

What to know before you go...

This guide is designed to help you complete an application for reimbursement from the Graduate Student Organization's Graduate Student Conference Travel Reimbursement Fund (GSCTRF) to cover partial costs associated with the conducting of scholarly research or conference presentations.



GSCTRF Guide

GRADUATE STUDENT
ORGANIZATION



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Graduate Student Organization

GSCTRF is funded by the GSO using Student Activity Fees and as such requires documentation to ensure all requests abide by both SUNY and BU Foundation policies.

The best advice for submitting and getting reimbursed quickly is to ensure your application is complete. It also doesn't hurt to make your application easy to review. All GSCTRF applications go through multiple reviews so making sure your application is easy to read, that your expenses are easy to identify, and that only those expenses GSO can pay for are included will help speed up the review of your application.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- ✓ Original itemized receipts for all expenses you are seeking reimbursement for
- ✓ Removal of all taxes and fees from every reimbursement item you list
- ✓ Redacted bank statement that list all expenses you are seeking reimbursement for
- ✓ All receipts and banks statements will need to be compiled into a sign PDF document
- ✓ Conference Acceptance Letter (or email)
- ✓ Name Bag from Conference
- ✓ Program page listing your name from Conference
- ✓ Research Authorization - Letter from your advisor approving travel (Research Travel Only)



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Removing taxes and fees

The GSO is unfortunately unable to reimburse you for any taxes or fees. Forgetting to remove these items from your application is the most common reason applications are rejected. All receipts that are submitted as documentation must be itemized and clearly denote any taxes or fees you paid and the amount listed on your application should have these taxes and fees subtracted. For example, in the instance of airfare, you should list the “Base Fare” amount in your application not the Total as the base fare includes no taxes or fees. Don’t forget to also pay attention to booking fees, such as on Greyhound tickets, which must be subtracted as well. Some online travel booking websites may not initially provide you with an itemized receipt so you may end up calling them directly to obtain this information. It is the applicant’s responsibility to ensure they provide correct and complete information.

Did someone else pay for part of your expenses?

Did a family member book and pay for your airfare to attend a conference? Even if someone else initially paid for one of your expenses you are still able to be reimbursed. You will need to have paid this person back before submitting your GSCTRF application and provide documentation for the expense. This documentation should include the original receipt(s) and bank statement(s) for all expenses along with documentation showing that you have reimbursed the other person. The later can be one of two forms, either (1) a copy of a deposited check, or (2) in the form of an email/letter that lists both your and their names, the expense they paid for, the amount of the expense, and that you have paid them back. It is also a good idea to include a note with your documentation explaining that part of your expenses were covered by a second person. This helps to clarify things for the Budget Committee and will speed up the review of your application. The faster your application can be review, the faster you get reimbursed!



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Protecting your privacy

In this current age where identity theft is a real and serious problem, the GSO asks all applicants to provide only the most essential information on their applications. Bank statements are one such document where the GSO only needs to be able to see the follow: (1) your (account holders) name, (2) the last four digits of the card or account number, and (3) full charge information for only the charges you are seeking reimbursement for. All other information on the bank statement can be whited out or covered up.

Compiling your Expenses

You might be wondering why you have to compile all your expense documentation into a single file. The GSO receives several hundred applications to the GSCTRF each year. To ensure the integrity of each application, the GSO requires all expense documentation to be compiled into a single PDF for each application. We don't want any of your expenses to get mixed up with someone else's. You can compile your expense documentation using a number of different methods, the following are simply a couple suggestions but you are free to use whatever method you prefer.

1. Scanning – You can compile physical hard-copies of all your documentation and scan them into a single PDF. The BU library has several scanners at your disposal, we even have one in the graduate student library study space! This is a great approach if you prefer to be able to physically markup documents.
2. PDF Compiler – You can compile electronic versions of your documentation into a single PDF using programs such as Adobe Acrobat DC. The following link provides helpful step-by-step directions for how to compile multiple PDFs (<https://acrobat.adobe.com/us/en/acrobat/how-to/merge-combine-pdf-files-online.html>). A number of free websites also provide PDF compiling and can be found by Googling terms such as 'PDF merging' or 'PDF compiling'.



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Did you pay in cash?

Some small expenses are understandably paid for in cash. It is important for applicants to clearly denote this by marking these receipts as “paid in cash”. Applications that do not clearly denote items paid in cash will be assumed to be missing bank statement documentation and rejected. It only takes a second to include this so please don’t forget!

What expenses can/can't the GSCTRF cover?

The GSCTRF is designed to reimbursement expenses related to the conducting of research or professionalization and is fully funded by Student Activity Fees. Given the use of student fees, the GSO is slightly limited in what expenses we can and cannot cover. With a few exceptions, the GSCTRF can reimburse travel, hotel, and conference registration related expenses. For travel expenses, the GSCTRF can reimburse expenses such as: air flight Base Fare, trains, tolls, buses, subways, taxis, parking, Uber (or the like), but cannot reimburse expenses related to rental cars or mileage. For hotel/lodging expenses, the GSCTRF can reimburse the cost of hotel rooms (including rentals such as through Airbnb). For conference registration expenses, if you are required to be a member of the hosting organization to attend the conference your membership is also reimbursable (provided you become a member of the organization at the same time as when you registered for the conference).

The above are the only expenses the GSCTRF can cover. We unfortunately cannot reimburse: visa fees, printing costs, food, rental cars, mileage, insurance, taxes or fees.