

MDRF

Mark Diamond Research Fund

GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION

UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO, State University of New York
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MARK DIAMOND RESEARCH FUND 2009-2010 GUIDELINES

Purpose: The **MARK DIAMOND RESEARCH FUND** (MDRF) provides grants to graduate students for **research expenses related to their theses or dissertations ONLY**. Covered expenses include such things as travel, supplies, human subject costs, laboratory animal costs, and transcription fees. Expenses NOT covered include such things as salary or stipend for applicant, conference funds, tuition for courses, clerical expenses, post-research expenses, and equipment or supplies available to applicant through the university or department or intrinsic to applicant's discipline. The program is funded by the GSA (from mandatory student activity fees) and the Graduate School.

Application deadlines: Complete applications are due in the GSA office (310 Student Union) by **3:00 P.M. ON THE DEADLINE DATE**. Application deadlines for 2009-2010 are as follows:

Friday, September 25, 2009 for research to be conducted November 1, 2009 - October 31, 2010;
Friday, February 19, 2010 for research to be conducted April 1, 2010 - March 31, 2011; and
Thursday, May 20, 2010 for research to be conducted July 1, 2010 - June 30, 2011.

Eligibility: Graduate students from any GSA-member department or discipline are eligible to apply, **as long as the applicant has NOT received a waiver of the student activity fee**. Applicants should be at or near completion of all coursework, have finalized the nature of the project, thesis or dissertation, and have an anticipated graduation date.

Amount: Ph.D. students may apply for up to \$2,000 and Master's students for up to \$1,000. Master's students who have received prior funding from the MDRF and continue into a doctoral program, may apply for the unused portion up to the Ph.D. funding limit. Please note that there are limited funds available each year and in each granting period. Grants will be

awarded within the financial constraints of the MDRF annual budget.

Procedural recommendations: Allow at least **TWO WEEKS** to prepare the application. Be sure to **FOLLOW ALL INSTRUCTIONS** and **PROOFREAD** the application for clarity, grammar, spelling and math. Incomplete applications are **AUTOMATICALLY REJECTED**. If you have questions or concerns, contact the MDRF Director **BEFORE** submitting the grant application. **MISSING OR INACCURATE INFORMATION WILL RESULT IN REDUCED FUNDING OR OUTRIGHT REJECTION OF THE APPLICATION.**

Review Criteria: Awards are determined by a majority vote of the MDRF Review Council, a panel made up of previous MDRF grantees, other UB graduate students, and two non-voting members: the MDRF Director and the Assistant Dean of the Graduate School. Applications will be evaluated on the following criteria:

1. **Clarity of the abstract and research description.** You should write in a way that could be understood by **ANY** senior UB graduate student (**NO JARGON!**). If technical terminology is essential to the application, a glossary needs to be included in the appendix;
2. **Clarity and accuracy of the financial planning** for the project; and
3. How well applicant has **followed instructions**.
4. **Viability of proposal**
5. **Ranking versus other applications**

Keep in mind that the people evaluating your application will most likely not be familiar with your discipline. A chemistry student may be deciding on an art application, a music student may be deciding on a physics application. The more care and effort you put into making all aspects of your application clear to someone who has no background in your discipline, the more likely you are to be funded.

Notification: Applicants are usually notified regarding the status of their application within a month following

the application deadline. MDRF grant funds are generally made available to the grant recipient by means of University purchase orders or as reimbursement by check for expenses paid by the grant recipient during the grant period. No cash is awarded.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Download the MDRF Application Form from the GSA website. The application **MUST BE TYPED** (using 12-point font). Pages should be numbered consecutively. The Application consists of nine parts, each of which has a purpose and **MUST BE INCLUDED**:

Part I	Cover Page
Part II	Applicant Status Form
Part III	Table of Contents
Part IV	Abstract
Part V	Research/Project Plan Description
Part VI	Literature Cited or References
Part VII	Budget
Part VIII	Budget Justification
Part IX	Appendix A-H

You must submit the following as part of your application package:

- **Original application** (with original signatures);
- **Three (3) copies of COMPLETE application** (excluding Part I: Cover Page). Copies must be collated and stapled (or otherwise securely fastened);
- **Four (4) collated and stapled copies of Part IV:** Abstract (plus a glossary defining terms, if necessary), Part VII: Budget, and Part VIII: Budget Justification.

