

GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION (GSA) –UMASS Lowell

Instructions for filling PDA form and FAQ's

Note: Original PDA form to be submitted comprises of pages 1-7, rest guidelines and instructions are for applicant's purpose only.

Purpose of the Award

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) has established the Professional Development Awards (PDAs) to promote professional activities of graduate students at the University of Massachusetts Lowell by providing financial assistance for attending conferences, seminars, workshops, etc. The PDA committee will determine the merit of each application through comparison with the other applications. The GSA will fund allowable expenses up to the permitted limits of the PDA's determined to be meritorious. It is also understood that this award represents a supplement to the applicant's other resources of funding (e.g. advisor's grant, personal funds).

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR APPLICANT:

- A PDA application can only be submitted 30 days before or after the professional development activity. Note that any reimbursement submitted after the date of travel may be taxed according to University guidelines. It is recommended that applicants apply for a PDA prior to travel and submit their reimbursement forms within 10 days after travel.
- Any registered or matriculated graduate student in good standing may apply.
- The reimbursement process can take two to three months.
- **There is a limit of one award per student per academic year -**
 - \$ 500.00 for the students who have presentations (talk or poster).
 - \$ 250.00 for the students who only attend a conference or workshop.
- **Funds are for TRANSPORTATION, LODGING and CONFERENCE REGISTRATION ONLY.**
- **Expenses, such as FOOD, ENTERTAINMENT, BOOKS, CDs, etc, WILL NOT BE covered by PDA.**
- **Third party reimbursements WILL NOT be covered by PDA** (Example: 1. Married student – payment by spouse, not acceptable, must have students name on credit card statement; 2. Payment of expense to another student by check or cash, not acceptable, payment must be done by the one claiming for funds)
- PDA submission can be made to the Graduate Student Association c/o **North Campus Mailroom, University of Massachusetts Lowell, 1 University Avenue, Lowell MA 01854**
- If traveling by car, mileage will be reimbursed at the current university rates as published on the procurement website http://www.uml.edu/procurement/Purchasing_Policies/tra_gui.html. Mileage must be proven by MapQuest or Google by submitting map with mileage of route to and from UML or Student's address to destination, whichever is closer to the final destination.

- **Student claiming funds for travel must have his own Drivers registration copy, i.e. person who own a car can claim for funds, accompanying people/students cannot.**
- **Rental car expenses WILL BE covered by PDA, but rental car mileage WILL NOT be considered for reimbursement by PDA.**
- **THERE IS NO GUARANTEE THAT EVERY PDA APPLICATION WILL BE APPROVED.**
- **The funds will be disbursed only after the applicant provides the original receipts for all expenses.**
- Those who are making presentations at conferences must provide independent evidence of their presentation.
- The applicant should not assume that funds have been approved unless he or she has received written confirmation from the GSA.
- Applications for advance funds for professional development activities will be handled on a case by case basis.
- **The applicant should keep copies of all submitted forms and of all receipts.**

Application Instructions/Checklist

Check when
completed

To be completed **before** travel (else PDA will not be granted)

Submit completed, original UMass Lowell Liability Waiver form to Debbie White, Coordinator of Graduate Programs, Cumnock Hall, 1st floor

Submit completed, original UMass Lowell Student Travel Authorization form to Debbie White, Coordinator of Graduate Programs, Cumnock Hall, 1st floor

ATTENTION: International travel requires the Chancellor's signature on the Travel Authorization Form!

To be submitted to the Graduate Student Association, Cumnock Hall – Suite 110, no earlier than one month prior to traveling or 10 days after the return date. All reimbursement forms MUST be received within 10 days of travel.

To be completed as described (else processing will be delayed)

Write the Application Form No. on top of each page of the application package as directed.

Completed application (items A-D) on the following pages. If attendance at the professional event is co-sponsored by another UMass Lowell budget account (department, research center, etc.) include amount of funding and funding source(s).

Photocopy of your UMass Lowell Student ID.

A typed description of the proposed activity.

A brief summary of the perceived benefit received from attending the professional event.

