

# Otterbein University Student Research Fund FAQ

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## Who is eligible for an SRF Grant?

All enrolled Otterbein students engaged in research or creative work are eligible to apply for SRF awards. This includes graduate students and seniors in their final semester, although there are special restrictions on the duration of grants given to graduating seniors (see "How long will I have to spend an SRF grant?" below).

## What will an SRF Grant pay for?

When you submit your proposal for either a Research or Presentation Award, you will include a budget listing the costs associated with the project you're proposing. This will vary from applicant to applicant, but examples of expenses could be materials, travel costs, printing charges, or support for study participants. The award cannot be used to provide the student with a stipend or any form of hourly wage. The money can only be used for the budget items you specified when you applied for your award. If you need to change your budget after receiving your award or have questions about what we can and cannot fund, please contact the Office of Academic Affairs. ([academicaffairs@otterbein.edu](mailto:academicaffairs@otterbein.edu))

For more specific lists of allowed expenses please see the *SRF-Research Grant* or *SRF-Presentation Grant* section of the *SRF Information Packet*, as appropriate.

## How long will I have to spend an SRF Grant?

We know that both research and paperwork can take time. Assuming you have not graduated, you will have 24 months to spend the money (see below if you intend to graduate within this time). After 24 months, no further reimbursements can be made even if you haven't spent all the money you were awarded.

If you graduate (or leave Otterbein for other reason) during that 24 months, the money MUST be spent before the end of your final semester at Otterbein. The money can then be reimbursed up to the end of the first semester AFTER graduation or departure. After that, we can't reimburse you for research or presentation costs, even if they were incurred while you were still a student. Keep in mind, if you graduate in May, the SUMMER semester is your last chance to be reimbursed for expenses. For questions about how to spend the money or submit an expense report, please see the Claiming Expenses portion of the SRF Information packet (page 11-12) or contact the Office of Academic Affairs ([academicaffairs@otterbein.edu](mailto:academicaffairs@otterbein.edu)).

## Do I need to have a faculty advisor to apply for an SRF Grant?

Yes. Both SRF-Research and SRF-Presentation Grants require a faculty advisor to sponsor and oversee the project. All expense claims should be signed by the faculty advisor as well as the student to indicate approval of expenditures.

For SRF-Research Grants the faculty member must be named on the cover sheet, and they must submit a SIGNED letter of support. This support letter should address their opinion about both the research you are proposing and their estimate of your ability to complete the work.

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For SRF-Presentation Grants, the faculty member name is listed on the online application and indicates their support. No letter is necessary.

## **Do I need to have held an SRF-Research Grant to apply for an SRF-Presentation Grant?**

No. We know that not all the interesting work going on around campus is funded by SRF. If you have a project that you are presenting at a meeting, you are eligible to apply for an SRF-Presentation Grant even if you never held an SRF-Research Grant.

## **Can I share my award with another student?**

Students can share an award if they intend to work together on the project and apply together. There is space on the application to name additional applicants. The cap is still \$400 per grant; it does not increase with the number of students involved in the proposal. All students will be recognized equally at the end of the academic year. If you are jointly awarded a grant, all students will have to sign the expense claim to get reimbursed, and you must be VERY clear about who should receive the money for the form to be processed appropriately.

## **What if there are multiple students all traveling to the same conference with SRF-Presentation Grants?**

If several students from one department will travel to the same conference and share costs, with no expenditure unique to one student, it is preferred that the Department submits one budget that names all students and describes any matching funds. Each student will be required to complete an SRF-Presentation Grant application, including a copy of the department-prepared budget. The award cap for each student will still be \$400, and there is no guarantee that money will be available to fully fund all applicants. The faculty advisor will be responsible for filing an expense report (see special instructions on the *Claiming Expenses* section of the *SRF Information Packet*) and will verify all receipts before reimbursement. All students' account codes should be listed on the expense report, and all students should sign the claim or otherwise indicate their approval of the expenses.

## **Can I get funding for a project that I've already started?**

We cannot reimburse for expenses you incurred before you receive the award, and we do require receipts for all expenses. Please be sure to apply for funds AND wait for your letter of acceptance before beginning any work on a project.

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## How many awards can I apply for?

Because funds are limited, the SRF administrators have decided that each student can hold only up to two SRF awards at a time. Typically this will be an SRF-Research Grant followed by an SRF-Presentation Grant, but every student's needs are different. If you are going to apply for multiple SRF-Research Grants, they must be for distinctly different projects. The same project will not be funded twice, even if the first grant is completed before you apply for the second round of grants. If you know your research will be done in two stages, make sure the second stage represents a complete research question in and of itself and that you explain how it is different from the first. Before applying for additional funding, you must FINISH at least one of your two existing grants. See the SRF-Research Grant and SRF-Presentation Grant pages for more information about finishing out an award.

## How will I know if I receive an award?

The SRF Committee makes every effort to review and respond to SRF-Research Grant applications within three weeks of the submission deadline and SRF-Presentation Grant applications within two weeks of submission. If there are a large number of applications in a particular round, the process may take longer.

Once reviewed, you and your faculty advisor will receive an email with one of the four following determinations regarding your proposal:

- Approval
- Approval with conditions (the funds may not be available until conditions are met, and there may be a deadline imposed for particular changes)
- Declined, with encouragement to reapply with revisions
- Declined

If your proposal is declined, we will let you know why in the email and indicate how the committee felt you might improve it if resubmission is encouraged.

## I'm going on an Otterbein sponsored travel course, will the SRF help me pay for research on my trip?

While you cannot use SRF-Research Grant funds to pay for Otterbein travel courses, it may be possible to secure money to support research work you plan to do while you're traveling. The research, however, must be above and beyond the activities planned as part of your course, and you must be clear about how your research plans are distinct from course requirements in your project narrative. Also, be aware that the faculty best situated to advise you in the preparation of your application may not be the ones you're traveling with. Be sure to get the best advice when planning your project. Your SRF project advisor need not one of the faculty members traveling with you, although your course instructor should be made aware of your additional plans and indicate their support of the project.

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## Who should I contact with additional questions?

The SRF-Research and SRF-Presentation awards are both administered through the Office of Academic Affairs. We are located on the third floor of Roush Hall, Suite 316. You can either stop by to ask questions, or you can email the office at [academicaffairs@otterbein.edu](mailto:academicaffairs@otterbein.edu), for more information.