MAPSS | Ipsos Awards for Innovative Research in the Social Sciences

The goal of the Ipsos Awards is to provide mentorship, research facility services, and/or additional funding for MAPSS thesis projects that demonstrate innovative approaches to social scientific problems. Further, the program seeks to enrich student experiences in their Master’s studies by providing opportunities for professional development and learning in an applied research context.

During the academic year, all awardees will develop a test plan for their research, write a budget proposal for grant funding, whiteboard with their mentor to deepen and visualize research findings, and curate a presentation for thesis findings—developed specifically for an applied research audience. The goal of these activities is to support Master’s thesis research and provide an opportunity to work with an applied research organization in conjunction with primary UChicago academic support.

TIMELINE FOR APPLICATION

Applications Due | Friday, January 17, 2020

Awards Made & Mentor Assigned | Friday, January 24, 2020

Graduation Celebration / Presentations | August 20, 2020

A suite of resources and services are available with the award for projects where useful. These include use of Ipsos mentor time, facilities, workshops, and technical equipment and support.

The following guidelines describe the suite of services included in the awards, and provide examples and rough estimates of typical project expenses to assist applicants with additional budgeting.

All awards will include use of the following service offerings:

1. **Mentoring and project support** from an Ipsos consultant specifically assigned to each award recipient.
   - Mentoring consultants will be assigned to award recipients based on fit between research interests, relevant expertise, and availability.
   - Mentoring consultants will be available to award recipients for **four scheduled one-hour meetings** to offer feedback and guidance related to study design and objectives, participant recruitment, and research planning.
   - Mentoring consultants will also be available to advise and troubleshoot at Ipsos’s facilities during scheduled test days.
   - Additional meetings, correspondence, or inquiries requested by the award recipients will be accommodated at the mentoring consultant’s discretion/ability to respond.
   - The four mentor/awardee meetings will cover the following:
     - Introductory Meeting and Writing a Test Plan (February)
     - Budget Review (February)
     - Ideation Session – Whiteboarding Findings (April-May)
2. **Professional Workshops** throughout the academic year to help support career development and getting a sense of applied research after academic commencement.
   - Webinar on UX Methodologies (March)
     - Open to all MAPSS students
     - Remote webinar with Ipsos UX speakers
     - Covers research methodologies in UX including:
       - Formative usability testing, validation testing, ethnography, qualitative interview coding, design workshops, co-design, and focus groups.
     - MAPSS grant recipients will have the opportunity to participate in an additional 1-on-1 Q&A after the event.
   - Panel Discussion: Academia to Applied Research (July)
     - Open to all MAPSS students
     - Hosted at University of Chicago
     - Panel of Ipsos UX professionals
     - Open forum for student Q&A

   **Award value:** $2,000 for consultant time

3. **Use of Ipsos facilities** at One East Wacker (downtown Chicago) and/or Oakbrook Terrace (a Western suburb of Chicago).
   - Facilities are generally available between the hours of 8am–6pm, Monday–Friday.
   - Private, soundproof test rooms for one-on-one interviews as well as larger rooms for focus groups are available.
   - Test rooms allow for comfortable interaction with any type of device or stimulus, including websites, mobile devices, paper documents, medical devices, video games, TVs, and prototype web applications.
   - As needed, Ipsos lab technicians will set up a custom recording lab for capturing test sessions and will provide flash drives with digital recordings of the sessions. The recordings will include video capture of the participant and the stimulus being tested, as well as audio capture of the session. Researchers will be responsible for operating the recording equipment during testing.
   - Space will be made available to award recipients for a **maximum of five days**. Scheduled test days need not be consecutive. A typical testing day accommodates six 60-minute interviews or two to three longer focus groups. Award recipients’ preferred dates will be accommodated to the extent possible, where test rooms are not in use by consultants.

   **Award value:** $1800 per day for one test room, one observation room, technical recording equipment, administrative support, lunch provided for test team, and availability of consultant mentor.
4. **Use of technical equipment** for testing and recording.
   - Award recipients will have the option to consult with Ipsos’s technology manager to design a stimulus display and data capture solution appropriate for their study.
   - Technology solutions include:
     - Laptop recording solutions for capturing interaction with websites.
     - Specialized camera set ups for capturing interaction with handheld devices, paper documents, and physical products.
     - Simple audio recording devices, web cameras, and handheld video cameras.
   - Award recipients will be responsible for operating the recording equipment during testing.

