

Travel Fund Rules and Eligibility

The Travel Fund is an initiative from Graduate Council in association with UChicagoGRAD that provides funds for graduate students at the University of Chicago to attend academic conferences, networking events, and other venues. There are two tiers of funding available on a rolling timeline: basic funding for participating in professional conferences or other events such as case competitions and advanced funding for those presenting original research at academic conferences. Basic funding can be won by groups of 1 to 5 persons and awardees can receive up to \$350 each in reimbursement for their travel costs, while Advanced funding awardees are allotted \$600 each for reimbursements. The only requirements are a good application submitted more than 10 days before the travel start date, and a brief recommendation form from a faculty advisor. After your travel, you are also welcome to share your experience with the Grad Council at one of our meetings during the academic year.

Every graduate student is invited and encouraged to apply. Since all of our reviewers are graduate students like you, please leave a few weeks for applications to be reviewed if you would like to hear the result before your event. In addition, if your application is rejected, you may apply again the next quarter if your event has not yet passed. Upon receiving an award, you will be expected to provide some additional information and file receipts for reimbursement.

In addition, due to heightened demand, the Grad Council has been working to automate the application system to better and more quickly meet the needs of our constituents. **Therefore, for both the reimbursement and application process, please read the instructions below carefully!** Inaccurate contact information for either the applicant or the faculty advisor could result in a delayed or rejected application. Please send all questions not addressed by the instructions to the Graduate Council Vice President of Travel, Mary Burkey at mtburkey@uchicago.edu.

We look forward to reviewing all of your applications and learning about all of your fantastic work and achievements!

1 Application Rules and Eligibility Requirements

- All applicants must be graduate or professional students at the University of Chicago
- Applications may be submitted up to two (2) quarters in advance of travel
- Applications must be submitted no later than ten (10) days before the first day of travel
- Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. Any applications submitted for travel in future academic quarters will be processed at the end of the current academic quarter

- No retroactive applications will be considered
- recommendation forms must be received within 30 days of an application submission
- You may only receive one (1) Travel Fund award (advanced or basic) per 3 years at the University of Chicago, including interruptions of student status
- Rejected applicants are encouraged to apply again in the future
- **Applicants must be involved in a conference beyond just attending, we require basic level fundees to participate in some way**, be that volunteering or advocating for UChicago Graduate Programming while in attendance
- If funded, students may only use the provided funds for the purposes outlined in their application
- Awardees must submit reimbursement requests no later than thirty (30) days after the last day of travel
- A representative may apply on behalf of a group for Basic applications. **The maximum allotted group size is five (5) members**
- Applications that are found to be duplicates of other applications or to have borrowed heavily from other applications will be withdrawn
- Awardees must truthfully list all sources and amounts of other funding
- Any violation of these rules or the application instructions to follow may result in the application being rejected

2 Application instructions

1. Go to gc.uchicago.edu/travel-fund/ to start the application
2. Press the "Apply Now" button for the fund you want to apply for (Advanced or Basic)
3. Fill out **all** of the requested personal information
4. Be sure to include a correct UChicago email address **if you do not receive a confirmation email, you did not supply a correct email address and your application is not being considered.**
5. Enter the type of presentation for the event you are attending. If not listed, please provide a brief description of your role at the event.
6. Carefully consider the listed questions and provide your responses in the space provided. There are two (2) questions in the basic application, and three (3) in the advanced application. For the sake of the grad students reviewing your application, please do not go over the word limit or make your responses overly technical.
7. Enter the approximate start date and end date of travel that would be covered by this grant.

8. Provide a semi-itemized list that is as thorough as possible for the expenses that your travel demands. Even if the listed expenses are greater than the allotted award amount, list the full amount that you require. The expenses covered by the Travel Fund are listed below.
9. List all other funding sources that you have applied for, or have received. We encourage you to look for as many funding sources as are available
10. Attach proof that you have been accepted to the event you are applying for
11. Enter the name and email of a faculty/staff contact who can provide a recommendation form **(inaccurate information could result in a delayed or rejected application)**
12. Click submit only if you have read and understood these instructions

***Important for Group Applications only**

Groups may submit applications for the Travel Funds Basic Award. If you are submitting on behalf of a group, please check the box stating that this is a group travel award, and enter the number of individuals in your group (limit 5). These applications are processed the same way as individual applications. If your group is larger than 5, consider applying for Grad Council's Professional and Academic Fund.

3 Review System

The following is the point system used to review applications. Each application is reviewed by 2 different graduate students. The reviewers have the opportunity to leave comments after each question.

