

**Graduate Research Allocations Committee (GRAC) Guidelines
University of New Mexico Department of Biology**

Purpose: The purpose of the Graduate Research Allocations Committee (GRAC) shall be to promote the professional development of Biology graduate students (1) by facilitating students' efforts in attracting outside funding for their degree research and (2) by encouraging graduate student participation in professional meetings.

Goals:

1. Graduate students shall be successful in attracting outside funding for research in support of their degree.
2. Graduate students will present their research at professional meetings.

Objectives:

1. GRAC will help graduate students develop their grant proposal writing skills. This objective will be met by writing proposals, reviewing and evaluating proposals, providing constructive criticism, and authorizing the allocation of GRAC awards according to the Guidelines Governing the Distribution of GRAC Allocations.
2. GRAC, with the intent of increasing the ability of graduate students to attract outside funds, will make recommendations to the Department Chair for the provision of Departmental funds in support of students' degree research and participation in professional meetings. These objectives will be met (1) by insuring that the Department Chairman is aware of the supply and demand relationship of allocated funds on an annual basis, (2) by receiving and evaluating student proposals for degree research and travel to professional meetings, and (3) by managing the distribution of GRAC awards.

Authority:

Final authority for matters concerning the administration of research proposals submitted to GRAC and the distribution of funds allocated to GRAC by the Department Chair shall remain with GRAC. This authority derives from BGSA approval upon the annual election of GRAC Chairs and the occasional approval of the Guidelines Governing the Distribution of GRAC Allocations. Although GRAC activities or decisions are not bound by BGSA, GRAC may seek advice or opinion concerning any matter from BGSA and should fairly consider this advice or opinion.

Organization:

The Graduate Research Allocations Committee shall be comprised of a two elected Chairs and BGSA members that have volunteered to review applications. GRAC Chairs are elected annually by the members of the Biology Graduate Student Association in accordance with the By-Laws of the Biology Graduate Student Association.

Guidelines Governing the Distribution of GRAC Allocations

The following are to serve the GRAC as guidelines in the execution of its activities. Some constraints on Applicants and their proposals are included here, so these guidelines are available to members of the Biology Graduate Student Association for information purposes.

Structure:

1. GRAC allocations are obtained from Biology Department overhead money. Research and travel moneys are separate allocations, the amounts of which are determined by the Biology Department chairperson.
2. There shall be two funding periods each year, in each the Fall and Spring semesters. Application deadlines will be determined by the GRAC Chairpersons (usually on the fourth Friday of the semester).
3. Annual allocations are recommended to be disbursed approximately 40/60 between Fall and Spring semesters. This distribution should reflect the recent pattern of funding requests.
4. The first priority in GRAC allocations shall be support of proposals of graduate student degree work. This includes support of degree-related research and support of student travel to professional meetings for the purpose of presenting information concerning degree-related research.
5. Research awards shall support the degree-related research of Biology graduate students. Travel awards shall support the travel of Biology graduate students to present at professional meetings. Note that travel expenses pertaining to research should be included in the applicant's research proposal not the travel proposal.
6. Allocations shall not be denied to any particular graduate student based on any factors other than the compliance with the Guidelines Governing the Distribution of GRAC Allocations, the quality of the proposal, and the availability of funds.
7. The maximum allocation to any student shall be one research award and one travel award per semester. Therefore, the maximum total allocation to any student per semester is \$550. These constraints reflect a compromise between quick establishment of "seed money" for students and the equitable distribution of limited GRAC funds among applicants.
8. The lifetime limit of GRAC research allocations shall be \$800 (M.S.) and \$1,600 (Ph.D.). There shall be no lifetime limit for travel allocations to scientific meetings. The names of funded applicants and proposal titles will be posted to the BGSA website each semester to recognize successful applications and to track how many times an individual has received funding.

Funding Priority:

9. Applicants must be Biology graduate students enrolled in at least 6 credit hours in the given semester.
10. GRAC awards will only be granted on a fully funded basis. No partial awards will be given. Moneys available to GRAC may vary depending on the funds available from the department, however are generally \$5000 for all research and travel for both semesters.

