

Funding for Graduate School Professional Development Awards is very competitive. Our requests exceed our funds, which means the process is selective. We offer here helpful guidelines and specify the criteria that we use for evaluation. These materials will assist you in writing a strong and competitive proposal. You will improve your chances of winning an award if you follow these guidelines carefully. You should also consider attending the [Professional Development workshops](#) devoted to research and presenting your work.

Proposal Checklist:

- How does this activity advance your academic, research, and professional development interests? Why is this endeavor significant for your career? If you're presenting at a conference, the following topics should also be included:
 - Conference description – is it a large or small conference? General or specific? How does the format of the conference relate to your goals?
 - Describe the session in which you'll be presenting and explain how your work fits within the session
 - Identify other sessions/events you'll attend and explain their significance in relation to your goals
 - Specific networking plans – is there a prominent researcher in attendance with whom you plan to connect? Someone connected with your particular field of research?
 - What is the impact of this conference on your career relative to your program deadlines? E.g., will this be your first talk or poster? Is it a presentation of your master's or dissertation project?
- What previous research/activities/experiences, if any, have you had that are pertinent to your proposal? Some possible experiences:
 - Professional development activities (see the [Calendar](#)), for example:
 - Elevator Pitch Essentials
 - Conference Prep I: Writing an Abstract
 - EAP: Talking with Others About Your Research
 - Previous relevant field research upon which your current proposal will build
 - Prior publications or presentations related to conference topics
- Provide a clear statement of your goals. What will be the outcome of this endeavor? Some possible outcomes:
 - Do you intend to submit your work for publication in a journal?
 - Do you expect it to contribute to an article or dissertation chapter?
 - Do you expect to present research findings at a conference? If so, which one and when?
 - Are you planning to apply this experience towards a major external fellowship or grant application?
- Include an explanation about other funding sources to which you plan to apply or have applied
- Writing Quality
 - Professional tone
 - No spelling or grammatical errors
 - Content and language appropriate for non-subject matter experts
 - Logical, effective organization (Note - you can structure your proposal following the sections in this checklist or select your own structure)
 - Coherent, cohesive arguments, i.e., make it clear *why* the funding of your proposal is critical to your development as a researcher

Other Criteria for Ranking Proposals and Determining Funding

- Proposals that do not address the items listed on the proposal checklist will be rejected.
- Proposals will be scored using a ten-point scale (10=high, 1=low) based on how well applicants address the questions listed on the proposal checklist. The following items will also be used to rank proposals:
 - Previous funding (5-point scale): 2=very little or no previous funding, -2=significant amount of previous funding)
 - Budget (2-point scale): 1=attempts at frugality (e.g., by sharing a room, staying at a cheaper hotel, paying meals out of pocket), 0=normal
 - Previous Post-travel Report: late, incomplete reports sent by previous award recipients can have a negative bearing on current applications. Post-travel reports that cannot clearly describe the benefits resulting from an endeavor funded by the Grad. School/ISLA are likely to have a negative impact on current applications.
- Equally strong proposals submitted by students attending the same conference will generally be awarded the same amount, barring special circumstances (e.g., one student does not have the opportunity to share a room and thus has higher costs).
- Students presenting at conferences who require significantly more than the limits listed below must justify the cost in their proposal:
 - Domestic: \$1,500
 - International: \$2,500