In recent years the School of International Relations has been able to offer grants for special purposes in addition to year-long fellowships awarded upon admission. While none of the following is a guaranteed entitlement, the School hopes to be able to continue making this special support available. Two new opportunities are added this year. Check with the POIR adviser for the latest news. Technical requirements for budgets and reimbursements are given at the end of this memo. Remaining questions on how to apply may be directed to SIR Associate Director Linda Cole lcole@usc.edu and in VKC 330. All awards are conditional on the candidate maintaining good standing and having submitted the annual POIR activity report by 31 March.

FOR ALL POIR STUDENTS

Summer grant. Deadline 1 March.

The School of International Relations welcomes proposals from POIR students to help finance research, methods training, language training, or data collection during the summer. Award levels will vary up to a maximum of $2,500. One who has defended the dissertation proposal by 31 March and has not completed the dissertation can qualify for up to $5000, which may include support for summer writing. The proposed project or training must be completed by 15 August.

These activities are eligible:
1. Methods training: attendance in a summer program designed to enhance proficiency in social science methods, qualitative or quantitative;
2. Language training in the US or abroad at a recognized institution or facility. Proof of acceptance into the methods or language training course is required.
3. Preliminary field or archival research for the PhD dissertation. If the research is conducted abroad in a student’s home country, only airfare is eligible.
5. Writing, for those at the ABD stage. Students eligible for final summer funding from the College or graduate school must demonstrate evidence of having applied for this money to be considered for money from SIR. Should the student win such a grant by the College or graduate school, SIR will not duplicate the award.

Proposals should be sent by email to Linda Cole lcole@usc.edu at the School of International Relations. The proposal should be specific but the text should not exceed one single-spaced page in length. The second page should present a detailed budget. Tuition, travel expenses, and other expenses that are directly related to the research or program are eligible. An
endorsement of the project from the student's faculty advisor is required. Decisions will be made on a competitive basis. Any application submitted late will be considered only if funds remain.

Applicants are expected to apply also to other USC and external sources and to report where they have applied. CIS does not participate in summer graduate student funding. If you receive other funding for this proposal, you must disclose it.

If your plans change significantly, you will need to resubmit a revised proposal and budget for approval. If you do not use any portion of the summer grant for the approved project, please reimburse the School by giving Linda Cole a check payable to USC during the first week of fall classes.

Note: One reason for the March 1 deadline is to make sure we complete the process in order to deliver timely summer checks. The College does not issue summer grants until late May to early June, to avoid conflicts with financial aid and campus employment restrictions. If you will be leaving the area immediately, you may arrange for the check to be mailed to a different address or deposited into your bank account. If you expect expenses before early June, it is wise to have a plan for how you will cover your expenses until you receive the award.

By 30 September, submit proof of travel and original receipts for all expenses to Linda Cole. Submit a one-page report outlining the accomplishments made possible by SIR summer funding, to Linda Cole in hard copy, to the POIR Graduate Advisor for your file, and to the professor chairing your committee. No future requests for SIR funding will be approved if such a report is not received on time.

NEW. APSA travel grant. Deadline 1 April.

A large share of the academic jobs are offered by political science departments, and attending the American Political Science Association annual convention in late August, with or without presenting a paper, can be a valuable part of professionalization. The candidate can invite published scholars from other universities to coffee to get acquainted, ask questions, and get them interested in one’s work. Introductions by USC professors can help. One can attend panels and observe first hand what to do and not do. Attending APSA can increase confidence that one understands the discipline’s culture and expectations.

Each candidate who has successfully defended a dissertation proposal is eligible to receive this grant once. Presenting a paper is not required. Ask your faculty advisors whether and when this travel would be beneficial to you. The SIR will reimburse reasonable travel expenses including the convention registration fee up to a maximum of $750. Please see below for guidelines on reasonable travel expenses.

Procedure: Submit your request to the POIR director and ask your chair to send the director advice about it. The director will forward recommended proposals to the SIR with his or her recommendations. SIR plans to fund as many approved awards in a given year as funds allow, but it is possible that not all applications will be funded in a given year. Applicants are expected to apply also to other USC and external sources of funds and to report where they have
applied. Other USC funding and outside funding relevant to the research proposal must be disclosed. If you receive another grant for travel to the same convention, this award would cover only reasonable costs that exceed the other grant. Finally, you must deliver to the POIR director and Linda Cole (lcole@usc.edu) a short report describing concretely what you did to take advantage of the opportunity: what panels you attended, who you met privately, what you learned that you did not already know, and recommendations for later students. This report is due two weeks after the convention ends. The School prefers to continue this offer as long as it has good evidence that candidates are taking professional advantage of it.

FOR STUDENTS SPECIALIZING IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

A POIR candidate who has not passed quals is considered an IR student if he or she is preparing either International Political Economy or International Security and Foreign Policy or both as examination fields. (The other fields can be comparative politics, American politics, or a customized field.) A student who presents a customized exam field can also ask whether the School would consider the custom field as qualified for this purpose. After passing quals, a candidate is considered an IR specialist if the dissertation committee includes at least one professor appointed primarily in the School of IR. The IR professor need not be chair of the committee.

NEW. Incentive to apply for fellowships from sources outside USC

Most candidates were offered two years of fellowship as part of the admission package. If you apply for and win an external dissertation fellowship or grant and agree to decline the promised second USC fellowship, the SIR will provide you a supplementary fellowship that increases your income by $5,000. For example, if the external award were $20,000 and the USC rate were $25,000, SIR would provide a matching fellowship of $10,000, making your total income $20K + $10K = $30,000 for that year. If the external award were $28,000, the latter plus the $5,000 supplement would make your total income $33,000. In addition to the financial advantage, each doctoral candidate should apply for external grants while under faculty guidance in order to develop the valuable professional skill of writing successful proposals.

