



# SIS GRADUATE RESEARCH, CONFERENCE, AND INTERNSHIP TRAVEL SUPPORT APPLICATION

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The School of International Service is pleased to offer a competition for travel support funded by the School. Current SIS graduate students may apply for this travel support if participating in a conference, internship or conducting research as an SIS student. Please carefully read the information provided in this guide to learn about the eligibility information, application instructions, and frequently asked questions before beginning the application.

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## ABOUT THE TRAVEL SUPPORT

Current SIS graduate students are eligible to receive up to \$500 for domestic travel and up to \$1000 for international travel in support of co-curricular activities which support your academic and professional development. The travel support can be used for activities such as attending conferences, presenting workshops, participating in internships, or conducting independent research. Other co-curricular activities may be considered. This travel support cannot be used for an established program (e.g. semester abroad, summer seminar, practica, etc.) it is intended for independent student activities.

## STUDENT TRAVEL REQUEST AND APPROVAL PROCESS

All domestic or international student travel for academic or business-related purposes must go through an official request and approval process. Students should be aware that the university reserves the right to refuse approval

for student travel. The university can also suspend travel to locations that have previously received approval if the situation in that location deteriorates after approval is given.

Application for travel approval is not required at the time of application for the SIS travel support, but all students who receive travel support must apply for and receive university approval to travel for your activity prior to departure. Notification of receiving travel support does not guarantee that travel requests will be approved. Travel requests must be submitted at least two weeks prior to the date of departure. Requests will be reviewed by the AU Office of Global Safety and a designated approver within the School for a final determination. Please use the link below to request approval for international travel:

[AU Global Safety International Travel Request Form](#)

## ACADEMIC CONSIDERATIONS FOR INDEPENDENT ACTIVITIES

Students participating in activities for which you will earn academic credit must also properly register these activities with your academic advisor. See the link below for more information:

<https://www.american.edu/sis/gradadvising/registration-requirements-forms.cfm>

## 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 already graduated at the time the activity will take place, students who have separated from the university, or students on a temporary leave of absence, are not eligible.
- Students who have received travel support in the past are eligible to apply again until you have reached the limit. Graduate students in SIS are eligible to receive a maximum of \$1000 in travel support during your academic program.
- Funding recipients who are also foreign nationals may need to take additional steps to ensure that funding is processed properly. Please refer to [AU finance page for foreign nationals](#) and the [ISSS page about U.S. taxes](#).

### 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 your 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 for the following expenses
  - To fund travel to countries categorized as very high risk by the University. High risk locations are determined by AU Office of Global Safety. Please note that the risk status of any location is subject to change if factors within the location change; the University reserves the right not to

approve travel to locations which are deemed high risk or to suspend approval for locations which become high risk.

- To pay tuition, or to fund a summer abroad, semester abroad, SIS practicum, or any other study abroad program.
- To cover insurance/liability on car rental or insurance on airfare.
- To buy equipment or supplies.
- To purchase gifts, alcohol, or other restricted items.

#### 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 your activity.
- SIS students may receive up to a maximum of \$1000 in travel support during your SIS graduate academic program. If you apply for and receive a travel support award for less than \$1000, you are eligible to apply for the travel support again for a different activity in a future application cycle.  
For example, if a student receives \$500 for their first application, they are eligible to apply again, but would not be eligible for more than \$500 for a second activity, as this will reach the combined maximum of \$1000 possible during their time as a student.
- Student should also be aware that this funding is subject to tax.

#### 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, with application opening and deadlines 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 your planned activity. Retroactive funding applications may be considered on a case-by-case basis, but is not guaranteed. 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
  - Travel taking place after the spring semester and before the fall semester:
    - Apply in the spring application cycle
  - Travel taking place from the beginning of the fall to December 31
    - Apply in the spring application cycle

## WHAT DOCUMENTS ARE REQUIRED TO APPLY?

- Online Travel Support Application Form ([APPLY](#))
- Statement of Purpose
- Estimated Budget
- Travel Plan
- CV/Resume
- Unofficial AU Transcript
- Other documents required based on the nature of your planned activity:
  - Conference information/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.). Your name must also appear in the body of the document in a heading. You will upload application files into the online application form, so please prepare them ahead of time. If you have any technical difficulties, please contact [gradresearchgrants@american.edu](mailto:gradresearchgrants@american.edu).

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### TRAVEL SUPPORT APPLICATION FORM ([ONLINE APPLICATION FORM](#))

The application form includes contact information, academic program information, travel plans, and the name of your recommender. You will also upload the required documents.

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### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The statement of purpose is an essay of approximately 500 words, 12-point font, single-spaced. It should describe in sufficient 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 your 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 you are attending or presenting, and the topic of your 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.

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### ESTIMATED BUDGET

Your estimated should include your total anticipated expenses: transportation expenses (airfare, train tickets, buses, etc.), living expenses (food and accommodation), other expenses (visa fees, conference registration, etc.) Each expense should be listed separately to provide a detailed budget breakdown. 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 using government per diem rates to estimate a food budget use the GSA website for domestic travel per diem rates (<https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>) or the State Dept website for international travel per diem rates ([https://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per\\_diem.asp](https://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp)). For per diem food estimates, you will be using the M&IE Rate (Meals & Incidental Expenses) not the maximum per diem rate for the location.

If you are receiving funding from any other outside sources, please note the source and the amount and/or budget item being provided. After listing total expected 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. A budget template is included on the last page of this document.

If you are unsure whether an expense is appropriate to include on your estimate, please contact [gradresearchgrants@american.edu](mailto:gradresearchgrants@american.edu).

