

Athabasca University acknowledges the importance of graduate student research and supports their endeavors via the Graduate Student Research Fund (GSRF). Students engaging in systematic inquiry are not only completing important milestones in their academic programs but are also contributing to their respective fields of study. The quality and reputation of Athabasca University as an academic centre of excellence is reflected in the extent to which graduate students learn, develop and apply their research competencies to investigate substantive questions in their disciplines and disseminate their research findings.

Recipients of Graduate Student Research Fund Grants should acknowledge the funding in related publications and presentations.

| <b>ETHICAL APPROVALS AND REQUIRED CERTIFICATIONS</b>   |
|--|
| <p>Athabasca University Research Ethics Board <a href="#">Guidelines for Applicants</a></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) If your research study involves humans or animals, human or animal pathogens or toxins or environmental impacts, you must obtain Athabasca University Research Ethics Board (AUREB) Certification prior to submitting an application to request funds to support the research study.</li> <li>2) Ethics Certification (where applicable) must be obtained prior to the release of funds from the Graduate Student Research Fund.</li> </ol> <p><b>Research involving humans and animals</b><br/> <a href="#">Research involving humans</a> requires approval of the Athabasca University (AU) Research Ethics Board (REB) prior to commencement of the research, regardless of the source of funding (if any) or the location of the research, if the research is being conducted by a member of the AU community or under the auspices of AU.</p> <p><a href="#">Animal-based research</a>, teaching, or testing requires animal ethics approval, in accordance with the AU Animal Ethics Policy and related Procedures.</p> <p><b>Research involving human or animal pathogens or toxins and environmental impacts</b><br/>           Researchers who plan to conduct a research study that involves human or animal pathogens or toxins must notify the Athabasca University Biosafety Offer at <a href="mailto:sciencelab@athabascau.ca">sciencelab@athabascau.ca</a> to discuss biosafety protocols.</p> <p>Researchers who plan to conduct a research study that involves potential environmental impacts must notify the Research Centre at <a href="mailto:research@athabascau.ca">research@athabascau.ca</a>.</p> |

| <b>APPLICATION DEADLINES &amp; NOTIFICATIONS</b> |  |
|--|--|
| Normally four times per year                     | February 1, May 1, August 1, November 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ If these dates fall on a weekend or statutory holiday, the deadline shall be the next business day.</li> <li>▪ Grant notification normally occurs within 21 business days of the application deadline.</li> </ul> |

| <b>VALUE OF GRANT</b>  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM</b>   | <b>DOCTORAL DEGREE PROGRAM</b>   |
| <b>Conducting Research</b>   | <b>Conducting Research</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Up to \$1,000 (CDN) to conduct research</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Up to \$1,500 (CDN) to conduct research</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Disseminating Research</b>  | <b>Disseminating Research</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Up to \$2,000 (CDN) to disseminate research</li> <li>▪ A student can apply to either of the above categories more than once; however, the total amount of GSRF funding shall not exceed \$3,000 (combined) while enrolled in the Master's program.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Up to \$2,000 (CDN) to disseminate research</li> <li>▪ A student can apply to either of the above categories more than once; however, the total amount of GSRF funding shall not exceed \$3,500 (combined) while enrolled in the Doctoral program.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Publication of Research</b>   | <b>Publication of Research</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Up to \$2,000 (CDN) while enrolled in a master's degree program</li> <li>▪ Publication in a print and/or online open access peer-reviewed journal</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Up to \$2,000 (CDN) while enrolled in a doctoral degree program</li> <li>▪ Publication in a print and/or online open access peer-reviewed journal</li> </ul>  |

- Grants from the Graduate Student Research Fund cannot be transferred to any other application or research study, dissemination or publication activity.

**ELIGIBILITY - GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH FUND GRANT**

- 1) Athabasca University graduate students currently enrolled and in good standing in an Athabasca University master's or doctoral degree program.
  - 2) Athabasca University graduate students who were enrolled in an Athabasca University master's or doctoral degree program are eligible to apply for a dissemination grant if the presentation occurred within three months after graduation.
  - 3) Approval from the Graduate Student's thesis supervisor, project supervisor, program advisor, course instructor, or other Athabasca University faculty member who is familiar with the work is required.
- **Graduate students enrolled in certificate or diploma programs are ineligible to apply.**

**PURPOSE OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH FUND GRANT**

Grants from the Graduate Student Research Fund are intended to:

