



GRADUATE  
STUDENTS'  
ASSOCIATION  
UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

University of Calgary Graduate Students' Association  
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## Graduate Student Groups Policy

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### Policy Statement

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Graduate Student Groups (GSG) are designed to support graduate students who wish to self-organize into specific interest groups. The Association provides resources to help these groups achieve their specific mandate. The following document provides operational and governance guidelines to GSG Executives and their members.

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### Definitions

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All defined terms which are used, but not defined herein, and which are defined in the Bylaws of the Graduate Students' Association of the University of Calgary shall have the meaning given to them in those Bylaws.

**“Academic Year”** means the year beginning September 1 and ending April 30.

**“Active Members”** means all persons registered as graduate students in the Faculty of Graduate Studies or as Credit Certificate and Diploma Program students at the University of Calgary who pay full- or part-time Association fees.

**“Annual Report”** means an annual submission in which a Student Group acknowledges that it was active in the past Academic Year and continues to meet the Association's Terms of Ratification.

**“Association”** means The Graduate Students' Association of the University of Calgary.

**“Board”** means the Board of Directors of the Association, which comprises the President, Vice President (VP) Academic, Vice President (VP) External, Vice President (VP) Student Life, and Vice President (VP) Finance & Services.

**“Event Grant”** means a monetary grant awarded to offset the costs of GSG events.

**“Event Organizer”** means the main person who oversees an event or is the representative of the event on behalf of the DGA/GSG/project.

**“Executive Officer”** (EO) is a full-time staff member responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the Association; the Executive Officer reports directly to the Board.

**“Graduate Representative Council” (GRC)** means a group of Active Members from eligible departments at the UCalgary; GRC members deliberate on issues affecting the Association, offer advice to the Board, and disseminate information to other Active Members.

**“Graduate Student Group (GSG)”** means a graduate student organization composed of Active Members linked by a common academic or other interest and officially Ratified by the Board.

**“GSG Bylaws”** means a document that establishes the purpose of the Student Group and the rules that govern its affairs, which cannot contravene the Association’s Bylaws or this policy.

**“GSG Executives”** means Active Members who have been elected or appointed to make decisions on behalf of specific GSGs as it relates to the governance of the specific GSG.

**“Operational Bursary”** means a monetary bursary awarded as continued funding for pre- existing GSGs.

**“Ratified/Ratification”** means status achieved by GSGs that are in compliance with the criteria and Terms of Ratification established herein.

**“UCalgary”** means the University of Calgary.

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### **Applicability**

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This document applies to all GSG Executives and members of GSGs.

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### **Reason for Policy**

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The purpose of this document is to:

1. Provide clarity regarding the Association’s relationship with all GSGs;
2. Outline the criteria for GSGs to obtain ratified status with the Association;
3. Outline the terms by which Ratified GSGs may access Association services, resources, and other benefits; and
4. Outline the procedures for the creation and proper governance of GSGs.

It is the responsibility of GSG Executives to ensure they are aware of and adherent to this policy document.

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### **Non-Compliance**

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There is significant liability exposure for the Association, both reputational and financial; as such, failure to comply with this document may result in the removal of privileges and status afforded to GSGs by the Association as determined by the Board.

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### **Authority**

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Section 93(3) of the Post-Secondary Learning Act (Appendix A) legislates that the students association of a public post-secondary institution shall provide for the administration of student affairs at the public post-secondary institution. That includes the development and management of student committees, the development and enforcement of rules relating to student affairs, and the promotion of the general welfare of the students consistent with the purposes of the public post-secondary institution.

The Board is delegated authority by the GRC to establish principles, strategies and procedures for how the Association supports and engages GSGs at UCalgary.

The Association's Bylaws govern the operations and activities of the Association, which includes GSGs. Any issue not addressed by the Association's Bylaws, this policy document, or the specific GSG policy shall be referred to by the Board for decision-making purposes.

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### **Roles and Responsibilities**

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#### **1. The Board:**

- 1.1. Create and maintain the Terms of Ratification as identified herein and other related policies and procedures for the creation and operation of GSGs;
- 1.2. Grant Ratified status to eligible GSGs that meet the Terms of Ratification;
- 1.3. Assess and make reasonable decisions for issues related to GSGs' failure to comply to the Association and UCalgary's policies and procedures including suspension or revocation of a GSG's Ratified status;
- 1.4. Encourage the formation of sustainable and financially responsible GSGs that practice good governance and create an inclusive, respectful, and enjoyable environment for Active Members; and
- 1.5. To act as advocates for GSGs at UCalgary.

