

Student Support Grant (SSG) Fact Sheet

Academic Year 2023 - 2024

Fall SSG Cycle: Applications Open from Friday, Oct. 06, 2023 - Friday, Nov. 17, 2023

Spring SSG Cycle: Applications Open from Wednesday, Feb 21, 2024 - Wednesday, Apr. 3, 2024

Please read this document in its entirety for information about the SSG

(more information available at www.fordham.edu/ssg; email ssg@fordham.edu with any questions)

I. ABOUT

The SSG is a competitive, merit-based grant designed to support Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS) students engaging in scholarly or professional development activities. Proposals for award support should demonstrate a student's commitment to professional development beyond the scope of their program's outline.

The SSG is funded by the Graduate Student Council (which is money that comes from GSAS students' fees) with occasional contributions from GSAS. The Selection Committee that makes the decision on each application is composed of past recipients and/or Council representatives. In recent years, an average of \$60,000 from the GSC's yearly budget has been allocated to the awards. **This year's allocated budget for SSGs is \$71,400.00.** Students are notified of awards by the GSC officers, who chair the Committee but do not make funding decisions. Awards can be claimed through the reimbursement process that the university (specifically the [Office of Accounts Payable](#)) has set forth (see section III.)

II. APPLYING *(to apply, go to www.fordham.edu/ssg and click "Apply Now for the SSG")*

A. Eligibility and Funding Tracks

All students who are (i) matriculated in a GSAS degree program; (ii) who are in good academic standing (please refer to §7.4.1 and §7.4.2 in the [GSAS Academic Policies and Procedures Guidebook](#) for details); and (iii) who have paid their student fees are eligible to apply. Early Admissions students are not eligible for the SSG awards.

Students may apply for support during either funding cycle (fall, spring); for equity purposes, priority will be given to applicants who have not received support in the immediate past funding cycle. Applicants must choose from one of the following three tracks per cycle, depending on their individual project/goal.

Track	Award Limit	Description
Conference	\$1,500 national \$2,000 international \$1,250 attendance	Presentation of an applicant's research (e.g. paper or poster presentations) or attendance at a national or international conference

Research	\$2,000	Research activities related to either an applicant's thesis; preparation of a dissertation prospectus; or the dissertation project
Alternative Learning Experience (ALE)	\$2,000	Activities that will aid meaningfully in strengthening an applicant's research or professional competencies, and don't fall into the first 2 tracks

B. Requirements (please also see the table below)

1) Project Narrative

- a) Feasible project or activity objectives clearly stated in the narrative. The narrative must articulate a clear connection between the proposed activity and the outcomes expected regarding the student's academic or professional development
- b) Alternative Learning Experiences (ALEs) should explain why the student is looking outside the University for this particular learning experience (e.g., students won't be funded, without reasonable justification, for taking a course outside the University if the course is offered at Fordham)
- c) Keep in mind that the committee is interdisciplinary. Make sure that your narrative is written clearly so as to be understood by readers outside of your field of study. Give a compelling argument for why you are a good candidate for receiving an award

2) Budget Proposal

- a) Students **must** use the formal budget proposal and justification form, available for download [here](#)
- b) Itemize all eligible expenses relating to your project or activity. (*See below expense guideline for information on expense reimbursements*)
- c) For transportation, accommodations, registrations, and any single item at or above \$500, attach documentation to support the cost estimate
- d) Include budget justification
 - i) The committee acknowledges efforts made by students to save costs. Make sure to include any relevant cost saving strategies here. (e.g., hotel splitting, Airbnbs, justifying high cost items, less costly travel methods, etc.)
 - ii) Keep in mind that expenses that may be standard for your field could seem abnormal for other fields of study. Make sure to explain your costs to the committee to the best of your ability

3) Faculty Recommendation

- a) As of last year, the Council voted on removing the faculty recommendation from the requirements for the application to SSGs. However, students will find a section in the application that asks for a "Faculty Reference." This simply asks for the name of a professor who may act as an advisor for the student.

