

COGS Professional Development Award Guidelines and Conditions

Revised December 2023

1) Award amount

The amount awarded for a Professional Development Award will be up to \$500.

2) Eligibility

All graduate and professional students are limited to \$500.00 worth of Professional Development Awards during their entire MSU academic career, and may apply for this award more than once to achieve \$500.00. Students must be registered for classes the semester the award is to be used. Students may not apply for both a COGS Conference Award and a COGS Professional Development Award for the same event; doing so will result in rejection of both applications. Eligible expenses include but are not limited to: event registration, travel, lodging, and materials. Items such as food, banquets, field trips, and souvenirs are not eligible.

3) Qualifications for a professional development event

“Professional development” refers to the acquisition of skills and knowledge needed for career advancement. The acquisition of such skills and their applicability to one’s field will be the fundamental criterion by which an event is judged. A qualified event includes but is not limited to a local, regional, national or international workshop, academic competition, convention, or association meeting in which the primary goal of event participation is to obtain knowledge or hone a skill set useful to their profession both creative and scholarly. Internships, degree coursework, summer school, and other such events also do not qualify. Applicants should clearly identify and explain how their professional development activity honed or improved their skill(s) or developed their knowledge in their justification statement. Attending an event does not guarantee funding. The Professional Development award is not intended for conference presentation. **If you are presenting at a conference, please apply for the Conference Award.**

4) Application Deadlines

For fall and spring semesters, **applications must be submitted by 5pm of the deadline date posted on the COGS website** during the semester for which the event occurs. For the summer semester, applications must be submitted [TEN BUSINESS DAYS] prior to the final spring COGS full council meeting. The COGS office will accept early applications. If an insufficient number of students apply for the COGS Professional Development Awards, the COGS Finance Committee will review applications submitted after the deadline. If the event starts between semesters, the student must apply during the semester immediately prior to the event start date. Both summer sessions are considered as one summer semester.

Applicants may not find out whether they were awarded a Professional Development Award until after the applicant has attended the event. Applicants should not base the decision to attend an event on the ability to receive COGS funding. [PLEASE ENSURE YOU HAVE A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION FROM YOUR ADVISOR]

5) Selection Criteria

A lottery system is used to determine the recipients of the COGS Professional Development Awards, provided the applicant has submitted a **completed** application form with all required information. Failure to provide all information as specified will result in **no** funding.

6) Availability of Funds

Funds for the Professional Development Award Program derive from the Graduate School. Administration of the funds is provided by COGS. If funds remain after that semester's lottery, the distribution will follow a first-come, first-serve basis for the rest of the semester. Of the budgeted funds, 50% will be available to be awarded during the fall semester, 50% during the spring semester. Fall semester will be defined as months July – December and Spring semester will be defined as months January – June. Any funds not awarded will be rolled over to the next semester with the exception of summer semester, which is the end of the fiscal year. Unused funds will be returned to the Graduate School after the fiscal yearend.

7) Decision Authority

The application should be submitted [online] to the COGS office where it will be dated, assigned a numerical identifier, and forwarded to the COGS Finance Committee. The COGS Finance Committee will randomize and review the applications at the first COGS Finance Committee meeting of each semester. The COGS Finance Committee will meet regularly throughout each semester (as per COGS By-Laws Section 8.2.1.1.1) to review requests and make award recommendations. All recommendations will be forwarded to the COGS Full Council for approval. The COGS office will notify applicants of their award status via email after final approval has been obtained.

8) Distribution of funds

As this funding is derived from the Graduate School, it will be awarded in the form of a fellowship. Once your fellowship has been processed, you should be able to see it in your StuInfo account. A fellowship is taxable. You will receive a tax form from the University at the end of the year. If you owe MSU any money, MSU will take what you owe directly from this award prior to deposition. If you have federal financial aid, you will want to check to see how this award affects any funding that you receive.

The applicant must submit a **minimum 500 word report** on what they learned, including a description of the event and the top 3 takeaways from attending, as well as proof of attendance to their event. Valid proofs of attendance include, but are not limited to, a picture of the applicant at their event or a copy of any certification earned by the applicant from attending the event. Your report and proof of attendance must be submitted to the COGS Office **within 30 calendar days of the last day of the event**. Failure to comply will jeopardize future award opportunities. Your report may be published by the Graduate School or COGS.

9) Conditions for Acceptance of Funding

It is understood that the Applicant will, at their own expense, protect and hold harmless COGS, its officers, representatives, members, boards, employees, and agents from all claims, damages, costs, lawsuits and expenses, including but not limited to, all costs arising from administrative proceedings, court costs and attorney fees, that COGS may incur as a result of any act, omission, or negligence of the Applicant or any of its officers, members, employees, agents, subcontractors, or independent contractors which may arise out of this funding request.

The liability of COGS, its officers, representatives, members, boards, employees and agents with regards to the funding of the Applicant for any claims, costs, damages, losses, and expenses for which COGS is or may be legally liable, whether arising in negligence or tort, contract, or otherwise, shall not exceed the amount of funding provided by COGS to the Applicant. In no event shall COGS, its officers, representatives, members, boards, employees, and agents be liable for any indirect, special, or consequential damages. The Applicant shall not transfer any right or interest in this Application without the prior written consent of COGS. The Applicant agrees to abide by all federal, state, and local laws and ordinances, as well as their student rights and regulations set forth by Michigan State University.

***FINANCIAL AID NOTICE: If you have completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), then you should be aware that receipt of a fellowship, scholarship, award or assistantship may reduce your eligibility for federal student loans. Please note the following: 1) you must be enrolled for the semester that your award is dispersed; 2) fellowships & awards are taxable; 3) if you owe MSU any money, your award will be reduced by that amount prior to deposition. Please contact the Office of Financial Aid at finaid@msu.edu if you have questions.**