School of Communication
Graduate Research Ignition Grants
2017-2018

Note: Prior application for a Graduate Research Grant from The Graduate School (TGS) is required for eligible projects to be considered for a School of Communication (SoC) Ignition grant.

This year’s deadlines:
TGS Graduate Research Grant deadline: Monday, January 22nd, 2018
SoC Ignition Deadline Date: Monday, February 19th, 2018

TGS Graduate Research Grant deadline: Monday, April 16th, 2018
SoC Ignition Deadline Date: Monday, May 7th, 2018
(Also See Eligibility and Timing below)

The School of Communication (SoC) announces its 2017-2018 competitive grant program for SoC full-time PhD students to provide up to $2000 for research and creative projects that you initiate. The purpose of the program is to help cover costs of scholarly projects that will lead to presentations and publications that you will develop as lead author, costs which are not covered by your advisor’s grants, your doctoral program, or The Graduate School (TGS). You may receive only one grant through this program during your studies in a PhD program in SoC. This grant may be used in combination with other internal funding, such as a Graduate Research Grant from TGS, or with external funding.

Expenses that can be Covered An SoC Graduate Research Ignition Grant can provide support for expenses incurred in your research projects including:

• Research travel (e.g., to a field research site, to an archive or library with a special collection, travel to interview major figures in the history of your research topic)
• Subject recruitment costs
• Hiring an assistant to run subjects or code data
• Direct costs of research (such as specialized supplies, software, laboratory animals, archival copies, copyright fees for use of photographs or screen images) with the exceptions listed below
• Construction or rental (not purchase) of specialized equipment not available on campus

Ignition grant funds are for reimbursement of approved research expenses described in your budget and must be managed in accordance with standard NU policies, including documentation of expenditures. Funds not expended by the grant end date revert to the School of Communication.

Expenses not Covered Some of the expenses that will NOT be covered through this program are: journal, book, or membership expenses, TGS dissertation fees or other expenses of preparing for your dissertation defense, consultant costs, travel for general educational purposes (including attendance or presentation at professional meetings, workshops, short courses, or
performance venues), purchase of computers or other equipment, purchase of routine office supplies, or payment of tuition, salary, or stipend costs for yourself or a family member.

Project costs incurred prior to the grant award and budget approval will not be reimbursed.

**Eligibility and Timing**  You can be awarded only one Ignition grant. If you are eligible for a TGS Graduate Research Grant (GRG) you must apply to both programs and your application for a GRG must occur prior to your Ignition grant application. This is because TGS has more funds available for GRGs than SoC has for Ignition grants. See the TGS website to determine your eligibility for a GRG: [http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/funding/fellowships-and-grants/internal-grants/graduate-research-grant.html](http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/funding/fellowships-and-grants/internal-grants/graduate-research-grant.html). If you are eligible for and apply to both grant programs, SoC will consider your proposal for funding if you are not funded by TGS in that round of submissions or if you are proposing more than $3000 in research or creative expenses, the maximum grant available from TGS. You must be a student in good standing with TGS to be considered for an Ignition grant.

Note for CSD PhD Students: According to TGS, only “humanities and social science projects” in SoC are eligible for funding, and biomedically-related projects are not. However, many proposals dealing with speech and hearing disorders have been awarded GRGs. Potential applicants in the CSD PhD program should not assume that their proposals would not be eligible for a GRG award. If you are a CSD PhD student and concerned about your project’s GRG eligibility, send a brief paragraph describing it to Kate Veraldi (k-veraldi@northwestern.edu). Unless Ms. Veraldi informs you that your proposal is not eligible, apply to both programs.

If you entered the School of Communication with a Bachelor’s degree, you will first be eligible for an SoC Graduate Research Ignition Grant after you’ve completed three quarters of PhD study, so if you entered SoC in fall 2016 with a BA or BS (and no relevant advanced degrees), you are not eligible for 2017 Ignition grants. If you entered the School of Communication with a relevant Master’s degree, you are eligible upon your enrollment.

*Avoid waiting too long before applying for an Ignition grant.* The optimal time to apply for GRG and Ignition grant funding is during your third year if you are planning five years of PhD study, or even earlier if you entered with a relevant Master’s degree and want to earn your PhD sooner. Ignition grants can’t be used to cover research expenses during your fifth and subsequent years of PhD study. About one-third of past applicants applied late enough that they had only a few months to use the awarded grant funding for their research expenses prior to their fifth year. Thus if you entered SoC in the fall of 2013 or earlier you are not eligible to apply for an Ignition grant. If you entered in fall 2014 and are currently in your fourth year, you would only have until the beginning of fall quarter 2018 to complete your Ignition grant project. The foregoing information assumes no leaves of absences during your graduate study, if you’ve taken a leave for two or more quarters, you may be eligible for additional time, contact Jane Rankin at j-rankin@northwestern.edu to confirm before applying.

