



GRADUATE
STUDENT
ORGANIZATION
AT SYRACUSE
UNIVERSITY

PAC GRANT POLICY

Table of Contents

I.	Introduction	3
II.	Purpose	3
III.	Program Calendar	4
IV.	Applications	4-5
V.	Awards	5-6
VI.	Reimbursement	6-7
VII.	Program Funding	7
VIII.	Application of PAC Grant Policy & Appeals Procedure	7-8
IX.	GSO Senate Directives	9

I. Introduction

Contained in this document are the provisions governing the GSO Professional, Academic, and Creative Work (PAC) Grant Program. Please read carefully as periodic updates occur. If you are not familiar with GSO PAC Grant policy or reimbursement procedures, please contact the General Secretary & Chair of the PAC Grant Committee at gsosecretary@syr.edu and the Comptroller at gsocomptroller@syr.edu before applying.

Changes to the provisions in this document may be made by the GSO Senate by Motion or Resolution at any Regular Meeting or Special Meeting called for that purpose. Minor changes to this document may be made by the GSO Executive Board, with Senate approval obtained at the next Regular Meeting. The General Secretary, in consultation with the Comptroller and PAC Grant Committee, will make periodic review of this document to ensure it matches with university policies and GSO Fiscal Policy & Senate directives.¹

II. Purpose

The [PAC Grant Program](#) provides funding to graduate students to defray the costs of attending academic and professional conferences. PAC grants are awarded based on need and merit, and are intended to partially reimburse transportation, lodging, registration, and membership expenses related to qualifying events. PAC Grant Program funds cannot be used for coursework, study abroad, field research, or non-conference-related travel expenses.

The GSO PAC Grant Committee makes final decisions concerning all awards. The committee does not make comments on applications and will not disclose the details of a specific application's decision.

All eligible students who complete the application will receive a grant while funding permits. Grant amounts are determined by the quality of the application, submitted materials, demonstrated need, and demonstrated efforts to defray costs and to procure additional funding (per Articles IV and V). When grant program funding for the fiscal year is depleted, no further grants will be awarded (per Article VI).

The PAC Grant Program is funded solely by the Graduate Student Activity Fee, which is paid by each main campus, enrolled, matriculated graduate student at Syracuse University and allocated by the Senate of the Graduate Student Organization. More information on the allocation of the activity fee can be found on the [current budget page](#).

¹ The General Secretary will update the links in this document as website changes occur.

III. Program Calendar

1. The PAC Grant Application & Award Process shall be open from September 1st to April 15th of the Fiscal Year. Applications will be accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis, with submission deadlines falling on the 15th of each month. The PAC Grant Committee meets once after each deadline to consider all applications received by that time.
2. The PAC Grant Application & Award Process shall shut down after the final application deadline of the Fiscal Year (April 15th); no new applications shall be accepted after this date and over the summer months when the GSO Senate and PAC Grant Committee are out of session. The PAC Grant Application Process shall open on September 1st, fifteen (15) days prior to the first application deadline of the Fiscal Year.²
3. Should a student inquire about funding for an event that occurs during the summer months when the GSO Senate and PAC Grant Committee is out of session, they shall be encouraged either (a) to apply prior to the final application deadline of the Fiscal Year on April 15th, with the understanding that their award shall count toward the Fiscal Year in which the reimbursement is received (per article VI, Section 1), or (b) to apply in the September following their event for a retroactive grant award.
4. No retroactive awards shall be granted for an event occurring more than three (3) months prior to the date of application. For all deadlines, the travel must start on or after June 1st of that fiscal year.³

IV. Applications

1. To be eligible for a PAC grant award the applying student must be a main campus, enrolled, matriculated graduate student at SU, both at the time of applying, and at the time of travel.
2. Eligible applicants must be applying for funding toward attendance at an academic or professional conference, case competition, workshop, or other similar events. PAC Grant Program funds cannot be used for coursework, study abroad, field research, or non-conference-related travel expenses.
 - a. Meals and food are not reimbursable expenses.

² Any questions or concerns regarding the PAC Grant Application Program shall be fielded by the GSO Vice President of Internal Affairs and Comptroller when the GSO Senate is out of Session. They shall encourage graduate students to prepare their application materials for when the process opens on September 1st.

³ E.g., if the student applies for a retroactive grant award on September 1st, only travel for a qualifying event in the previous June, July, or August would be eligible. If a student applies during the 2024-2025 fiscal year, it must be for travel that occurred as of 1 June 2024.

3. All applicants are required to request funding from additional sources, such as their department, advisor, college, etc. Applicants should not depend solely on GSO subsidies since these funds are not guaranteed. Applicants need not be successful in requests for additional funding to receive a PAC Grant award, so long as the attempt to procure additional funding is clearly demonstrated.
4. Applicants who clearly demonstrate efforts to reduce their costs will be granted additional weight.
5. Applicants will be notified of the status of their application and award amount (per Article V) within approximately 21 business days of the monthly deadline. Students who are awarded funds must seek reimbursement of expenses. The GSO cannot pay for these expenses directly; once the applicant has incurred the expense, they must apply for reimbursement and provide the necessary documentation (per Article VI).

