



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Research Travel Grant Applicants  
**FROM:** GAPSA Research Council  
**DATE:** July 1, 2022  
**RE:** How Research Travel Grant is Awarded?

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The Research Travel Grant was initially created to support the idea of equal opportunity for all research students traveling to their conferences. While some students, particularly those in the STEM fields, have the luxury of some degree, if not all, financial support from their advisors, program, and/or school, others do not.

Therefore, the review process is heavily focused on evaluating the applicant's needs for the grant. To be explicit, the importance of the conference to their career, the urgency of the conference, and the departmental financial situation. While we do take into consideration of intellectual merit, it is not the main component – we are not in a position to evaluate applicants' work across different disciplines.

To expand on that, one of the major factors to evaluate the importance of the conference is the applicants' statement: "Explain how this conference contributes to your academic and professional development." To network with professionals in the field, exchange state-of-art knowledge, and present one's work – all these are very valid yet very generic and vague reasons; these can apply to most applicants. Therefore, a much-preferred statement would demonstrate compelling reasons that tailor toward one's own situation.

In addition, during each cycle, we receive a huge number of applications, and we only have very limited funds. Thus, unfortunately, we are unable to fund all qualified students, and the selection process is necessary. This has always been an extremely difficult process for the Council every time. To expand the number of students who benefit from this grant, we do not always award with the full amount. While some applicants who score on the top would be awarded in full, the rest would be awarded partially based on their scores.

Over recent years, we realize the demands of the Travel Grant have grown bigger and faster. Therefore, we are actively seeking alternative ways to meet such needs. As one of our main advocacy projects, we are currently having conversations with all 12 graduate schools as well as the Provost Office to discuss a better mechanism to support the conference travel for all research students. We greatly appreciate your understanding and are more than happy to hear your voice on such a matter.