You may want to consider that proposals submitted for the February, 2018 deadline are likely to face less competition than those submitted for the May, 2018 deadline.
International Travel? If you propose to use Ignition grant funds to travel abroad you should plan to adhere to the procedures described by NU’s Office of Global Safety and Security on their website [http://www.northwestern.edu/global-safety-security/] and those on The Graduate School’s webpage on international travel: [http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/campus-life/health-and-wellness/student-health-insurance/international-travel.html].

**Application Procedures** To apply, go to the instructions for applying for a Graduate Research Grant from TGS and prepare the information listed there, with the differences noted below. See this page: [http://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/funding/fellowships-and-grants/internal-grants/graduate-research-grant.html]. As part of your Graduate Research Grant application you list any outside funding that has been requested or granted. If one or more of your requests is funded (including TGS funds) after your Ignition application has been submitted, send Jane Rankin a message at j-rankin@northwestern.edu with the amount awarded so that the limited Ignition funds can be awarded equitably.

Here are two important differences in proposal procedures between TGS’s Graduate Research Grant program and the SoC’s Ignition Grant program:

1. Prior to submission, combine the items in your Ignition grant proposal, except your advisor’s recommendation letter, into one pdf file, keeping them in the order listed under Instructions, and submit them to your academic advisor. Plan on giving it to him or her at least one week before the deadline. Submit your Ignition grant proposal directly to Jane Rankin electronically rather than submitting through the designated TGS nominator for your graduate program. **Please use the subject line ***2018 Ignition grant proposal for [Insert Your Name]*** to minimize the chances that your proposal gets overlooked. The letter of recommendation from your advisor should be sent to Jane Rankin directly as an electronic file. The electronic address for both items is j-rankin@northwestern.edu. If you do not receive an acknowledgement of your application within a week of submission, contact Jane Rankin.

2. Research involving human participants must be reviewed by the appropriate IRB office prior to any data collection. If you’ve already obtained IRB approval prior to submitting your Ignition grant proposal, please send it along. If you haven’t yet submitted it, send your IRB approval to Jane Rankin as soon as you obtain it. A copy of IRB approval or exemption must be submitted before any funding will be released. IRB information is available at [http://www.research.northwestern.edu/oprs/irb/].

**Deadlines and Notifications** There will be two deadline dates for SoC Ignition proposals in 2017-2018: **Monday, February 19, 2018** and **Monday, May 7, 2018**. Proposals submitted to SoC will be reviewed once TGS has announced the grants from its review cycle, typically at the end of the quarter in which the proposal was submitted. This way the SoC review panel has information about Graduate Research Grant funding for projects and can fund the Ignition grant proposals equitably. Therefore apply for an Ignition grant at least a few months before you need funding to begin.

**Criteria for Selection** The criteria for selection will include the significance of the proposed project. Your explanation of significance may focus on the project’s theoretical or
methodological significance, its creative contribution, and/or its potential contribution to social or public policy. Please keep in mind that the reviewers are communication scholars who may not be expert in your area. Additional review criteria include: evidence that the project is your own creative or research initiative, the clarity and feasibility of your research plan, the adequacy of your preparation for the proposed activities, the rationale for the proposed funds, the appropriateness of the costs (Is there a way to accomplish the goals less expensively? How closely related are the proposed expenses to your research/creative goals?), and your past productivity. If you cut and paste in content from your dissertation proposal, make sure that the resulting text provides crucial information to reviewers and reads coherently.

**Final Report**  A two-page final report on your project is required. It should include a description of your achievements with the Ignition grant funding and the opportunities that it made possible (e.g., dissertation completion, publications, receipt of awards, etc.) and be submitted electronically to j-rankin@northwestern.edu at the expiration of the project period, before your graduation, and normally no longer than 18 months after the award. If your project will require more time, write this into your proposal or contact Jane Rankin for an extension before the project period expires.

**Questions?** If you have questions about the Graduate Research Ignition grants contact your Director of Graduate Studies or Associate Dean Jane Rankin at j-rankin@northwestern.edu.