Please note: All documentation must be submitted in Word, PDF, or Excel format

	Conference	Research	ALE
Completed Application Form	✓	✓	✓
Updated Resume or Curriculum Vitae	✓	✓	✓
Project Narrative (450 - 700 words)	✓	✓	✓
Budget Proposal and Justification	✓	✓	✓
Acknowledgment of Conference Acceptance	✓	N/A	N/A

III. ELIGIBLE EXPENSES AND REIMBURSEMENT

A. Eligible Expenses

All payment requests to Fordham University must follow the guidelines described in the [Accounts Payable Manual](#), most notable section **AP9 - Travel and Expense Reimbursements**. Please refer to the [Student Reimbursement Guide](#) for more details. Email ssg@fordham.edu with any questions, and more information about Accounts Payable can be found [here](#).

Please note that the university will **not** reimburse for travel until after the date(s) of travel, which is why we kindly ask that you send the completed request for reimbursement within thirty (30) days of completion of your SSG award activity. More information can be found on the [SSG website](#).

B. Examples of Common Expenses

1) Travel

- a) Lodging (hotel, AirBnB, etc); **limit of \$250/per night**
 - i) *Exceptions will be considered for high cost of living areas with reasonable justification*
- b) Airfare, train tickets, bus tickets, local transportation, etc. If for out of town travel
 - i) *As per AP, and for purposes of this document, **out of town travel** is travel that requires the traveler to stay overnight at a location other than his or her home or that involves airline or inter-city rail travel. **All other travel is local travel***
 - ii) *This can include taxis and other transportation necessary to partake in the experience the SSG is awarded for as long as it adheres to the above bullet point*
- c) Car expenses
 - i) *The University will reimburse the cost of gas for filling a rental car as long as you present a copy of the receipt. For the use of personal vehicles, the University will reimburse based on the IRS standard mileage rate found on the [IRS website](#); for 2023, this amount is 65.5 cents a mile. To request reimbursement, provide a screenshot/copy from an online map showing the mileage to/from your destination*
- d) Food allowance

- i) *The University will reimburse food during out of town travel (read: not local) and conference days provided there is an itemized receipt; the SSG Committee suggests you track a reasonable eating allowance during those days to remain under or equal to any given SSG award*

2) Conference Expenses

- a) Conference registration fees
- b) Professional printing for posters and other items through the [Office of Strategic Sourcing](#)

3) Research Expenses

- a) Materials and supplies for research experiments
- b) Human subject incentives (gift cards only)
 - i) *This is done through the [Procurement Office](#) and we highly suggest that you contact them to coordinate delivery of the gift cards to your participants if you receive an SSG*
- c) Access fees for libraries, museums, archives, etc

4) ALE Expenses

- a) Course/workshop expenses
- b) Access fees for libraries, museums, archives, etc

C. Non-Reimbursable Expenses

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us. Please see below for a few examples of non-reimbursable expenses.

- 1) Equipment (computers, software)
- 2) Misc. personal expenses (rent, utilities, alcohol, personal care items)
- 3) Misc. organization expenses (journal subscriptions, association memberships)
- 4) Entertainment costs or payments to individuals for services rendered not related to proposal
- 5) *Per Diems* are not allowed in that there is no set daily amount that will be reimbursed; original receipts for food, accommodations, modes of travel, must be provided for reimbursement.

D. Reimbursement Procedure

Please take a moment to read through the GSC Reimbursement Guide 2023, found on the [SSG website](#). For convenience, the information is also found below:

In the course of submitting a reimbursement request for a Graduate Student Support Grant (SSG), please adhere to the guidelines stipulated in this document. Note that the Graduate Student Council (GSC) follows the requirements as per the Office of Accounts Payable at Fordham University; if you have any questions about the basis for the required documentation for the reimbursement process, please be sure to contact AP at ap@fordham.edu.

- **Formatting**

- Unless approved otherwise, **please submit all reimbursement requests digitally as one PDF** using the [SSG Reimbursement Google Form](#).

- **Structure of required documents**
 - When submitting your request using the **Google Form**, please fill out all information and follow the steps outlined in the form; you will receive an email confirmation after your submission. The documents we need you to submit are:
 - A copy of your Award Letter
 - Copies of your receipts from the transactions (email confirmations, receipt scans, etc)
 - If receipts are in foreign currency, each receipt must be converted to US dollars and the conversion rate table must be provided
 - ***If you do not have a receipt:*** redacted bank/card statements with the relevant transactions highlighted or circled
 - Redactions can be done via your bank, any PDF editor, or through MS Word by covering the personal information and saving the Word document as a PDF

Note: In the past, we have required receipts AND statements but now you can submit just one of these documents.

