



College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences

Undergraduate Research Fund (URF) Guidelines

Purpose

The Undergraduate Research Fund (URF) supports DePaul undergraduate students in their pursuit of research and scholarship. The program allows undergraduate students to receive funding for planning, implementation, and dissemination of course-related research and scholarship at locations beyond DePaul, including in-person virtual conferences. Providing financial assistance for presenting research at professional and academic conferences enhances the learning experiences of our students. This funding contributes to students' overall academic experience and more effectively meets the needs of undergraduate education.

Eligibility

The URF is available to full-time students in good academic standing with an overall GPA of 3.00 or higher whose primary major is in the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. For a complete list of LAS majors, see [here](#). Students must be currently enrolled as full-time students during the time of the intended research, travel, or scholarship opportunity detailed in the application. The URF supports students who are sole or main authors of the presented research/scholarship and are identified as presenters in the conference program or in a letter of acceptance from the conference organizers. Proof of acceptance is required as part of the application.

Although the URF will support funding for approved conference travel outside the United States, URF funding is not available for students whose travel will begin and/or end outside the US.

Specifically, *URF funding may not be used to support conference-related travel while one is on a Study Abroad trip.*

Students may receive more than one award per year, but preference is given to applicants applying for the first time within the academic year. Previous awardees are eligible to reapply in subsequent years.

Supported Activities

This program is intended to provide undergraduate students with financial support to travel outside the city of Chicago to present original research/scholarship at regional, national, or international academic conferences.

Allowable Expenses

The College reserves the right to disallow requests for reimbursement based on university policy and DePaul Business purpose. The following expenses are typically allowable:

- Conference registration fees. In the case of approved activities in the city of Chicago and suburbs, *only* conference registration fees are allowable.
- Airfare/Train fare—from the applicant’s location at the start of the approved travel period only.
- Automobile rental expenses. The College will reimburse the least expensive method of travel or route for any given business trip regardless of the method or route used. Given a substantial discrepancy in the cost based on the mode of travel, LAS will reimburse the lesser amount unless extenuating circumstances necessitate the more expensive mode.
- Mileage for travel by personal vehicle, only if the cost of mileage is less expensive than air or train travel. Reimbursement for mileage is based on the standard mileage rates set by the IRS for a given year and includes gas and tolls, which will not be reimbursed separately from the standard mileage rate.
- Ground transportation (train, taxi, ride-share) to/from the airport and lodging or conference location. Rental cars will not be funded for ground transportation at the conference site.

Unsupported Activities and Expenses

- Coursework provided by another institution.
- Tuition.
- Attendance at a conference where one is **not** presenting original research or creative work (The URF does not provide funding for professional development or networking purposes.)
- Food, drink, or incidentals.
- Books, copy fees, or technology purchases.
- Ground transportation within the city of Chicago (Exceptions may be made in the case of safety or mobility concerns. Please note any such request for an exception in your application.)
- Lodging or other expenses incurred more than one day before or one day after the published start/end dates of a conference, not to exceed five days total.
- Any expenses, other than conference registration, that are incurred prior to the submission or acceptance of an URF application.
- Trips unrelated to an accepted speaking role at a legitimate academic conference hosted by an academic institution or professional organization.
- Other than conference travel, trips that are not directly connected to active, for-credit course work (including theses and dissertations), and/or do not result in a for-credit deliverable. **The URF does not support travel related to internship credit.**
- Trips that would be simultaneous with the international travel segment of Study Abroad.

Available Funding

There is no specific cap on the amount of money that may be requested. However, the process is competitive, and the use of funds is closely regulated. Applicants are advised to make plans with the understanding that not every request can be fully funded. The LAS Dean’s Office reserves the right to partially fund requested expenses based on the budget and timeline detailed in the application.

URF as a Singular Source of Funding

In rare cases, students apply to multiple sources of funding for the same trip. This includes funding sources (department or career center awards, grants, fellowships, etc.) that are internal and external to DePaul. This practice is allowed, but the URF requires that you disclose this

information in your application. Acceptance of a URF award shall be understood as confirmation that the applicant has not already received *full* funding for the same request from another source and will not submit for reimbursement charges that will be covered by another funding source.

Guidelines Governing Reimbursement

URF funds are obtained via reimbursement, following submission of original or scanned/mailed receipts. Applicants should anticipate paying for expenses upfront and being reimbursed after their trip. *Pre-payment may be available to students with financial hardship who are unable to prepay expenses. Please contact LASGrants@depaul.edu for more information prior to application. Requests for prepayment after receipt of an award letter may not be possible.*

Before applying to the URF, please be sure that you are aware of these guidelines governing reimbursement:

- By university policy, reimbursement requests submitted more than **30 days** after the last date of travel will not be reimbursed under any circumstances.
- Reimbursement requires itemized receipts, not confirmations. The receipts may be submitted in hard copy or via email. They must be submitted as one request and not piecemeal.
- Reimbursement will be made only to the individual who incurs an expense. If a charge is made in the name of someone other than the applicant, that person will be reimbursed directly and must provide a DePaul ID or SSN, and a mailing address, when receipts are submitted for reimbursement.
- All students requesting reimbursement via direct deposit must complete and submit the necessary direct deposit enrollment form, which will be provided along with the URF award letter upon acceptance.

