



GSA Bill #23

A bill amending the Special Rules for the Graduate Travel Awards Program

1           **WHEREAS**, Part V – Article III – Section 1 of the GSA Bylaws establish that the Graduate  
2 Student Assembly may adopt Special Rules with a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of those present and  
3 voting; and,

4           **WHEREAS**, the Special Rules for the Graduate Travel Awards Program (GTAP) were  
5 adopted on April 5, 2016; and,

6           **WHEREAS**, the Special Rules for the GTAP were amended on October 4, 2016; and,

7           **WHEREAS**, the Committee for GTAP has submitted a revision to these Special Rules for  
8 the GTAP; and,

9           **WHEREAS**, the GSA Executive Committee has reviewed and approved the Special Rules  
10 for the GTAP.

11           **THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED**, that the Special Rules for the GTAP be adopted as  
12 amended.

Submitted by	Committee for GTAP	DATE	01/30/2017
Referred to	Executive Committee	DATE	01/30/2017
Committee action	Approved	DATE	01/31/2017
Floor action	Adopted by voice vote	DATE	02/07/2017
Presidential Signature	(s) President Correas	DATE	02/08/2017

# **Association of Students of the University of Nebraska**

## **Graduate Student Assembly**

### **Special Rules - Graduate Travel Awards Program**

#### **Section 1. Definition**

The Association of Students of the University of Nebraska (ASUN) Graduate Student Assembly (GSA) Graduate Travel Awards Program (GTAP) contributes funds to qualifying individuals' travel expenses for active conference participation in the United States and abroad.

#### **Section 2. Objective**

The GTAP facilitates and promotes the intellectual and professional development of graduate students at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and contributes to the strengthening of the University and its increases prominence in the greater scholarly community.

#### **Section 3. Committee for GTAP**

1. The Committee for GTAP ("the committee") shall be composed of no less than six (6) GSA representatives appointed by the Executive Vice President, and one (1) Chair as elected by the membership of the Assembly by simple plurality of votes.
2. Committee members shall be disqualified from applying to and receiving any GTAP funds during the academic year they serve on the committee.
3. The committee shall meet regularly to evaluate applications, grant awards and evaluate expense reimbursement requests.

#### **Section 4. Awards**

1. The number of awards will be determined by the GTAP fund budget. The GSA shall allocate any monies received during the current academic year, as well as rollover funds from previous years, to the GTAP fund.
2. Awards for domestic travel shall not exceed four hundred dollars (\$400) and awards for international travel shall not exceed six hundred dollars (\$600). These amounts may only be altered by the GSA at the beginning of each academic year.

#### **Section 5. Deadlines**

The following periods and deadlines shall be used for the GTAP.

Period	For Travel Between	Deadline	
		Application	Notification
Fall	September 1 December 31	July 31	August <del>15</del> <u>20</u>
Spring	January 1 April 30	November 30	December <del>15</del> <u>20</u>
Summer	May 1 August 31	March 31	April <del>15</del> <u>20</u>

**Section 6. Reviewers**

1. Peer reviewers shall be graduate students in good academic standing that have established academic residency at the University, in accordance with the Office of Graduate Studies regulations.
  - a. Any student fulfilling the above-mentioned requirement may request the committee to serve as a peer reviewer for any period, provided he does so at least 15 calendar days before the application deadline. Tenure as a peer reviewer shall expire after every review period, and students may re-apply.
  - b. The committee shall determine any additional requirements for serving as a peer reviewer, as well as the application procedure for becoming one.
  - c. Any student serving as a peer reviewer shall be disqualified from applying to and receiving any GTAP funds during their period of service.
  - d. Committee members shall be prohibited from serving as peer reviewers during their tenure.
  - e. Peer reviewers shall adhere to the highest academic standards, and should excuse themselves if any conflict of interest arises.
2. Faculty reviewers shall be members of the graduate faculty of the University. The committee shall recruit members from various disciplines to serve as Faculty reviewers for the GTAP.
  - a. Faculty reviewers shall not evaluate applications submitted by students to which they serve as chair or members of their supervisory committee, of which they serve as advisors or supervisors, or with whom they hold active research collaboration.
  - b. Faculty reviewers shall adhere to the highest academic standards, and should recuse themselves if any conflict of interest arises.

**Section 7. Eligibility**

1. No student from a University department or graduate program who has failed to appoint or elect and maintain a representative to the GSA during the previous academic year shall be eligible to apply or receive any GTAP funds.
  - a. This requirement shall not be enforced during the first year of the GTAP.
2. Applicants that have requested and received a refund for University Program and Facilities Fee (UPFF) Fund A during the current or previous semester shall not be eligible to apply or receive GTAP funds.

3. Applicants must be enrolled in a graduate degree program at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and be in good academic standing.
4. All travel must be completed before graduation.
5. Students are eligible to receive up to one travel award per academic degree (masters or PhD), but they may apply multiple times, provided they only apply once during each round.