- **Timeline**
 - **Requests must be submitted within 30-days of the date the expense was incurred or no later than 6 months after the original date of your award letter**, whichever comes first (if there is an unforeseen delay in your project, please contact us directly). Please retain a copy of all materials/receipts/documentation for your records
 - Reimbursement requests will be sent to the Graduate Student Council who will verify and then send to the GSAS Budget Manager for approval/administrative signing. GSAS will then send the request to [Accounts Payable](#) for the issuance of funds. This process can take anywhere from 3 - 5 weeks, though we at GSC/GSAS try to expedite our end to better serve our students. If you have any questions for Accounts Payable (including ensuring they have the correct contact information on file), please contact them at 718-817-2255

Additional notes:

- **Amount being claimed for reimbursement must not exceed the amount stated on the award letters**
- **Consider compressing your PDF using any online compressor to reduce the file size**
- **For faster processing, please consider**
 - **Circling the relevant transactions along with the card number associated with your account in each receipt**
 - **Writing a clear and concise explanation of the reimbursement being sought in the explanation section of the request**
 - **Withholding unnecessary pages that contain no information, for example extra information about the airline you are using or the details of the interest rate breakdown of your credit card. This reduces the file size and the amount of pages Accounts Payable needs to check**

E. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

- **What if I am requesting monies (direct payment) for an entity outside of Fordham?**
 - The University requests that you ask the vendor to fill out a [W-9 form](#)

- **How long does the reimbursement process take?**
 - Processing takes approximately 3-5 weeks, though we at GSAS/GSC try to speed this along and get the documents to Accounts Payable as soon as possible. Once it is in that office, we are not privy to the processing time and we have seen it be variable over the last several years. Please be sure to reach out to us or their office with questions
- **Can I apply for funding both semesters?**
 - Students may apply for support during either or both funding cycles (fall, spring); however, priority will be given to applicants who have not received support in the immediate past funding cycle
- **I split a hotel but someone else paid the hotel bill and then I paid that person for my share. Can I be reimbursed for the hotel expense?**
 - You can share the cost of a hotel room with another individual; however, the University will only reimburse the individual whose name and credit card information are listed on the hotel bill. Please arrange with your hotel to split the charges in advance of checking-in. To reimburse an individual other than yourself, please provide their name, FIDN (if Fordham student) or W-9 form (if a non-student), and the hotel receipt showing payment. The same applies to Airbnb and other lodging options. Venmo receipts to the student who paid for lodging are NOT acceptable for reimbursement (please contact Accounts Payable for more guidance on this kind of transfer)
- **What do I do if my receipt doesn't show the last four digits of the credit card used for payment?**
 - Provide a bank statement showing the last four digits of the card/account as well as the transaction (you may black out non-relevant information). The dual "receipt and bank/card statement" requirement for proof of purchase and reimbursement is common in many industries for reimbursement and is done for auditing purposes
- **Can I apply for more than one funding track in the same award cycle?**
 - Any GSAS student (MA, MS, PhD) may only apply for one funding track in the same SSG award cycle. If your proposal appears to fit within multiple tracks, please apply for the track that best fits your proposal
- **Can I be reimbursed for a payment made by a third party?**
 - The University will only reimburse the party that made the payment to the vendor. For example, if you share the cost of renting a car with another student, only the student that paid the rental car agency can be reimbursed (with proper expense documentation). The University will not reimburse you for the amount that you reimbursed the other student
- **Can I be reimbursed for travel before my date of travel?**
 - Generally, no, the University will not reimburse individuals for travel expenses until after the date of travel. If you are struggling financially, we may be able to assist in booking advance airfare through Fordham, given you have already received your SSG award letter
- **How should I get my reimbursement documents out to the GSC?**
 - DO NOT bring your materials to any office. Unless approved otherwise, please submit all reimbursement requests digitally as one PDF using the SSG Reimbursement Google Form
 - Scan all your items if necessary using any common software (built in scanning capabilities on [iPhone](#), for instance), or by taking and cropping a photograph of the item