

Department of Sociology Fact Sheet on Graduate Office Fellowship (GOF) Funding

What is it?

Each year the Graduate School disperses Graduate Office Fellowship (GOF) funding to the College of Social Science. The College then allocates GOF funds to each department, typically before the beginning of the fall semester. Soon after receiving the allocation from the College, the department's Graduate Program Director (GPD) and Graduate Academic Program Coordinator (APC) submit a GOF spending plan to the College for approval. Only after the College approves the Department's GOF spending plan is the Department allowed to disburse GOF funds.

What can it fund?

Students may use GOF awards to (a) fund conference travel, (b) cover selected dissertation-related expenses (e.g., data collection, fieldwork, specialty software, research-related travel, etc.),¹ and (c) pay for summer methodological/analytical training that MSU does not offer (e.g., at the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [ICPSR] Summer Program). Students may request GOF funds for more than one activity/category. For each distinct request, students must submit a separate application—and then rank-order their multiple requests in their submission correspondence. Students also may apply for GOF funds more than once a year. Students may not use GOF funds to reimburse travel, dissertation, or training expenses incurred prior to their GOF award.

Who is eligible?

To be eligible to receive GOF conference travel or summer training funds, students must:

- be currently enrolled,
- be in good academic standing (i.e., achieving program benchmarks in a timely fashion),
- have a paper submitted for conference presentation;
- have the expressed written and financial support of their major advisor, and
- submit a complete application.

To be eligible to receive GOF dissertation funds, students must:

- be currently enrolled,
- be in good academic standing (i.e., achieving program benchmarks in a timely fashion),
- have the expressed written and financial support of their major advisor, and
- submit a complete application.

What is required for a complete application?

A complete application for conference travel² or summer training funding must include (in order in a single PDF):

- SOC GOF Funding Application Form (one for each request);
- the abstract of the paper to be presented;
- evidence of the paper's acceptance (or current status);
- a budget for travel, lodging, and/or local ground transportation expenses with brief justification;
- a letter of written and financial support from your primary advisor; and
- (as appropriate) a completed Graduate School Travel Funding Request form.

A complete application for dissertation funding must include (in order in a single PDF):

- SOC GOF Funding Application Form (one for each request);
- a brief (400-word max) statement describing:
 - the proposed research tasks;
 - their intellectual merits; and
 - a timeline for task completion;
- a budget for the proposed research tasks with brief justification; and
- a letter of written support (and financial support—if applying for dissertation travel funds) from your primary advisor.

¹ GOF dissertation funds are available to support proposed or ongoing empirical research. They are not meant to support students during the analysis or writing stages of their dissertation project.

² Prior to the conference travel, the student must have an approved travel request in the Concur system and provide evidence of the paper's acceptance at the conference.

When are the deadlines?

Each academic year, SOC tends to announce the Call for Applications for GOF funding in early October and in early January with due dates in early November and early February, respectively. Students must submit their completed applications to the SOC Graduate APC.

What happens after the complete application is submitted?

1. Student submits a complete application to the SOC Graduate APC.
 - *Student prepares the materials.*
 - *Student meets with their major advisor to secure a letter of support and commitment of financial support. (For a GOF conference travel funding application, the major advisor indicates their amount of financial support on the travel funding request form.)*
 - *Student submits a single PDF version of their complete application.*
 - *If a student submits more than one complete application at a time, they must rank-order their multiple requests in their submission correspondence.*
2. SOC Graduate APC reviews the application for completeness (and returns it to the student for additional work, as necessary).
3. SOC Graduate Education Committee (GEC) meets to review complete applications and determine allocations for successful applications.
4. SOC Chair approves department support for successful applications.
5. If applicable for conference travel funding applications:
 - Successful applications are routed to the College Associate Dean for Graduate Students for requests for additional support; and/or
 - Successful applications are routed to the Graduate School for requests for additional support.³
6. If applicable for international SOC graduate students:
 - Successful applications are routed to the Office for International Students and Scholars for additional signoff.
7. If applicable for international conference travel, dissertation research, or summer training funding applications:
 - Successful applications are routed to International Studies and Programs for requests for additional support.
8. SOC Graduate APC informs the student of their successful application, urges the student to understand how their fellowship may impact any financial aid, and requests that the student confirms their acceptance of the fellowship by a near-term deadline—after which the fellowship offer may expire.
9. Upon the student confirming their GOF fellowship acceptance, the SOC Graduate APC processes the disbursement of funds in the relevant semester.

What is due after the award monies are used?

Students receiving GOF conference travel, summer training, or dissertation research funds must submit a written closing report to the SOC Graduate APC by the beginning of the semester immediately after the disbursement semester. In this brief (2-3 paragraph) closing report, the student should (a) describe what they accomplished with the awarded funds and (b) include a breakdown of the actual expenses covered. Students must submit a separate closing report for each GOF award they have received. Failure to submit a closing report in a timely fashion may jeopardize eligibility for receiving future GOF funds.

³ The Graduate School imposes a \$600 limit to awarded funds for all graduate students during their time at MSU.