V. Awards

1. PAC Grant awards shall be set at a tiered rate of \$600, \$300, and \$100. There shall be no gradation of award amounts above, below, or between these.
2. Eligible applicants presenting their research or creative work at academic and professional conferences shall be awarded at the \$600 tier.
3. Eligible applicants not presenting their research or creative work but wishing to attend an academic or professional conference for other approved reasons (i.e., familiarization, chairing a panel, volunteering, networking, job searching) shall be awarded at the \$100 tier.
4. Eligible applicants who are presenting (per Article IV, Section 2) may be awarded at the \$300 tier if (a) the applicant opts for the \$300 tier award in their application, or (b) the applicant fails to clearly demonstrate need in the application,⁴ or (c) the applicant demonstrates significant access to additional funding without clearly demonstrated need for the full \$600 tier award.⁵ Recognizing that additional funding resources are not equally available across departments and disciplines, applicants should pursue additional funding whenever available, and should opt for the \$300 tier whenever possible, to ensure that the GSO PAC Grant is distributed to as many graduates as possible and especially to those with greatest need.

⁴ **Guidance to the PAC Grant Committee on this condition:** if the applicant does not demonstrate sufficient information (a) on budget costs and (b) on actions taken to defray costs. In this case, the measure to suspend consideration of the application pending further information may also be taken.

⁵ **Guidance to the PAC Grant Committee on this condition:** if an applicant (a) demonstrates access to \$1000+ in additional funding or (b) 70% of the total approved costs are covered by additional funding.

5. The GSO General Secretary & Chair of the PAC Grant Committee may suspend the consideration of a PAC Grant application, and request further information or resubmission, if they feel an applicant (a) has not sufficiently provided the required components of the application and/or (b) has inadequately addressed the application criteria explicit in the PAC Grant Application Form and Grading Rubric. Additionally, members of the PAC Grant Committee (i.e., evaluators) may petition the General Secretary & Chair of the PAC Grant Committee to suspend the consideration of an application for the same reasons by majority vote. The General Secretary must report all suspensions to the Executive Board.

VI. Reimbursement

1. Each graduate student is eligible to receive one GSO PAC Grant reimbursement per Fiscal Year.⁶
2. Reimbursement paperwork shall be submitted within 30 days after completing the event travel,⁷ and/or before the end of the current Fiscal Year (June 30th), whichever comes sooner.
 - a. If the grant was awarded retroactively for event travel already conducted, the required paperwork shall be submitted within 30 days of the applicant receiving notification of their award.⁸
3. If reimbursement paperwork is not submitted within 30 days of completing the event travel, or before the end of the current Fiscal Year on June 30th, the award is forfeit. The applicant will be encouraged to apply again.
 - a. An applicant may notify the GSO Comptroller and General Secretary in advance if they feel that they may face difficulties meeting this requirement; if notified in advance, and if for reasons deemed valid, the GSO Comptroller and General Secretary may approve up to a 30-day extension in submitting the required reimbursement paperwork.
4. PAC Grants are classified as taxable income by the IRS. Students may have part of the award withheld by the university for income tax purposes. The GSO has no control over this process.

⁶ E.g., if the student applies for and is awarded a GSO PAC Grant in FY22-23 but submits the relevant paperwork for reimbursement in FY23-24, the student will not be eligible to receive another PAC Grant reimbursement for FY23-24.

⁷ I.e., the student shall submit all reimbursement paperwork within 30 days from the travel dates indicated on the student's PAC Grant application.

⁸ I.e., the student shall submit all reimbursement paperwork required either within 30 days after the notification of award from the GSO General Secretary.

5. The student who received the grant award is the only individual who can be reimbursed from that award. The GSO can only reimburse for actual expenses incurred by the awarded student.
 - a. The student's department, college, or school may also be reimbursed for travel expenses incurred by that student.
6. Before any reimbursements can be issued, the GSO Comptroller must receive proof of registration at the conference. For presenters, documentation indicating said presentation must also be submitted.
7. To receive reimbursement, the student must submit the following:
 - a. Their PAC Grant Award letter;
 - b. Original, itemized receipts or bills, scanned and submitted in PDF format;
 - c. Proof of attendance/registration in any form;
 - d. A [GSO Request for Payment form](#).
8. All reimbursement paperwork should be submitted to the GSO Comptroller.
9. If a department, college, or school made payments on the student's behalf, the same procedure should be followed, but specifying payment to the relevant university unit instead of the student.

