College of Music Graduate Funding Guidelines and Funding Limits

Travel Funding | Research Enhancement | Emergency Funding

Updated requirements informed by the MSU College of Music Reimbursement Charts dated 8/1/26.

Purpose: This document establishes College of Music graduate funding limits, reimbursement documentation requirements, pre-trip application expectations, and student expense input instructions. It is intended for graduate students pursuing a degree program who are enrolled in the semester in which funding is awarded.
All application materials must be submitted as one combined PDF; submissions not submitted as one PDF will not be accepted. Submit to musgrad@msu.edu.

1. Quick Reference Funding Limits

Category	Limit or Preset Amount	Key Documentation
Domestic travel or research enhancement	Up to $1,200	Acceptance/participation documentation, budget, receipts or estimates
International travel or research enhancement	Up to $2,000	Acceptance/participation documentation, budget, receipts or estimates, pre-trip travel authorization, and travel registry completion
Total College of Music funding per fiscal year	Up to $2,000	Tracked by fiscal year, July 1-June 30
Emergency funding	Up to $1,500	Itemized list and documentation of emergency need
Meals	$50 per approved travel day	No meal receipts required when using per diem; student must be in overnight status and provide lodging location
Personal vehicle mileage	$0.73 per mile, up to $450 per trip	Mileage calculation showing origin, destination, round-trip miles, and business purpose
U.S. lodging	$164/day planning benchmark; limited to 6 days per trip	Itemized estimate or receipt with required lodging details
Submission format	**One combined PDF**	**Application and all documentation in one PDF; otherwise not accepted.**

2. General Eligibility

Graduate funding is available to support eligible College of Music graduate students who are actively enrolled in a degree program and making satisfactory progress toward degree completion. Funding is limited and is awarded based on eligibility, documentation, available funds, and the relationship of the activity to the student's scholarly, creative, or professional research trajectory.

Students are encouraged to submit funding requests before travel whenever possible. Pre-trip requests should include documented estimates, including flight screenshots with visible dates, lodging estimates, registration costs, and meal calculations based on the College of Music meal per diem.

Submission requirement: The application and all accompanying documentation must be submitted as one PDF. Packets not submitted as one PDF will not be accepted. Submit to musgrad@msu.edu.

3. Eligible Funding Categories

A. Travel Funding: Presentation, Performance, Composition, Conducting, or Competition

Funds are available for graduate students to travel to present their research or creative work at professional venues. Eligible activities include:

- Research papers selected for presentation through a peer-review process.
- Compositions selected through a peer-review process for performance at a conference, festival, or prestigious venue.

- Performers or conductors selected through a peer-review process to appear in a competition, conference, festival, masterclass, or prestigious professional venue.

These funds are not available for general conference attendance, thesis/dissertation research travel, or course-related travel.

B. Research Enhancement Funding

Funds are available to support activities that enhance a student's research, creative activity, or final project. Eligible activities may include:

- Active participation in workshops, short courses, festivals, masterclasses, or comparable educational experiences that are peer-reviewed or have a vetted application process.
- Travel for data collection, archival research, or project-based research activity.
- Participation in a masterclass or workshop where the student is selected as an active participant.

Research Enhancement funding cannot be used to attend workshops, festivals, or masterclasses led by the student's major professor.

C. Supplies and Materials

Under special circumstances, funding requests to purchase supplies or materials directly related to a student's research or creative project may be considered. Requests must include a clear explanation of how the materials support the student's research, final project, performance, composition, or creative activity.

D. Emergency Funding

Emergency funding may be available through the Graduate School and College of Music Graduate Office. Emergency funding from the College of Music is limited to up to $1,500 per student per year, subject to eligibility, documentation, Graduate School review, and available funds. Emergency requests must include an itemized list and documentation for monthly and one-time costs, such as room and board, bills, medical or dental costs, or repairs.

4. Annual Funding Limits

Funding Type	College of Music Limit
Domestic travel or research enhancement project	Up to $1,200
International travel or research enhancement project	Up to $2,000
Total College of Music funding per student per fiscal year	Up to $2,000
Emergency funding	Up to $1,500

The fiscal year runs from July 1 through June 30. Funding is not guaranteed and may be reduced based on available funds, strength of documentation, cost sharing, and the number of requests received.

5. Expense and Reimbursement Requirements

The following requirements incorporate the College of Music reimbursement chart. College of Music student funding limits may be lower than general MSU reimbursement limits. Students should submit estimates for pre-trip review and final receipts or documentation after travel when required. Estimates, receipts, screenshots, and required forms must be included in the one-PDF application packet.