## **Section 8. Application and Evaluation**

1. All applications, as established in Annex 1, and application materials will be available on the GSA website at least sixty (60) calendar days in advance of the semester's application deadline, and should be filed before such deadline.
  - a. The committee may establish an electronic or paper filing procedure, but both mechanisms may not be used at the same time.
2. Applications must be accompanied by a note of acceptance to present at the conference, as well as any notification awarding competitive and non-competitive funding to attend said conference.
3. Applications will be blindly reviewed by an "ad hoc" group composed of two (2) peer reviewers and one (1) faculty reviewer.
4. Travel award applications shall be evaluated on a one hundred (100) point scale as follows:
  - a. Peer and faculty reviewers shall judge the application granting up to thirty (30) points each, in accordance to the rubric in Annex 2.
  - b. Up to ten (10) points shall be awarded by the committee in the following way:
    - i. Conference association: regional (3 points), national (4 points), international (5 points).
    - ii. Presentation: poster (3 points), oral (5 points).
5. The committee shall refer all applications to peer and faculty reviewers which shall return their completed evaluation rubrics no later than ten (10) calendar days after receiving them. If any of the reviewers fails to return the completed evaluation rubric, a new reviewer may be selected, provided the evaluation is returned in no more than five (5) calendar days.
6. To ensure evaluations are returned in due time, the committee shall distribute applications evenly amongst peer and faculty reviewers.
  - a. No peer or faculty reviewer should receive more than two (2) applications in excess of any other reviewer, unless a reviewer in this cohort fails to review and submit applications by the established deadline.

## **Section 9. Ranking, Granting and Notification**

1. The committee shall calculate the final score of all applications, with the highest ranked application receiving the requested funds, and proceeding downwards, until all monies have been allocated.
2. Provided two or more applications are tied for the last funds to be allocated:
  - a. The faculty reviewer score shall determine who gets the award.
  - b. A coin toss shall determine the awardee, provided the above-defined procedure fails to favor an application.
3. Awardees shall be notified electronically via email before the aforementioned deadline, and shall be required to formally accept or decline the award.

4. If an awardee declines an award, or is unable to attend the conference, he or she must notify the committee as soon as possible. If the notification deadline has not elapsed, the committee may re-award the funds for that period.

## **Section 10. GTAP Funds**

1. Funds may only be used as approved by University policies and as set forth by the committee and the Graduate School.
2. The individual will only receive funds to cover the exact expenditures up to the amount approved.
3. Travel Grant funds may not be used to fund the following:
  - a. Anything found in violation of law and/or University rules, regulations, policies and procedures.
  - b. Personal travel.
  - c. Items and expenses not included in the original travel grant application.
  - d. Purchase of beer, wine or other alcoholic beverages.
  - e. Plaques, prizes, scholarships, awards, trophies or medals or other related gift items.
  - f. Payments to invest in or provide capital for any business or commercial enterprise, or any activity intended to generate profit.
  - g. Telephone, electronic facsimile, Internet, cable or communication device charges.
  - h. Prohibited purchase include:
    - i. Firearms, weapons, or ammunition.
    - ii. Tobacco or tobacco related products.
    - iii. Illegal or illicit substances or devices.
    - iv. Controlled substances
    - v. Pornography or other products that are demeaning or degrading to people.
  - i. Any court actions.
  - j. Costs or litigation against the University, of its employees in fulfillment of their duties, or against its students.
  - k. Rental vehicles and rental vehicle insurance, unless proper justification is provided.
  - l. Incidental travel not on the original application.
  - m. Travel costs for a graduate student engaged in lobbying, class work requirements, or job searching
  - n. Association dues, even if required to attend a conference or competition.
  - o. In the cases of transportation, University mileage regulations will apply.
4. Any funds allocated by the GSA budget not awarded during the Fall period shall roll-over to the Spring period, and any funds allocated by the GSA budget and/or rolled-over from the Spring period shall roll-over to the Summer period.
5. Funds not allocated during the academic year may roll over to the following year only with the authorization of the GSA.
6. No GTAP funds may be used for any other purpose than granting travel awards, and no award may be granted any later than five (5) calendar days past the notification deadline.

## **Section 11. Reimbursement**

1. No award shall be extended as a check or transfer to the applicant, but rather all travel awards shall be reimbursed to the individual.
  - a. The GTAP shall not reimburse more than three (3) hotel night stays and four (4) per diem, unless proper justification is provided.
  - b. Only actual expenses may be reimbursed, per diem rates may only be used to estimate the cost of travel.
  - c. No expenses shall be reimbursed unless the applicant and faculty advisor attest of having presented the work at the conference.
2. No later than thirty (30) calendar days from the last day of travel, a reimbursement form shall be submitted to the committee itemizing what is to be reimbursed, and attaching the corresponding receipts.
3. The committee shall verify that all claimed expenses comply with University, ASUN, GSA, and GTAP regulations, and verify with the University department or graduate program of the student that no expense has been claimed more than once.
4. After all expenses have been verified and approved, and the University department or graduate program has reviewed and endorsed the report, a check or transfer shall be extended to the awardee for the amount approved.
5. Mileage reimbursements will be verified. The GTAP will only reimburse mileage to and from an event. Mileage beyond the intended destination will be subject to review and may be denied. All mileage requests are subject to the University mileage policy.
6. The GTAP shall have thirty (30) calendar days to process the awardee's reimbursement request, provided the awardee, University department or graduate program fulfill all committee requests in a timely manner.
7. Special provisions shall be taken if conference travel occurs close to the end of the fiscal year, so that the awarded monies are disbursed from the appropriate budget.
8. University Travel Services policies and regulations shall be followed at all times.

