

SAI Grant Changes

Dear fellow students,

As some of you might know, the conditions for the SAI grant have recently changed (you can find the updated information [here](#)). We are aware that these changes and their timing are not ideal for those of you leaving for fieldwork soon and have voiced our concerns and criticism at the program council. However the changes have been passed and will stay in place for at least the next year and we find it necessary to clear some things up regarding this development. (The following information has been shared with us by admin.)

Background

At the beginning of the year, new regulations by [Riksrevisionen](#) were introduced at university level with no prior notice. These regulations are **stricter and more complex** than previous ones when it comes to documenting and registering grants and reimbursements. Their main aim is to prevent misconduct at the highest level, but the measures trickle down to the department-level and end up affecting students too. As these changes came suddenly and the department is now obligated to **adapt their system** for documenting spending, they have tried to make the necessary changes to the SAI grant as quickly as possible, in order that it be available to those going on fieldwork this year.

New conditions

Before, while in practice nearly every student has received some money, theoretically **not everyone had to** receive something. This was just a **sign of goodwill** from the department to support part of everyone's fieldwork budget. The **quality of the project** used to be an important criteria for allocating funds.

Now, the nature of the grant is such that it is **compulsory for every student to receive** some money. In other words, the grant becomes a student right rather than the result of a competitive process. This is primarily an administrative change but might be good to know for students. The overall available **budget has not changed**. This next year will be a **trial** of sorts and the rates might be adapted in the future once they have more data about how many students on average stay within Europe or travel outside of it.

The grant is **meant for relocation to the field**, not fieldwork itself. This is why **local spending** (such as for accommodation or food) is **NOT refundable** within the new SAI grant. When we asked about the reasoning behind this change we were told that this **has always been the rule** and is the same as the travel grant for staff members going on fieldwork. It has only been discovered through the re-assessment of the grant that it has been done in the **wrong way before**.

Conference funding is unfortunately **not available** anymore. This is due to the new compulsory nature of the grant and as conference funding is **optional / competitive**, it can not come out of the same budget anymore. However, as it **has not been decided** yet what to do should there be a significant sum of the **budget left**, we have proposed making it

available for conference funding and it has been noted and will be looked into by admin. Whether this will be possible or the case will most likely **not be clear** before the **end of the year**.

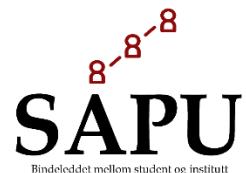
A few additional points:

- You can only receive reimbursement once the journey has been **completed**.
- If you register before the first deadline (June 1st) you will receive access to the reimbursement portal earlier and will be able to **receive reimbursement** (for the completed trip to the field) **earlier**.
- If you only have a **phone number** by a carrier **from the US**, please contact admin to help you gain access to the reimbursement portal: info-master@sai.uio.no
- Travel to a field **within Norway** (outside Oslo) is included and **eligible** for reimbursement.

Again, we fully understand that these changes are not in the interest of students and come as a potential challenge for those having budgeted with the original grant in mind. At the same time we ask you to understand that they were not initiated by the department but were the best they could do with the new regulations that were put in place and the time frame they had.

If you have any comments or concerns, please feel free to reach out to us!

Sincerely,



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