- 1) Enhance the research experience of grant recipients including skills in completing grant applications, understanding university and national research funding foci.
- 2) Foster research creativity and innovation.
- 3) Support graduate students' research focused endeavors.
- 4) Acknowledge graduate students' contributions to the research climate of Athabasca University.
- 5) Encourage dissemination of scholarly research that is part of the student's master's or doctoral degree program.
  - a) Dissemination activities provide graduate students with the opportunity to disseminate their research to the appropriate audience(s) such as research study sample participants, the public, policymakers and colleagues, and other pertinent groups. Examples of the types of forums students can use to disseminate their research include, but not limited to, includes conference, workshop, symposium, seminar, colloquium or roundtable, whether in-person or online, or other presentation formats that are part of knowledge mobilization (knowledge mobilization must have a well-defined purpose that is relevant to the student's research topic).
  - b) Dissemination activities must be discussed with the graduate student's research supervisor prior to the dissemination activity.
    - Refer to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) website for the definition of [Knowledge Mobilization](#)
- 6) Help defray publication costs in a print and/or online open access peer-reviewed publication.

**SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS**

- 1) Applications to the Graduate Student Research Fund, shall use the existing Graduate Student Research Fund application forms. Applications must be submitted through the Athabasca University [Research Portal](#).
- 2) Only completed applications, including applicable appendices, will be considered for review by the Graduate Student Research Fund Committee. Late submissions will not be accepted.
- 3) Applicants are encouraged to ensure that their application can be readily understood and evaluated by others who are not necessarily familiar with the technical language used in their discipline or field. Define acronyms and explain any topic specific terminology.
- 4) Consider formulating longer text responses in a separate document and proofreading before cutting/pasting into the online application form, as there is no spellcheck or formatting available within the online application form.
- 5) Applications will be reviewed in accordance with these guidelines.

**ELIGIBLE EXPENSES**

**A rationale for all expenditures related to the research study or dissemination of the research results, including estimates, if actual costs are not available must be included within the budget submission.**

Examples of eligible expenses supported by the Graduate Student Research Fund include, but are not necessarily limited to the following:

- 1) Travel costs directly related to the data collection component of the research study, or dissemination of the research results (e.g., airfare, accommodations, meals, incidentals, ground travel, and/or conference fees).
  - a) Details on how expenses are calculated must be included in the budget submission (e.g., kilometers travelled and mileage rates).
  - b) Refer to Athabasca University's [Expense Reimbursement Policy](#).
- 2) Materials and supplies (e.g., postage, long distance telephone charges, data management/analysis software that is not otherwise normally available at AU, digital connections (e.g., Internet Connections), encrypted data storage and backup, paper, computer ink, cartridges, photocopying and printing).
- 3) Incentives or gift/cultural protocol for research study participants.
  - Rationale for the value of the incentives for participation must be justified in the budget submission.
- 4) Equipment and Hardware (up to \$1,000) (e.g., an object of the research, part of the system to be developed from the research, or a special tool needed for the research).
  - a) If the hardware or equipment is required for the research study, the rationale must be clearly justified and described within the application.
  - b) For a single item cost \$500 or more, if the supervisor has a plan to reuse the item in future research, a workable mechanism for the return of the item must be worked out between the student and the supervisor. The mechanism must be clearly described within the application, including how the item will be returned from the student to the supervisor, at the end of the research project.
  - c) If the research project is to develop and implement a system using the purchased equipment and/or hardware, and the supervisor has a plan to reuse the system in future research, a workable mechanism for the return of the item must be worked out between the student and the supervisor. The mechanism must be clearly described within the application, including how the item will be returned from the student to the supervisor, at the end of the research project.
  - d) The student must be fully aware that the supervisor may not sign off the research for graduation, until the supervisor has received from the student, the purchased item or implemented system, as per the above criteria.
  - e) All items returned from the student become the property of Athabasca University until fully amortized.
- 5) AU AWS platform and its services and tools (up to \$1,000).
- 6) Transcription costs.
  - a) Transcription is an integral and interpretive part of the research and learning process, as it is the first step in analysis of the research data. NOTE: Graduate students are encouraged to use electronic means to transcribe digital audio files (e.g., <https://gotranscript.com>).
  - b) Guidance must be sought from a graduate student's supervisory committee whether outsourcing transcription is appropriate. In some disciplines it is customary that graduate students transcribe the data themselves to capture the learning experience, the essence of the spoken work, and intent of the participant(s). Supervisor approval must mention transcription specifically if it is applicable.
    - Justification and costs to hire a transcriptionist must be provided in the budget submission.
- 7) Other expenses (e.g., advertising, flyers, etc.).
- 8) Publication costs in a peer-reviewed print scholarly journal or peer-reviewed open access scholarly journal.

**GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH FUND (GSRF) DOES NOT SUPPORT**

Examples of **activities not supported** by the Graduate Student Research Fund include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

- 1) Costs to conduct research that is not part of the graduate student's master's or doctoral degree program of research.
- 2) Costs to disseminate research that is not part of the graduate student's master's or doctoral degree program of research.
- 3) Furniture items and common office equipment (e.g., calculators, telephones, computers, laptops, headsets, microphones, audio recorders, etc.).
- 4) Production costs for thesis/dissertation and/or research reports (e.g., editing, binding, publishing, etc.), including any required committee assessment copies, as set out in the regulations governing the academic degree for which the research study was undertaken as a requisite.
- 5) Rent (if conducting research from home).
- 6) Software or equipment where such items are available free-of-charge or at a reduced cost on loan from Athabasca University (e.g., via Athabasca University Library & Scholarly Services, or an academic centre).
- 7) Textbooks or reference books (other than in exceptional circumstances where the material cannot be accessed by borrowing through private or public sources).
- 8) For other alternatives (e.g., Tutorials, Citing and Referencing Tutorials etc.).
  - Refer to the [Athabasca University Library & Scholarly Services](#)
- 9) Tuition fees.
- 10) Costs to hire Research Assistants.

**EVALUATION CRITERIA**

The [Graduate Student Research Fund Committee](#) normally adjudicates all Graduate Student Research Fund applications. Consultation may be sought from individuals possessing specific expertise (e.g., methodological) as required.

Funding decisions are based on peer review; the internationally accepted standard for determining excellence in scientific research. A peer view process will determine the scientific rigor, significance of the problem being studied, appropriateness of methodology, and potential for the study findings to lead to publication and/or further funded research.

Not all of the questions on the Graduate Student Research Fund application form may be applicable to a particular research study. In such cases, the applicant is encouraged to provide sufficient other relevant information that will allow the reviewers to assess the application.

**Graduate Student Research Fund (conducting research and/or dissemination) applications are evaluated using the following criteria:**

- 1) Consistency with the Graduate Student Research Fund Guidelines.
- 2) Clarity and completeness of the proposed research, including literature review and detailed research design/methodology.
- 3) Scientific merit and feasibility of study as supported by the literature review and research design justifications.
- 4) Significance of the research (project contributions to research, academy, practice, etc.)
- 5) Knowledge mobilization, including plans for dissemination and/or publication of the research findings.
- 6) Realistic research study timelines.
- 7) Budget, including relevance of and detailed justification for all planned expenditures.

**Graduate Student Research Fund (publication) applications are evaluated using the following criteria:**

- 1) Journal identified as either being a peer-reviewed print scholarly journal or peer-reviewed open access scholarly journal.

- 2) Confirmation that the article is/will be published.
- 3) Confirmation of publication costs (may be listed as USD, CDN or other funds).
- 4) Full reference citation.
- 5) Authorship placement, in relation to the funds requested, and if applicable, explanation of why other authors/institutions have not/will not be covering a percentage of the publication charges. **Priority is given to first and second author Athabasca University students and faculty.**
- 6) Rationale for choosing the scholarly journal and steps taken to assess its credibility.
  - a) There has been an increase in the number of deceptive, predatory and low-quality journals. Applicants must provide a rationale for choosing the scholarly journal that includes:
    - Journal peer-review process, reputation, aims and scope, including other rubrics used to assess the journal's credibility (e.g., age of journal, restrictions, similar articles, membership of editorial board, Beall's List of Predatory Journals and Publishers, ABDC Journal Quality List, or other list(s)/other criteria).
    - Explanation of how the journal fits with the topic and why the journal was chosen in relation to all other journals that might also fit with the topic.
  - b) If a scholarly journal is named in a journal list that is accepted by the applicant's discipline and/or faculty, (e.g., ABDC Journal Quality List, etc.) this does not automatically obligate the Graduate Student Research Fund Committee to approve funding, as the committee will consider other factors in its overall assessment (e.g., reputation, authorship placement, other applicants, relative impact factor, etc.).
- 7) Impact factor (used to measure the quality of a scholarly journal)
  - a) Impact factors vary by discipline and/or faculty and some journals may have a relatively low impact factor but are still considered very "high quality". Impact factors vary on a number of dimensions and scores themselves cannot be considered in isolation from other factors. The Graduate Student Research Fund Guidelines do not have a "clear-cut" acceptable impact factor threshold, therefore, it is up to the applicant to provide details about the journal:
    - Identify current and historical journal impact factors.
    - Explain where the journal stands relative to impact factors of other journals in the applicant's discipline and/or faculty.
    - Defend their decision to publish in the journal, despite the impact factors and rankings, and the threshold for what is deemed to be an acceptable impact factor, in addition to other rubrics used in accessing the journal's credibility. This may also include new scholarly journals, which currently have no impact factors.
  - b) It is at the discretion of the Graduate Student Research Fund Committee to assess and evaluate low impact factors to determine if a journal is low in quality, which will assist in determining if funding from the Graduate Student Research Fund Publications is warranted.

