History for the 21st Century



The UMBC Historical Studies Program Graduate Student Handbook AY 2021-22

History for the 21st Century



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WELCOME

Welcome to the UMBC Historical Studies Program!

The Historical Studies Program is a young but successful program that, since its founding in 1990, has shepherded graduate students into careers as academics, museum and nonprofit directors and staff, archivists, and policy analysts. We are proud of this record and we look forward to working with you to launch your career as a historian.

The three keys to a successful experience in the Historical Studies Program are 1. having a clear understanding of what is expected of you and how to fulfill your commitments, 2. building a fruitful relationship with a faculty advisor, 3. gathering a cohort that can support you as you wrestle with classes and your thesis. This Handbook is designed to help you meet the first obligation above and provide you with the contacts that will facilitate your meeting the second and third.

This Historical Studies Program Graduate Student Handbook is your guide to the Historical Studies Program. Herein you can find information on all of the contacts and resources you will need to navigate program requirements and graduate student responsibilities, TA-ships and travel funding, and information about everything else from course registration to defending your thesis.

Though much of the information herein will remain the same year after year, there are some sections that will be updated annually. Considering, please make sure that you have the current issue of the Handbook.

Best wishes for a successful academic year.

George Derek Musgrove Graduate Program Director

CONTACTS & RESOURCES

Graduate Program Director

Dr. George Derek Musgrove Fine Arts North, Rm. 509 410-455-2044, derek.musgrove@umbc.edu

The Graduate Program Director is your main point of contact with the Historical Studies Program. He serves as the principal advisor for first year students and as a secondary advisor for those students who have selected thesis advisors.

History Department Administrator

Ms. Carla Ison Fine Arts North, Rm. 505 410-455-2049

ison@umbc.edu

Besides the Graduate Program Director, the History Department Administrator is your main point of contact for the Historical Studies Program. She can help you with locating and filing important forms and generally with navigating the Graduate School bureaucracy.

Your UMBC email and the HistGrad listserv (histgrad-group@umbc.edu)

The Historical Studies Program and the Graduate School rely on e-mail sent to your UMBC e-mail account as their primary method of communication. Please check your UMBC e-mail regularly or link it to an account that you do. Additionally, the History Department Administrator will add you to the HistGrad listserv using your UMBC email address during the summer before your first semester of classes. The program uses this listserv to announce deadlines, changes in program requirements, new course offerings, internships and job openings, etc. The listserv is also a forum for you to connect with and discuss issues of importance to the history graduate student body. If you are not sure that you are subscribed to the HistGrad listserv, send a short note including your UMBC email address to Ms. Ison at ison@umbc.edu, requesting that you be added.

History Department website (www.history.umbc.edu)

Under the "Graduate Students" drop down menu, students can find all of the information they need to understand the requirements of the program. All forms required by the Graduate School are also linked through this site. Students can also find an up to date copy of this handbook on this site

Graduate School website (www.umbc.edu/gradschool)

This website contains all of the information that you will need concerning TA-ships, submitting the thesis and graduation that are not contained in the History Department website. Most of these functions are, however, linked through the Department website so check there first

History Librarian, Mr. Drew Alfgren (alfgren@umbc.edu)

Mr. Alfgren can help you navigate the library and assist you in finding sources for any research project. And he is glad to do it. It is literally his job. Contact him at the email above or sign up for an appointment at https://library.umbc.edu/makearesearchappt.

The Graduate Student Association (http://gsa.umbc.edu/)

Commons Building, Rm. 308 410-455-2773

gsa@umbc.edu

The GSA is both the principal graduate student governance organization (through the Graduate Student Senate) and the principal source of research and travel funds for graduate students. It also offers several part-time, non-teaching assistantships for students. Students can apply for these funds / jobs through the GSA website.

GSA Graduate Writing Advisor (http://gsa.umbc.edu/writing-advisor/)

The GSA Writing Advisor is the person to turn to for stylistic, grammar, or drafting help with your course papers and thesis. (The **UMBC Writing Center** (http://lrc.umbc.edu/tutor/writing-center/) also has a writing coach available at times to help graduate students. However, the Graduate Writing Advisor caters more directly to graduate students.)

