GPSS Travel Fund Program (TFP) Application Instructions

Eligibility Requirements

Who can apply?

All graduate students registered full-time at Virginia Tech are eligible to apply. Students must attend a conference in which they are presenting scholarly research that was conducted at Virginia Tech. Due to the high number of applicants, a graduate student may not receive more than one TFP award per academic year. Assistance through the TFP is not merit-based and is awarded based on a review process to help ensure complete and accurate applications.

What can be reimbursed?

The TFP is a refund-based program, so receipts must be submitted to receive the award. Costs that are eligible for reimbursement include conference registration, abstract fees, and costs associated with travel.

Examples of travel expenses that may be reimbursed include plane tickets, mileage used on personal vehicles, lodging and per diem as established by the government.

If a student's expenses were purchased by their department, the TFP can refund the department for travel expenses (as long as receipts are provided).

Award amounts

Funding for registration, abstract fees, and travel to conferences are provided with priority given to students based on financial need. Awards are in the following amounts:

Tiers	Award amount
Virtual attendance only	200
In-person Tier 1	300
In-person Tier 2	500

Award criteria

A student may only receive a TFP award once per academic year (Summer to Spring).

Who is NOT fundable?

For the Fall 2026 Cycle, we cannot fund conferences that begin outside of the time period from October 1st to December 31st, 2026.

We cannot fund more than one conference per academic year. Submission of an application after you have been awarded a TFP for the 2026-2027 academic year or applying for more than one conference in the same application will disqualify your application.

Remember that only one conference may be applied for at any time. Applying for more than one conference in the same application will disqualify your application.

We cannot fund students attending conferences as **a volunteer or participant (who are not presenting their research).** If you are applying to lead a conference session, you must be the main organizer. Please work with your relevant student organization to apply for funding through the Student Budget Board (SBB).

We cannot fund students attending workshops to gain research skills in which they are not presenting their research. We cannot fund course or workshop fees.

Application Instructions

Your total application will consist of the following parts:

- Online Application
- Personal Information
- Conference Information

Online Application

The online application can be found here: https://forms.office.com/r/YXcxrugE1J

The application will be open July 14th-August 18th.

When the application is open, you will be redirected to Microsoft Forms to take a survey. Please have all required information on hand prior to filling the form.

Be sure to e-mail yourself the form to save a copy for your records.

Personal Information Questions

First Name

First name as registered with Virginia Tech Example: Wednesday

Last Name

Last name as registered with Virginia Tech Example: Addams

Virginia Tech Email Address

Please submit your Virginia Tech email address. All communication will be conducted through your email. Example: waddams(at)vt.edu (replace "at" with symbol)

Last Four (4) Digits of Hokie Passport Number

- ☐ Please type the last four digits of your Hokie Passport number without any punctuation.
- ☐ Please do not submit your entire Hokie Passport Number. Example: 6789 (Full Hokie Passport Number is 123456789, so last four digits are 6789)

Anticipated Degree Level

Masters (MS, MFA, Meng, etc.)

- ☐ If you are working on a Masters level degree, please select this option

Doctoral (PhD, DVM, EdD, etc.)

- ☐ If you are working on a Doctoral level degree, please select this option. If you are working on multiple degrees, please select the higher level.

Virginia Tech Academic Department

-Enter the abbreviation and full name of your academic department affiliation Example: ENT – Entomology

Conference Information Questions

Conference Dates

- ☐ Please verify, for our records, that the conference falls between the dates of October 1-December 31st. If it does not, your application will not be considered.
- ☐ If you click "Yes", and your conference does not fall between these dates, you will be excluded from consideration for any TFP award for the 2026-2027 academic year.

Name of Conference

Please submit the full name of the conference you are presenting at. Example: The 7th Annual Nevermore Conference

Conference Website

Please submit the website URL of the conference you are presenting at. Example: http://www.nevermoreconference.com/

Virtual or In-Person Attendance

Virtual presentations will have a subset of TFP funds available for the reimbursement of registration and abstract fees.

International or Domestic?

International and Domestic travel are not factored into determining application eligibility. The TFP for Fall 2026 is entirely based on financial need, and is not using travel distance as a metric for determining reimbursement amounts.

Conference Location

Please submit the location in which the conference is being held. If the conference is domestic, submit as City, State. If the conference is international, please submit as City, Country. Examples: Washington, DC; Seoul, South Korea

Type of Presentation

Please select the type of presentation you will be giving. You may only select one option.

