**The Cheuse Center Travel Research Awards for MFA Students**

Each year, the Alan Cheuse International Writers Center awards three grants of $5,000 each to support George Mason first- and second-year MFA students to travel internationally and conduct research. These awards are designed to enable MFA students at George Mason University (GMU) to more fully engage with an international creative writing project they are working on or hope to begin.

Awardees will travel during Summer 2023 for a minimum of three weeks. The award money should be sufficient to cover most travel expenses to and from the foreign country; living expenses while in the country; and expenses associated with the proposed work. Some countries, of course, will be more expensive than others, which is why we’re asking you to compose a budget for your trip (see below) so you are adequately prepared for what you may find on the ground. **The funding can only be used for countries that are NOT under U.S. Department of State Travel Warnings or Alerts. This does not include Europe (except Ukraine) and Israel.** For more information about all of this, you can visit [internationaltravel.gmu.edu](http://internationaltravel.gmu.edu/).

There are two deliverables in exchange for the Cheuse Center travel grant. First, the awardees will submit to the Cheuse Center a piece of creative work that originates from the travel award. Second, the awardees will submit a supplemental work that demonstrates concrete interaction with a person or people in the host country (details below). Awardees will also need to complete an overseas travel orientation and preparation session with Mason Abroad, register at [masonabroad.gmu.edu](http://masonabroad.gmu.edu/), and demonstrate proof of international health insurance, which can be purchased from George Mason for $50.

The application must be typed up and emailed to Cheuse Center Interim Director Leeya Mehta by 11:59pm on **January 29, 2023**. Her email address is lmehta@gmu.edu. The application will consist of three parts:

1. Your name, year in the program, and genre (fiction, poetry, or nonfiction)
2. A 2,000-word application essay and description of project (Do NOT exceed the word limit. Applications exceeding the 2,000-word limit will be automatically disqualified).
3. A budget

With the exception of the first part (which is hopefully self-explanatory), please see below for detailed instructions on parts two and three.

**APPLICATION**

**Description of your project: Where you would like to go and why (no more than 2,000 words)**

Please explain how this grant will aid your creative work and what specific methodology you will use to accomplish your goals. Please include:

* Where will you go and for how long?
* What project are you proposing and where are you in its creation?
* What do you plan to accomplish on the ground and how do you plan to accomplish it?
* Have you identified any challenges you might face in this research and what steps you might take to meet those challenges? (For example, are there language issues you will need to overcome? Does your project require a lot of interior travel in a foreign country? Are there safety issues that you are concerned about?)
* How familiar are you with the region, country and culture you plan to visit?
* How does this award fit in with your professional and personal development?

**Budget**

This section is a chance for the selection committee to see the potential cost of a trip. It is also a chance for applicants to consider their monetary needs and the reasonableness of their ambitions.

It is important to note that, in most cases, the monetary award for a research grant will not change depending on your proposed budget. Awardees will generally each receive $5,000.

Please include the following in the budget:

* Travel expenses to and from the chosen country
* Visa and Passport costs, if applicable
* Housing for the proposed amount of time in the country
* Food and incidentals while traveling
* Cost of research—travel, translators (if applicable), photocopies, books
* If you are traveling to a country that requires quarantine once you arrive, have you budgeted for this?

**A Note on the Deliverables**

As mentioned above, awardees will be expected to produce two deliverables and give them to Cheuse Center Interim Director Leeya Mehta at the start of **spring semester 2024 (January 2024)**. First, student awardees must submit the final draft of a creative work that originated from the travel grant. There is no length requirement for this—one short story, a portion of a novel, an essay, a work of journalism, three poems or one poem. We expect work of the best quality. As the years pass, the Cheuse Center hopes to collect these creative works into an anthology, and we will not include work that does not meet the highest creative and intellectual standard.

Second, awardees must submit a product that engages with the local communities and people in the country or region in which she/he is conducting research. These products can include, but are not exclusive to, translations of local literature; interviews with local writers; an oral history of someone you met while traveling; photographic portraits of people you met with an accompanying photo essay. The purpose of this deliverable is to allow the MFA student to directly learn from and interact with the local communities in the spirit of cultural exchange. Awardees will work with the Cheuse Center Director to determine what this secondary project will be.

Finally, on occasion, the Cheuse Center may ask awardees to present or speak, whether informally or formally, with potential donors or Cheuse Center board members. This is simply a way for us to showcase the awardees’ work and the Center’s contribution to it. We understand that some are more comfortable with this than others, and we will work individually with each recipient.

We can offer three grants for Summer 2023.

**The Fine Print**

These grants are designed for current students enrolled in George Mason’s Masters of Fine Arts Program. Since this fellowship carries work with it into the next year, **only first and second year students are eligible to apply**.

If for some reason recipients of Cheuse Center grants do NOT re-enroll in the MFA Program, they must return the full $5,000 they have received from the Cheuse Center.

Failure to turn in deliverables may result in the revocation of the fellowship and the asking of money back.