PROGRAM CALENDAR

June

June 1 – New graduate student registration opens (Registration is not required until late August)

June 15 – Last day to apply for summer graduation

July

July 31 – Last day to submit thesis for summer graduation.

August

August 25 – Historical Studies Program New Graduate Student Orientation and course registration. TA Orientation. Look for a save the date with more detailed information over the summer.

-Also, look out for an invitation to the *Graduate School* New Student Orientation and TA Orientation around this time as well.

Late August – TAs are given their semester assignments

August 31 – First day of classes

September

Sept. 15 – Last day to submit fall application for graduation

Third Wednesday of the Month – "Graduate Students Helping (1st year) Graduate Students" panel

October

Third Wednesday of the Month – Works in Progress Seminar

November

Work with your advisor to register for spring courses

Third Wednesday of the Month – Works in Progress Seminar

Late Nov. – TA/GAs please remind your advisors to submit evaluations at https://gradschool.umbc.edu/funding/assistantships/forms/

Nov. 30 – Last Day to submit thesis for fall graduation

December

Dec. 21 – Fall graduation ceremony

January

Late January – TAs are given their semester assignments

February

Feb 15 – Last Day to submit spring application for graduation

Third Wednesday of the Month – "(Alumni) Graduate Students Helping (2nd year) Graduate Students" panel

March

Third Wednesday of the Month – Works in Progress Seminar

April

Work with your advisor to register for fall courses

Third Wednesday of the Month – Works in Progress Seminar

Late April – UMBC Graduate Research Conference

Late April – TA/GAs please remind your advisors to submit evaluations at https://gradschool.umbc.edu/funding/assistantships/forms/

May

May 1 – Last day to submit thesis for spring graduation

Second week of May – Preliminary Prospectus Presentations (HIST 702 students)

Late May – Spring graduation

ADVISING & REGISTRATION

Advising

When graduate students enter the program, the Graduate Program Director (GPD) will serve as their advisor. All students should meet with the GPD for advising before enrolling in classes. Before the end of their second full-time semester, students should select a thesis advisor from among the regular or associate graduate faculty in the Department of History. The thesis advisor will serve as the student's advisor for all matters (progress toward the thesis, selection of courses, assistance with a job / Ph.D. program search) until they leave the program. (Students must still consult the GPD when seeking authorization for internships and independent study courses.) Students are encouraged to consult the GPD when selecting a thesis advisor. Once a student has selected a thesis advisor, they must complete the Declaration of Thesis Advisor Form and submit it to the History Department Administrator.

Courses of Study

There are two courses of study which lead to completion of the M.A. in Historical Studies at UMBC:

M.A. in Historical Studies

Students who plan to pursue the traditional M.A. in Historical Studies must earn a minimum of 30 credits. All students are required to take HIST 701 (The Study of History) typically in the fall semester of their first year, and HIST 702 (The Practice of History) typically in the spring semester of their first year. Students must take six elective courses, with at least three of these courses being at the 700 level. (The 700 course requirement can be modified for cause with the permission of the GPD.) Students may, with permission from the GPD, use HIST 798 (Special Topics in Historical Studies) and/or HIST 790 (Internship) to fulfill elective credit requirements. Finally, students must take at least six credits of HIST 799 (Thesis) over two or more semesters. Students should use this checklist to track their progress toward completion of the M.A. in Historical Studies.

M.A. in Historical Studies, Public History track

Students who enroll in the M.A. in Historical Studies, Public History track must also earn a minimum of 30 credits to graduate. All Public History track students are required to take HIST 701 (The Study of History) and HIST 705 (Introduction to Public History) typically in the fall semester of their first year, and HIST 702 (The Practice of History) typically in the spring semester of their first year. In addition, students in the Public History track are required to complete HIST 790 (Internship). Public History track students fulfill the remaining credit requirements with four elective courses and at least six credits of HIST 799 (Thesis) over two or more semesters. Students should use this checklist to track their progress toward completion of the M.A. in Historical Studies, Public History track.

Course Offerings

All graduate courses are listed in the <u>Graduate Course Catalogue</u>. History graduate courses bear the numerical designation 600 or 700. The history faculty seek to offer most graduate level courses in the late afternoon or evenings to accommodate students who work during the day. Nearly all graduate classes take place during the Fall and Spring semesters. Though you may

find the occasional 600 level course offered in the summer, you will rely mostly on courses taught during the regular fall and spring semesters. If you have trouble getting into a course that is technically "closed" to additional graduate students, please contact the instructor and ask for permission to register.

