



# UTRGV Student Government Association

## 2018 – 2019 Student Travel Funds Guidelines

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### Purpose

The Student Travel Funds (STF) are available to support students traveling to conferences and competitions in order to enhance their academic and professional experience.

### A. Definitions

1. “Attendee:” a student attending a conference solely as a non-competitor, presenter or participant.
2. “Direct Bill:” receiving an award via direct payment to the hotel or conference as opposed to being reimbursed.
3. “Domestic Travel:” traveling to a conference/competition that is within the U.S.
4. “Fiscal Year:” pertaining to dates that fall between September 1, 2018 and August 31, 2019.
5. “Group:” two or more students attending the same conference or competition.
6. “International Travel:” traveling to a conference/competition that is not within the U.S.
7. “Lodging:” a hotel room or university residential facility used by an applicant for the duration of a conference/competition.
8. “Participant:” a student taking part in a conference or competition by competing, presenting, or performing.
9. “Registration:” the act of paying a monetary amount to attend a conference or competition.
10. “Reimbursement:” the act of repaying expenses associated with the conference or competition after the student’s return.
11. “Transportation Expenses:” expenses associated with traveling to and from a conference via flight or bus excluding intercity travel.
12. “Travel Coordinator:” the individual who will complete the application process and serve as an application’s official point of contact.

### B. Eligibility

1. Any student interested in receiving travel funds must meet the following conditions when applying for the semester of travel:
  - i. Must be enrolled at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley for the current semester (exception for Summer semesters).
  - ii. Undergraduate students must have a minimum 2.5 cumulative GPA and graduate students must have a minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA.
  - iii. Must be in good standing with the university.



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2. The purpose for the applicant's travel should be to explicitly enhance their academic and/or professional experience gained while attending UTRGV.
3. The conference or competition must be held at least eighty (80) miles away from the Brownsville or Edinburg campus.
4. Students applying for Student Travel Funds are not allowed to receive academic credit for any registered courses as a result of the conference or competition.
5. Student travel must abide by [STU 01-300: Student Travel Policy](#) located in the UTRGV Handbook of Operating Procedures.

### C. Application Process

1. Select a travel coordinator that will complete the application process and serve as the direct point of contact between SGA and the application members
  - i. The travel coordinator may be contacted various times by email during the application process and should be available to respond to any inquiries or request for an interview.
2. Prepare the following documents as they will be needed on the application. If the documents are unavailable at the time of application, email them to [sgafunds@utrgv.edu](mailto:sgafunds@utrgv.edu) **within 5 calendar days** of the stated return date on the application.
  - i. *Authorization for Student Travel Form & Release and Indemnification Agreement Form* for each petitioner. These travel forms must be submitted to and approved by the Office of the Dean of Students located at BCRTZ 205 or EUTCR 323. The forms are available [here](#) for domestic applications and [here](#) for international applications.
  - ii. For Student Organizations, a W9 (Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification) must be on file at UTRGV. If a W9 is not on file, the document must be sent to the email stated above.
  - iii. Proof of charges for all expenses on the application such as receipts and/or the Hotel Folio.
  - iv. Documentation of payment for all expenses on the application such as a bank statement. Bank statements should only have the expenses associated with the conference/competition visible (i.e. redacted).
3. In order for an individual attendee or participant to receive reimbursement, each applicant must have 'Direct Deposit' set up with UTRGV through ASSIST.
4. Apply online using the "2018–2019 Student Travel Funds Request" form located on our [Vlink page](#). Submit the application before the deadline for the semester that the conference or competition is. The deadlines are as stated below:



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Semester	Travel Period	Application Deadline
Fall	September 1 – December 31, 2018	October 15, 2018
Spring	January 1 – May 31, 2019	March 15, 2019
Summer	June 1 – August 31, 2019	July 15, 2019

