I. Purpose

Professional Advancement Grants (PAG) are provided to graduate and professional students by the Graduate and Professional Student Senate (GPSS) to help defray expenses related to professional meeting, conference, and development-related travel.

II. Travel Month Award Divisions

a) PAGs shall be awarded based on ‘Travel Month’.

b) The month in which a conference occurs shall be determined by the last day on which the conference occurs regardless of when travel begins or ends, this is referred to as an applicant’s ‘Travel Month’. For example, if a conference runs from August 20th to September 1st, the Travel month is September and the deadline to submit is August 15th at 5PM.

c) The total amount of funds budgeted for PAG awards for the fiscal year shall be divided among the twelve months. Some months may receive more funding than others, as yearly trends have demonstrated higher demand for some. For 2018-2019, November and March have higher allocations than other months.
d) If, in a given month there is unspent money, the extra money will be allocated to the proceeding month.

III. Awarding PAG Awards

a) Each PAG application shall receive a priority number. Anyone who has not previously received a PAG will have Priority 1. Anyone who has previously received at least one PAG will have Priority 2.

b) Eligible Priority 1 applicants will be awarded a PAG immediately following processing of the application and while sufficient funds remain.

c) If the available funds are sufficient to fund all of the priority 1 applicants but not all of the Priority 2 applicants, after the 15th and before the 22nd of each month, the PAG committee shall conduct a lottery to determine which Priority 2 applicants to fund. This lottery shall be conducted using a built-in lottery program to the PAG site. The PAG chair and at least 1 additional member of the PAG committee or executive board must be present. (If the system’s lottery is down, use RANDOM.ORG. Instructions on how to use RANDOM.ORG can be found in the appendix.)

d) Priority 2 applications are not processed until the deadline for their conference (i.e. if a person applies in May for a conference in December, their application will be processed between November 15th-November 22nd).

IV. Student Eligibility

a) In order to receive PAG award, the applicant must be a current graduate or professional student at Iowa State University (ISU).

1. The applicant must be registered for the fall semester to receive funding for a trip which occurs in August through December.

2. The applicant must be registered for the spring semester to receive funding for a trip which occurs in January through May.

3. The applicant must be registered for either of the two summer sessions or the previous spring semester to receive funding for a trip which occurs during June or July.

4. The applicant must not graduate prior to travel occurring.

b) Students are only eligible for one PAG award per fiscal year (July 1 – June 30)

c) Students may apply more than once, but the applications must be for different conferences.
1. For example, if a student is denied a PAG award for a conference, they remain eligible to apply for a different conference that same fiscal year.

V. Travel Eligibility

a) Applicants may receive travel funding to attend a professional meeting as a presenter or as a non-presenter.

b) Applicants may receive travel funding to attend a professional workshop that provides experiences not available at ISU.

c) Applicants will not receive funding for required academic activities.

d) Travel is not eligible until proper confirmation documentation is available to provide to GPSS.

1. Presenters must have an abstract acceptance confirmation (email or letter) to be considered for a PAG award.

   a. The letter/email containing the confirmation must be addressed to the student and should include the following information:
      
      1. The name of the conference or workshop,
      
      2. Date(s) of the conference and/or presentation,
      
      3. Name, title, and affiliation of the person that sent the confirmation, and
      
      4. Contact information for the person that sent the confirmation

   b. GPSS may request that an applicant submit proof of acceptance in hardcopy, it is the applicant’s responsibility to retain the confirmation for one (1) year following the conference.

2. Non-presenters must have a registration confirmation (email or letter) to be considered for a PAG award.

   a. The letter/email containing the registration confirmation must be addressed to the student and should include the following information:
      
      1. The name of the conference or workshop,
      
      2. Date(s) of the conference or workshop,
      
      3. Name, title, and affiliation of the conference chairperson, and
      
      4. Contact information for the chairperson
b. GPSS may request that an applicant submit proof of registration in hardcopy, it is the applicant’s responsibility to retain the confirmation for one (1) year following the conference.

VI. Amount of Support

The amount of a PAG award shall be $200. This number is subject to change on a year-to-year basis as funding allows.

VII. Application

a) Application forms and instructions are the responsibility of the PAG chair and are posted on the GPSS website (http://www.gpss.iastate.edu/students/pag/).

b) Documentation of registration is required at the time of application (Section “Student Eligibility”).

c) Incomplete, late, or duplicate applications will not be considered for funding. The PAG Committee is not responsible for student errors in submission; it is the duty of the applicant to ensure that the submission was successful.

d) The deadline for an application is 5:00 pm on the 15th of the month prior to the month of the conference.

e) It is in an individual’s best interest to apply as soon as possible and at any time prior to the deadline in d).

f) The department contact listed in the PAG application will be notified of both the creation of the PAG application and of the PAG decision. It is important that the department contact listed in the PAG application be the department staff member who handles reimbursements, as there is account information included in the PAG email that he/she will need access to. It is the applicant’s responsibility to ensure that they include the correct contact details.

VIII. Travel Reimbursement

a) The applicant should contact his or her department for information on the reimbursement process. There are no additional forms required from the PAG committee or GPSS to claim the funding; however, there may be forms at the department level.

b) Documentation of registration is required for reimbursement (Section “Student Eligibility”).

c) Dispersal of funds will conform to ISU policies.

d) Reimbursements must be completed within 30 days from the last date of travel listed in their application.

e) Reimbursements will only be approved for actual expenses incurred.
f) All lodging receipts and all receipts for items $75 or greater must be retained in the traveler’s academic department. The Graduate College will not be responsible for the retention of traveler's receipts.

g) It is the applicant’s responsibility to approve other travel reimbursements through AccessPlus in accordance with the Graduate College and their department rules. PAGs are NOT filed the same way, as you must contact your department staff to file your PAG.

h) It is at the discretion of the GPSS Executive Committee to approve reimbursement extension requests for extenuating circumstances. A student should notify the PAG Chair immediately – and preferably within the 30 day deadline – to request an extension. Please note that extensions are not guaranteed and are read on a case-by-case basis.

IX. Travel Cancellation

a) If a student is funded to attend a conference and does not attend, the student must notify the GPSS PAG Chair in writing (email <gpssp@iastate.edu> is preferred) to cancel their PAG for that conference no later than 2 weeks after the conference.

b) Students who do not follow the procedure to cancel in the appropriate time will stay listed in the system as a recipient who has forfeited their funds, and will not be considered for another PAG until the next fiscal year.

c) Funds awarded for travel to one conference/event cannot be transferred to a different conference/event.

X. Appendix

The PAG system now has a built-in lottery as of April 2018 using RANDOM.ORG. If this system is down, proceed to the following:

First number the PAG applications in the lottery from 1 to m. From the RANDOM.ORG homepage, click on Random Integer Set Generator. In the box for the number of unique random integers, type the number of available PAG awards. In the boxes for the range of values, type 1 and the number of applications (m). Then click "Get Sets." The numbers in the set are the numbers of PAG applications that get funded.