11. Highest priority will be given to the funding of work directly related to the completion of the student's degree, whether it be Ph.D. or Masters. Proposals including an explicit statement explaining how the research proposal is related to degree work will be awarded 5 points on the reviewer evaluation sheet.
12. Applications for GRAC funding may be submitted twice per academic year. However, higher priority will be given to applicants that were not funded in the previous semester. Proposals from such applicants will awarded an additional 10 points on the Chair score sheet.
13. For Research Proposals: priority is given to the purchase of equipment and expendable goods applied to the student's research. Requests for food, motels, and publication costs will not be granted.
14. For Travel Proposals: GRAC allocations shall assist graduate students presenting their research at professional meetings by funding direct transportation, registration and lodging costs. Automobile transportation will be funded according to mileage rates found in the University Business Policies and Procedures Manual (<http://ua.unm.edu/travel/mileage-rate.html>). Other forms of transportation, such as flight, are also eligible for funding. Travel applicants can apply for funding prior to registration, however they must provide evidence of the registration costs and the dates and location of the conference (e.g. website screenshot). If the applicant is awarded funding, the funds will not be disbursed until the applicant has submitted proof of completed registration. Applicants that have completed registration must include a copy of the completed registration form or registration receipt.

Reviewers:

15. All applications will be reviewed by four GRAC reviewers, after which the GRAC chair will compile the scores.
16. GRAC Chairs will assign submitted applications to reviewers. Chairs will make every attempt to avoid any conflict of interest or perceived conflict of interest between reviewers and applications they are reviewing.
 - a. Chairs will track the major advisor of each applicant and reviewer
 - b. Applicants may not serve as reviewers for the same category of GRAC for which they are applying during the same semester.
 - c. Chairs will attempt to assign reviewers so that the applicant and the reviewer do not share a major advisor, share a lab or office space, or have a personal relationship (such as spouse, partner, roommate, etc.)
17. The GRAC Chairs will determine if there are sufficient reviewers to send out applications for review that will ultimately be rejected for not meeting the application requirements (such as incomplete application).
18. The GRAC Chairs will schedule reviewer meetings to discuss and award Travel funds and to discuss and award Research funds.
19. Reviewers must justify, in writing, any scores they give to an application.

Products:

20. Non-expendable equipment purchased with GRAC allocations shall remain the property of GRAC. Upon the completion of the funded project, the identity and location of GRAC equipment must be reported to the GRAC Chair in writing. Non-expendable equipment purchased with GRAC money shall remain within the lab of the original purchaser after completion of the project; this with the understanding that other students requiring the equipment will be given reasonable access to it.
21. Non-expendable equipment costs shall not exceed the amount requested for funding (maximum \$400).
22. The University of New Mexico, Department of Biology, Graduate Student Association, Graduate Research Allocations Committee should be acknowledged for complete or partial funding in all publications resulting from projects funded by GRAC.

Proposals:

23. Only current applications can be used when submitting research or travel proposals. A link to the current application can be found on the UNM Biology website. Applications not using current forms will not be considered for funding. The purpose of this requirement is to allow GRAC to evaluate all proposals with the same set of instructions and format.
24. Proposals shall conform to the GRAC application instructions. Applications lacking any required sections or not conforming to GRAC application guidelines will be rejected at the GRAC Chair's discretion.
25. The allocation period for Fall GRAC awards applies to activities occurring after the previous May to that planned through December of the same year. For Spring GRAC awards, funded activities must take place between September of the previous calendar year and August of the same calendar year.
26. All money awarded must be claimed by August of the following year (Fall awards) or of the funding year (Spring awards).
27. Mileage costs should be based on mileage rates found in the University Policies and Procedures Manual (<http://ua.unm.edu/travel/mileage-rate-cr.html>).

Animal Care & Use Protocol

28. Applicant must indicate if an animal care and use protocol is required for the project on the application cover sheet.
29. If the applicant is working with non-human vertebrates but is unsure if they need a protocol, they are encouraged to contact the UNM Office of Animal Care and Compliance (website: <http://hsc.unm.edu/som/research/acc>).
30. If working with non-human vertebrates, the OACC must approve protocols before applicant receives GRAC funds. Applicants must include a copy of the approval letter for the IACUC Protocol or the first page of the submitted Protocol that has been or will be submitted to the OACC (this is not the same as the certification of taking the Animal Care course).
31. The UNM Office of Animal Care and Compliance (OACC) requires an animal care and use protocol under these circumstances: All UNM affiliated personnel must have an

approved animal care and use protocol to conduct research (including field observations) using live, vertebrate animals (fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, or mammals) or vertebrate animal tissue (including blood). There are blanket museum protocols by division which cover research with specimens within museum collections.

The UNM OACC has verified that:

- a. If applicant is only using animal tissues from the Museum of Southwestern Biology, no specific animal care and use protocol is required.
- b. If applicant is using dried museum skeletal material, skins, or fossil material, no specific animal care and use protocol is required.
- c. If applicant is using animal tissues from another source, applicant needs to verify with the UNM OACC what protocols are required for the project.

Institutional Review Board Approval

32. If the applicant is conducting any research that involves human subjects, they must include Institutional Review Board Approval.