1. Oral Presentation
2. Poster Presentation
3. Leading a Workshop (main organizer/leader)
4. Other (please provide details)

Title of Presentation

Please submit the title of your presentation. Example: A History of Scary Things

Proof of abstract submission and Presenting author

- Are you the presenting author? Yes or no. Notice if you put yes and are not presenting, you will be disqualified from future TFP cycles.
- You must provide proof of abstract submission and it must demonstrate that you are the **presenting author.** We cannot fund applications that are secondary author/not presenting. Even if you are a secondary author

- An exception is if you are leader of a session (the primary leader)
- Submissions that are just a document containing the abstract and not the proof of submission are deemed **incomplete** and will only be considered if funding is available
- Submissions that show you with multiple authors but not clear that you are the presenting author are deemed **ineligible**.

Cost of Registration

- Respond to the following with your cost of registration.
- Please note that some registration costs may vary whether you are attending in person or virtually.
- Please provide your response as only numeric value. Example: If your registration is $200, type your response as: 200

Abstract Fees (if applicable)

- Abstract fees are eligible for reimbursement through the TFP.
- Not all conferences require abstract fees, so if this does not apply to you, please write "0" in the blank.

How many miles did you use your personal vehicle?

- This can be applicable whether you drove to the conference, or to an airport for your flight.
- This only applies to your personal vehicle, not a Virginia Tech owned fleet vehicle or rideshare (Uber/Lyft)

Overall cost of transportation related to attending your conference.

This includes…

1. The cost of your airfare, train, rideshares, or bus tickets
2. Car rental
3. The cost of parking during your conference travel

Cost of lodging

Please provide the total cost of your lodging for the duration of your conference.

Duration of your conference (in days)

- How many days made up the duration that your conference was in session?
- For example: If the first day of your conference was August 5th and the last day was the 8th, please respond "4" in the response section.

What are the guaranteed funding sources you have?

- Please provide **guaranteed** funding sources from other grants and/or department support for your conference.
- Do not provide anticipated funding sources

How much of your overall cost of conference travel is eligible for reimbursement as described in TFP application instructions?

- Please provide an estimate of the cumulative costs associated with your conference travel that you would like to request reimbursement for through the TFP. This includes costs such as airfare, meals, lodging, parking, rideshare, etc.
- Please include costs that were covered by your department that are eligible for reimbursement. If your department purchased your plane ticket and a receipt is available, this can be included.
- Please keep in mind that we can only reimburse expenses that have an associated receipt provided. For example: If you are unable to provide a receipt for the cost of your airfare, then this cost is not eligible for reimbursement.

Are there any travel expenses that you experienced that were not included in this application? If so, what were they?

Faculty Advisor

Advisor Name

Please submit your primary academic advisor. This advisor should be your primary Academic Advisor. If you have co-advisors, you do not need to list them both, please select one for the purposes of this application. If your Advisor will not be available to certify your information, please provide the name of one of your advising committee members or your department head. Example: Larissa Weems

Advisor Approval form

Please use the advisor approval form found at https://gpss.vt.edu/programs/tfp.html. Failure to use this template will result in an incomplete application.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who is eligible for TFP funding?

All graduate students at Virginia Tech who are enrolled full time are eligible to apply. The TFP is only for students who are attending a conference to present scholarly research that was conducted at Virginia Tech.

2. When does the TFP application window open for Fall 2026?

The Fall 2026 Cycle is open from July 14th-August 18th at 11:59 pm. The Fall 2026 Cycle will cover conferences that begin any time from October 1st-December 31st.

3. Can I apply for a conference outside of the Fall 2026 funding cycle?

No, the Fall 2026 Cycle of the TFP will only cover conferences that begin any time from October 1st-December 31st.

4. My conference begins before/after the application cycle, am I still eligible to apply?

As long as your conference begins any time between October 1st-December 31st, you are eligible to apply for the Fall 2026 Cycle of TFP.

5. Where can I find the application form?

The TFP application form can be found here: https://forms.office.com/r/YXcxrugE1J

We recommend you read the Application Instructions first!

6. What do I need to submit for the TFP application?

You will need to complete the online application (see Online Application section for full details). Be sure to notify your advisor that he/she needs to complete an additional verification on your behalf.