Internships (HIST 790)

The department circulates internship opportunities via the Histgrad listserv. Students may also find internships on their own. Wherever you find an internship, it must be pre-approved by the Director of Public History, Dr. Denise Meringolo (ddm@umbc.edu) before you can use it for graduate credit. Once you have secured an internship, it can be supervised by any Historical Studies Program graduate faculty member. An internship is required for students pursuing the Public History track, but they are also available (as elective credit) to students in the general M.A. program.

GA/TA Special Course Registration

Graduate assistants and teaching assistants must be registered as full-time students whether they hold a full-time appointment or a part-time appointment. To be considered full-time, a student must be registered for a minimum of nine (9) credits in each fall and spring semester. To this end, those GAs and TAs who enroll in fewer than three courses should register for a no-cost course: GRAD 600 or GRAD 601.

- If you are a full-time GA or TA (full time is a work-load of 20 hours per week), please register for GRAD 601. This course is fixed at five credits.
- If you are a part-time GA or TA (part time is a work-load of 10 hours per week), please register for GRAD 600. This course is fixed at three credits.

GRAD 600 and GRAD 601 do not conflict with any other courses and do not add responsibilities or duties to the student – they also do not provide credit toward graduation. Their purpose is simply to reflect the workload associated with assistantship duties.

Students may enroll in these courses by searching through the <u>Schedule of Classes</u> and looking for the subject: "Graduate School Assistantship."

For more information about these courses view the <u>Registration</u> page of the Graduate School website.

Deadlines for Enrollment

Students should register for classes the semester before the term in question, during the advising period. If they do not register early, students are strongly encouraged to register within the first two weeks of classes at the latest. The Graduate School fines anyone who does not register by the end of the first two weeks of the semester. Just as importantly, your signing up for classes early allows the professor to plan based on class size. The fall 2021 add/drop deadline for the University, which includes internships and independent studies, is September 14. The spring 2022 deadline is in the second week of February.

Continuous Enrollment and Leaves of Absence

Once a graduate student takes their first class as a degree-seeking graduate student in Historical Studies, they have five years to complete the program. During that time, they must maintain "active status" – i.e. must be registered for at least 1 credit during the semester – to have access to the library or any other UMBC facilities and to meet with faculty.

Students who wish to continue in a degree program but who cannot study in a particular semester or year should notify the GPD and take a leave of absence (LOA). All graduate students, both full and part-time, must be registered for something by the end of the first two weeks of classes regardless of whether they will be taking classes or working on their thesis. If they have not registered for classes in a given semester, they will be considered on LOA. Failure to enroll after two consecutive semesters of LOAs (fall or spring terms) will result in a student's enrollment status changing from active to discontinued. Students are limited to three LOAs for their time in the program. (Please note: Having a LOA does not count as having "active status." A LOA is designed for those students who must temporarily interrupt their studies due to personal or professional concerns; thus one loses access to the library and university facilities during the LOA period.)

All requirements for the master's degree must be completed within a five-year period, regardless of any LOAs. Students seeking an extension of the five-year deadline must submit an Extension Request to the Graduate School after consultation with the Graduate Program Director.

Please visit the Graduate School's <u>Enrollment and Registration</u> page if you have any further questions about these policies.

ASSISTANTSHIPS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Eligibility for Financial Assistance and How to Apply

The Historical Studies Program annually awards a limited number of assistantships and scholarships to full-time students. Assistantships confer tuition remission, a stipend of slightly over \$14,000, and health insurance benefits. Only full time students can serve as graduate assistants. To be considered full-time, a student must be registered for a minimum of nine credits in each fall and spring semester for the year under consideration. Scholarships typically cover tuition and, in some cases, fees. Both full-time and part-time students are eligible for scholarships.

Both new applicants and continuing students in the Historical Studies Program are eligible to apply for financial assistance. New students apply by checking the relevant boxes under "Financial Assistance Information" in Section IV of the <u>Graduate School application form</u>. Continuing students wishing to be considered for an assistantship must send (by the same deadline) a letter indicating their interest and qualifications for financial assistance to the Graduate Program Director. This letter can be transmitted via email.

