



SIS Graduate Research, Conference, and Internship

Travel Support Application

About the Travel Support

The School of International Service is pleased to announce a competition for travel support funded by the School. Graduate students may apply for this travel support if they will be participating in a conference, internship or conducting research as an SIS student. Recipients will be eligible to receive up to \$500 for domestic travel and up to \$1000 for international travel in support of the aforementioned activities. Applicants are required to read the eligibility information, application instructions, and FAQs before beginning the application.

Please email gradresearchgrants@american.edu if you have questions.

Eligibility to Receive Travel Support

Who can apply to receive funding?

- Current SIS graduate students are eligible to receive funding to defray the costs of attending conferences, conducting independent research, or participating in an internship. Undergraduate students, non-SIS students, and doctoral students are not eligible to apply.
- Applicants must be current students at the time of the activity for which the funding is being requested.
- Students who have received travel support in the past are eligible to apply again until they have reached the limit. Graduate students in SIS are eligible to receive a maximum of \$1000 in travel support during their academic program.

What can travel support be used for?

- Travel support is intended to support students' participation in activities requiring domestic or international travel that will enrich their academic or professional development, such as undertaking independent research, participating in internships, or presenting at or attending conferences or workshops. Funding can be used for expenses such as transportation, accommodation, conference registration fees, food costs, etc.
- Travel support can NOT be used:
 - To pay tuition, or to fund a summer abroad, semester abroad, SIS practicum, or any other study abroad program.
 - To fund travel to countries categorized as very high risk by the University. To find out if a specific country is currently in this category, please email gradresearchgrants@american.edu. (Please note that the security status of any country is subject to change; in the event that a travel support recipient's destination becomes very high risk, they may be required to attend a high-risk workshop prior to departure.)
 - To buy equipment or supplies.

How much funding is available?

- Applicants are eligible to receive a maximum of \$500 for a domestic travel activity or \$1000 for an international travel activity.

- The travel support application process is competitive with applications judged on the strength of application, relevance of activity, demonstration of need, and number of students requesting support in each application cycle. Applicants may receive less than the maximum possible allocation for their activity.
- SIS students may receive up to a maximum of \$1000 in travel support during their graduate academic program.

Where does the travel support funding come from?

- The School of International Service and the SIS Dean's Office provide the funding for the SIS Graduate Travel Support. The application process is managed by the SIS Office of International Programs.

How to Apply

When do I apply for travel support?

- The travel support application cycle is open twice each year, announced through the SIS Office of International Programs newsletter and listed on the SIS Office of International Programs [Financial Aid & Funding page](#). The application is intended to fund future activities, so students should apply prior to their planned activity. Retroactive funding applications may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Funding requests outside of the application cycles will not be accepted.
 - Travel taking place between January 1 to the end of the spring semester:
 - Apply in the fall application cycle (**deadline: October 20**)
 - Travel taking place after the spring semester and before the fall semester:
 - Apply in the spring application cycle (**deadline: March 20**)
 - Travel taking place from the beginning of the fall to December 31
 - Apply in the spring application cycle (**deadline: March 20**)

What documents are required to apply?

- Student Information Form (online application)
- Statement of Purpose
- Estimated Budget
- Travel Plan
- Letter of Recommendation
- CV/Resume
- Unofficial AU Transcript
- Other documents may be required based on the nature of your planned activity:
 - Conference registration/confirmation for conference/workshop attendees
 - Invitation to present and paper abstract for conference/workshop presenters
 - Internship offer/agreement for internship applicants
 - Research outline/schedule for independent research applicants

Detailed instructions for each of these documents are provided below. Please submit each document as a separate file (.doc or pdf preferred) with your last name and the document type as the title (for example, Smith – Statement of Purpose, Smith – Estimated Budget, Smith – Travel Plan, etc.). The Information Form will be submitted online, and all other documents should be submitted by email to gradresearchgrants@american.edu.

Student Information Form ([online application form](#))

The application form includes contact information, academic program information, travel plans, and the name of your recommender. You will not be able to save and return to the application, so please be prepared to provide this information when you start the application.

Statement of Purpose

The statement of purpose is an essay of 500-1000 words, 12-point font, single-spaced. It should describe in detail the activity for which you are applying for travel support and how it benefits your academic or professional development. Applicants traveling for research should also indicate if it is for their substantial research paper (SRP) or independent study and whether it has received IRB approval (if needed). Applicants traveling for an internship should include the name of the organization, describe its mission, and the details of the internship such as job duties, duration, etc. Applicants traveling to a conference or workshop should note if they are attending or presenting, and the topic of their presentation (if applicable). For all activities, you should also note the status of your participation (confirmed or pending), whether your travel preparations are finalized, and why you are requesting funding.

Estimated Budget

Your estimated should include transportation expenses (airfare, train tickets, buses, etc.), living expenses (food and accommodation), other expenses (visa fees, conference registration, etc.) Each item should be listed separately, for example if you will stay in a hotel one night and a hostel another night, these should be individual items. If you have not yet finalized your travel plans, please estimate your costs as closely as possible for the location where you will be. The University will not pay for insurance/liability on airfare or car rental. Food costs cannot include alcohol. If you are unsure whether an expense is appropriate to include on your estimate, please contact gradresearchgrants@american.edu.