3.1 Basic Review

Student information (5 points possible) Seniority on the date of the conference:

PhD Students:	≥ 5 years:	+5
	4th year	+4
	1-3rd year	+3
Masters:	≥ 2 years	+5
	1st years	+3
Professional Students:	≥ 2 years	+5
	1st years	+3

Question 1: Within 400 words, please describe the importance of this event and how this event relates to your academic/professional interests. Additionally, please explain the nature of your participation in the event. How will attendance further your academic and/or professional goals? What opportunities does this event provide and how will it enhance your UChicago graduate experience? (25 pts possible: 5 = best, 1 = worst)

Relevance of event clearly described?	5 4 3 2 1
Clear justification for participation?	5 4 3 2 1
Will the event provide academic/professional value?	5 4 3 2 1
Will this event enhance the students graduate experience?	5 4 3 2 1
Clear organization and delivery?	5 4 3 2 1
Total:	-----

Question 2: Graduate Council's goal is to build a strong community of scholars from across the University. In 200 words, describe how your attendance at this event helps the greater UChicago community. How will you use the knowledge you learn to give back to your colleagues and peers (i.e. perhaps you will report back to your committee or school, write a post for a website, create educational material, etc.)? (15 pts possible: 5 = best, 1 = worst)

Clear commitment to helping the community?	5 4 3 2 1
Plan described for use of knowledge to help peers?	5 4 3 2 1
Clear organization and delivery?	5 4 3 2 1
Total:	-----

Overall Strength of Application: Please take a moment to decide the overall strength of the application and whether you feel the student has appropriate need for funding. Consider, e.g. if the PI can provide funding if the student does not receive this award, if the cost of the conference and its location are reasonable, and especially if the student will need to pay out of pocket for travel. An applicant with extreme need (4-5) may be a senior student who would have no choice but to pay the cost of attending a US conference out of their own pocket, whereas a low-need (1-2) applicant may be a third-year whose PI can, but doesnt want to, pay for the student to attend a conference in Portugal. (10 points possible: 5 = best, 1 = worst)

Does the student need this grant?	5 4 3 2 1
Does this application merit funding?	5 4 3 2 1
Total:	-----

Recommendation form. (10 pts possible)

3.2 Advanced Review

Student information (10 points possible) Seniority on the date of the conference:

PhD Students:	≥ 5 years:	+5
	4th year	+4
	1-3rd year	+3
Masters:	≥ 2 years	+5
	1st years	+3
Professional Students:	≥ 2 years	+5
	1st years	+3

Talk: +5 Poster: +2 Unknown: 0 Not Presenting: -5

Question 1: In 200 words or less ,describe the importance of this event and why it is relevant to your academic/professional interests. Additionally, please explain the nature of your participation in the event and describe how competitive it is to present at this particular event. (20 points possible: 5 = best, 1 = worst)

Relevance of event clearly described?	5 4 3 2 1
Clear justification for participation?	5 4 3 2 1
How competitive is this event?	5 4 3 2 1
Clear organization and delivery?	5 4 3 2 1
Total:	-----

Question 2: Within 400 words or less, please describe your project and the significance of your research. Why is this an important question or research topic? How are you contributing to your field of study? Please target your answer to a group of graduate students without an in-depth understanding of your field. (20 points possible: 5 = best, 1 = worst)

Is the purpose clearly stated?	5 4 3 2 1
research significance explained?	5 4 3 2 1
Does the student ask an important question?	5 4 3 2 1
Is a larger context explored?	5 4 3 2 1
Total:	-----

Question 3: Graduate Council's goal is to build a strong community of scholars from across the University. In 200 words or less, describe how your attendance at this event helps the greater UChicago community. How will you use the knowledge you learn to give back to your colleagues and peers (i.e. perhaps you will report back to your committee or school,write a post for a website,create educational material,etc.)? (15 points possible: 5 = best, 1 = worst)

Clear commitment to helping the community?	5 4 3 2 1
Plan described for use of knowledge to help peers?	5 4 3 2 1
Clear organization and delivery?	5 4 3 2 1
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Total:	-----

Overall Strength of Application: Please take a moment to decide the overall strength of the application and whether you feel the student has appropriate need for funding. Consider, e.g. if the PI can provide funding if the student does not receive this award, if the cost of the conference and its location are reasonable, and especially if the student will need to pay out of pocket for travel. An applicant with extreme need (4-5) may be a senior student who would have no choice but to pay the cost of attending a US conference out of their own pocket, whereas a low-need (1-2) applicant may be a third-year whose PI can, but doesn't want to, pay for the student to attend a conference in Portugal. (10 points possible: 5 = best, 1 = worst)

Does the student need this grant?	5 4 3 2 1
Does this application merit funding?	5 4 3 2 1
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Total:	-----

Recommendation Form (10 pts possible)

4 Reimbursements

Awardees will be granted funds as reimbursement of expenses, and awardees must submit receipt copies as documentation.

What is Covered	What is NOT Covered
Any Transportation	Meals or Food
Lodging	Coffee or Caffeinated beverages
Conference Fees	Items bought while travelling

If possible please provide receipts that have the applicant name and a date on them. You only need to provide receipts that you want to be reimbursed for. Please provide digital copies with sufficient resolution. On the expense report, please list all the expenses that you want reimbursed (they must match receipts) and if you have alternate funding, clearly list (and label) everything that is covered by the alternate funding if applicable.

More instructions will be provided in the award notification email.

Extra info that might be useful:

- Grad council does cover rental cars. Just keep and upload the receipts for the rental and for gas.

- Grad council will cover travel in a personal car using the standard IRS mileage rate (53.5 cents per mile)
- Though discouraged, you may use copies of credit card statements in extraordinary circumstances.