Chapter 14: Research Funding

There are a number of organizations and foundations, both public and private, dedicated to financially supporting students in their professional development. Most of these target the funding of research projects, others indirectly support research through dissertation awards, while some support travel to conferences to present research results.

Listed below are a number of links to sites which themselves list funding opportunities. It is important to pay particular attention to submission deadlines.

Department

The Department of Psychology provides a limited number of Dissertation Research Awards (The Beryl Anderson Dissertation Research Award) for graduate students who are candidates for a PhD in Psychology (http://psychology.cua.edu/research/dissertationaward.cfm). Funds will be awarded to students to support non-personnel costs directly associated with their dissertation research project. The number of awards granted will depend upon the number of applications and available funds. More details are found in Chapter 14 of this handbook. The average award is roughly $500.

There are 3 deadlines each year for applications: March 1, July 1, and November 1.

To be eligible, students must:
1) Currently be enrolled in a PhD program.
2) Have had their 2 page dissertation topic proposal approved by the Department of Psychology faculty and submitted to the Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences.
3) Have submitted the project for CUA IRB approval if the project requires such approval.
4) Have already applied for dissertation research funding from at least 1 other organization (see the “Dissertation Funding Resources” link on the Research page of the Department of Psychology website).

To apply, students should submit:

1) A completed “Dissertation Research Awards Application Form” (see the Department of Psychology website, Research link).
2) The 2 page dissertation topic proposal.
3) A 1 page (maximum) summary of the funds requested, why these funds are needed to support the study, and a detailed budget for how these funds will be used.
Students should submit 3 copies of each of these application materials to Brian Nowlin, Assistant to the Chair, by 4 pm on the day of the above listed deadlines. Students will be informed of the outcome of their application within 1 month of the submission deadline.

The Department also offers travel awards for students presenting a poster or paper at the conference: [http://psychology.cua.edu/research/travelaward.cfm](http://psychology.cua.edu/research/travelaward.cfm).

**The American Psychological Association (APA)**

APA provides a number of awards each year.

A rather comprehensive list of awards and scholarships can be found at: [http://www.apa.org/education/grad/funding.aspx](http://www.apa.org/education/grad/funding.aspx) and also [http://www.apa.org/about/awards/index.aspx](http://www.apa.org/about/awards/index.aspx)


To find information about awards offered by each of the APA’s Divisions, use: [http://www.apa.org/about/division.html](http://www.apa.org/about/division.html)


Early Graduate Student Researcher Award: [http://www.apa.org/about/awards/scistucoun-earlyre.aspx](http://www.apa.org/about/awards/scistucoun-earlyre.aspx)

Student Travel Awards: [http://www.apa.org/about/awards/scidir-stutrav.aspx](http://www.apa.org/about/awards/scidir-stutrav.aspx)

**Other sources of funding:**


Over the years, a number of students in our department have had success in getting National Research Service Awards to support their training from the National Institutes of Health: [http://grants2.nih.gov/training/nrsa.htm](http://grants2.nih.gov/training/nrsa.htm).

American Psychological Foundation has an extensive list of funding opportunities: [http://www.apa.org/apf/](http://www.apa.org/apf/)

The Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies has two dissertation awards as well as another for current graduate students: [http://www.abct.org/Awards/?m=mMembers&fa=main&nolm=1](http://www.abct.org/Awards/?m=mMembers&fa=main&nolm=1)


The District of Columbia Psychological Association gives student research awards: [http://dpa.onefireplace.com/](http://dpa.onefireplace.com/)

William T. Grant Foundation funds research to improve the lives of youth: [http://www.wtgrantfoundation.org/](http://www.wtgrantfoundation.org/)


Psi Chi Awards and Grants if you were a member or officer as an undergraduate: [http://www.psichi.org/?page=2_graduate_main](http://www.psichi.org/?page=2_graduate_main)

Private foundations may be a source of funding for students. Consult with the CUA Office of Sponsored Programs, and explore The Foundation Center: [http://foundationcenter.org/washington/](http://foundationcenter.org/washington/)

The CUA office of the Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies maintains a list of funding opportunities for students: [http://graduatestudies.cua.edu/currentstudents/fundingresearch.cfm](http://graduatestudies.cua.edu/currentstudents/fundingresearch.cfm)

The following tips on receiving funding for student research were printed in the APA Monitor, Vol. 40, No. 7, July/August 2009.

- **Start locally.** Begin your dissertation fund search within your own department and university, says Todd Kashdan, PhD, a George Mason University clinical psychology professor. The money available might be in smaller amounts, but it is usually easier to compete for, he says. Search for all the information you can find online on your university's Web site. In addition, be sure to contact the administrative support staff within your psychology department. "The administrative staff is the gatekeeper to all the knowledge," he says. Also, universities have full-time staffers in their research or special programs offices who are well-versed in the complexities of grant applications. And don't forget that one of your best sources might be your adviser, particularly if
he or she is supervising a large research grant and there's money available for related research, says Glenn Good, PhD, of the University of Missouri.