Expense Item	College Student Funding Limit or Calculation	Reporting and Receipt Requirements
Airfare - coach/main cabin	Reasonable coach/main cabin fare; upgraded seats and optional add-ons are not assumed eligible	Passenger name, amount paid, ticket or confirmation number, issuing airline or website provider, class of service, origin and destination, dates of travel, and flight numbers. Pre-trip screenshots must show the visible date captured.
U.S. lodging	Up to $164/day planning benchmark; limited to 6 days	Reimbursed/funded at cost for reasonably priced lodging at the best available rates. Itemized estimate or receipt must include

	per trip	traveler name, hotel name and address, check-in/check-out dates or dates of stay, and total paid.
International lodging	TBD; reviewed case-by-case	Reimbursed/funded at cost for reasonably priced lodging at best available rates. Itemized estimate or receipt must include traveler name, hotel name and address, check-in/check-out dates or dates of stay, total paid, and business purpose if rate is over the maximum allowed.
Shared lodging	Up to $164/day planning benchmark total; limited to 6 days per trip	Cross-referencing of shared expenses is required. Students sharing expenses must submit funding applications together. Reimbursement may be split between travelers or paid to the traveler who paid the expense.
Meals/per diem	$50 per approved travel day	Student must be in overnight status and provide lodging location. Meal receipts are not required for per diem. Meals provided by the event, hotel, host, or registration must not be included.
Personal vehicle mileage	$0.73 per mile; up to $450 per trip	Mileage calculation required showing origin, destination, round-trip miles, and business purpose. Normal commuting mileage is not eligible.
Rental vehicle	Case-by-case when necessary and cost-effective	Itemized receipt including traveler name, rental dates, rate, rental car class, total amount paid, and business purpose.
Parking	Reasonable actual cost	Receipt/documentation providing amount paid.
Tolls	Reasonable actual cost	Receipt/documentation providing amount paid.
Taxi, bus, Uber/rideshare, shuttle, or train	Reasonable actual cost	Receipt/documentation providing amount paid and business purpose.
Conference registration	Actual cost, subject to project and annual limits	Receipt/documentation providing amount paid. Must be connected to eligible active participation.
Emergency funding	Up to $1,500	Itemized list and documentation providing amounts due for monthly and one-time costs, such as room/board, bills, medical, dental, or repairs.

6. Meal Funding Limits

The College of Music meal per diem is $50 per approved travel day. Students may request up to $50 per day for meals during approved travel. Meal requests should be calculated based on the number of approved travel days. Meal receipts are not required when meals are calculated using the College of Music meal per diem.

To receive meal per diem funding, the student must be in overnight travel status and must provide the lodging location. Meals provided as part of a conference registration, festival package, host institution, hotel, or other funded source should not be included in the meal request.

Approved Travel Days	Meal Per Diem	Maximum Meal Request
1 day	$50	$50
2 days	$50/day	$100
3 days	$50/day	$150
4 days	$50/day	$200
5 days	$50/day	$250

7. Airfare Funding Limits and Booking Timeline

Airfare funding is limited to coach/main cabin airfare that is reasonable, necessary, and directly connected to the approved activity. Students should not assume that upgraded seats, premium economy, business class, first class, seat-selection fees, priority boarding, travel insurance, or other optional add-ons will be supported.

Travel Type	Recommended Submission Timeline	Minimum Timeline for Full Airfare Consideration
Domestic travel	45 days before departure	30 days before departure
International travel	90 days before departure	60 days before departure

Requests submitted after these timelines may still be reviewed, but airfare support may be reduced if the late submission results in significantly higher travel costs. Late requests should include a short explanation of why the request could not be submitted earlier.

Students must include a receipt, invoice, or screenshot of the proposed flight price. Documentation must show the date the price was captured, origin and destination, travel dates, airline or booking platform, fare class when available, total cost including taxes and fees, and confirmation that the fare is coach/main cabin or equivalent. Final reimbursement documentation must include passenger name, amount paid, ticket or confirmation number, issuing airline or website provider, class of service, origin and destination, dates of travel, and flight numbers.

8. Lodging Funding Limits

Lodging should be based on a reasonable rate for the destination, the official conference/festival hotel rate, or the most cost-effective lodging available. U.S. lodging uses a $164/day planning benchmark and is limited to 6 days per trip. Requests above the planning benchmark should include justification, such as official conference hotel status, lack of lower-cost availability, accessibility or safety considerations, or cost savings through shared lodging.

Itemized lodging documentation must include the traveler's name, hotel name and address, check-in and check-out dates or dates of stay, and total paid. For shared lodging, the expenses must be cross-referenced and students sharing expenses should submit funding applications together.

9. Ground Transportation and Mileage

Ground transportation may be considered when it is necessary and reasonable. Personal vehicle mileage is calculated at $0.73 per mile and is limited to $450 per trip for College of Music student funding. This cap is a College student funding limit for this policy.