Note: You are responsible for making the required copies of the application. The GSA staff will not be able to offer assistance or equipment for this. Incomplete applications will NOT be reviewed.

Application package should be delivered to:

Director, Mark Diamond Research Fund
Graduate Student Association
University at Buffalo
310 Student Union
Amherst, New York 14260

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS

The Application Form should be self-explanatory for Parts I, II, III, IV and VI. Simply follow the directions and provide all the information requested. Note that the application must be assembled according to Part III: Table of Contents (page 3 of the Application Form), so

that page will be particularly useful to you as you prepare the application.

Detailed instructions regarding Parts V, VII, VIII and IX are listed below.

Part V: Research/Project Plan Description

Clearly and concisely describe the research or graduation project for which you are requesting MDRF funding in language that could be understood by ANY senior UB graduate student. Be specific and informative, but **REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE WRITING FOR AN AUDIENCE UNFAMILIAR WITH YOUR AREA OF STUDY. Do not use jargon.** If you must include technical terminology, provide a glossary in the Appendix. Make certain the MDRF Review Council can distinguish between your research and that of your advisor or others associated with the project. It is **only your** research that is eligible for MDRF funding.

a. SPECIFIC AIMS OF THE RESEARCH OR PROJECT.

Outline what the proposed research or project is intended to accomplish.

b. BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE

RESEARCH OR PROJECT. Briefly place your research in a larger context and summarize its importance to your field. Why are you doing this research?

c. PROGRESS REPORT/PRELIMINARY STUDIES/

PREVIOUS RELATED PROJECTS. Briefly report on any ongoing research of which your project is a part. Provide information regarding any preliminary studies, pilot studies, course work or projects that have informed or influenced the current research design.

d. METHODS/TECHNIQUES. Provide details of your research plan, including a brief description of the work that you are proposing, the techniques you will use, the kind of data you expect to obtain, and the means by which you plan to analyze or interpret that data in order to accomplish your research objectives.

Be specific, but avoid unnecessary technical details or jargon. Provide enough information so that someone not involved in your discipline can follow your approach and understand your project. **This section is considered the most important portion of Part V, therefore no application will be considered complete without it. You are writing for a broad audience, so analogies may be useful.**

e. RESOURCES NEEDED. Provide details concerning the human subjects, animals, materials, supplies, performers or other resources that will be used in this project, including facilities and institutions (laboratories,

museums, libraries, etc.) to which you will need access. Failure to provide this information suggests an inadequately developed methodology. When using human or animal subjects, the applicant must identify the subject pool (even in cases where subject fees are not requested), and explain the number of subjects or animals expected to be used. For quantitative research, this will involve a statistical rationale and explanation of statistical analysis, and for qualitative research, a justification of choices. In the case of human subjects, you must include a plan for recruitment.

Part VII: Budget Form

Complete the one-page Budget Form provided, itemizing all project expenses, available resources, and MDRF requests. Make certain the math is correct. Do not leave anything for the Review Council to calculate, decipher or interpret. You may add rows if needed. **Consider the formula: Section A (all project expenses) – Section B (available resources) = Section C (MDRF request).**

Section A: Summarize ALL expenses related to the project described in this application.

Section B: Provide a brief summary of available resources (financial and in-kind). Financial resources include any grants (other than MDRF) or other sources of income (including personal savings) that will be used to pay for this research. In-kind resources are those to which you have access free of charge (at the University or elsewhere), such as equipment, software, computer, lab, studio, housing with family/friends, use of a car, etc. Do not include a dollar amount for the in-kind items.