Procedure: Ask the POIR office for tips on how to identify competitions and deadlines. Many deadlines are once a year in the fall, for disbursement the following academic year. Winning proposals often have resulted from six months of work, comments, and refinements. Start early in and ask your faculty for help. Attend USC workshops on proposal writing. As soon as you receive notice of winning a competition, contact the POIR director and Linda Cole lcole@usc.edu to arrange the supplement.

Travel to present a paper at a conference

Candidates are encouraged to consider submitting advanced dissertation chapters or papers at professional conferences such as the ISA and APSA annual conventions. Funding from this source is available only for the presentation of a paper. Eligible are all papers that deal
with a subject in international relations or with a global issue studied outside the USA. For this purpose, work is considered advanced if equivalent in quality to that normally presented by assistant professors. In most cases preparation will not be advanced enough until the fourth or fifth year of graduate education. The committee has, however, approved papers by students earlier in the program, for instance written by a candidate who already had an MA. Students should ask their professors whether their papers are sufficient. If they have not reached that level yet, the student can collect comments on drafts from local faculty and fellow candidates and then improve and submit them for publication without attending a conference, or apply the next time.

For a paper at a major conference outside North America the maximum is $1,000; for a major Canadian, US, or Mexican conference, $750; for a regional US conference, $200. For a meeting held less than 75 miles from USC, SIR will reimburse registration fees but not travel expenses. These maxima apply per paper, even if more than one student co-authors the paper. A student who co-authors a paper with a professor is eligible to apply if the student himself or herself presents the paper at the conference, either with or without the co-author in attendance. No student is eligible for more than one conference per academic year.

Procedures:
1. Ask your chief faculty advisers whether the dissertation chapter or paper meets the standard for presentation at a top professional conference. Professors should give honest answers and assistance if needed, bearing in mind the harm to reputations that has come from premature appearances.
2. To qualify the student must write the paper prior to the SIR deadline, which is three months after applying to attend the conference. E.g. if the conference deadline is 1 June, the SIR deadline is 1 October.
3. The student should be a member of the association and register early to save on the registration fee.
4. Apply in writing to the SIR Director’s Advisory Committee c/o lcole@usc.edu. Include 4 elements: a cover letter indicating your intention to attend the conference with a note on the specific nature of the conference and whether it has accepted your paper; a copy of your invitation if the organization has accepted the paper; a copy of your paper; a travel budget (details below), mentioning other funding sources you are contacting and how you will cover your expenses if you do not obtain all the needed funding. Email is fine as long as all necessary documentation is attached.
5. Ask one faculty adviser to write the committee confidentially advising whether this paper, including improvements that are feasible before the meeting, meets the professional standard.
6. If the SIR committee approves and the conference accepts the paper, the student must notify the adviser and the SIR director that he or she plans to attend the conference. Then the student must present the paper at a USC seminar, normally hosted by the CIS, at least one month prior to the conference. The paper should be circulated 2 weeks before the presentation.
7. Regional conferences like ISA West are an alternative for papers that are not yet ready for a top-level convention. For that case, the student must submit the request, accompanied by the paper and request a letter from the chief adviser evaluating the paper, 30 days before the conference.
8. The deadline may be relaxed for a candidate who has presented a paper successfully in a previous year. In a subsequent year, the student should present the new paper to the main faculty adviser. The adviser is asked to write the committee 30 days prior to the conference, assessing whether the previous presentation had been successful and whether the new paper is suitable.

9. After the conference, seek reimbursement of approved expenses by presenting receipts to Linda Cole in VKC 330. Also provide the committee with a brief report on the use of the grant, including how the paper was received at the conference. No requests for further support will be considered until reports on prior grants have been filed.

**Technical requirements**

A **travel budget** may include the categories listed below. If actual expenses exceed the approved budget, some expenses may not be reimbursed.

**Incidentals**, such as conference registration

**Round trip coach air fare.** Online ticket receipts are accepted. Make sure that you are submitting a receipt and not just a confirmation of a travel booking. The receipt includes payment details, whether paid by credit card (usually the last 4 account digits) or cash (in which case the receipt shows a zero balance).

Ticketing options: Use a USC travel vendor and we can prepay the travel with an internal requisition. But the USC vendor is not the cheapest way to fly. When dealing with a tight budget, you may prefer to charge a ticket on your credit card and seek reimbursement once you have completed the trip.

**Local Transportation.** Ask taxi and bus drivers for a receipt with amount, date and type of payment.

**Hotel.** If you share a hotel room, ask for a separate invoice for your share. If the hotel cannot produce separate invoices, process the request only for your share. The hotel cost includes the room plus local taxes. It should not include meals charged to your room or any minibar charges.

**Meals.**

**Claiming a reimbursement.** Print the USC travel expense report form, found on the Disbursement Control website along with the University's procedures: [http://fbs.usc.edu/depts/dc/](http://fbs.usc.edu/depts/dc/). The Disbursement Control Office insists that each item and receipt be listed separately on the form. If, for example, you have more than three entries to list in the transportation section, do not combine items into a single line. Instead submit more than one form. Please note: The USC form says you do not have to provide a receipt for items less than $25, but USC Dornsife College requires them. Please submit a receipt to support every item you claim. The School does not use the per diem reimbursement option; we ask for receipts for all meals and lodging. Attach all receipts to 8 1/2 x 11 sheets of paper using clear tape, not staples, with no overlaps. They will be scanned. Ideally, organize the receipts into the main budget categories above with meal receipts in date order. If your signature is difficult to read, please print your name too. Paying attention to these details can reduce delays in processing.