

Vanderbilt University NSF-GRFP Cost of Education (COE) Allowance Proposal and Purchasing Guidelines

What is the Cost of Education (COE) allowance?

The Graduate School serves as the administrative home for Vanderbilt graduate students in the National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP).

NSF provides a fixed COE allowance to Vanderbilt for each fellow on tenure, to be used at the University's discretion. Vanderbilt uses COE funds to pay fellows' student health insurance, student activity fees, student health fees, and a portion of tuition for the years fellows are on tenure.

Tuition is nominal (currently \$200) for fellows on tenure with 72 credit hours. Therefore, after insurance, activity fees, health fees, and tuition are paid, there are funds remaining. In these cases, fellows may request the use of the remaining COE funds for approved education, research, and professional development expenses.

How to Request Remaining COE Funds

This only applies to fellows on tenure who have reached 72 credit hours (see above). To request funds eligible fellows must:

- (1) Contact the NSF-GRFP Coordinating Official (CO) to determine the amount of available COE funds each semester.
- (2) Complete the proposed COE expenses tables below (travel on p.3), including a rationale of how the funds will be used for professional and/or educational development.
- (3) Obtain PI approval and signature.
- (4) Submit this form via email to the NSF-GRFP CO. Your PI must be cc-ed on the request.

The Graduate School provides final approval for all requests. Funding approval will be sent via email. Retain this email to include with your procurement requests. **All COE proposals must be submitted by May 31st and all purchases must be made by June 14th of the tenure year.**

Coordinating Official: Irene Wallrich
irene.wallrich@vanderbilt.edu

Purchasing Guidelines:

- All purchases must be made using Vanderbilt Procurement or payment methods, using the unique COA provided in your approval email.
- Direct purchases by fellows **will not** be reimbursed.
- Purchasing should be in alignment with all Vanderbilt University [policies](#).
- See guidance below for specific purchase categories and unallowable expenses.

Computer equipment and capital purchases:

All computer equipment must be purchased via VUIT in coordination with the fellow's department. Fellows should engage with department staff for the purchase of **any capital equipment (including computers)**.

Computer equipment—laptops, desktops, printers—**must** be purchased on the fellow's behalf by the department or lab using the VU procurement system (AQUIIRE) or other Vanderbilt approved payment method. With PI and Graduate School approval, please provide department procurement specialist/coordinator with equipment model/type information (screenshots/web links/etc.) to facilitate sourcing.

Capital equipment (i.e., laptops, printers, microscopes) purchased with NSF-GRFP COE funds are property of Vanderbilt and the responsibility of the lab. Fellows must return capital equipment to the department or lab at the end of the fellow's tenure.

Books, memberships, and other supplies:

To purchase education and research supplies/materials, please coordinate with your department procurement specialist once you have received approval from the Graduate School.

Unallowable expenses:

Any items deemed unallowable by Vanderbilt finance policies – including, but not limited to, tuition for credit-bearing courses, personal expenses, furniture, accessories – will not be approved. Unallowable expenses are determined by the Graduate School.

This process creates operational efficiencies, allows for better grant/budget tracking by charging to the COA string associated with NSF expenses, and eliminates the need for a fellow to submit a reimbursement request.

NSF- GRFP Cost of Education Proposal

*Submit via email (cc lab PI) to Irene Wallrich
irene.wallrich@vanderbilt.edu*

NSF Fellow: _____

PI: _____

Please complete the tables below (travel on next page), including a rationale for how the NSF-GRFP COE allowance will be used for professional and/or educational development.

Proposed COE Expenses – Education/Research Supplies

Item	Model No. & Weblink	Qty	Estimated Cost	Rationale
Total Estimated Cost				

NSF- GRFP Cost of Education Proposal

Submit via email (cc lab PI) to Irene Wallrich
irene.wallrich@vanderbilt.edu

Proposed COE Expenses – Travel

Travel Purpose: (training/conference/etc.)

Destination: _____

Dates of Travel: _____

Travel Rationale:
 (include name of conference/training)

Item	Cost/Unit	Qty	Total
Registration			
Lodging	\$ /night	nights	
Airfare			
Mileage*	\$0.575 /mi		
Ground Transport			
Per Diem*	\$ /day	days	
Other:			
Other:			
Total Estimated Cost			

*Must use Vanderbilt Travel Policy rates.

Proposed COE Expenses – Travel

Travel Purpose (training/conference/etc.):

Destination: _____

Dates of Travel: _____

Travel Rationale:
 (include name of conference/training)

Item	Cost/Unit	Qty	Total
Registration			
Lodging	\$ /night	nights	
Airfare			
Mileage*	\$0.575 /mi		
Ground Transport			
Per Diem*	\$ /day	days	
Other:			
Other:			
Total Estimated Cost			

*Must use Vanderbilt Travel Policy rates.

I hereby verify all information provided above is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge

Fellow Signature _____

Date _____

I hereby approve the proposed use of the NSF-GRFP Cost of Education (COE) funds for the above outlined education, research and/or professional development expenses.

PI Signature _____

Date _____