Section C: MDRF expenses. List all expenses for which you are seeking MDRF support. If the item exceeds \$200 (or if purchasing many of the same item) the total for these items exceeds \$200, the cost listed here should reflect the LOWEST of the THREE quotes provided in the appendix, unless you are specifically requesting a more expensive item (with explanation provided in the Budget Justification). Make certain that the amounts listed in this section do not total more than the amount for which you are eligible to apply.

PART VIII: BUDGET JUSTIFICATION

You **must provide a clear justification for every item** in the budget for which you are requesting MDRF support. Items should be clearly identifiable as items from Section C of the Budget Form. If you are awarded a grant, you are limited to the items you actually requested and justified, and which were approved.

You must **explain why each item (and quantity** of that item) is needed. The Council will assume that **any**

item not justified is not needed and will remove the item from the budget. If you want 5 nights in a hotel, you must state why 5 is the necessary number of nights. If you need 100 subjects, you must explain what methodology you used to arrive at 100 as the necessary number. If you need to fly to a location and then rent a car, you must explain why you chose this location and why you cannot use other methods of transportation.

Three (3) quotes are required for any individual budget item that exceeds \$200. If you state that multiple price quotes are impossible to obtain because only one company sells a product or service, **you must provide documentation.** If it is necessary to use one particular product only to insure a standard research protocol, explain this fully and provide documentation to support your claim. **All price quotes must be documented.** Documentation should be included in Appendix G (see next page for details). Failure to provide three adequate quotes for items that exceed \$200 will result in immediate denial of the grant. If you are purchasing three (3) of the same item that costs \$100 each, your total for that item is \$300 and you will need three quotes.

In all cases the Council will look to see whether the applicant has:

- Established that the item requested is necessary to the research;
- Established that the item requested is not available from another less expensive or free source; and
- Provided a justification of the quantities of supplies, the length of travel, etc.
- Provided three quotes for any individual item (or total items) that exceeds \$200.

Fundable Items

1. TRAVEL - Itemize all travel expenses and provide MDRF Council with **precise travel plans** necessary to complete project.

a. Transportation.

- **Long Distance:** Indicate the type of transportation (air, train, bus) to be used, and provide three price quotes if the amount exceeds \$200. Dates of travel on the quotes must be consistent with information provided elsewhere in the application.
- **Local Travel:** Travel associated with daily routine activities is NOT fundable. Travel directly related to your research is fundable. Travel to and from UB is NOT fundable.
- **Mileage:** MDRF currently reimburses 14 cents per mile for research-related travel that

involves using your own vehicle (you must provide documentation of the distance e.g., MapQuest).

- **Tolls:** Tolls must be budgeted for in the proposal.
- **Car Rental:** Only economy type cars are allowed for rental. If another vehicle is required, it must be justified in the budget justification. No reimbursement for fuel used in rental vehicles.

b. Food. MDRF funds up to \$20/day for food (breakfast and dinner). This is not a per diem rate and reimbursement is only for actual expenses

c. Lodging. MDRF funds up to \$75/day for lodging. This is not a per diem rate (Higher rates may apply to high demand areas).

NOTES:

Note 1. Airline tickets purchased prior to the first day of the granting period, in order to take advantage of "Super-Saver" fares, will be reimbursable provided: (1) the proposal is indeed funded by the MDRF Review Council, (2) the travel takes place *during* the granting period, and (3) the MDRF Director gives prior approval. **THERE WILL BE NO OTHER RETROACTIVE REIMBURSEMENT FOR ANY BUDGETED ITEMS THAT ARE PURCHASED PRIOR TO THE FIRST DAY OF THE GRANTING PERIOD.**

Note 2. Reimbursement: (Original, itemized receipts are required) you must **provide documentation** in order to be reimbursed for travel expenses (public transportation, mileage information, parking, etc.) and all other expenses.

2. EQUIPMENT - Itemize all equipment requested. Any equipment purchased with funds from the MDRF becomes the property of the MDRF and GSA and must be returned to the MDRF inventory upon completion of the project for use by future grantees.

