



Graduate Student Association

Professional Development Grant Guidelines

Administered through the Graduate Students Scholarship Excellence Program

Purpose

The GSA Professional Development Grant supports ESF graduate students who participate in training opportunities, skill-based workshops, or professional organizations that enhance their skills and help prepare them for future careers. For more information, see the **Eligible Activities** section below.

Availability of Funds

The GSA has funds available for the **Fall 2025 – Spring 2026** period. Students may apply for funding for professional development activities taking place between **September 1, 2025 – May 10, 2026**.

- **Application deadline: November 15, 2025**
- **Maximum request per student: \$600**

The GSA distributes funds across multiple applicants; some requests may only be partially funded depending on the number of submissions received.

If you have not yet received an official acceptance or registration letter for your activity, you should still submit your application by the deadline. Please clearly state this in your application, then forward the missing documentation to the GSA as soon as it becomes available. Only acceptance/registration documentation may be submitted after the deadline; all other required documents must be included in the initial application.

Note: Applicants are also encouraged to explore other sources of professional development funding such as the GSEU Professional Development Program, Career Services, and the Graduate School.

Eligible Activities

The GSA Professional Development Grant supports graduate students participating in activities that enhance their professional skills and career readiness. Eligible activities include training workshops, skill-based courses, conferences, and professional certifications that provide practical knowledge or experience relevant to a student's academic or career goals. Costs that may be covered include registration fees, tuition, testing fees, books, software, and other technology required to participate in the activity. Training or skill-building workshops offered as part of conferences are also eligible, as long as the primary purpose is professional development rather than presenting research. Examples of eligible activities include leadership or communication workshops, technical training in specialized software or laboratory techniques, professional



certifications, professional memberships, grant-writing or scientific writing courses, and structured activities offered by professional organizations that enhance career skills. Social gatherings or activities focused primarily on networking are not eligible, unless they provide a clear professional development component.

This grant cannot be used for expenses related to travel, research, or presenting original research. All activities funded through this grant must take place between **September 1, 2025, and May 10, 2026**. If you have questions about eligibility email gsa@esf.edu and/or ikrsteska@esf.edu.

Student Eligibility

All currently enrolled graduate students at SUNY-ESF are eligible to apply. Applicants must be in good academic standing at the time of application and throughout the duration of the funded activity.

Submission

Applications must follow the official application form posted for this grant program and include all required components, including a detailed budget. Incomplete applications will not be considered. Completed applications should be submitted electronically as a single PDF document to the Graduate Student Association at gsa@esf.edu by the published deadline. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Selection Process

Applications will be reviewed shortly after the submission deadline by the GSA Grants and Awards Committee in collaboration with ESF faculty. All identifying information such as name, degree program, advisor, and department will be removed before review to ensure fairness. Proposals are first screened for completeness and then evaluated for content. If the number of applications exceeds available funds, proposals will be ranked based on the strength of the application and the applicant's assistantship funding status. Priority will be given to students who submit strong proposals and who are not currently supported by assistantships.

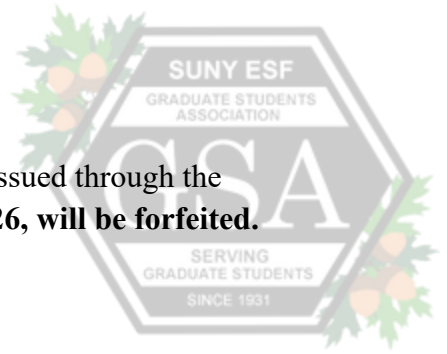
Award Determination

Once funding has been approved, the committee will determine the final award amount based on the budget submitted with the application. Items that do not comply with GSA requirements will be removed from the award. In order to distribute funds equitably, GSA distributes funds across multiple applicants; some requests may only be partially funded depending on the number of submissions received.

Reimbursement

Awards are issued as reimbursements. Recipients must submit receipts for all GSA-funded expenses along with a final report before reimbursement will be processed. Reports and receipts should be submitted as soon as possible, ideally within two weeks of the activity's completion, to

expedite processing. Reimbursements may take four to six weeks to be issued through the Business Office in Bray Hall. **Any awards not claimed by May 30, 2026, will be forfeited.**





Final Report Requirements

Recipients must submit a final report electronically to gsa@esf.edu before reimbursement will be processed. Failure to provide the required report and documentation may result in delayed or denied reimbursement.

Your report must include:

- A cover page
- A brief description of the professional development activity and its outcomes (1 paragraph per activity, if multiple)
- A statement of how the activity benefits your professional development (1 paragraph per activity, if multiple)
- A copy of the course/training certificate (if applicable). If no certificate is provided, include an explanation.
- A budget report including:
 - How GSA funds were spent
 - Other funding sources used
 - Any out-of-pocket expenses
 - Receipts for all purchases