TA-ships and GA-ships

The Historical Studies Program controls approximately four Teaching Assistantships (TA-ships), though the number can vary depending on the program budget. In these positions, students assist a member of the faculty in managing their course by taking up the duties of facilitating discussion and other forms of student work, and grading.

Once a student is awarded a TA-ship, the GPD will assign them to a supervisor roughly two weeks before classes begin – when class rosters stabilize. Students and their supervisor are encouraged to meet as soon as they are assigned to one another and organize their work schedule in whatever manner is mutually agreeable, so long as it meets the guidelines laid out in the Graduate Assistant Handbook.

The Historical Studies Program also sends two students to the Special Collections department of the UMBC Library to serve as Graduate Assistants (GAs). These students assist the UMBC archivists in processing collections, building finding aides, and other work associated with an archive. Here too, students and their supervisor are encouraged to meet as soon as they are assigned to one another and organize their work schedule in whatever manner is mutually agreeable, so long as it meets the guidelines laid out in the Graduate Assistant Handbook.

Resources for GAs and TAs

GAs and TAs first point of contact for any problems they are experiencing on the job is the GPD. If they are more comfortable seeking advice or help from their fellow graduate students, the Graduate Student Association provides excellent resources for GAs and TAs, including helpful links explaining everything from your healthcare benefits to professional development and confidential consultation for conflict resolution.

THE THESIS

The thesis demonstrates a student's ability to create historical scholarship that integrates both primary and secondary sources to make a novel argument about the past. All theses involve working with a faculty advisor and at least two additional faculty as thesis committee members. The thesis can take one of two different forms in the Historical Studies Program. The first is a traditional, written thesis of three chapters, ranging between 75 and 125 pages. The other is a project-based public history thesis that includes a substantive writing section examining the historiography of the chosen research topic integrated with the student's insights but, instead of written chapters, may include a website, exhibition, archival collection, or lesson plan.

Finding Your Thesis Advisor and Topic

At some point during their second semester in the program, students are required to select a thesis advisor. A thesis advisor serves as a content specialist and mentor to their students, doing everything from, helping students to draft their prospectus and reading multiple drafts of the thesis, to helping students choose classes, writing recommendations, and assisting them in either applying to graduate school or finding a job. Considering the importance of the thesis advisor to a students graduate school experience and early career, this choice should not be made lightly. Students should choose an advisor who, 1. possesses the requisite content expertise, 2. with whom they have or believe they can develop a good working relationship, and 3. is available and willing to work with the student during their time in the program. Students will choose an advisor as part of the HIST 702 (Practice of History) course but should begin looking as soon as they arrive on campus. Once a student has chosen a thesis advisor, they must fill out a Declaration of Thesis Advisor Form and submit it to Ms. Ison.

Students choose and develop their thesis topic in HIST 702 (Practice of History). They are encouraged, however, to begin searching for a thesis topic before they enter this class. To begin discussing possible topics, schedule a meeting with the GPD or a member of the faculty who specializes in your chosen field.

The Prospectus

Before writing the thesis, students must write a formal prospectus and have it approved by their thesis advisor and two additional thesis committee members *before* registering for a fourth credit of HIST 799 (Thesis). For an idea of what goes into the prospectus see the "How to: Prospectus" guide on page 14 below. Students will write a preliminary draft of the prospectus in HIST 702 (Practice of History).

Thesis-Related Courses

Students ready to begin work on the thesis should register for 1-3 credits of HIST 799 (Thesis) with the approval of their advisor – this should be done during the semester after the student completes HIST 702 (Practice of History). Before registering for a fourth credit of HIST 799 (Thesis), students must have chosen a thesis committee and submitted a prospectus to said committee. Once their prospectus is approved, students may register for the final 3 credits of HIST 799. If needed, students can register for credits of HIST 799 (Thesis) beyond the initial six, in order to remain active.

Important Forms and Deadlines:

It is the student's responsibility to gather all the appropriate forms, have them signed by the requisite advisors and committee members, and submit them to the History Department Administrator, Ms. Ison, by the appropriate deadlines.