3. SUPPLIES - Itemize all supplies and provide the MDRF Council with precise quantities necessary to complete the project.

4. SOFTWARE – The purchase of software is a fundable expense only if it is not available for use on campus AND the applicant makes a clear case for why it is necessary. Software that enhances the presentation of findings is NOT fundable. As with other MDRF

requests, three quotes must be provided, if the cost exceeds \$200. If the software is only available through one source, documentation must be provided.

5. TRANSCRIPTION FEES - Transcription fees will be funded at the flat rate of \$5.00 per page. Reimbursement is only for actual expenses and must be supported by original receipts. Transcription costs may not exceed 50% of your total budget allocation requested.

6. HUMAN SUBJECT COSTS - MDRF will reimburse human subjects at a rate of **\$7.25 per hour of participation**. Itemize all subject costs, including how many subjects will be required and the estimated amount of time each subject will be needed. Some applicants choose to pool the human subject fees and use this money to purchase incentives for human subjects (mugs, ribbons, gift cards, etc.) If you choose to do this, you must provide a detailed explanation of the process to be used in awarding incentives. Submit University IRB Human Subject Approval.

7. SPECIAL SERVICES/NEEDS - Itemize all special services/needs (e.g., translators, coders, expert services, performers, extra computer time, etc.) and clearly explain in the Budget Justification why they are needed. **The standard MDRF rate for special services/needs is \$12 per hour.** You can request a higher amount (as long as it is reasonable), but you must clearly justify why you wish to pay the specified amount (e.g. a translator of an uncommon language may demand higher compensation). You must provide documentation regarding qualifications (e.g. resume/c.v.) of those you propose to pay for these services. If you are requesting more than the \$12/hour MDRF standard rate, you must provide three quotes if total to be paid exceeds \$200.

8. LABORATORY ANIMAL COSTS - Itemize all animal costs, state how many animals will be required, their unit purchase cost, and their unit care cost (animal care cost per day), using University guidelines. Submit University Animal Use Approval.

9. RENTAL EXPENSES - Renting performing spaces and equipment, and recording expenses are fundable when they are required and justified to complete the research/project.

10. GALLERY FEES AND FRAMING – For students in art related disciplines whose final projects include an exhibition, gallery fees and framing for the exhibition are fundable.

11. POSTAGE – Postage and shipping expenses are fundable. Itemize and provide details. Note: The

University Mail Office has a bulk-mailing permit for large mailings.

12. ARCHIVAL PHOTOCOPYING – MDRF applicants are expected to abide by all copyright laws.

13. PHOTOCOPYING OF SURVEYS – MDRF applicants are expected to abide by all copyright laws.

Non-Fundable Items

1. PAYMENT OF SALARIES, STIPENDS, AND/OR FEES TO APPLICANT OR RESEARCH ASSISTANTS.

2. CONFERENCE FEES OR EXPENSES. (The GSA has a separate conference fund.)

3. TUITION FOR COURSES OR TRAINING.

4. BOOKS OR MANUALS.

5. TYPING, DATA ENTRY, OR SIMILAR CLERICAL EXPENSES (except for Transcription Fees, as noted above).

6. POST-RESEARCH EXPENSES, such as software necessary for enhancing the presentation of findings, advertising, duplication, printing or binding costs.

7. EQUIPMENT OR SUPPLIES THAT ARE NORMALLY AVAILABLE to students within a department or within the University will not be funded, at the discretion of the MDRF Review Panel.

8. PERSONAL EQUIPMENT (e.g. computers, printers, etc.) **OR SUPPLIES THAT ARE INTRINSIC TO THE APPLICANT'S DISCIPLINE** (e.g. artists' paintbrushes, general laboratory supplies, etc.) will not be funded.

