

Graduate Student Research Competition Guidelines

Competition Overview

Any enrolled master's or doctoral student in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences or the School of Engineering is eligible to apply for research funding through the Graduate Student Research Competition (GSRC).

The maximum award amount is \$1,000. Funding must be used within three semesters of the award date, and prior to the recipient's graduation from Tufts. Retroactive funding requests are eligible for GSRC proposals.

Students are limited to one academic award per year. All students whose proposals were not chosen for funding are encouraged to revise and resubmit their application the subsequent semester.

GSRC funds are intended to support students with their research expenses and to provide students practice in crafting external grant proposals. GSRC funds **are not intended to replace** department or grant funds but to augment existing resources.

Awards are competitive, and funding is awarded based on the following criteria:

- Significance of the research to the field **and** to the applicant's degree progress
- Clarity in writing, presentation, and methodology
- Clarity and justification of the budget.

Completed proposals must be submitted electronically. The 2018-2019 submission deadlines are:

October 30, 2019 (Fall) and March 11, 2020 (Spring).

Applicants will receive a response regarding the status of their proposal within one month of the deadline.

Applicants whose projects are approved for funding will receive information regarding next steps at that time. Applicants whose projects are recommended for revision and resubmission will receive information from the committee about recommended revisions at that time.

Review Committee

Proposals are reviewed by a panel comprised of faculty and graduate students from across disciplines. The GSRC committee comprises two co-chairs and three sub-committees: Arts and Humanities, Natural Sciences and Engineering, and Social Science.

The 2019-2020 co-chairs are Dean for Graduate Education Karen Panetta, School of Engineering, and Associate Dean Sarah Herchel, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. Subcommittees comprise one faculty member and three graduate students, with representation from students in master's and doctoral programs. Each proposal is read in depth by the subcommittee indicated in the proposal cover sheet, and discussed by all GSRC committee members and co-chairs.

Recipients of a research award may be invited to serve on the awards committee in subsequent years to gain experience reviewing grant proposals.

Please contact Felicia Astorino at felicia.astorino@tufts.edu or 617-627-3106 with any questions about any aspect of the GSRC application and process.

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Eligible Funding Requests

Funding requests in the following categories are eligible for consideration through the GSRC.

Please note the following:

- If request is granted and you are using **human subjects**, funds cannot be disbursed until you have approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), and if request is granted and you are using **laboratory animals**, funds cannot be disbursed until you have approval of the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). Confirmation of IRB or IACUC approval must be provided **prior** to dispersal of funds.
- All unused supplies, materials, and equipment purchased with any amount of funding from Tufts must be returned to the department at the conclusion of the research project.

Eligible Funding Categories:

1. **Equipment & Supplies:** Research-related supplies, materials, and equipment which are outside of pre-existing faculty or departmental grants. For students in departments where supplies are ordered in bulk for labs, such as Chemistry, funding may be requested for supplies to further students' research interests even though the department orders these supplies on the student's behalf.
2. **Field Study Expenses:** Travel expenses connected to research around materials or resources (including culturally relevant expenses) otherwise unobtainable at Tufts. Please note that travel expenses requests must include both justification for the travel and a day-to-day itinerary of specific research plans. Priority will be given to requests to do on-site research where the resources of that site are unique.
3. **Participant Compensation:** Any type of compensation for studies involving human subjects.
4. **Other:** Any expense not included in the above categories. See next page for examples, and contact Felicia Astorino at felicia.astorino@tufts.edu for specific questions. Funding requests outside of the above categories must be justified in detail, and **should be specifically addressed in the advisor's letter of recommendation.**

Ineligible Funding Categories:

1. **Travel to conferences or professional meetings:** Please request these funds from the [Graduate Student Travel Fund](#) and/or the [Provost's Graduate Travel Support Program \(GradFlights\)](#).
2. **Salary or stipend:** Funding may not be used as a salary or stipend for any graduate student, undergraduate research assistant, or any other individual working with the project.
3. **Readily available alternate, free resources:** See next page for examples, and contact Felicia Astorino at felicia.astorino@tufts.edu for specific questions. If there is a reason why the pre-existing resources (books, software, public transport, etc.) are not appropriate, please justify in detail why this is the case and the committee will take this under consideration.

If GSRC funding will only partially cover research expenses, please explain how the remaining research costs will be funded.

In some rare cases, the committee may partially fund a proposal if some budget items are ineligible rather than recommending that the entire proposal be revised and resubmitted. In these cases, students will receive clear and detailed reasons for these changes.