7. Do I need to save my receipts?

Yes, please save all receipts and documentation related to the conference. Virginia Tech requires receipts for reimbursement. Although the TFP does not require receipts for the application, you will need to submit receipts to your department.

8. How will I receive the award money?

Once the final decision has been made, an email will be sent to successful applicants with instructions on how to claim your award, as well as the appropriate forms. You will be required to submit documentation of conference information and travel expenses (receipts) to your department, along with your award letter, which will be the email in which you are notified of your award. The money will flow from the Graduate School, to your department, and then back to you.

9. Is there still a difference in maximum claims between Masters/Ph.D. and domestic/international?

There is no difference in maximum claims between Masters and Ph.D. students.

10. What is the maximum amount I can claim for my travel?

See "Award Amounts" table for each funding tier.

11. Can I receive more money than the amount I was awarded?

The TFP is a highly popular program with a very limited budget, granted to us through the Virginia Tech Graduate School. It is the intention of the GSA to award as many deserving applicants as possible with a reasonable amount of money to help toward the cost of travel. It is not intended to be your sole source of funding, so please try to seek other forms of funding. The GPSS encourages you to discuss external funding sources with your advisor and departmental/college contacts. We do not provide any information on external sources of travel or research grants.

12. Am I still eligible to apply for TFP if I conducted my research offsite (not at Virginia Tech or a satellite campus)?

If you conducted research for your current program at Virginia Tech at an offsite location, you are eligible. If you conducted research as part of another degree or professional program at another institution or corporation, you are not eligible. Please email the TFP chair if you are concerned that your presentation may not qualify.

13. Can I use TFP funds to attend a conference as a volunteer/attend a workshop/to pay for course fees?

No. We have limited funds to share with students and this money is given to us by the Office of the Provost to further facilitate sharing the research that Virginia Tech produces with the world. Thus, funds from the Travel Fund Program are limited to students presenting the work done while a graduate student of the university.

14. If I have more than one advisor, do they all need to approve my application to the TFP?

No, only one of your advisors needs sign the advisor approval form.

15. What should I do if my advisor cannot reply to the email sent to them by the system before the submission deadline?

If they are unable to reply by the deadline, you may submit the email of a member of your academic committee or, alternatively, your department head.

16. Can I submit the application through email?

No. Submissions through email will not be accepted. All applications have to be submitted through the online application. No applications will be considered if submitted otherwise.

17. I received a letter of funding for the Fall 2026 Cycle but have decided I do not want it or would rather receive funds for future travel. Can I forfeit my Fall 2026 funding in order to be eligible to apply later in the year?

We do realize that sometimes plans and requirements change. Please email the TFP Chair if you feel that you must cancel your acceptance of the Fall 2026 funding. These requests will be handled on a case by case basis. We will, however, endeavor to avoid penalizing you if circumstances change. The TFP Chair will do their best to work with you – please remember that the TFP Chair is also a VT graduate student and is also subject to deadlines and academic commitments.

18. How am I evaluated?

Every application is carefully reviewed by a committee of graduate students and the TFP Chair, the GPSS Director of Programs. Reviewers will check your application for completeness, and that your conference falls within the funding cycle (October 1st-December 31st for the Fall 2026 cycle), that you provided correct information on the conference, and that your advisor or committee member has indicated their approval of your application (via the advisor approval document on the GPSS TFP website).

19. For what reasons can my application be rejected?

Your application may be rejected for the following reasons (this list is not exhaustive, and the GPSS reserves the right to add to this list):

1. An incomplete application – proof of abstract submission incorrect (not presenting author, only submits abstract itself without proof of submission, unclear if student is the presenting author, no proof of presenting and/or first author), advisor approval is not the correct form
2. Providing false information - conference dates that are not correct, false budget information, etc
3. Not being first author/presenting author
4. Your advisor or someone else submitting the application for you
5. Not applying for a trip within the proper funding window from October 1st-December 31st.
6. Award money has been allocated to students with greatest financial need
7. Applying for attending a conference and not actually presenting research
8. Leaving questions blank
9. Guaranteed funding source left unknown or blank (if you do not have guaranteed funding, you can put 0 in this column)

20. How do I know the current status of the application process?

The status of each individual application will not be revealed until all final decisions are made, which will be as soon as possible after the close of the Cycle, and no later than August 18th, 2026.