9. GENERAL PHOTOCOPYING IS NOT COVERED. See Fundable Expenses for archival photocopying and surveys.

10. ALL INSURANCE is considered a personal expense and is not covered by MDRF (Rental, Health, Travel, Etc.)

11. TRAVEL TO AND FROM THE UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO. If you do not live in Buffalo, or are temporarily working outside of the Buffalo area, MDRF will not reimburse for travel to and from UB

12. ANY REQUESTED ITEMS THAT DO NOT FALL INTO THESE CATEGORIES ARE UP TO THE INTERPRETATION OF THE MDRF REVIEW COMMITTEE.

PART IX: APPENDICES

You must provide the appendices listed below to ensure a complete application. If an appendix is not relevant to your application then list it as not applicable (NA) in Part III: Table of Contents. If there might be any chance that the Council would question the applicability of a particular appendix item, you should include an explanation of why it is not applicable.

Appendix A: Curriculum Vita (CV).

A CV must be included in the application. The curriculum vita helps to establish your credibility as a grant applicant. This is not a transcript of course grades; it is an academic biography that summarizes your education, teaching experience, research experience, and other relevant information. If you need assistance with a CV, contact a faculty member in your department or Career Planning and Placement.

Appendix B: Acceptance to Candidacy.

PhD applicants must attach a photocopy of the "Acceptance to Candidacy" letter you received from the Graduate School (not the application that you have submitted). Applicants may list this item as pending if their Application to Candidacy has not yet been approved, but has been submitted.

NOTE: NO GRANT FUNDS WILL BE DISTRIBUTED until the grantee has provided the MDRF with a copy of the signed "Acceptance to Candidacy" letter from the Graduate School.

Appendix C: Human Subject Approval.

If you are using humans in any way you must include a copy of the completed and approved IRB (Institutional Review Board) Human Subject Approval Form (which must be legible, and have ALL the required signatures). MDRF will not release grant funds until this form is received. Please see the IRB website <http://www.research.buffalo.edu/rsp/default.cfm> for more information. IF the MDRF Review Panel feels that IRB approval may be required, they will request you provide documentation from IRB that states IRB approval is not needed.

Appendix D: Animal Use Documentation.

If you are using animals in any way, you must attach a copy of your clearance for animal use or explicitly state why you are exempt from this University requirement and provide supporting documentation. This copy MUST be legible, and MUST have ALL the required

signatures. MDRF will defer, not release, grant funds until this form is received.

Appendix E: Institutional Review Board Approval for use of radioactive material. If applicable, attach a copy of approval for the use of radioactive materials. The form must have all required signatures. MDRF will not release grant funds until this form is received.

Appendix F: Documentation of Access. You must provide documentation that you will have access to the institutions, equipment or individuals necessary for the research described in the application. Documentation can include letters, email correspondence, printouts of appropriate information from web sites, etc. If the customs and culture of the targeted community preclude such documentation, you must provide a detailed explanation of your plan to gain access. (If you have concerns about subject confidentiality, contact the MDRF Director for further instruction). If correspondence is in a language other than English, you must provide a translation.

Appendix G: Price quote documents. You must provide **three quotes** for budget items that exceed \$200. You must also include three quotes for multiple quantities of the same item that totals over \$200. Documentation for these quotes should be included here, and might consist of a catalog page, a published advertisement, voided register receipt, or a printout from a website (the address of the web site is NOT enough). Stores can also provide written price quotes. Quotes should be **well organized and clearly marked**. For example, if you include a full page from a catalogue with multiple items listed, indicate which of the items and prices on the page you are submitting as a quote. **If providing written documentation proves impossible, you must contact the MDRF Director to determine how to address the specific situation.**

Appendix H: Supporting Materials. You should include material here that you feel would be helpful to the MDRF Council. If you use any technical terms or jargon, you should include a glossary. Other support materials might be surveys and interview questionnaires to be used, samples of programs and recording of performances, videos, graphs, diagrams, tables, charts, maps, photographs or slides. (Materials can be returned to you, upon request, following the review session.) If you are requesting funding for special services (translator, performer, expert) you should include appropriate documentation/resumes in this section.