VII. Program Funding

1. A minimum of \$90,000 or 20% of the GSO's total operating budget, whichever is lower, shall be allocated to the PAC Grant program in the GSO Annual Budget Resolution.⁹
2. PAC Grant funding shall be limited to the amount specified in the GSO Annual Budget Resolution for the Fiscal Year, after which the PAC Grant Committee may issue no further PAC Grant awards unless the General Secretary & Chair of the PAC Grant Committee, in coordination with the President and Comptroller, petition the GSO Senate via a Motion for additional funding from Special Programming or from the initiation of GSO Carry Forward processes.

VIII. Application of PAC Grant Policy & Appeals Procedure

1. The GSO General Secretary and Comptroller will maintain the intent of the policies contained within this document. They shall communicate the provisions herein when

⁹ Rationale: \$90,000 provides sufficient guarantee to fund at least 150 full \$600 tier awards, with the opportunity of allocating more funds if possible. However, in the event of a dip in the projected budget for any given Fiscal Year, \$90,000 may not be possible without significant strain on the total operating budget, in which case 20% ensures that the PAC Grant program is funded to at minimum the same level as RGSO & Special Programming; see: the GSO Fiscal Policy.

sending applicants their notification of award and shall enforce the GSO PAC Grant Policy in any subsequent communication regarding grant reimbursement requirements.¹⁰

2. Any decision of the GSO General Secretary and/or Comptroller in the execution of this document may be appealed to the GSO Executive Board¹¹ by a Syracuse University GSO Member (defined per GSO Constitution Article I, Section 1) in the following manner consistent with the appeal process outlined in the GSO Fiscal Policy (Article X):
 - a. The Member must submit the appeal to the President (gsopresident@syr.edu) and the Vice President (gsointernalvp@syr.edu) in writing, copying the President Pro Tempore (gsoprotemp@syr.edu) and Parliamentarian (gsoparl@syr.edu).
 - b. The Executive Board (i) may decline to review the appeal. If the Executive Board opts to review the appeal, they may (ii) sustain the decision of the General Secretary and/or Comptroller, or (iii) override the decision of the General Secretary and/or Comptroller.¹²
 - i. If the Executive Board declines to review the appeal, the decision of the General Secretary and/or Comptroller is sustained by abstention. They may choose to explain the decision to decline, though it is not required.
 - ii. If the Executive Board sustains the decision of the General Secretary and/or Comptroller, they must communicate their rationale to the Member.
 - iii. If the Executive Board overrides the decision of the General Secretary and/or Comptroller, they must communicate their rationale and any necessary actions to the General Secretary and/or Comptroller.
 - c. The decision reached by the Executive Board is final. PAC Grant decisions may not be appealed to the Senate.¹³

¹⁰ Once the PAC Grant Committee grades an application and assigns an award, the GSO General Secretary notifies the applicant about the amount of their award and informs them of the additional paperwork required for the student to receive their reimbursement successfully.

¹¹ The GSO Executive Board and Rules & Administration Committee retain interpretive authority over the policies in this document.

¹² **Guidance to the Executive Board on this provision:** On principle, the Executive Board should not override the decision of the General Secretary and/or Comptroller when an application under review is in clear violation of GSO standing legislation, GSO PAC Grant and Fiscal Policy, or University Policy on one or several counts. They ought to consult precedent(s), tact, and common sense in cases of considerable grey area in the interpretation and application of a policy. The Executive Board is encouraged to consult the GSO Rules & Administration Committee, and furthermore is especially encouraged to petition that committee for a formal Opinion in novel cases that lack significant precedent or interpretive consensus.

¹³ Rationale: This ensures that GSO Senate is not encumbered with adjudicating numerous PAC Grant cases by *Resolutions to Override*. The authority to award PAC Grant funds is invested in the GSO General Secretary

IX. GSO Senate Directives¹⁴

Relevant directives of the GSO Senate listed in descending order include:

- GSO Senate Resolution 24.12: A Resolution Redistributing the GSO PAC Grant Program in Response to the Expressed Financial Needs of SU Graduate Students. 56th GSO Senate (2023-2024 AY).
- GSO Senate Resolution 24.02: A Resolution to Amend and Enforce GSO PAC Grant Policy. 56th GSO Senate (2023-2024 AY).
- GSO Senate Resolution 22.06: A Resolution to Rename the Travel Grant and Travel Grant Committee. 54th GSO Senate (2021-2022 AY).

and PAC Grant Committee, administered in accordance with GSO PAC Grant and Fiscal Policy. The authority to approve disbursement of awarded funds is invested in the GSO Comptroller, administered in accordance with GSO PAC Grant and Fiscal Policies. The right to appeal to the Executive Board, including members of the GSO Rules & Administration Committee, in PAC Grant matters ensures that the above Officers and Committees are dutifully and fairly applying the policies and provisions legislated by the GSO Senate.

¹⁴ This is a note: To date, the GSO Rules & Administration Committee has issued no formal Opinions on matters regarding GSO PAC Grant Policy. If ever this occurs, they should be added among the list (and this note deleted).