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## 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. Note that this should not be a copy of a flight itinerary or a descriptive essay of your plans but rather an itemized overview of your plans. Each itinerary may look different depending on the types of activities, locations, and length of travel a student is proposing. A template of a travel plan might include:

Date	Activity
MM/DD/YY	Depart City, Country A – Arrive in City, Country B
MM/DD/YY	Travel from City, Country B to City, Country C
MM/DD/YY-MM/DD/YY	Participate in XYZ Conference/Research/Internship in City, Country C
MM/DD/YY	Travel from City, Country C to City, Country B
MM/DD/YY	Depart City, Country B – Arrive in City, Country A

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## CV/RESUME

The CV or resume should include relevant professional and academic experiences. Applicants are free to use their preferred format.

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## UNOFFICIAL AU TRANSCRIPT

You can provide your unofficial AU transcript by going to the AU portal ([myau.american.edu](http://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.

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## INFORMATION/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. If you are not yet registered for the conference, provide a document with screenshots of the conference information page which includes the name of the conference, date, location, registration costs/dates, and a link to the conference page.

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## 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.

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## 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).

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## RESEARCH SCHEDULE FOR INDEPENDENT RESEARCH APPLICANTS

This is not an outline of your research topic, but rather a logistical overview of how you expect to conduct research during your overseas travel. If you plan to conduct site visits, interview individuals or organizations, distribute surveys, review primary documents, etc. you should share a clear plan for how these actions will take place during your international travel. The research schedule is a brief description (no more than 500 words) of what you are doing, when and where it is taking place, and how it applies to your research topic.

## RECEIVING THE FUNDING

### HOW ARE TRAVEL SUPPORT RECIPIENTS DETERMINED?

Once the application deadline passes, all applications in the application cycle are reviewed, first checked for completeness and then for the strength of the application. Reviews are completed by the SIS Office of International Programs and key stakeholders in the SIS community depending on the type of activities for which funding is being requested.

This is a competitive application process. Travel support allocations are determined by the overall amount of funding available, the number of applicants under consideration for that application cycle, the quality of application received, and demonstrated need. Applicants are not guaranteed to receive travel support for your requested activity or to receive the full amount of funding requested.

### 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 necessary to process the funding disbursement and a deadline for completion. Students are responsible for completing the forms in a timely manner, failure to do so may result in forfeit of the travel support award.

### WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS AFTER BEING AWARDED SIS GRADUATE TRAVEL SUPPORT?

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## AFTER RECEIVING THE NOTIFICATION

Your notification letter will contain detailed instructions for completing the next steps including several forms needed for the travel support payment to be disbursed, and a deadline to submit these documents. If you are traveling outside the U.S., you must complete the required Student Travel Request appropriate to your activity (see links on page 2 of this guide) at least two weeks prior to your departure. Applicants who are presenting at a

conference or workshop must provide an official document from the organization showing your name in the program. Once you begin to make travel arrangements, be sure to save all receipts.

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#### WHILE TRAVELING

Collect receipts for accommodation, travel, registration, or other items indicated in your estimated budget, as well as boarding passes for any flights. You may 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 which should feature you in the photo and show your participation in the activity for which the travel support was awarded such as presentations, or internship/research activities (i.e. photos that only show food, landscapes, or tourist sites are not sufficient). Note that AU reserves the right to use these images for promotional purposes.

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#### AFTER COMPLETING YOUR TRAVEL

Within two weeks of completing your travel, you must submit a brief summary of your activities and at least two good-quality photos. AU reserves the right to use these submissions for promotional purposes. Be prepared to submit receipts upon request within two weeks of completing travel.

#### 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. If your payment documents are incomplete or incorrectly filled out, they will be returned to you for correction and 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.) Payment documents are first collected by the SIS Office of International Programs, then reviewed by the SIS financial office, and then sent to the appropriate AU office for payment. Disbursement may be made via Accounts Payable, Human Resources, or Financial Aid depending on the circumstances of the activity. Please expect at least 4-6 weeks for payment to be disbursed from the time that forms are correctly submitted.

#### 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. If the funding is subject to tax, students will receive a 1099 form at the end of the tax year and will need to file taxes accordingly. Students currently employed by the university may receive the funding as a stipend payment with tax deducted at the time of payment.

## SIS TRAVEL SUPPORT - ESTIMATED BUDGET TEMPLATE

Use this form to estimate expenses for your domestica or international travel. A downloadable copy is available [here](#). In cases where the exact amount is known please list it; if not yet determined, use the best estimate available for the location to which you are traveling. SIS travel support will not cover insurance/liability on car rental or insurance on airfare. SIS travel support cannot be used for purchase of gifts, alcohol, or other restricted items. Students should provide full estimated cost of your travel. If you have funding from other sources, please note this as well, and subtract it from the estimated total, to show your total need.

### STUDENT INFORMATION

First Name:		AUID:	
Last Name:		Email:	

### TRANSPORTATION

Type (air/train/bus/taxi)	To/From	One-way/Round Trip	Amount
Transportation Subtotal			

### ACCOMMODATION

Location	Rate / Night	Number of Nights	Amount
Accommodation Subtotal			

### MEALS

Use official GSA per diem rates for domestic locations ( <a href="https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates">https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates</a> ) or U.S. State Department per diem rates international locations ( <a href="https://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp">https://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp</a> ).			
Location (city)	M & IE Rate	Number of Days	Amount
Meals Subtotal			

### OTHER EXPENSES

Description of other expense (example: conference registration fees, other required expenses, etc.)	Amount
Other Expenses Subtotal	

### TOTAL

TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS:	
FUNDING FROM OUTSIDE SOURCES:	
TOTAL NEED:	

I confirm that this estimate is accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature		Date	
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