## **Section 12. Compliance**

1. It is the responsibility of all graduate students seeking GTAP funds to read and understand policies and procedures of the University, the Graduate School, ASUN and GSA. Individuals that receive GTAP funding must be in compliance with all policies and procedures at all times. Individuals that are found to be in violation of any policy of the University, the Graduate School, ASUN, GSA and GTAP must reimburse any and all funds they received during the time they were in violation of these policies. Furthermore, individuals that attempt to defraud or mislead the University, the Graduate School, ASUN, GSA and/or GTAP will be subject to disciplinary review, and individuals may be held individually responsible and criminally liable for any funds received illegally or under false pretenses.
2. Any student may request the committee permission to review their application and evaluation materials, but at all times the confidentiality of the peer and faculty reviewers shall be maintained.

Approved by the Graduate Student Assembly on April 5, 2016.

Amended by the Graduate Student Assembly on October 4, 2016

## Annex 1. GTAP Application

### Applicant information

<b>Name</b>	_____	<b>NU ID</b>	_____
<b>Email</b>	_____	<b>Phone</b>	_____
<b>Department</b>	_____	<b>Degree</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> Masters
<b>Conference</b>	_____	<b>Date</b>	_____
<b>Location</b>	_____		

Please attach:

1. Conference registration.
2. Conference poster/oral presentation acceptance, including the submitted abstract.
3. Any supporting information requested in this application. Any further information and/or documentation will not be evaluated.

In 500 words or less please describe your research and the importance of attending this conference. Please keep in mind that reviewers may not be in your particular area of study. Essays longer than 500 words will be disqualified. All applications will be evaluated in accordance to the Graduate Travel Awards Program Rules. A copy of the evaluation rubric can be obtained from the Graduate Student Assembly website: <http://unl.edu/gsa>.

### Conference and funding information

1. Have you been accepted to present at this conference? Yes/No
  - a. Is this an oral presentation or poster presentation? Oral/Poster
  - b. Is the institution sponsoring this conference international, national or regional?  
International/National/Regional
2. Was this research conducted at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln? Yes/No
3. Have you applied for a GSA travel award in the past? Yes/No
4. Have you been granted a GSA travel award in the past? Yes/No
  - a. Has this award been granted during your current academic program (masters or PhD)? Yes/No
5. Have you applied for other funding to attend this meeting? Yes/No
6. Have you secured additional funding to attend this meeting? Yes/No
  - a. If yes, please indicate below (and attach funding information):
    - i. Department: \$ .
    - ii. Advisory/faculty: \$ .
    - iii. Research grant: \$ .
    - iv. Conference award: \$ .
    - v. Other competitive award: \$ .
    - vi. Other non-competitive award: \$ .

### Budget information

Travel award funds may only be applied to the items listed below.

1. Travel:
  - a. Airline ticket cost: \$ \_\_\_\_\_, OR
  - b. Ground transportation cost (personal vehicle): \$ \_\_\_\_\_ miles at \$0.54/mile = \$ \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Other transportation costs: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
2. Conference registration fee: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
3. Lodging: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per night x \_\_\_\_\_ nights = \$ \_\_\_\_\_
4. Meals: \_\_\_\_\_ days at \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per day = \$ \_\_\_\_\_
5. Other costs: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
6. Total attendance cost: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Student

I certify that I have read and agree to the current rules and directions for the Graduate Travel Awards Program (GTAP) and certify that all information I have provided in this application is accurate. I further grant permission to the Committee for Graduate Travel Awards Program and the Graduate School to verify my status as a graduate student in good standing at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and my eligibility for the travel award competition. I further certify that, to the best of my knowledge, I have not received a UPFF Fund A refund.

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty advisor

I certify that I have read this travel award application, including the budget, that the applicant is my student and is a graduate student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in good standing, that all information in this application is accurate to the best of my knowledge, the budget is realistic, and this student is likely to attend and give this presentation at this conference.

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_



**Annex 2. GTAP Peer and Faculty Review Rubric**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Points</b>
<p><b>Clear, concise description of research</b>            Applicant summarizes research in a clear and concise way that can be understood by fellow graduate students who may not be in their area of study.            Reviewer can clearly understand the goals and outcomes of the research to be presented.</p>	15
<p><b>Involvement of applicant in work being presented</b>            Applicant addresses their part/involvement in the research.</p>	5
<p><b>Importance of the conference to the applicant and his/her group at the University</b>            Applicant describes the importance of attending this conference for the advancement of their career and the impact it will have on other members in their group/lab at the University.</p>	5
<p><b>Visibility of the University</b>            Applicant describes how attending the conference will further the name and reputation of the University.</p>	5
<p><b>Total</b></p>	30