Peer Reviewer #1 – Completed form and copy of UML Student/faculty ID

Peer Reviewer #2 – Completed form and copy of UML Student/faculty ID

Peer Reviewer #3 – Completed form and copy of UML Student/faculty ID

Photocopy of completed UMass Lowell Liability Waiver (Original submitted to Debbie White)

Photocopy of completed Student Travel Authorization Form (Original submitted to Debbie White)

Completed University Travel reimbursement form.

Expense report mentioning funds requested.

All expenses and original receipts for travel (boarding pass for AMTRAK and flight; tickets for subway and train/bus), hotel (payment receipt/bill; confirmation e-mail showing all the details - if booked at orbitz, expedia, hotwire, etc), or conference registration fees.

Copy of a credit card statement(s) used for the payment of expenses during travel.

Submit original receipts neatly taped to blank 8.5" x 11" paper.

Additional information to be submitted if presenting and seeking a \$500 award

Submit a copy of your abstract if you are giving an oral or poster presentation (A copy of the entire paper or miniaturized poster is preferred, but not required).

Attach a copy of the presentation schedule and highlight your presentation on the schedule.

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FAQ's for PDA application

Q) Purpose of PDA Award

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) has established the Professional Development Awards (PDAs) to promote professional activities of graduate students at the University of Massachusetts Lowell by providing financial assistance for attending conferences, seminars, workshops, etc. The PDA committee will determine the merit of each application through comparison with the other applications. The GSA will fund allowable expenses up to the permitted limits of the PDA's determined to be meritorious. It is also understood that this award represents a supplement to the applicant's other resources of funding (e.g. advisor's grant, personal funds).

Q) Process of PDA application:

Step 1: Fill the Travel Authorization and Liability Waiver forms. Submit them to Debbie White at Cumnock Hall (Provost's office) before leaving for your conference. Keep a copy of both forms to be attached with the PDA application.

Step 2: Fill the PDA application and Travel Reimbursement forms with all original expenditure original receipts and submit for review by:

- Mailing to Graduate Student Association c/o North Campus Mailroom, University of Massachusetts Lowell, 1 University Avenue, Lowell MA 01854

OR

- Submitting the complete PDA application at GSA office Cumnock Hall Suite 110 in clearly labeled envelopes.

Step 3: Review of complete submitted PDA application by the PDA committee.

Step 4: Approval of PDA application and applicable reimbursement amount.

Q) Process of PDA preapproval:

Step 1: same as above

Step 2: Get a preapproval letter from PDA chairperson.

Step 3: Submit all original expenditure receipts and documents for reimbursement after the trip.

Step 4: Review of complete submitted PDA application by the PDA committee.

Step 5: Approval of PDA application and applicable reimbursement amount.

Q) PDA committee:

PDA committee comprises of 3-5 fellow graduate students from various disciplines at UMASS-Lowell, they look into quality of application and make sure PDA award goes to deserving candidates, thus maintaining transparency in the system. Any graduate student willing to be part of the review committee should write to PDA chairperson.

Q) What committee looks in PDA application (Key for approval):

A neatly filled application and well arranged required document makes it easier for reviewers and considerably shortens the duration of approval time (saving the follow up time). For applicant's ease, a reference prefilled PDA application has been uploaded on GSA website. Feel free to access it when ever needed.

Q) Travel reimbursement guidelines and supporting document required:

Air travelling: Itinerary details, original confirmation and credit card details copy, boarding passes.

Travelling from owned car: Mileage calculation using shortest distance as shown by Google maps etc.

Travelling from rented car/Taking a cab/taxi/Conference registration and accommodation: Payment receipt and credit card details

Q) Details for proving Expenditure (strict requirement):

Card credit details- *Printout of Credit card statement of that period with payments made for PDA reimbursement highlighted needs to be submitted.*

All the supporting original documents and receipts.

IMP NOTE: No reimbursement would be processed without original payment details or on inappropriate documents submitted.

Q) Details for proving Poster or Oral Presenter:

A copy of your abstract if you are giving an oral or poster presentation (A copy of the entire paper or miniaturized poster is preferred).

A copy of the presentation schedule highlighting your presentation on the schedule.

Q) Conference registration fees: Not covered for PDA reimbursement.

Q) Whom to contact for questions:

Any GSA ExCom member (PDA chair preferred) and GSA Advisor can be contacted.