#### **2. GSG Executives and members must:**

- 2.1. Comply with Association and UCalgary policies and procedures that are relevant to GSGs' operations including the GSG Agreement (Appendix A);
- 2.2. Follow the GSG's Policy as approved by the Board;
- 2.3. Add value to the graduate student experience on campus by creating an inclusive, respectful, and enjoyable environment for Active Members;
- 2.4. Inform the Board of any suggestions that may improve the service to GSGs and Active Members; and
- 2.5. Submit an Annual Report to the Governance Coordinator no later than April 30<sup>th</sup> of each Academic Year.

**3. Governance Coordinator:**

- 3.1. Maintain and update GSG-related forms, documents, and information on the Association's web site and other communication channels;
- 3.2. Receive, organize, and forward GSG creation requests and funding requests to the Board;
- 3.3. Inform GSG Executives of the final decision made by the Board in regards to GSG creation request and funding requests;
- 3.4. Issue cheques to GSGs with approved funding; and
- 3.5. Take on other related tasks as delegated by the Board or the Executive Officer.

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**Statement of Independence**

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Although GSGs receive support from the Association, GSGs operate autonomously and function independently of the Association according to each organization's own bylaws as approved by the Board.

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**Related Regulations, Statutes, and Policies**

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The Association's Bylaws (Appendix A) govern the operations and activities of the Association, which includes GSGs. Any issue not addressed by the Association's Bylaws, this policy document, or the specific GSG policy shall be referred to by the Board for decision-making purposes.

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**Contacts**

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| <b>Subject</b> | <b>Contact</b>              | <b>Email</b>   |
|----------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Policy         | Vice President Student Life | <a href="mailto:vpsl.gsa@ucalgary.ca">vpsl.gsa@ucalgary.ca</a>             |
| Administration | Governance Coordinator      | <a href="mailto:governance.gsa@ucalgary.ca">governance.gsa@ucalgary.ca</a> |

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## Procedures

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### 1. Terms of Ratification

- 1.1. At the discretion of the Board or designate, a GSG may be Ratified by the Board if it fulfills the following criteria:
  - 1.1.1. GSG must have minimum of ten (10) members, two-thirds of whom must be Active Members;
  - 1.1.2. All GSG Executives must be Active Members; a minimum of three (3) GSG Executive positions are required including:
    - 1.1.2.1. President;
    - 1.1.2.2. Vice-President; and
    - 1.1.2.3. Treasurer.
  - 1.1.3. The GSG's mandate and objectives must promote the general welfare of Active Members;
  - 1.1.4. Membership in the GSG must be open to all Active Members;
  - 1.1.5. The GSG elects GSG Executives and operates according to ratified Bylaws following the GSG Bylaws Template (Appendix A);
    - 1.1.5.1. All GSGs' Bylaws are subject to review by the Vice President Student Life, Governance Coordinator, and/or other delegates to ensure that their Bylaws abide by the Association's Bylaws, and applicable policies and procedures.
  - 1.1.6. The GSG properly fills out the GSG Creation Form (Appendix A) and other supporting documents and submits to the Governance Coordinator;
  - 1.1.7. The GSG has submitted a properly completed Annual Report and sent to the Governance Coordinator by the end of the Academic Year (for existing GSGs); and
  - 1.1.8. GSGs must follow the following guidelines when naming the GSG:
    - 1.1.8.1. Keep your name short and simple. It should give a clear idea of what the GSG does. Take care to select a name that will last;
    - 1.1.1.1. GSG mandates and names must be unique. The Board will not ratify GSGs that are perceived to substantially duplicate existing organizations or exist to support one-time events; and
    - 1.1.1.2. Avoid acronyms that are already used by other GSGs. Duplicate acronyms will cause confusion;
    - 1.1.1.3. Do not use "University of Calgary or UCalgary" in the GSG name unless you have explicit written permission from UCalgary to do so.

