

The VU GSSS Graduate Fund

This version is from August 27, 2025

General information

The aim of the Graduate Fund is twofold:

- the Graduate Fund supports a PhD candidate to carry out their research;
- the Graduate Fund stimulates a PhD candidate to orient themselves internationally in order to promote a broad scientific development.

Research related costs eligible for (partial) coverage from the Graduate Fund

- Data collection, field work
- Translation and language editing
- Attendance at a scientific conference, workshop (including accommodation, meals, travel)
- Summer school or other doctoral training, not organized by the GSSS
- Other research-related visits (to Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, within the Netherlands, abroad) or a research stay at a foreign university, including travelling and housing
- Other research-related travel costs

Research related costs not eligible for coverage from the Graduate Fund

- Literature (book or access to a journal article)
- Publication fee (e.g., in cases of open access; many journals offer that the fee for open access publishing an article from Vrije Universiteit staff is charged to Vrije Universiteit)
- Computer and other technical equipment
- Lay-out and printing thesis
- Costs of graduation
- Travel costs and accommodation opposition
- Dissemination of research results

Conditions

- A PhD candidate can only apply when they have passed the Go/No Go assessment (in case the assessment is in procedure, please also submit your application. We can always conditionally approve your application).
- A PhD candidate can only apply when registered in Hora Finita.
- The applications should be made before the activity takes place. Applications concerning activities that have taken place in the past are not taken into consideration.
- PhD candidates are allowed to submit more than one application during their project.
- Funding will be granted on the basis of co-financing: the Graduate Fund covers a maximum of 75% of the needed finances. Applicants will have to find other sources to cover the remaining costs (such as the main grant, subsidy or bench fee of your research project; the department; a specific grant or subsidy from an external party; your employer; your own means)

- The total limit for a candidate is €6000, and the yearly limit is €2000 (there is an exception for a candidate who has obtained personal drawing rights¹)
- A grant is less likely if the activity is intended to be carried out after three-quarters of the intended project duration (as defined in Hora Finita) or even after the project duration has been exceeded; an additional motivation for carrying out the activity is needed justifying why this will not prevent the rapid completion of the thesis.
- Money awarded cannot be used for any purpose other than initially applied for.
- Applications regarding activities for which a reasonable alternative is offered in the Netherlands will not be accepted.
- VU regulations on sustainability (e.g., preference is given to travel by train over by air) should be followed².
- VU regulations on reimbursement have to be followed^{3 4 5}.
- When participating in a conference or workshop, you have to submit a paper, poster, or similar kind of contribution (funding for attendance only will not be granted).

Submitting your application

- Submissions can be made at any time, but they should be sent before the activity takes place.
- Applicants submit their application to the Director of the Graduate School, through the address of the Graduate School, graduate.school.ssw@vu.nl.
- The application should consist of:
 - o A completed VU-GSSS Graduate Fund application form (in English), signed by the candidate and supervisor, including a budget that clearly states all costs for which the candidate applies for funding.
 - o Copy of the letter of acceptance of the paper/poster, or a letter of acceptance by the university or research institute (if you do not have a confirmation yet, please send it to us as soon as possible).

Handling the application

- The GSSS management gathers all the applications received in a month and reviews the submitted applications at the beginning of the following month.
- The GSSS may contact the applicant, the first supervisor, and the other supervisor(s) for necessary clarification or further explanation.
- The Program Manager informs the PhD candidate of the outcome.
- The financial contribution will be reimbursed in arrears on presentation of a detailed account and by submitting a completed declaration form to the Finance & Control Department (please make sure to mention 'Graduate Fund', WBS H/261020.003, on the declaration form).
- An advance payment may be requested by filling in the 'advance form', signed by the head of the department.

¹ PhD buddies and VU PhD council members are eligible for an additional €400 per year. Make sure to complete the "Personal drawing right" section in the application form to obtain this funding.

² <https://vu.nl/en/employee/declarations-and-commute-allowance/sustainable-business-travel>

³ <https://vu.nl/en/employee/declarations-and-commute-allowance>

⁴ <https://vu.nl/en/employee/declarations-and-commute-allowance/domestic-business-travel>

⁵ <https://vu.nl/en/employee/declarations-and-commute-allowance/international-business-travel>