that details how the money was spent. GSG will deny future applications if receipts are not provided in good order and received by the date specified in the award letter. A sample letter is available on the GSG Grants' website at (<https://umaine.edu/gsg/individual-grants/>).
 - ***Failure to account for disbursed funds will result in a hold placed on your student account at the Bursar's Office.***
 - Proof of presentation is required for the Travel to Present category. Proof of presentation can be a listing on a website, the conference program, or the book of abstracts from the conference. A **printed** copy of your proof of presentation, along with your receipts, should be submitted after you receive notification that you were awarded GSG funding.
- **Serve as a Grant Reader:**

If awarded funds, you agree to serve as a grant reader in the next cycle. Exceptions include graduation, extensive off-campus field work, and medical excuses.

Contact the Grants Officer via email (gsg.grants@maine.edu) with any questions.