- 1.1.1.3.1. Ratified GSGs may use the tagline “Officially sanctioned by the Graduate Students’ Association of the University of Calgary” as part of their marketing and advertising; and
    - 1.1.1.3.2. Ratified GSGs may use the UC interlock graphic using the UCalgary’s visual guidelines [here](#).
- 1.2. The Board shall not Ratify a GSG that:
  - 1.2.1. Intends to restrict membership or participation based on grounds of discrimination protected under Canadian Human Rights Act (Appendix A);
  - 1.2.2. Has or intends to violate the Association and/or UCalgary’s policies and procedures;
  - 1.2.3. Has or intends to violate federal, provincial, or municipal legislation;
  - 1.2.4. Exists to solicit political contributions for partisan activities; or
  - 1.2.5. Exists to fulfill a short-term, time limited mandate.
- 1.3. The Board may deny, revoke, or temporarily suspend a GSG’s Ratification status or access to the Association’s services and resources if the GSG:
  - 1.3.1. Fails to meet requirements outlined in the Terms of Ratification section of this Policy;
  - 1.3.2. Fails to submit an Association Event Submission Form in a timely manner;
  - 1.3.3. Hosts an event that has not been approved by the Association;
  - 1.3.4. Fails to collect or submit waivers when notified by the Association of a requirement to do so;
  - 1.3.5. Fails to pay for repairs or replacement of the Association or UCalgary’s property, for which any of its members are responsible for damage, either through accidental action or negligence;
  - 1.3.6. Applies for or receives funding or services on behalf of another party;
  - 1.3.7. Applies for or receives funding or services by falsifying or omitting relevant information; or
  - 1.3.8. Fails to submit their annual report as defined in section 7 herein.

## **2. Registration**

- 2.1. Once the GSG Executives have been selected, a GSG Creation Form (Appendix A) must be completed and submitted.

- 2.2. Along with the GSG Creation Form, the following must be submitted:
  - 2.2.1. GSG Bylaws;
  - 2.2.2. List of members; and
  - 2.2.3. Minutes from the Annual General Meeting/meeting where the Bylaws were approved by members for approval by the Board.
- 2.3. The Association's Governance Coordinator shall then submit the creation request to the Board within five (5) business days of receiving the request for official ratification. The final decision shall be emailed to the GSG within fifteen (15) business days of submitting request.
- 2.4. Once approved, the GSG must provide documents proving the GSG holds a bank account.
  - 2.4.1. This must be completed within fifteen (15) business days from the point of notification of ratification.
  - 2.4.2. A minimum of two (2) signing authorities are required.
    - 2.4.2.1. Signing authorities must be GSG Executives as identified in section 1.1.2 herein.
- 2.5. Upon ratification and registration, the GSG shall receive a one-time start-up grant of \$300.

### **3. Annual Membership Fee**

- 3.1. GSGs may charge an annual membership fee.
  - 3.1.1. GSGs that charge an annual membership fee are not eligible for event funding through the Association.

### **4. General Funding Guidelines**

- 4.1. All funding made available to GSGs may be subject to operational procedures including deadlines and administrative processes established by the Association. A GSG may not be provided with a type of funding or service that is not generally made available to other GSGs.
- 4.2. As established in the Terms of Ratification, the Association may limit a GSG's access to funding and services for failure to comply with the Terms of Ratification.
- 4.3. Cheques issued to GSGs must be cashed within six (6) months of the date of issue. Failure to comply will result in forfeiture of those funds.
- 4.4. Cheques for GSGs will be addressed to the GSG and not made out to individuals.
- 4.5. Funding for GSGs is on a first-come, first-served basis and is not guaranteed.

### **5. Operational Bursary**

- 5.1. By October 15 of each Academic Year, GSGs must fill out a GSG Change of Information/Operational Bursary Form (Appendix A). This

form informs the Association of the names and contact information of all current GSG Executives, changes to banking information, the number of students in the GSG, and any other pertinent changes to the GSG.

5.1.1. GSGs must fill out this form each Academic Year, even if there have been no changes to the GSG, in order to receive an Operational Bursary of \$300.

## **6. Event Grant**

6.1. GSGs may apply for reimbursement for funds used for events. A GSG may be eligible to receive a maximum of \$300 per Academic Year, or \$150 per intake.

6.1.1. Only events approved by the Association shall receive an Event Grant.

6.1.2. There are two (2) intakes per Academic Year. The first intake is for events that take place between April 1 and September 30 each Academic Year. The second intake is for events that take place between October 1 and March 31 each Academic Year.