Transportation Type	Preset Amount or Limit	Documentation Required
Personal vehicle mileage	$0.73 per mile; up to $450 per trip	Mileage calculation showing origin, destination, round-trip miles, and business purpose
Rental vehicle	Case-by-case	Itemized receipt including traveler name, rental dates, rate, rental car class, total paid, and business purpose
Parking	Reasonable actual cost	Receipt/documentation providing amount paid
Taxi, bus, Uber/rideshare, shuttle, or train	Reasonable actual cost	Receipt/documentation providing amount paid and business purpose

10. Required Application Materials and Pre-Trip Application Instructions

Students may apply for funding before travel occurs. Pre-trip applications allow the College of Music Graduate Office to review eligibility, confirm required documentation, and determine the amount of funding that may be available before the student makes final travel arrangements. The application and all accompanying documentation must be submitted as one PDF. Packets not submitted as one PDF will not be accepted.

Completed pre-trip applications should include the following required materials:

- The completed **typed** application form using the most current version on the College of Music website,
- The application and all accompanying documentation combined into **one PDF**; otherwise, it will not be accepted.
- Major professor/advisor signature in **BOTH** required locations.
- Confirmation that the student is registered in the semester funding will be awarded.
- A brief student letter explaining the purpose of the request, the student's role, the location and dates, and how the opportunity supports the student's research, creative activity, or professional development.
- Documentation of acceptance, invitation, selection, or active participation, such as an acceptance email, invitation letter, competition notification, conference program listing, or confirmation of selection.
- A detailed estimated budget using the College of Music calculating expense grid.

- Airfare receipt, quote, or screenshot when airfare is requested. The documentation must show the visible date captured, travel dates, origin and destination, airline or booking site, total cost, and coach/main cabin or equivalent fare class when available.
- Lodging estimate or documentation when lodging is requested.
- Registration, application, tuition, or participation fee documentation when applicable.
- Meal estimate and ground transportation estimates as applicable.
- For international travel, completion of required pre-trip travel authorization and MSU travel registry steps.

Requests should be submitted to the Music Graduate Office by emailing one combined PDF containing the application and all supporting materials to musgrad@msu.edu. Multiple attachments or non-PDF submissions will not be accepted.

Students should not purchase airfare, pay registration fees, or make non-refundable travel arrangements before receiving funding approval unless they understand that reimbursement is not guaranteed. After the trip, students may be required to submit final documentation, including receipts for airfare, lodging, registration, ground transportation, or other approved expenses. Meal receipts are not required when meals are calculated using the College of Music meal per diem.

11. Student Calculating Expense Grid

Students should use the companion Excel expense calculator when submitting a funding request. The spreadsheet calculates meals, mileage, lodging days, emergency funding caps, total requested funding, applicable project limits, and the recommended award cap. **Include a PDF copy of the completed expense grid in the one-PDF application packet.**

Key formulas in the calculating grid include:

- Meals = approved travel days x $50/day.
- Personal vehicle mileage = round-trip miles x $0.73/mile, capped at $450 per trip.
- U.S. lodging = number of lodging nights x entered nightly rate, limited to 6 days per trip.
- Emergency funding = documented emergency need, capped at $1,500.
- Recommended award cap = the lesser of the total requested amount and the applicable College of Music funding limit.

Expense Category	Description / Calculation	Documentation Required
Airfare	Coach/main cabin cost; enter estimated or actual cost	Screenshot or receipt with required airfare details and visible capture date for estimates
U.S. Lodging	Nights x nightly rate; limited to 6 days per trip	Hotel estimate, reservation, or itemized receipt
International Lodging	Actual cost, reviewed case-by-case	Itemized lodging documentation and business purpose if applicable
Shared Lodging	Total shared cost or student portion	Cross-reference shared expenses; applications submitted together
Meals	Approved travel days x $50/day	No meal receipts required for per diem; lodging location required
Personal Vehicle Mileage	Round-trip miles x $0.73/mile; capped at $450	Mileage calculation required
Rental Vehicle	Actual cost when approved	Itemized receipt and business purpose
Parking	Actual cost	Receipt/documentation
Taxi/Bus/Uber/Rideshare/Shuttle/Train	Actual cost	Receipt/documentation and business purpose
Registration or Participation Fee	Actual cost	Receipt/documentation providing amount paid
Emergency Funding	Documented need up to $1,500	Itemized list and documentation of need

12. Review Timeline

Completed applications may be submitted at any time during the fiscal year, July 1 through June 30, or until funds are exhausted. After the College of Music determines its award, the student will be notified by email. When appropriate, the College of Music Graduate Office will also forward the request to the Graduate School for consideration.

13. Important Notes

- Acceptance of fellowship monies for Travel Funding or Research Enhancement may affect student loans or other financial aid. Students should contact the Financial Aid Office with questions. The College of Music cannot override Financial Aid decisions.
- Funding is not guaranteed. Awards may be reduced based on available funds, incomplete documentation, late submission, eligibility concerns, or requests that exceed College or Graduate School limits.
- All requests must be submitted using the most current application form and must be typed, not handwritten.
- **Submission requirement: The application and all accompanying documentation must be submitted as one PDF. Packets not submitted as one PDF will not be accepted. Submit to musgrad@msu.edu.**