   **Award value:** $500 for lab set up.

It is important to remind all applicants that their thesis project is entirely theirs. It should be developed and managed in conjunction with the applicant’s faculty member and should meet their expectations. Any advice and support provided by the award or by Ipsos mentors will strictly support the faculty-directed project. It is important for students to keep this in mind and to have the grant fit into their project rather than the other way around.
**Awardee Budget**

Once awarded, all applicants must submit a budget that accounts for the time and material costs of their proposed research project. Mentors will work with awardees to complete this. Applicants should include the monetary value of any services they expect to use in their complete budget. The services will be considered in-kind contributions to award recipients. Applicants who seek additional funding for other project-related expenses are required to detail these expenses in their project budget, which, if awarded, will be met up to a maximum amount of $500.

The following additional categories describe other typical costs associated with conducting research, and are based on typical Ipsos user studies. Not all thesis projects will incur these costs, nor is this an exhaustive list of what applicants may propose. Applicants are encouraged to discuss possible costs with their MAPSS advisor and ask questions at the Ipsos open house in order to prepare a budget request as part of their proposal.

**Recruitment of Human Subjects**

Getting the right kinds of people to participate in your study is key to effective research design and quality data collection, but finding them and compensating them for their time can cost money. Recruiting and compensation costs are a function of two key variables: (1) the incidence rate of the type of participant you are looking for and (2) the length of the test session. The incidence rate involves the ease with which people who fit particular screener criteria can be recruited (iPhone users are common, 7-year old boys with Type-1 diabetes are not). The length of the test session can vary from 30 minutes for a short set of tasks to up to 2 hours, which we recommend as a limit for people's attention spans. Most of our study sessions last about an hour, and may go up to 90 minutes for a longer interview or focus group session. If you handle recruiting yourself, by calling upon friends and family or advertising on a college campus or Craigslist, you needn't pay recruiting fees to a professional recruiter, and you may be able to leverage smaller incentives for people’s participation ($10−$50, or entry into a raffle for a $100 gift card, etc.) However, if you think you will have a very difficult recruit, or if you need a very specific type of person with certain demographic characteristics controlled for, you may want to use the services of a professional recruiter ($100−$150) paid to the recruiter per participant recruited). Professionally recruited participants will need to be offered somewhat higher incentives ($75−$150) than is typical for students on a college campus.

Any IRB considerations involving human subjects must be addressed through the student’s application to the university with faculty consent.

**Technical Equipment**

Ipsos has a large selection of laptops, mobile phones, tablets, gaming consoles, etc that grantees will have access to in their study design. Participants may also be asked to bring personal equipment to the
interview if that is the subject of interest for the research. In addition, Ipsos has a large selection of recording equipment that may be used in the lab or in the field. Applicants are welcome to inquire about the availability of specific types of equipment at the Ipsos open house, prior to submitting their proposal. If the applicant believes they will need to purchase any necessary equipment not owned by Ipsos, the cost of the additional equipment should be included in the proposed budget and justified in the proposal.

Local Travel

Applicants may include local travel expenses in their budget where warranted for rental car, gas, mileage, tolls, public transit, etc. Warranted travel expenses must involve travel to/from Ipsos’s offices at 1 E. Wacker and Oakbrook Terrace, or to the applicant’s chosen field sites.

Non-local Travel

Even when conducted outside the lab, research typically requires a specific type of environment (e.g., school, hospital, library, consumer electronics store, etc.) where geographic location is of secondary importance. However, the committee recognizes that some research might take place in unique settings, such as a specialized museum or a specific charter school. In the case that an applicant seeks to conduct research in a specific field location for which there is no appropriate local equivalent or alternative, the committee will entertain research proposals that include non-local travel costs including transportation, accommodation, and field site expenses. Applicants are encouraged to discuss the necessity of geographically specific field sites with their MAPSS advisor and consider lower cost alternatives before committing to a non-local field site.

Other

The committee will entertain other miscellaneous research-related expenses in budget proposals. The applicant must justify all expenses and clearly relate them to the research requirements and objectives. Some examples of miscellaneous research expenses that could come up include subscription or usage fees for specialized software or online tools for data capture and analysis, access to specialty library holdings or reference material, and entrance fees or honoraria that might help the researcher gain access to the user population of interest.

1 Applicants are strongly encouraged to investigate free options that may be available to them through the University or online before incorporating fees for software or other analysis tools into their budget proposals.
What should **not** be included in the budget proposal

Budgeted items must be directly related to the proposed research and cannot be used for non-research-related long-distance travel, accommodations, tuition, conference registration or organizational membership fees, time spent on background research or proposal preparation, or personal expenses. Inappropriate budget requests will not be considered. Applicants are encouraged to ask the MAPSS Program Officer (Shelly) if they have questions about the relevance or propriety of any proposed expenses.