#### DURATION OF GRANT

Grant recipients are obliged to abide by the conditions governing these grants, conduct/publish the research as proposed, and adhere to all relevant Athabasca University Research Policies and related procedures in so doing.

- 1) If funding is conditionally approved, all conditions must be met within thirty (30) business days from the date the conditional approval memo is received (unless there are conditions related to conflicting external deadlines). If conditions are not met as required, from a timeline and budget perspective, the file will be considered inactive and the file will be closed. Applicants will be required to resubmit a new application to the next application deadline.
- 2) Approval of a grant shall remain for up to one year from the date of the full approval memo.
- 3) If, due to extenuating circumstances, research activities cannot commence and/or be completed as planned, you must notify the 1) Graduate Student Research Fund Committee and 2) thesis, dissertation or project supervisor, program advisor, course instructor, or other Athabasca University faculty member who is supervising your work.
- 4) If the research activity cannot be completed within twelve (12) months of approval, the grant recipient may request a maximum of a one-year extension. Extension request must be submitted via the Research Portal at least 30 days prior to the original end date.

**CLOSING OUT OF GRANT****Graduate Student Research Fund grant recipients:**

- 1) A full complete expense claim, with original receipts and final report must be submitted within 30 days of the end date of the research study/dissemination activity/publications of research (or within 30 days of the end date of the approved extension, if applicable).
- 2) The final report must be submitted via the Athabasca University [Research Portal](#) and must demonstrate that the research/dissemination/publication was completed in accordance with the approved application and related budget.
- 3) Any unspent funds will be returned to the Graduate Student Research Fund at the end of the 30-day period and any unclaimed expenditures will become the responsibility of the grant recipient.
- 4) Subsequent Graduate Student Research Fund grants (if eligible) will be conditional upon the submission of the expense report and final report for grants previously approved by the Graduate Student Research Fund Committee.

**ADDITIONAL FUNDING SOURCES**

*Applicants who apply to the Graduate Student Research Fund may also apply for other Athabasca University funding sources (to support research related expenses and research dissemination expenses):*

- [Access to Data Management/Analysis Software](#)  
Students who need to buy data management/analysis software for their research may have some of their costs covered by the Access to Data Management Analysis Software Fund. The funding can be used to buy licences or upgrades for statistical software (e.g., SPSS, NVIVO, ATLAS.ti, etc.).
- [AU Student Software Discounts](#)  
(You are required to provide proof of your academic affiliation to register and qualify for the software discounts offered)
- [AU Access to Research Tools Award](#)  
Funds are intended to facilitate the research conducted by AU graduate program students to assist in partially covering the costs incurred while completing a thesis/dissertation or major project. Examples of anticipated expenses that a student may incur include purchasing licences for statistical software such as SPSS, NVIVO, mileage to conduct interviews for the research, or obtaining copyright permission to use a particular research tool/instrument.
- [Profiling Alberta's Graduate Students](#)  
Funds are intended to support dissemination/presentation opportunities which showcase the high quality of research being conducted by graduate students at Athabasca University. Award funds are intended to assist with the cost associated with travel expenses.  
  
[Alberta Graduate Students Travel Incentive](#)  
Funds are intended to support dissemination/presentation opportunities which showcase the high quality of research being conducted by graduate students at Athabasca University. Award funds are intended to assist with the cost associated with travel related expenses (conference fees, transportation, accommodation and/or meals).
- [Graduate Level Student Travel Awards](#)  
Funds are intended to support dissemination/presentation opportunities which showcase the high quality of research being conducted by graduate students at Athabasca University.