

Guidelines for GCSC Travel Grant Applications

How do I apply for funding for research and conference trips?

Who is eligible for travel grants?

Full doctoral members of the GCSC can apply for financial support for research and conference trips.¹ Please note that you should have been a member of the GCSC for at least three months before you become eligible for your first travel grant. The more diligently and economically you plan your journey and application, the more likely it is that it can be processed and approved quickly. We thus strongly recommend to study this leaflet before preparing your application and to contact Lena Nüchter (*Team Graduate Studies*) before submitting it. Travel grants are granted in reference to the *Hessisches Reisekostengesetz*, the corresponding guidelines of the *DFG (German Research Foundation)* as well as the guidelines of JLU.

Shorter research trips vs. longer research stays

For reasons of sustainability, research trips of any length should generally aim to combine several goals or destinations – e. g. a conference talk with archival work, further research or exchange with other researchers. This is especially true for trips to far-away destinations. Please always consider alternatives to physical travel, such as possible hybrid attendance or exchange via video.

To apply for travel reimbursements for a conference, applicants ought to either be involved in the organization or an active participant (i.e. contributing a paper or poster) of the conference. Well-grounded exceptions can be negotiated.

Support for research and conference trips of less than 30 days is calculated on the basis of your actual costs and reimbursed after receiving the original receipts. For research trips of 30 days or more the funding may be calculated differently. It will be considered to allot a lump sum which you can spend at your own discretion. Your travel expenses and, if necessary, other costs (copying costs etc.) are reimbursed separately and must be individually substantiated.

Please contact Lena Nüchter (*Team Graduate Studies*) well in advance whenever you are planning a research trip of more than 30 days or more. For trips of this length we request a short statement from your first supervisor commenting on the relevance of the trip for your doctoral project, the necessary time span and the economic viability of your research stay.

¹ Postdoctoral members may be eligible in exceptional cases if they officially represent the GCSC during their trip. Please consult the Team Graduate Studies before applying.

Longer research stays should be conducted during the semester breaks, so that you can participate in the GCSC's research environment and curricular activities as much as possible.

Processing your request

Please submit your travel grant application around 8 weeks before the beginning of your trip to <travelgrants@gcsc.uni-giessen.de>. We might have to contact you with further questions before we officially pass your request to the *GCSC Executive Board*, who sit approximately once a month. Especially during the summer holidays and the Christmas break, processing times may be considerably longer.

If you wish to receive a partial advance payment of the allotted sum (which is possible if the expenses are too high for you to prepay on your own), please submit your travel grant form as early as possible. A few weeks may pass between the Executive Board's approval and your receipt of the partial advance payment.

Please consider that applications cannot be approved if, at the time of the respective *Executive Board* meeting, the applied trip has already been completed or is in process.

Please also be advised that any bookings prior to the Executive Board's decision are made at your own risk. Any costs incurred by you through prior bookings that exceed the amount granted by the Executive Board cannot be covered by the GCSC.

Planning and preparing your travel grant application

Keep in mind that expenses must be commensurate with the respective benefits. Please research the expected expenses of your trip diligently in advance, and individually specify all means of transfer and place(s) of accommodation in your application. The GCSC cannot cover additional costs that are claimed during or after your travel. Costs that exceed the approved amount cannot be refunded. In case costs turn out to be lower than the approved sum, the allocation will only cover substantiated expenses.

Please choose the **most economically and ecologically viable option** for your outward and return journeys (generally by means of public transportation) and your accommodation, using different search engines. Applicants are not entitled to first class transportation, first class accommodation or direct flights. Please book train tickets well in advance in order to benefit from special offers by *Deutsche Bahn (Sparpreise)*. Within an appropriate distance, please make use of your *Semesterticket* or *Deutschlandticket*. Please check whether purchasing a *BahnCard* will be economical. If you need to use any other than the most economical means of transportation, please indicate the reasons in your application.

In order to mitigate against unforeseeable events in the course of the pandemic, the GCSC will reimburse, within certain limits, additional costs arising from the booking of cancellable options for accommodation, transport, etc. Please choose the cheapest cancellable option available and

feel free to contact the Team Graduate Studies if you are unsure. Unfortunately, the GCSC cannot cover any costs that you incur if your trip has to be cancelled or cut short.

The JLU's [Policy for Sustainable Business Travel](#) is in effect for all journeys. Moreover, the GCSC generally does not reimburse costs for short-haul flights. Journeys to destinations within Germany, or international destinations that can be reached within a maximum of 8 hours with a reasonable train connection (max. 3 changes in long-distance connections), should be made by train. Within a reasonable cost framework, this will also be approved by the GCSC where flights would be the cheaper option. Applications deviating from this principle require a case-by-case justification. If you are flying, please include the JLU's [flat-rate levies for CO₂ emissions from air travel](#) in your travel grant budget.

