

# Rehabilitation Counseling Student Organization (RCSO) Travel Fund Application Guidelines/ Instructions

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## About the Program

The objective of this program is to provide funding for rehabilitation counseling graduate students to participate at various levels in academic and professional workshops and conferences. Professional development is something this organization places high emphasis on and we want to not only encourage students to seek out these experiences, but assist in lessening the financial burden that can often come with these learning experiences. This program is funded by the rehabilitation counseling student organization and administered by the organization's Executive Board.

## Eligibility Criteria

An applicant must:

- Be currently enrolled as a rehabilitation counseling graduate student at the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (SHRS) at the University of Pittsburgh
- Be in good academic standing within the department (GPA  $\geq$  3.0)
- Be an active member of the rehabilitation counseling student organization
- Show interest in the opportunity for growth by participation in professional development opportunities

## Guidelines

- Students are eligible to apply once per fiscal year (July 1 – June 30) for RCSO travel funding. Funds will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Due to limited funding, if a large number of students apply for funding for the same conference, decisions on funding allocation may be turned over to the department chair, Dr. Michael McCue who will convene a panel of three student members at large from the RCSO. Funding will be distributed continuously until funds are exhausted.

Selective funding allocation may come in the form of:

1. A select number of students receiving full award amount

*or*

2. All applicants receiving a portion of requested funding

- Students must apply for funding in advance of attendance, *no sooner than 60 days prior* to the conference start date and *no later than 30 days prior* to travel. No exceptions will be made.

- See the “Participation Level” table on the application form for the maximum amount of funding offered for each category.
- We understand the difficulty that often comes with the availability of funds to support travel for these opportunities. However, due to limited funding, if eligibility criteria are met and funds are available, students will receive *pre- approval* for a travel funding. Please note that this funding program is a reimbursement program; no funds will be disbursed before the student travels. All students awarded funding will be reimbursed after returning from travel. Additionally, this funding will be fully approved for disbursement ONLY after the student has submitted the required Travel and Business Expense Report along with supporting documentation (i.e. receipts). Please see the application instructions section for information regarding the documentation completion.
- Incomplete or ineligible applications will not be processed.

## Application Instructions

### Pre- Approval Process

- Your application must be pre-approved in order to receive funding
- In order to have your application pre-approved, you must submit your completed application along with documentation supporting your involvement in the event for which you are applying for funding for.
- Please refer to the table on the application for when applications will be accepted based on your event date.
- Travel funding is allocated on a first-come, first-serve due to limited funds; therefore, the earlier you submit your application, the more likely you may be to be awarded funding.
- If extra funding is available, you will be notified.

### Instructions

1. Review the eligibility criteria and guidelines above prior to submitting your application
2. Complete the RSCO travel fund program application and submit along with proof of participation supporting your “Participation Level” listed on the application.
3. Submit your application materials ***no earlier than 60 days prior to and no later than 30 days prior to the start date of the conference.***
4. Allow at least 2 weeks for review of your application. Applicants will be notified of funding decisions via email.
5. If you receive pre- approval for funding:
  - Submit the following support materials *within 30 days of returning from travel*:
    - Signed Travel and Business (T & B) Expense Report form. The T & B Form and instructions can be downloaded via the SHRS website listed below.
      - <http://www.shrs.pitt.edu/student.aspx?id=291>

- Original receipts. **If you do not submit the appropriate receipts, you will not be reimbursed.** These must be original receipts with **your name** printed on it indicating that you have paid. A few of the receipts you can submit:
  - Hotel bill
  - Conference registration fee
  - Rental car receipts OR taxi receipts
  - Meals: We can reimburse meals at a per diem rate set by the federal government.
    - Please refer to this website for current rates:  
<http://www.pts.pitt.edu/Travel/common/perdiem.html>.
  - Gas/ Mileage: Reimbursement is based on mileage, not amount spent on gas during traveling.
    - Please refer to this website for current mileage rates:  
<http://www.pts.pitt.edu/Travel/common/mileage.html>.
  - Plane tickets: The only acceptable receipt (except for e-tickets) is the part stamped “passenger receipt” with **your name** and the cost of the ticket. You must either purchase your ticket through a university-approved agent listed below OR submit a memo explaining why you chose another agency.
- Fill out and sign the meals/mileage student integrity form and submit along with your T&B report after travel.

6. Funding reimbursement will be processed as soon as possible after proper documentation is received.

*Please contact the Rehabilitation Counseling Student Organization via email at [abf14@pitt.edu](mailto:abf14@pitt.edu) if you have questions about the travel fund program.*

### University Funding Policy Requirements

A statement regarding travel funding from University of Pittsburgh’s Guidelines:

*If you are receiving funding from University source(s), all reimbursements should be filed on the same T&B form. **In most cases, your receipts must add up to the total amount that you received from all sources granting you money.** If you do not submit the appropriate receipts, you will not be reimbursed. **We are bound by university reimbursement guidelines and cannot make exceptions. With this in mind, it is always better to save all receipts during your trip.***

