

School of Communication Humanities PhD Travel Grant

The School of Communication Humanities PhD Travel Grant is designed to assist humanities doctoral students in presenting their work publicly and to provide opportunities for students to interact with disciplinary and interdisciplinary scholars at conferences and other professional venues. The maximum amount awarded for an SoC Travel Grant 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 annually, to underwrite virtual or in-person participation at a conference, professional meeting, symposium, colloquium, summer institute, seminar, or other curated event (e.g., a film or performance festival) at which they are presenting research, participating on a panel, or otherwise sharing their work in progress. For first-year students only, the grant can support attendance without presentation. Humanities students in the Rhetoric, Media, and Publics PhD program and the Communication Studies PhD program (Rhetoric and Public Culture) are eligible for travel 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 travel occurs and 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 a maximum of six grants over the course of a graduate career, but for only one grant in a single fiscal year (September 1–August 31).

Appropriate Use of the Grant

Use of the grant is contingent on the university's health protocols. Students traveling internationally must adhere to the university's [Graduate Student Travel Policies](#) from Global Affairs.

Eligible expenses, subject to university policies on [travel expenses](#), include:

- Registration fees for participating in the event (either in-person or virtual)
- Membership dues for professional organizations when required for event registration
- Airfare/airline fees at the most reasonable and economical rate. Travel should be booked through [Northwestern Travel Agencies](#) whenever possible.
- Ground transportation (public transportation, taxi fares, rideshare fares, rail fares). Private automobile transportation is reimbursed per mile at a rate set by the university.
- Lodging in reasonably priced, commercial-class hotels, motels, inns, or rentals (e.g., Airbnb), or at conference-site lodgings
- Meals at reasonably priced restaurants. Allowable costs depend on the destination; for example, for domestic travel in 2025–26, a maximum of \$16–23 is allowed for breakfast, \$19–26 for lunch, and \$28–38 for dinner.

- Other fees directly related to event participation (e.g., tolls, parking fees, Internet charges at hotels, airports, and cafes)

Ineligible expenses include: first-class, business-class, or economy-plus airfare; airline upgrades; alcohol; books, magazines, and newspapers; childcare, babysitting, elder care, house-sitting, pet-sitting (please note that The Graduate School has a [Dependent Care Professional Development Grant](#) that may be helpful to some students); clothing, laundry, dry cleaning; flowers, gifts; haircuts and other personal services or products; luggage; meals for local or virtual conferences; passports, vaccinations, visas; personal entertainment; expenses paid for by other grants, either at Northwestern or externally; spouse or dependent expenses; and other costs not directly related to traveling to/from and participating in the event. Further, university policies on [travel expenses](#) disallow some other reimbursements; students should check guidelines carefully and consult as needed with their program or departmental assistant or business administrator.

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 travel begins; applications can be made before a student learns whether a submission to present at an event has been accepted. If a student's submission is not accepted by the event organizers, the student remains eligible to apply for the SoC Travel Grant to fund a different trip in the same year.

Funds for travel in the 2025–2026 academic year (fiscal year 2026) are available until August 31, 2026. Funds for travel occurring on or after September 1, 2026, cannot be awarded until fiscal year 2027 begins (i.e., after September 1, 2026). Students who are attending conferences early in the next fiscal year must still apply at least 30 days in advance, with the understanding that funds awarded for travel starting on or after September 1 cannot be accessed until the next fiscal year.

Process:

- Complete an SoC Travel Grant application [using the online form](#). The application requires information about the event and the planned travel. In addition, the applicant must upload a brief budget of anticipated costs (approximate figures are fine) as well as the proposal for event participation.
- 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 Travel 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](#).

Questions?

For questions about the SoC Humanities PhD Travel 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.