

School of Communication Humanities PhD Research Grant

The School of Communication Humanities PhD Research Grant is designed to assist humanities doctoral students with basic research costs. The maximum amount awarded is \$500.

Eligibility

- Active, enrolled PhD students in years 1–6, in good academic standing, in the Interdisciplinary PhD in Theatre and Drama (IPTD), Performance Studies, and Screen Cultures programs are eligible for this grant. Humanities students in the Rhetoric, Media, and Publics PhD program and the Communication Studies PhD program (Rhetoric and Public Culture) are eligible for research funding from the Department of Communication Studies; these students should contact their DGS for information.
- To receive this grant, students must be active (not discontinued, graduated, or on leave) and in good academic standing when the funds are expended; students who are funded by the university or by external fellowships and grants are equally eligible.
- Each student is eligible for one SoC Research Grant over the course of a graduate career. Funds cannot be requested incrementally across multiple years (e.g., \$200 in year 1, \$300 in year 3). Instead, a research grant must be expended within a single fiscal year (a single September 1–August 31 period), and the application should describe the entire amount being requested (up to \$500). Students may then use the money across the fiscal year, submitting multiple expense reports as long as the total cost does not exceed the total amount applied for and approved (up to \$500). For planning purposes, please note that, according to university policy, expense reports must be submitted within 90 days of receipted expenditures.

Appropriate Use of the Grant

Eligible costs include research materials and services not available on campus:

- Essential research travel (e.g., to archives, repositories, field sites). Students must adhere to the university's health protocols and, if traveling internationally, to the university's [Graduate Student Travel Policies](#) from Global Affairs. Eligible costs are stipulated by university policies on [travel expenses](#).
- Acquisition of research materials unavailable locally, digitally, or via Interlibrary Loan
- Photocopies, photo-reproductions, image or film reproductions, fees for permissions and usage rights
- Payment for services (e.g., transcription, translation, copyediting, web development and/or hosting); costs for token payments to interviewees
- Construction, rental, or leasing of special research equipment not available on campus

Ineligible expenses include: travel to professional meetings, symposia, conferences, colloquia, summer institutes, seminars, or film or performance festivals (the SoC Humanities PhD Travel Grant supports such expenses); tuition and fees; costs of printing, copying, or otherwise preparing the dissertation; travel to consult with members of the dissertation committee;

computers and other electronic equipment for personal use; expenses paid for by other grants, either at Northwestern or externally; and retroactive costs incurred or committed before review and approval of the SoC Research Grant application.

Application Instructions

Timing: Applications for the grant should be made as early as is feasible but must be made a minimum of 30 days before the planned expenditures.

Funds for expenditures planned for the 2025–2026 academic year (fiscal year 2026) are available until August 31, 2026. Funds for expenses to be incurred on or after September 1, 2026, cannot be awarded until fiscal year 2027 begins (i.e., after September 1, 2026).

Process:

- Complete an SoC Research Grant application [using the online form](#). The application requires a brief budget of anticipated costs (approximate figures are fine) and a statement explaining how the funding will support the student's research.
- The submitted application is forwarded automatically to the student's program DGS for review of the student's plans in relation to academic goals. If approved, it is forwarded to the SoC Dean's office for budgetary approval by the Associate Dean for Administration and Finance. To be awarded, an SoC Research Grant must be approved by both the program and the School.
- Upon approval at the School level, the student and the relevant program or departmental assistant will receive an email authorizing the expenditure. Decisions are ordinarily communicated within ten business days after the application is submitted.

Expenditure of Funds

The student's program and home department determine specific procedures for reimbursements and expense reports; contact program staff for more information. Please note that although departments can sometimes assist with direct payments for upfront costs like conference fees and travel booking through [Northwestern Travel Agencies](#), most costs/payments are taken care of afterward using the standard reimbursement process.

All SoC Research Grant recipients are required to file expense reports with their program or home department. Expense reports must be submitted as soon as possible but always within 90 days of expending funds, according to university policies on [travel expenses](#).

Expiration of Research Funds

Access to research funds ends at the time a student deposits the dissertation or at the end of the 24th quarter (sixth year) of a student's graduate career, whichever occurs first. All spending, expense reports, and reimbursements must be concluded by that time.

Questions?

For questions about the SoC Humanities PhD Research Grant, consult your program DGS or Rayvon Fouché, SoC Associate Dean for Graduate Education.

Other Sources of Northwestern Funding for Graduate Students' Professional Development

TGS students are eligible to apply for a range of [internal fellowships and grants](#) to support research, travel, and other professional activities.