HARVARD UNIVERSITY
science education

Science Education Conference Presentation Grants

for Undergraduate Researchers

Guidelines and FAQ

General Guidelines

The Science Education Office is pleased to offer Harvard undergraduate students financial resources for presenting their independent research at regional and national scientific conferences and workshops. Undergraduates who are currently enrolled Harvard College students and who have completed a research project in the life, physical or mathematical sciences may apply.

Grants will be awarded on a competitive basis. Grants are generally in the $500-1500 range. Not all applications can be funded and funding of 100% of the amount requested is not guaranteed.

Conference grants are awarded on a reimbursement basis and require submission of original receipts to the Science Education Program Coordinator for disbursement of the award.

Grant Deadlines

Grant applications should be submitted as soon as the student's abstract has been accepted for presentation and no later than two months prior to the conference. Application deadlines are on the 1st of every month and students will receive notification at the end of the month. Applications received after the 1st will be considered for the following month.

***Please note that applications for international conferences are due at least 3 months prior to the conference date.**

Eligibility

Harvard College undergraduates currently enrolled full-time in a science concentration and who are in good academic standing are eligible to apply for a Conference Presentation Grant. Conferences or workshops attended must be directly related to the academic and research interests of the student. **Eligibility is assessed on the basis of academic standing during the *preceding* semester.**

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Frequently Asked Questions

1. Can more than one student from a single concentration apply for a grant?

2. How much funding may be requested from the Undergraduate Science Education Office?

3. What are reimbursable expenses?

4. Can conference funds be received in advance of attending the conference?

5. Can a student apply for reimbursement after attending a conference?

6. What constitutes a complete application?

7. Do I have to submit the application online?

8. Who chooses the grant winners?

9. What are some of the criteria used to award grants?

1. Can more than one student from a single concentration apply for a grant?

Yes. But no more than three students from a single concentration may receive awards for Conference and Research Grants in a single academic year.

2. How much funding may be requested?

Conference Grants may cover up to a maximum $2000 of accountable expenses, but no more than is requested in the original application. Amounts spent in excess of a Grant allocation, even if documented with original receipts, cannot be reimbursed.

3. What do I need to do to get my funding? How do I get my funding?

- ✓ Apply to present a poster or an oral presentation at a conference in a science field related to your academic concentration or research interest.
- ✓ Once the conference organizers have accepted your abstract, submit a copy of the abstract along with a completed conference grant application to the Science Education Office by the appropriate deadline for your event. (See #7 below for what constitutes a complete application.)
- ✓ If you are awarded a grant, you will receive an award letter indicating the amount of your grant and any additional paperwork that may be required.
- ✓ Once you return from the conference, to receive your funding you will need to submit receipts for the expenses incurred that the award will reimburse. Once the Science Education Office has a complete application file along with expense receipts, your award check will be disbursed.

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4. What are reimbursable expenses?

Transportation (by the most economical means available), lodging (excluding food), registration fees, and expenses related to presenting research (e.g. poster printing) are all accountable. Restaurant bills and costs related to personal advancement, such as copying and distribution of resumes, are not reimbursable expenses. Amounts spent in accordance with a Grant allocation, but for which original receipts are not provided, cannot be reimbursed.

5. Can conference funds be received in advance of attending the conference?

No. A student may apply for a Grant in advance of the date of the conference, and receive a commitment of funding, but no funds will be disbursed until the student has provided the Science Education Program Coordinator with original receipts for expenses incurred.

6. Can students apply for a conference grant after they attend a conference*?**

No. Applicants are strongly encouraged to plan in advance and to try to secure funding in advance of their conferences.

**** Note that the Science Education Office does not accept retroactive applications*

7. What constitutes a complete application?

Instructions about completing an application are on the main application page. All materials containing personal information will be kept confidential. A complete application will include the following:

- Short statement (500 words max) on the relevance of the conference/meeting to your research
- An abstract of the paper/poster you intend to present
- Proof of paper/abstract acceptance (if available)
- Student signature
- Faculty (lab PI) or concentration advisor original signature

8. Can I submit the application online?

Yes, however the selection committee requires all applications to bear original or digital student and faculty signatures. Electronic submissions will be accepted and kept on file but will not be considered complete until signed by both faculty and student. Submit your completed applications (with your P.I's signature) via Accellion (https://fta.fas.harvard.edu/courier/web/1000@/wmLogin.html) to both rmora@fas.harvard.edu and margaretlynch@fas.harvard.edu. Also submit a copy of your research abstract and documentation that the abstract has been selected for conference presentation before the appropriate deadline for your event. (See #7 above for what constitutes a complete application.)

9. Who chooses the grant recipients?

The Selection Committee meets at the end of each month to determine the merit of each applicant. Students who submitted a grant application will receive notification at the end of the month in which they applied.

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10. What are some of the criteria used to award grants?

Some of the guiding questions used to assess Science Education grant applications are as follows:

- Has the applicant's **statement** been tailored for the grant being requested?
    - *Tip: Less is usually more. The committee is looking for a concise and compelling argument for why this particular funding opportunity is vital to your scholarship.*
- **Letter of recommendation**: has the letter been tailored to the grant being requested, or does it include a lot of extraneous information? Does the recommender demonstrate a clear investment in the applicant's work?
    - *Tip: Always ask your recommender whether s/he can write a strong letter on your behalf. If the answer is no, find someone who can. Do your best to make sure your recommender is clear on the title and details of the grant for which you are applying.*
- **Budget:** is the amount of the funding request reasonable?
    - Has the applicant done his or her best to minimize expenses?
    - What other funding will the applicant have at his or her disposal?
    - Has the applicant previously received significant funding from Science Education?
- For **conference grants** - is the applicant presenting a poster or giving a talk?
    - *Tip: With extremely rare exceptions, attending a specialized conference to present your research will trump going to a conference for job networking purposes, etc.*