That's the case at the University of Michigan, where John Jonides, PhD, runs the Cognitive Neuroimaging Lab. Jonides, who studies working memory, funds his lab's research with grants from the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation and the Office of Naval Research. "I have my students work with me putting together grant proposals seeking funds, and that funding foots the bill for their dissertation research, because their dissertation research is almost always connected to one of the projects I'm funded to work on," Jonides says. Typically, research for a dissertation involving behavioral measures and fMRI time costs around $50,000 he says. For less expensive research at Michigan, students can seek internal funding from the psychology department, the graduate school and the Office of the Vice President for Research, Jonides says.

• **Look for a foundation.** If your dissertation touches on an issue of concern to a philanthropic foundation, search through online databases for grants available for research, recommends Susan Ogletree, director of the Education Research Bureau at Georgia State University. The Foundation Center, for example, maintains an online directory of foundation research funding available, where students can search for their research topic. E-mail your library, or talk to the staffers at your university's research office to see if they subscribe to the database at fconline.fdncenter.org.

• **Go to APA.** In a typical year, the APA Science Directorate receives almost 200 applications for dissertation research funding and awards 30 to 40 grants, from $1,000 to $5,000 each. Successful proposals have clear and concise descriptions of the research, show a good understanding of the state of the science, and follow directions exactly, says Virginia Holt, of APA's Science Directorate. "We look to fund proposals that will demonstrate excellence in science, show promising research careers for the graduate student proposal writers, and use resources effectively and efficiently," she says. For a list of APA dissertation grants, visit [www.apa.org/science/dissinfo.html](http://www.apa.org/science/dissinfo.html)

• **Tap other psychology groups.** Another source is the American Psychological Foundation/Council of Graduate Departments of Psychology Graduate Research Scholarships in Psychology, administered by APA's Science Directorate. The program offers 13 grants from $1,000 to $5,000 each. More information is available at [www.apa.org/science/apf-cogdop.html](http://www.apa.org/science/apf-cogdop.html).

• **Investigate federal funding sources.** For most students, it might seem like a long shot, but your dissertation research might be a good fit to the research interests of an institute of the National Institutes of Health, which offers two grant programs for students. One is the Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Awards for Individual Predoctoral Fellows, known
informally as F31s or NRSAs. The other is the Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Awards for Individual Predoctoral Fellowships to Promote Diversity in Health-Related Research. The grants provide partial tuition and fees, a stipend for living expenses and an allowance for books and travel.

Another possible source of funding is through the National Science Foundation's SBE Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grants. For information on the NIH grants, visit www.grants.nih.gov/training/nrsa.htm. Information on NSF funding is at www.nsf.gov/funding.

Marcy Boynton received funding from both federal sources, including $62,000 in NRSA money over two years, and a $7,993 dissertation research improvement grant for her work examining the interplay of acculturation and sexual risk behavior among Latinos. Boynton says the rigorous application process compelled her to focus her research ideas. Talking to graduate students who had successfully applied for an NRSA and reading through funded applications also helped her, Boynton says. "In retrospect, the hardest part is that first grant you put together," she says.

• **Check out state associations and APA divisions.** Many APA state associations and APA divisions support dissertation research funding. For example, Div. 15 (Educational) offers two $1,000 dissertation research awards for students who have an approved proposal from their dissertation committee, but haven't started collecting data yet, says awards committee co-chair Michele Gregoire Gill, PhD. Students who are Div. 15 members and are pursuing a question related to educational psychology are eligible, Gill says. For more information about APA division awards, visit www.apa.org/about/division/awards.html

• **Follow directions and proofread.** When you apply for dissertation funding, read the directions for putting together a proposal several times before you start, says L. Shane Blasko, PhD, an assistant professor with Argosy University in Atlanta, and a former employee of Georgia State University's Educational Research Bureau, which helps faculty members seek research funds. Follow every instruction and ask your adviser to double-check your application, Blasko says. "Adherence to detail is super important," she says. Students commonly make such mistakes as not including information requested, not following word or page limits and not putting information in the right order, she says. "If there's anything that doesn't follow their directions to a 'T' they won't read it," she says. Got a question about something on the application? Ask the contact person listed, Blasko says.

• **Keep your receipts.** Most funds come with strings attached, so if you're lucky enough to get a dissertation grant, be sure to keep a record of how you spend it. Many grants require you to report all expenses and provide a summary of your findings to your funding source.