Forms	Due Dates	Notes
Declaration of Thesis Advisor Form	Preferably at the end of the second full-time semester.	
Prospectus Approval Form	When the prospectus is finished, typically at the start or mid-point of the third full-time semester.	
Application for Graduation Form	Fall: Apply to graduate: July 1 – September 15 Supplemental Application Due: September 30 Spring Apply to Graduate: December 1 – February 15 Supplemental Application Due: March 1 Summer: Apply to Graduate: April 1 – June 15 Supplemental Application Due: June 30	
Certification of Readiness to Defend the Master's Thesis Form	No later than two weeks prior to the defense.	
Format the Thesis using the Graduate School's <u>Thesis</u> Style Guide	Fall: Before November 30 Spring: Before May 1 Summer: Before July 31	While a thesis does not need to be formatted until it is submitted to the Graduate School, students are strongly encouraged to adopt the proper formatting when they begin writing to save themselves the added work of having to reformat their thesis after it is finished.
Submit the Thesis	Fall: Last day to submit November 30 Spring: Last Day to submit May 1 Summer: Last day to submit July 31	These deadlines indicate the date by which your academically complete document must be submitted to the system. An academically complete document is one to which all thesis committee-ordered revisions have

	been made.

Scheduling the Defense and Defending the Thesis

Students must work closely with their committee to schedule the thesis defense. Keeping an eye on the thesis submission deadline for a given semester (see the dates above), students must plan to give their advisor and committee time to read the thesis (the general rule is that faculty are given two weeks to read any submissions from graduate students) *and* time to make any requested revisions. So, at minimum, if a student hopes to submit the thesis on May 1, they should defend no later than April 15. And if they plan to defend on April 15, they should get the final draft of the thesis to their advisor no later than March 15. The advisor will read and (possibly suggest revisions) before the thesis must be sent to the full committee sometime around April 1. The committee must then be given two weeks to read the thesis before the defense.

Every defense has the same format, one for which the student must be prepared. See the "What to expect when you are defending" guide on page 16 below for details.

How To: Prospectus

(15-25 pages)

Writing the prospectus is the first step in producing a thesis. Its primary purpose is to convince your thesis committee that your topic and approach are sound so that you can gain approval to proceed with the actual research. It will also serve as a rough draft of your thesis introduction.

The Elements of a Prospectus

Your prospectus must include (The below order is strongly suggested, though not mandatory):

- 1. A **title** that clearly delineates the larger question that you seek to answer, the topic that you will use to answer said question, and the time and place where your narrative takes place, in an inventive manner.
- 2. An **introduction** section containing the following:
 - a. An **opening anecdote** (optional but highly recommended) that introduces your topic and leads smoothly into / raises the questions that you hope to answer.
 - b. A research question
 To structure your research question fill in the blanks in the below format:
 TOPIC: "I will study______"
 RESEARCH QUESTION: "Because I want to find out how / who /
 why_____"
 SIGNIFICANCE: "In order to help readers understand how / why / what
 _____"
 - c. A preliminary **thesis statement** or argument
 To structure your argument think of yourself as a lawyer presenting a case in court and your audience as the judge. Fill in the blank below:
 ARGUMENT: 'Your honor, the evidence presented in my thesis will show'
- 3. A **background** section (optional, but only in rare cases) providing any information the reader needs to understand your topic.
- 4. A **literature review** that *synthesizes and analyzes* the scholarly conversation (all relevant books, scholarly articles and dissertation / MA theses) on your topic. How have scholars approached this topic in the past? How has this conversation changed over time and why? Describe your intervention in said scholarly conversation at the end of this section. How is your approach, information, or perspective different? Does it fill a gap in the scholarly conversation? Does it change our understanding of a familiar topic? If historians have not greatly explored your topic, briefly explain how your thesis might add new knowledge or interpretations to the larger historical field.
- 5. A description of your **methodology**. What body/ies of information do you plan to use to inform your study? How do you plan to use them? What are the benefits and challenges of

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¹ See Wayne C. Booth, Gregory Colomb, and Joseph Williams, *The Craft of Research*, pp. 37-74 (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2008).

using these sources? Why are you using them? Have others used them? How are you using them differently? Describe any theoretical approaches you will use to interpret your sources *if* such a description is necessary to increase the reader's understanding of your project.