- i. Once an application has been submitted, the total of funding requested cannot be increased.
  - ii. Once an application has been submitted, the number of students on the request cannot be increased. If the number of students attending decreases, an email notification must be sent to [sgafunds@utrgv.edu](mailto:sgafunds@utrgv.edu)
  - iii. Late applications will not be accepted.
5. The travel coordinator must complete the “Online Program Evaluation” form located at our [Vlink page](#) **within five (5) calendar days** of receiving an official notice of award.
6. Applicants shall have the option to receive their award via reimbursement or direct bill depending on the timing of the application approval.
  - i. Eligible expenses that can be reimbursed by this program are strictly only lodging expenses, registration fees, and transportation expenses as defined in section A.
  - ii. Eligible expenses that can be direct billed by this program are restricted only to lodging expenses and registration fees. Applicants requesting direct bill will be contacted to set up a meeting with SGA Support Staff upon approval of their application.
  - iii. In the case that SGA is ‘direct billing’ an applicant(s) Hotel, the travel coordinator must present their own credit card/debit card at the Hotel for Incidental Fees.
  - iv. SGA will not provide funding for incidental fees incurred.
  - v. In order to receive reimbursement for lodging, a hotel folio and a list of all students per room or proof of payment for a university residential facility must be submitted.
  - vi. If the student opts to take his/her personal vehicle, only gas millage can be refunded. (At their own risk, the university will not be responsible for any damages incurred). The calculation for reimbursement will take the current price per gallon, miles driven, and assume a baseline of 25 miles per gallon into consideration. A conference program and travel details will be required for this reimbursement. An example of the calculation is as follows:



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- a. (Miles/25)\* Current Price per Gallon.
  - b. Ex. (1,000/25)\*\$2.50 = \$100
  - c. If traveling alone, maximum miles that can be refunded are 1,000 miles.
  - d. If traveling as a group, maximum miles that can be refunded are 2,000 miles.
  - e. The cost of gas will be proportionately deducted from each attendee/ participant's awarded amount.
7. **Failure to meet any deadline or submit any documentation stated in this section will lead to the application being denied.**

### D. Review Process

1. The students listed on the application submitted will be checked for eligibility as outlined in section B(1).
2. A student can only be funded for one trip per fiscal year. (September - August)
3. If there is any missing or unclear information, the travel coordinator will be contacted to clarify or possibly schedule an interview.
4. The application will then be sent to the Financial Affairs Standing Committee of the Student Government Association to determine whether an application is viable.
  - i. The committee will review the applications in the order that they receive them.
  - ii. The committee shall only be able to award amounts for eligible expenses as stated in section C(6)(i)
  - iii. Individuals who are recognized as **participants**, as defined in section A, may only be allocated up to \$500 for registration, lodging and/or transportation expenses associated with a conference/competition.
  - iv. Individuals who are recognized as **attendees**, as defined in section A, may only be allocated up to \$250 for lodging and/or registration expenses associated with a conference/competition.
  - v. SGA may provide funding for up to twenty (20) students attending the same conference and/or competition. If two or more applications list the same conference and/or competition, they will be grouped together. SGA may fund an entire group up to \$5,000 for attending or participating in a conference and/or competition.
  - vi. The committee will calculate reasonable lodging expenses associated with the trip



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using per diem rates as determined by US General Services Administration (GSA).

- vii. Four students must stay per room with a minimum of three. Reasonable accommodations can be provided with documentation and input from Student Accessibility Services.
5. An official notice of award email will be sent to the travel coordinator if and once the Financial Affairs Standing Committee has reviewed and approved the application.
6. The committee shall be limited to the following budget for each semester cycle:

<b>Semester</b>	<b>Travel Period</b>	<b>Budget</b>
Fall	September 1 – December 31, 2018	\$30,000
Spring	January 1 – May 31, 2019	\$20,000
Summer	June 1 – August 31, 2019	\$20,000

For more information about the semester budgets, please email [sgafunds@utrgv.edu](mailto:sgafunds@utrgv.edu).

### **E. Disclaimers**

1. The Student Government Association reserves the right to decline funding if any paperwork is incomplete, incorrect, late, or if criteria or requirements to be met are deemed unacceptable.
2. The Student Government Association reserves all rights and discretion for approval and amount awarded of funding.
3. The Student Government Association may decline funding for students who fail to submit receipts and other relevant documents by designated deadlines

For any questions or concerns, please contact [sgafunds@utrgv.edu](mailto:sgafunds@utrgv.edu)