

**Biology Graduate Student Association (BGSA)
Graduate Research Allocations Committee (GRAC) 2026-2027**

GRAC Travel Award Application Rules and Guidelines

The following are rules and guidelines concerning GRAC Travel Award applications. Failure to follow any rules or guidelines may result in disqualification of the application without peer review, at the GRAC chairperson's discretion. A separate set of rules and guidelines for research awards is available on the GRAC page of the UNM Biology Graduate Student Association's website.

GRAC Travel Awards support travel for professional development-related expenses (NOT just conference presentations). For example, flights, mileage for fieldwork, conference fees, rental cars, etc. may be funded. **Please note that travel funds will be reimbursed after submission of receipts (i.e. after an event occurs, not prepaid).**

GRAC applications are reviewed by the GRAC chairpeople and at least three reviewers from various sub-disciplines in biology. Please write your proposal to communicate with a broad biology audience. It is recommended that you review the scoring criteria at the end of this document before completing your application. For examples of previously funded proposals see the GRAC website: <http://bgsa.unm.edu/Funding/graduate-research-allocations-committee.html>

General Rules

GRAC funding caps: Travel Awards are for the amount of \$150. The amount designated by the GRAC chairs at the start of the semester is the maximum amount that can be requested. Applicants will be notified in advance of the application deadline if award amounts are increased. No partial awards will be given. **There is no lifetime limit to the number of Travel Awards a student may receive.**

Funding period: Funds may only be requested for travel to conferences occurring during the current funding period. The dates of travel and conference should be indicated in your application proposal and itemized.

**Fall funding period: May 2026 - December 2026.
Spring funding period: September 2026 - August 2027.**

Anonymous application material: The required PDF of application material (described below) must be anonymous. Anonymous material should contain no identifying information such as names, telephone numbers, email addresses, NSF grant numbers, or lab affiliations. When necessary, substitute "APPLICANT" or "APPLICANT'S ADVISOR" in place of identifying names. Citations do not need to be anonymized unless language specifies that you contributed to the reference.

Application deadline: **All requested materials must be received by the application deadline at 11:59 PM.** Application materials can be re-submitted as many times as necessary until the application deadline. The last version sent closest to the deadline will be the one that is accepted and reviewed.

Successfully funded applications: The UNM Biology Graduate Student Association should be acknowledged for complete or partial funding in all publications resulting from projects funded by GRAC.

Grant recipient follow-up: A follow-up may be sent one year after any reward for a project update. This update may be posted to the BGSA website pending applicant approval.

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Application

In order to submit a complete application, you must:

1. Complete the online GRAC Travel Application Form
2. Email one anonymous PDF to the GRAC chairpersons that includes:
 - a. Proposal body
 - b. Literature cited
 - c. Budget
3. If you are applying to defray the cost of conference travel or registration, email a completed registration form or proof of conference *and* your submitted conference abstract. These items must be emailed separately from the anonymous PDF.

Section Guidelines

Proposal Body: The proposal body can be **no longer than one page, double-spaced**, with 1 inch margins, and with a font no smaller than 12 point Times New Roman. Figures and in-text citations are included in the total length of the proposal body. In your proposal, briefly describe the research you will present and how it relates to your degree work. Address how attending this conference will help you reach your research/professional goals.

Literature Cited: The literature cited section must use a consistent citation format from a prominent journal in your field. This section **does not count toward your 1-page proposal limit**.

Budget: The budget must be **no longer than one page**. Expenditures should be itemized, and funding sources for each item should be clearly indicated. **A budget justification paragraph must also be included**. Specify for which items you are requesting GRAC funding. Include explicit information on funding you have requested elsewhere, including funding that has been received, applied for, or will be applied for in the current funding period. Write out the full name of the funding source and indicate if the award is pending or accepted. Rejected funding need not be included. **GRAC Travel funds may be used for registration, lodging, and travel fees; but may NOT be used for food, audiovisual equipment, or other incidentals.**

Mileage Reimbursement: Mileage costs should be based on mileage rates found in the University Policies and Procedures Manual (<https://ua.unm.edu/travel/mileage-rate.html>).

Completed Registration Form: If you are applying to defray the cost of conference travel or registration, a document with your name, the name of the conference, and **some confirmation that you have registered is needed**. You may redact personal information such as credit card numbers as long as your name and confirmation of your registration for the meeting remain clearly visible. If registration has not begun for the conference, please provide proof of the dates and location of the conference (e.g., a screenshot of the registration webpage) and the estimated cost of registration.

Presentation Abstract: If you are applying to defray the cost of conference travel or registration, **a copy of the abstract submitted** for your presentation at the meeting is needed. Your name must be listed as the presenting author. If the meeting only requires a title, please indicate as much and include the title of your presentation.

Other things to keep in mind: All above formatting requirements must be met in order for the proposal to be funded.

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Review Criteria

Below are the criteria assessed by GRAC chairpersons for proposal acceptance and fairness. Travel Award applicants should make sure that their proposals meet all the listed criteria so that the application can be accepted and the proposal passed on for peer review.

GRAC Chair Score Sheet (10 possible points)

Failure to comply with the below criteria will result in an immediate rejection.

- Fully completed online application submission form
- Proposal emailed before application deadline
- Application fully anonymized (eg. removed name, advisor name, student ID, etc.)
- Conference or proposed travel falls within award period
- Application is formatted properly and within page limit
- Budget justification paragraph included
- Copy of completed registration form, if applicable

Additionally, applicants who have already applied for or received funding outside of GRAC awards for this specific proposal will be awarded 10 points. While external funding is not a prerequisite for selection, securing or seeking it provides a competitive advantage.

Reviewer Score Sheet (40 possible points)

Below are the four major criteria that are peer reviewed for each GRAC Travel proposal. Travel Award applicants should review this scoresheet when writing their proposals.

- Does the proposal include a clear and succinct description of the research being presented or furthered by travel? **(1-10 pts)**
- Does the applicant describe specific benefits they received/will receive from attending this conference or performing the travel? **(1-10 pts)**
- Is the budget reasonable, clear, and appropriately detailed? **(1-10 pts)**
- Grammar, spelling, and clarity: A score of 10 should be used for proposals that are free from misspellings and grammatical errors. Deduct points as errors occur. **(1-10 pts)**

If you have any questions pertaining to the GRAC application process please reach out to your GRAC chair(s).