Travel Registration

A complete application requires compliance with DePaul's Student Travel Policy. Compliance differs depending on whether you are traveling to a destination in the US or abroad.

- **Students planning travel outside of the United States** must complete [Independent Student Travel Registration](#) and submit evidence of registration within the application. *Please note:* This link may take you to a page with Study Abroad branding because most international travel at DePaul is managed by the Study Abroad program; please complete the registration process with the understanding that you are registering for travel funded by the URF, not Study Abroad.
- **Students planning domestic travel** must complete the [Travel Release and Waiver](#) and submit that signed form within the application.

Applications lacking the appropriate evidence of travel registration will not be processed.

Application and Criteria for Approval

Applications are reviewed and decisions are made on a rolling basis throughout the academic year until funds are depleted. Applications may be submitted online as soon as you have received confirmation of your acceptance in the event's program. You are encouraged to apply as soon as you have all the information necessary to complete the application, which must be received no later than 30 days prior to your departure for domestic travel or 45 days for international travel.
Applications submitted after departure will not be considered.

The Executive Associate Dean in LAS will approve applications. Criteria include:

- A clear and complete project description outlining the applicant's project as it will be presented. This will typically be the conference "abstract" or "proposal" rewritten for a non-specialist audience.
- Verified proof of selection or acceptance to present at an academic conference.
- A clear and complete budget detail and budget narrative outlining the requested expenses and providing relevant information and/or rationale for the listed expenses. See [FAQs](#) for more information. If both a budget and budget narrative are not submitted, the application will be denied.
- The endorsement of a full-time faculty member familiar with the student's ongoing academic work.
- Documentation confirming that you have completed the necessary Travel Registration requirements, detailed [above](#).
- Equitable distribution of available funding, to include special consideration of first-time applicants.

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To apply to the Undergraduate Research Fund, follow the link below. For assistance completing the application, see the FAQs that follow.

URF Application:
<https://forms.gle/kQ3GuVjZP2CMXSPf9>

Note that your responses cannot be edited once the Google Form application is submitted. Please ensure all information provided is complete and correct at the time of your submission.

URF Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Is there anything I should do before I apply?

Yes.

- All DePaul students intending to travel beyond the city of Chicago with the support of the URF must be compliant with DePaul's Student Travel Policy. Students planning travel *outside* the United States must complete [Independent Student Travel Registration](#) and submit evidence of registration within the application; students expecting to travel domestically must submit the [Travel Release and Waiver](#), and submit that signed form within the application. Applications lacking these necessary documents will not be processed. [Please review the section on Travel Registration above for a more complete explanation.](#)
- All URF applications require the name and email address of a faculty member who has agreed to endorse your application. Please ensure that you have discussed your intentions to apply to the URF with said faculty member prior to submitting an application.

I was accepted to present at an academic conference in the city of Chicago or surrounding suburbs. Am I eligible to receive URF support?

Applicants preparing to present at an academic conference in the Chicagoland area may request URF support to cover conference registration fees only. In some cases, applicants may also request support for ground transportation in and around Chicago due to safety or mobility concerns. If this is the case, please be sure to note such concerns in your application.

What information should I provide in the Budget Detail and Budget Narrative sections of the application?

Both a budget and budget narrative are required for your application to be considered. Your budget detail should clearly list all anticipated expenses for which you will be seeking reimbursement. Your budget narrative should explain why you made your selections. For example, did you select the hotel because it was attached to the conference location? If you are renting a car, why must you do so? It must also capture any extenuating circumstances. For example, if your flights span dates outside of the conference, you should include the reason why that is the case and the research you did to ensure there was no large difference in pricing. Are you sharing a room with a fellow student or splitting other costs? Are you starting your trip from a location outside of Chicago and why? All relevant information should be included in your budget narrative to aid your application and provide the LAS Dean's Office with a clear understanding of your requested expenses.

I am facing financial hardship and unable to pay for my expenses ahead of travel. Will the URF consider disbursing funds upfront, rather than through reimbursement?

In most cases, URF funding is only offered via reimbursement upon the submission of receipts. However, if you are facing financial hardship, pre-payment of URF funds may be available. Please contact LASGrants@depaul.edu for more information *prior to application*. **Requests for prepayment after receipt of an award letter may not be possible.**

What steps do I take when applying for the URF?

To apply for the URF, you must complete the following steps:

1. Complete the required Travel Registration explained in the [Travel Registration](#) section of the Guidelines. *Note that you must provide evidence of travel registration within the application, so do not move to Step 2 before completing Step 1.*
2. Complete the [URF Application Google Form](#).
3. Carefully review and submit your application. *Note that your responses cannot be edited once the Google Form application is submitted. Please ensure all information provided is complete and correct at the time of your submission.*

I have a question specific to my circumstances that was not covered in this document. Who can I contact?

Please contact LASGrants@depaul.edu and include URF in the subject line of your email.

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