6.1.3. To receive reimbursement for events, GSGs must fill out an Event Submission Form (Appendix A) two (2) to three (3) weeks prior to the event date and receive formal approval from the Association.

6.1.4. Copies of receipts from the event need to be submitted via the After Event Report Form (Appendix A). Funding will not be given to GSGs with missing information or receipts. Receipts must be submitted by October 15 for the first intake and April 15 for the second intake.

6.2. Cheques shall not be written for more than the receipt(s) amount.

## **7. Annual Report**

7.1. All GSGs must submit the Annual Report to the Governance Coordinator at the close of each Academic Year. Annual Reports are due by April 30 (or the next business day) of each Academic Year.

7.2. Annual reports must include the following items:

7.2.1. GSG Executive names and email addresses for both the outgoing GSG Executives and (if known) the incoming GSG Executives;

7.2.2. List of members;

7.2.3. List of activities for the whole Academic Year, and the number of people who attended each activity;

7.2.4. Financial statements (bank statements, income statement, cash balances, and outstanding items); and

7.2.5. Issues or concerns (if applicable).

## **8. University and Other Third-Party Complaints**



- 8.1. The Board shall not mediate third party complaints against a Ratified GSG. For the purposes of this procedure, third parties shall include all on- and off- campus organizations, campus service providers, and other student groups.
- 8.2. The Association may investigate complaints or charges that a GSG has acted in a manner that is inconsistent with these procedures or other Association's policies and procedures.
- 8.3. In the event the Association receives complaints that an Active Member affiliated with a GSG has violated UCalgary or the Association's policies or procedures, the Association may refer the matter to the relevant UCalgary authority.

## **9. Events and Risk Management**

- 9.1. The Event Organizer must fill out the Event Submission Form (Appendix A) and obtain a formal written approval from the Association in order to be insured under the Association's general liability insurance and to take advantage of other Association's services and resources, including but not limited to:
  - 9.1.1. Equipment rentals;
  - 9.1.2. Promotional items;
  - 9.1.3. LDL coupons;
  - 9.1.4. Free beverages;
  - 9.1.5. Waiver templates;
  - 9.1.6. Event Grant; and
  - 9.1.7. Other event support.
- 9.2. Event waivers must be filled out by all participants if the event or activity has elements of physical or legal risks. Completed forms shall be returned to the Events Coordinator for records and storage. During this process, the Procedures and Guidelines for Administration of Waivers (Appendix A) shall be followed.
- 9.3. The GSG Event Organizer must submit an After Event Report (Appendix A) after each event.
  - 9.3.1. All information provided in the After Event Report will be kept confidential by the Association and will only be used for Association business as determined by the Board; and
  - 9.3.2. Failure to submit an After Event Report may result in rejection of future event submissions from the same entity.
- 9.4. The Association may cover costs through the Association's insurance, excluding costs associated with negligence, which the Event Organizer might become legally obligated to pay as damages to a third party as defined in the Association's Insurance Policy arising from an incident where they were hosting an Association-approved event, for any of the following reasons:

- 9.4.1. Bodily injury; and
- 9.4.2. Property damage.
- 9.5. The Events Coordinator shall be available for any event-related questions or to provide resources via email, phone, or in-person, provided the request is made with reasonable notice.
- 9.6. GSGs may refer to the instructions from the Association's Event Handbook (Appendix A) while planning an event.
- 9.7. GSGs are entitled to free classrooms and space booking with the University of Calgary's Conference and Events Management (CEM) as per the [CEM-GSA Classroom Booking Agreement](#) (Appendix A). GSGs shall follow the GSG Handbook (Appendix A) to learn about how to book an event venue.

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### **Appendix A: Forms and Templates**

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1. [Post-Secondary Learning Act](#)
2. [Canadian Human Rights Act](#)
3. [Association's Bylaws](#)
4. [GSG Bylaws Template](#)
5. [GSG Creation Form](#)
6. [Event Submission Form](#)
7. [GSG Change of Information/Operational Bursary Form](#)
8. [After Event Report](#)
9. [Procedures and Guidelines for Administration of Waivers](#)
10. [Events Handbook](#)
11. [2018-2019 CEM-GSA Classroom Booking Agreement](#)
12. [GSG Agreement](#)
13. [GSG Handbook](#)

All GSG forms and supporting documents are available on the GSA web page:  
<https://gsa.ucalgary.ca/graduatestudentgroups/>