DEES PhD Student Research Allowance  
Policy and Procedures

DEES provides a discretionary research allowance of $1,000/year to each full-time PhD student in good standing in their 1st through their 5th years.

Allowable Expenses: Your research allowance is specifically earmarked to support research expenses leading to your PhD. It can help you attend special meetings, travel for fieldwork, conduct analyses, buy research-required equipment, etc.

Computers and Equipment purchased with University funds are University property. We consider computers to have a useful life of 3 years, during which they must remain at Columbia if you leave the program. Students nearing graduation (4th year or later) will not be allowed to buy computers with their funds unless approved by the DEES Chair.

Unallowable Expenses: Non-research or personal expenses: e.g., text books, class expenses, meals (unless traveling), rent, personal/luxury items, services, alcohol, etc. Clothing and recreational items (e.g., camping gear) are not allowed.

Funds Availability: Funds are added at the start of each academic year. Unspent balances carry forward to the next year, allowing you to accumulate up to $5000 for larger expenses. Upon graduation unspent funds are returned to the pool to help other students.

How to Access your Funds

Talk to us first! Always contact us before you spend to discuss your intended research expense and payment method.

Direct billing: Some items can be purchased directly for you by the department:
- Airfare purchased through Ultramar or other Columbia travel service
- Equipment/supplies that can be ordered by credit card
- Computers or laptops (must be bought through Columbia, not reimbursed)

Invoice payment: You can use your DEES allowance for full or partial payment of bills for analytical services and other research expenses. The invoice must be addressed to Columbia University/DEES, not to you personally.

Reimbursement: We will reimburse you for eligible receipts up to 90 days old submitted with a standard Columbia Travel and Business Expense Reimbursement Request. An example TBER for a travel reimbursement from your research fund is attached.

- All receipts must show proof of payment (0.00 balance, credit card #, etc.)
- Meals receipts (accepted for research travel only) must be itemized.
- Include a flyer/agenda or other proof of conference or event

Please try to save your allowance for large research expenses (> $300). Where possible, combine smaller purchases into a single claim. We don’t have the staff to process individual $40 transactions for 90 students!

Questions? Contact Jean Leote (x8550) or Sally Odland (x8633)

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