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Funding Request Examples

Budget Line Item	Funding Category	GSRC Eligibility
Costs to purchase lumber and equipment for constructing sculpture as part of artistic scholarship	Equipment and supplies	Eligible
Chemicals purchased through department for use in students own research	Equipment and supplies	Eligible
Refreshments for focus group sessions	Participant compensation	Eligible
Compensating study participants \$15 per session	Participant compensation	Eligible
Travel to England to engage in archival research around unique, otherwise unavailable collection	Field Study Expenses	Eligible
Registration cost and travel costs to attend workshop outside of Tufts teaching methodology or other knowledge central to research but which is not available at Tufts	Other	Eligible
Registration cost for conference in research area	Travel to conferences or professional meetings	Ineligible – request funding through Travel Fund
Transcription services	Other	Eligible
Stipend for applicant to transcribe interviews in their own time	Salary or stipend	Ineligible
Purchasing books for research use unavailable at Tufts	Other	Eligible – please note that books must remain with department or Tisch Library after conclusion of research
Purchasing books for research use that are available at Tisch Library	Readily available alternate, free resources	Ineligible
Rideshare costs to/from research site in Woburn with unreasonably long travel time via public transport	Other	Eligible
Rideshare costs to/from research site in Downtown Boston	Readily available alternate, free resources	Ineligible – funds to purchase CharlieCard would be eligible

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Application Components

The following documents are required, and comprise a complete proposal.

All documents may be uploaded through the following application form: <http://tinyurl.com/gsrc1718>. Please note that Exhibits A & B are part of the application form, and you do not need to create separate documents for these two exhibits.

Exhibit A: Application Cover Sheet – Page one of the application form.

Exhibit B: Abstract – In 200 words, summarize your proposed project and its significance to your work and the field as a whole. This must be communicated in a manner that is understandable to scholars in other disciplines. Abstracts and project titles may be published online.

Exhibit C: Project Prospectus – In 1000 words, describe the project you are proposing for GSRC funding. The text of the prospectus should:

- **Give the committee an overview of the research project** for which you are requesting funding, particularly your theoretical goals and tangible, proposed outcomes for this study.
- **Be written in a language comprehensible to colleagues in other disciplines.** Your proposal will be read by individuals outside your field. Please note that overuse of jargon and of incomprehensible terminology is the most common reason students are directed to revise and resubmit their proposal.
- Describe as specifically as possible the proposed research, including methodology and procedures to be used. Be sure this description includes brief justifications for the appropriateness of your proposed methodology and procedures to your research.
- Explain the significance of the project to the field and its relationship to your overall scholarly work and degree progress. Note that explaining the significance of your project in **both** areas is important.
- Justify the need for and the intended use of the grant money. If this project is part of a larger project, please include a statement of existing funding and delineate funding usage in the budget. Explain the consequences of not receiving GSRC funding, and if external funding is being sought but is not yet secured, the consequences of not receiving the external funding.
- If applicable, note any progress made with prior GSRC funding.

Exhibit D: Itemized Budget – List and justify all items for which GSRC funding is requested. The budget should:

- Be submitted as a separate Exhibit, even if there are only one or two line items.
- **Justify each line item**, briefly, additional to any umbrella budget justification that may be included in the prospectus.
- Note any other sources of funding being used alongside each line item, if other sources of funding are being used.
- Include original receipts as an attachment if the funding request is retroactive.

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Exhibit E: Curriculum Vitae or Resume

Exhibit F: Letter of Support – A detailed letter from the applicant’s academic advisor or a faculty member familiar with the project. The committee recommends that this letter should:

- Be one page in length.
- Confirm the need for the funding support and confirm the significance of the project to the applicant’s personal academic career.
- Contain substantive discussion about the relevance of the research and the need for funding.
- Discuss the impact this research project will have on the student’s growth as a scholar and/or as a practitioner in the field.
- Address the need for and appropriateness of any funding requests outside of the following categories: equipment & supplies, participant compensation, field study expenses.
- Avoid commenting on personal attributes or characteristics of the student, instead focusing on the value or impact of the proposed research project.
- Discuss the feasibility of the stated objectives and goals.
- Consider any obstacles or challenges that may hinder the student or the investigation from achieving a successful conclusion.

Submit proposals electronically at:
<http://go.tufts.edu/gsrc1920>

All exhibits of the application should be submitted via the online form.