Please make sure that you are sufficiently insured for the destination and duration of your journey abroad. Valid travel health insurance is indispensable! The GCSC cannot reimburse expenses for insurance of any kind. The GCSC can also not be held responsible for any financial losses following the failure to commence or complete the planned journey.

Please inform Lena Nüchter well in advance if you consider travelling with your family. If you need to take care of small children, you may apply for reimbursement of the travel and accommodation costs for your child(ren) and, where necessary, an additional caregiver. Alternatively, there is the possibility of travelling with your child(ren) only and applying for childcare costs at the given location.

In case you are planning to visit archives, libraries, museums or research centres, please provide proof in advance that you will be granted access to the institution in question, either by forwarding an invitation or your correspondence with a representative, or by providing some other kind of reference regarding the accessibility of the sources or data you need. If one purpose of your research trip is to confer with colleagues or experts from your field, we will also need proof that the collaboration has been arranged in advance. If required, we will gladly issue a written confirmation to facilitate access to other research organisations.

Notification, wrap-up, and billing of your travel

After the respective meeting of the *GCSC Executive Board* we will notify you via e-mail or may approach you with additional questions. In addition to that, you will receive a written confirmation of the travel grant via snail mail. If you have been granted a lump sum you will automatically receive the total amount in advance.

Please note that you will need to hand in the **original receipts in order to receive reimbursement**. Please submit these documents to Ann Van de Veire. Lump sum grants are the exception to this rule: If you have been granted a lump sum, the letter of approval will indicate the specific receipts that you will need to submit. Please remember to keep copies of your receipts, especially for larger expenses.

If you are employed at JLU, please **remember to attach a “Dienstreiseantrag”** (business trip application) that has been approved by your superior (this pertains to both “wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiter_innen” AND “wissenschaftliche Hilfskräfte”/AHKs). If you are travelling to another EU member state, an EEA state or to Switzerland, you may also have to attach an **“A1-Bescheinigung”**. Please consult the information given by JLU that is linked to on the GCSC travel grants website, and e-mail Lena Nüchter if you have further questions.

If you are planning to combine your research stay with a vacation, please note that the latter cannot comprise more than 5 workdays (both day of arrival and day of departure not included). Should the vacation be longer than 5 workdays, the cost for both outward and return journey cannot be reimbursed due to Hesse’s *“Reisekostengesetz”* (travel expenses law).

For all research trips (co-)funded by the GCSC, you will be asked to **submit a report** via e-mail within four weeks of your return. In this report we ask you to summarize the itinerary, purposes and benefits of your research trip. Please send the report (via e-mail) to <travelgrants@gcsc.uni-giessen.de>.

Which expenses can be covered by a travel grant?

- Outbound and return journeys and, where applicable, on-site public transportation
- Accommodation (in reasonable distance from the research or conference venue)
- Conference fees (if in doubt, please ask the organizers for the net fees, not including catering, excursions and other events)
- Photocopying costs (e. g. in case of archival research, please specify)
- Where applicable, fees for issuing visa and entry permits such as ESTA (please specify)
- In individual cases, field-specific additional costs (e. g. translators) – please think carefully whether your fieldwork is likely to incur any additional costs and speak to the Team Graduate Studies if in doubt
- Travel and care expenses for your child(ren), or a caretaker's travel expenses

Which expenses can NOT be covered?

- Travel health insurance, travel cancellation costs, and other insurances as well as vaccinations. Please make sure in advance that your health insurance will cover necessary treatment during your stay abroad!
- Meals, catering, and any items of your everyday need. Any board included in conference fees must be deducted from the fee (please ask the organizers). The same applies for conference dinners and -parties.
- Costs for communication (such as roaming fees or costs for internet access)

- Books, magazines, cameras and other materials
- Costs for personal research assistants
- Costs for private extensions of research stays; double rooms for accompanying partners (except if they are accompanying you to take care of your children)

Conditions of approval

The *GCSC Executive Board* diligently evaluates incoming travel grant applications and bases its decision on the following criteria which are part of the GCSC's statutes:

- Relevance of the research trip for your dissertation project
- Advancement of the (post)doctoral member's presentation and publication skills
- Establishing and maintaining a national and international academic network within your field of research
- Interdisciplinarity (where applicable)
- Academic excellence
- Sustainability (ecological and financial costs)

Please make sure to maintain a reasonable balance between the purpose and benefit of the research trip and the expenses. **When planning a (financially) large-scale research trip, please apply for (partial) third-party funding with other foundations or host institutions as well.** These efforts will considerably strengthen your application for GCSC travel funding. In general, and depending on their financial scale, the GCSC will fund three to a maximum of five research and conference trips per person.