A. For students creating <u>Public History</u> projects: This is where you can describe in depth your method of delivery (podcast, website, exhibition, walking tour, etc.) and the *reason* that you have chosen this mode of presentation. Make the case for why this mode of presentation is appropriate, innovative, or insightful. Discuss how your project compares to other, similar projects presented in this format, if any exist.

- 6. A **chapter outline** that explains how you are organizing your study and why. (Provide approximately one paragraph per chapter that describe the topic, rationale, and preliminary conclusions of each.)
- 7. A **bibliography**. What are the sources you will use to explore this subject? Organize your sources into sections by: Primary and Secondary and then within the primary section by type of source (newspapers, books, interviews, etc.)
- 8. **Description of research needs** (optional). Do you have any special needs in order to complete this study? In particular, do you need funding to travel to archives, gain access to collections, or acquire technical equipment? Do you have the special skills (languages, technical expertise) that this project might require?

What to expect when you are defending²

When you arrive, the committee members will greet you.

They may ask you to leave the room for a moment. This is mostly for paper shuffling purposes: do they have all the forms, who is the graduate school rep, etc. They will also take a minute or two to check in with each other and figure out if they have similar questions and make a general plan about who will ask what.

They will invite you back in. You should prepare about five or ten minutes --no more-- of comments. Typically, you should spend that time talking about how you came to your subject, how you approached it, where you found sources, what you think your most important contribution is to the scholarship, and what you plan to do next with this work.

Then, you will all engage in a conversation. Although this is called a "defense," you should not be "defensive." Instead, you should recognize that this is the kind of collegial conversation about your work that ALL of us go through EVERY TIME we conduct new research or publish something. Questions will likely be along the lines of "did you consider...." or "have you thought about..." or "why don't you look at....." Sometimes your answer will be, "I did look at that, but I didn't include it because...." or "Wow. I didn't really think of that, let me make a note" or "I did look at that, but maybe it's buried too far into the chapter...."

Your Advisor will generally not ask questions. They have already asked you a thousand questions. They may chime in to point out, "What Dr. so and so is asking is what I've been trying to get at...." or to say "Susan and I did talk about that but we set it aside because...."

The advisor's role will mostly be to take notes because it is extremely likely that the committee will ask you to make a few changes before you make your final submission to the graduate school. Ultimately, you and your advisor will figure out how best to approach those suggestions in a short meeting after the defense.

Once the conversation is over, the committee will ask you to leave the room again. They may spend some time making a plan for your requested revisions. They will mostly sign papers. Then they will ask you back into the room and give you their decision.

AT MOST the entire process should take 1.5 hours. Often it is far less: an hour or so.

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² Courtesy of Denise Meringolo

TRAVEL / RESEARCH FUNDING

The UMBC Graduate Student Association provides <u>professional development and research grants</u> to all graduate students. Interested students can apply for funding on a monthly basis throughout the year – applications are due on the 15th of each month. Students must apply for funding at least one month before they hope to use the funds or their application will be considered late – so apply as early as possible! All applications are reviewed by the GSA's Grant Review Panel using their <u>Points of Policy</u>. Please review these criterion to ensure that your application is successful.

The Historical Studies Program provides supplemental funding (to a GSA grant) for research expenses (scanning, photocopying, purchase of materials, hiring of research help, etc.) and/or research related travel expenses (to visit archives, interview subjects, etc.) for Historical Studies Program students. Students may apply for a maximum of \$500 per year. This funding is not intended to support travel to conferences, which is available from the Graduate Student Association.

Applicants for Historical Studies Program supplemental funding must be in good standing. To apply for the funding they must:

Write a brief letter to the GPD including:

- 1. A short explanation of their proposed research and/or travel and
 - a. If requesting funds for travel, the student must put in an <u>eTravel request</u> before submitting their application to the Historical Studies Program and include the eTravel number with the application. The History Department Administrator, Ms. Ison, can help you with this part of the process.
 - a. A detailed proposed budget of their expenses and the funding they expect to receive from the GSA and the Historical Studies Program.

The above described letter should be accompanied by a letter from the student's thesis advisor supporting the applicant's plan and budget.

Students must apply for supplemental funding at least 30 days ahead of the time when they will need the money. Students must submit receipts for all of their expenses to secure reimbursement.

Applications can be submitted to the GPD via email.