If you are receiving funding from any other sources, please note the source and the amount and/or budget item being provided. After listing individual costs, and any outside funding sources, please indicate a total estimated cost of participation in the activity. Budgets submitted in a spreadsheet or as a chart within a document are highly encouraged. See below for an example.

For a budget sheet template, please email gradresearchgrants@american.edu.

Travel Plan

Your travel plan should be a document noting the start of travel and arrival at your destination, any planned travel during the activity or significant milestones of your trip, and your departure from the destination and date of return. If you are visiting more than one location during your travel, you should list the city and the dates you will be at each location.

Letter of Recommendation

The letter of recommendation should be from an AU faculty member, in principle the same listed on the application form. Professional recommendations will be accepted, if particularly applicable to the activity for which you are seeking travel support funding. Your recommender must submit the letter directly to gradresearchgrants@american.edu.

CV/Resume

The CV or resume should include relevant professional and academic experiences.

Unofficial AU Transcript

You can provide your unofficial AU transcript by going to the AU portal (myau.american.edu), then selecting Academics, and finally View Online Transcript. This will generate a PDF document to submit with your application. Do not provide a degree audit report. If you are applying in your first semester at AU, please provide a transcript from the previously attended institution.

Conference registration/confirmation for conference/workshop attendees

This may be an official receipt showing registration in the conference or a letter or email from the organization hosting the conference confirming your participation.

Invitation to present AND paper abstract for conference/workshop presenters

This may be a letter or email from the organization hosting the conference confirming your role as a presenter.

The abstract should summarize the content of your presentation in no more than 250 words.

Internship offer/agreement for internship applicants

This may be a letter or email from the organization at which you will intern. It should indicate the duration of the internship, number of hours per week, job duties, and work location(s).

Research outline/schedule for independent research applicants

Provide a thesis statement, an outline of your research plan, an expected schedule (e.g. organizations or individuals to interview, research sites, etc.), and a brief explanation of the expected results of this research.

Receiving the Funding

When will I be notified if I have been chosen as a travel support recipient?

Applications will be reviewed after the application deadline has passed. Notifications are typically made 2-3 weeks after the deadline. The notification includes additional instructions and forms in order to process the funding and a deadline for completion.

What are the next steps after being awarded SIS Graduate Travel Support?

After receiving the notification

Your notification letter contains detailed instructions for completing several forms needed for the travel support to be disbursed, and a deadline to submit these documents. If you are traveling outside the U.S., you must also complete the [SIS Graduate Global Program registration](#). Applicants who are presenting at a conference or workshop must provide an official document from the organization showing their name in the program.

While traveling

Collect receipts for accommodation, travel, registration, or other items indicated in your estimated budget. Flights also require that the boarding passes be saved. You will need to provide these receipts after the activity to show that the funding was used for appropriate costs. You must also take photos of relevant experiences from your activity (preferably with you featured in the photo). These should show your participation in the activity for which the travel support was awarded such as presentations, or internship/research activities (i.e. food photos, landscapes, or tourist sites are generally not sufficient).

After completing your travel

Within two weeks of completing your travel, you must submit receipts for all appropriate expenses as noted in your budget. You must also submit a summary of your activities and at least two good-quality photos. AU reserves the right to use these submissions for promotional purposes.

When will the travel support be disbursed?

After receiving the notification, students should submit the indicated payment forms (and for presenters only, the official program) as soon as possible. Once all documents are correctly submitted, they are processed for payment, which typically takes 2-4 weeks. If your payment documents are incomplete or incorrectly filled out, they will be returned to you for resubmission, which will delay the processing. Processing of payment cannot begin until participation in the activity is confirmed (e.g., internship agreement is finalized, registration for a conference is provided, official program when presenting is submitted, research schedule/itinerary is finalized, etc.)

How will the travel support be disbursed?

- Recipients who have been employed by American University within the current calendar year will receive the funding as a stipend, processed in the same manner as their current paychecks (e.g. check, direct deposit, etc.). If the funding is subject to tax, it will be deducted at the time of payment and reported on a W-2 form at the end of the year.
- Recipients who have not been employed by the University will receive the payment by check. If the funding is subject to tax, they will receive a 1099 form at the end of the year and will need to file taxes accordingly.
- Recipients whose funding is to aid for-credit activities (such as for-credit internships or independent studies) will receive the payment as a credit to their student account through the financial aid office. If the funding is subject to tax, they will receive a 1099 form at the end of the year and will need to file taxes accordingly.

Will the travel support payment be subject to tax?

- In principle, activities that primarily benefit the travel support recipient, such as funding which supports conference attendance, internships, or research will be subject to tax.
- In principle, activities that primarily benefit the University, such as a funding recipient who presents at a conference or workshop AND provides an official program showing that they are designated as an American University student, are not subject to tax.

All applications are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. If you have questions about how your travel support funding will be designated, please contact gradresearchgrants@american.edu. Funding recipients must provide receipts for all appropriate expenses during their travel. Failure to provide receipts will result in the funding being subject to tax. Funding recipients who are also foreign nationals may need to take additional steps to ensure that funding is processed properly. Please refer to the [ISSS page about U.S. taxes](#).

[SIS Graduate Travel Support Application Form](#)

If you have questions not answered here, please email:
gradresearchgrants@american.edu