

Student Group Procedures

Effective August 1, 2026



Student Group Procedures

The GSA aims to enhance the graduate student experience by promoting engagement through the facilitation of Student Groups, including Graduate Student Groups (GSGs), Departmental Graduate Associations (DGAs), and Consortiums.

Departmental Graduate Associations (DGAs)

DGAs empower graduate students to take an active role in their education and graduate school experience by organizing events, launching new initiatives, and offering support and advice to their peers. DGAs positively contribute to graduate student communities by enabling student leaders to strengthen departmental connections. Since May 2008, our DGAs have promoted social engagement, academic involvement, and improved communication strategies for graduate students.

Graduate Student Groups (GSGs)

We encourage you to start a group based on your research, cultural, or special interests. If there is an existing GSG that matches your interests, we invite you to join it. If you wish to create a new GSG, this handbook will guide you through the process.

While Student Groups receive support, both financial and otherwise, from the GSA, they operate independently and according to their own governing documents.

If you have any questions regarding your Student Group, please feel free to reach out.

Student Group Types

Student Group Type	Purpose	Membership
Departmental Graduate Association (DGA)	The official graduate student representation for an academic department within the GSA.	All graduate students within the department.
Graduate Student Group (GSG)	Brings together graduate students with shared academic, cultural, professional, or special interests.	Active members who choose to join the group.
Consortium	A collaboration between two (2) or more DGAs to organize joint initiatives and strengthen interdepartmental engagement. Consortia are eligible for additional GSA funding.	Two (2) or more participating DGAs.

can take the initiative to form a consortium. By combining efforts, consortiums can organize shared events and initiatives while accessing additional funding opportunities through the GSA.

Student Group Autonomy

All Student Groups operate autonomously as independent, unincorporated entities with a structure similar to that of a student club. Although registered Student Groups receive financial and administrative support from the GSA, they govern themselves according to their own bylaws.

Student Group Types

Benefits of Registration

Benefit	Available to Registered Student Groups
Operations Bursary	Up to \$500 annually
Student Group Insurance	Included
GSA Use of Space Sharing Agreement	Access to book eligible campus spaces
Quality Money Grant	All graduate students eligible to apply
Other GSA Resources	Available as outlined in the Student Group Policy and Handbook

Student Groups may also exist as unregistered (or deregistered) organizations. However, unregistered groups are not eligible to access GSA resources, including insurance, grants, the Use of Space Sharing Agreement, or other benefits described in the Student Group Policy and this handbook.

Have Questions? We're Here to Help!

For assistance with creating or updating a Departmental Graduate Association (DGA), Graduate Student Group (GSG), or Consortium, as well as event-related requests (including equipment rentals, insurance, and promotional items), please email admin.gsa@ucalgary.ca.

Please include a brief description of your request, and the GSA will provide the appropriate instructions.

For other inquiries, please contact:

- **General enquiries:** askgsa@ucalgary.ca
- **Governance and Change of Information:** governance.gsa@ucalgary.ca
- **Operational Bursary and Vice President:** vicepres.gsa@ucalgary.ca

Important Dates

- **October 15:** Change of Information
- **December 15:** DGA Fall Event Report
- **April 30:** Annual Report GSA Office

Graduate Students' Association

1030 Earth Sciences Building (ES) 10th Floor, University of Calgary

Creating a New Student Group

Interested in creating a new Student Group? Follow the steps below to register your group with the GSA.

Step 1: Contact the GSA

To begin the registration process, email governance.gsa@ucalgary.ca with a brief description of your request. The GSA will provide the appropriate instructions and advise you on the documents required to register your Student Group.

Please be prepared to provide:

- Executive contact information.
- Student Group bylaws.
- A list of members.
- Minutes from the Annual General Meeting (AGM), or the meeting at which the bylaws were approved by the membership.

Step 2: Board Review and Approval

Once your request has been received, the Executive Coordinator will submit it to the GSA Board for official ratification within five (5) business days.

The Student Group will be notified of the Board's decision by email within fifteen (15) business days of the request being submitted. Once approved, the Student Group must provide documentation confirming that it has an independently operated bank account with a minimum of two signing authorities.

Creating a New Student Group

Bank Accounts and Financial Management

Student Groups should maintain an independently operated bank account to receive GSA funding or apply for external funding opportunities.

Student Groups are responsible for maintaining accurate and transparent financial records. Any member of the Student Group should be able to review the group's financial records upon reasonable notice.

To promote accountability and financial integrity:

- Maintain a bank account with at least two signing authorities.
- Keep detailed financial records of all revenues and expenditures, including their sources and purposes.
- Maintain an up-to-date financial spreadsheet or ledger for the Student Group.

The University of Calgary, including the GSA, is not responsible for the collection, management, or disbursement of Student Group funds and does not provide insurance or safekeeping for Student Group bank accounts or financial assets.

Student Group Directory

The GSA maintains a directory of registered Student Groups and their contact information on its website to help graduate students connect with Student Groups and to facilitate collaboration between groups.

Visit the Student Group Directory at:

gsa.ucalgary.ca/graduatestudentgroups

Annual Requirements for Student Groups

To maintain registration and remain in good standing with the GSA, all Student Groups must complete the following annual requirements.
Change of Information

Due: October 15

By October 15 of each year, all Student Groups must submit updated information to the GSA, including:

- New executive contact information.
- Confirmation of the number of graduate students enrolled in the department from the Graduate Program Administrator or Director (DGAs only).
- A signed copy of the Student Group Agreement.
- Banking information identifying the Student Group bank account and authorized signing authorities.
- Current governing documents (Bylaws or Constitution).

Student Group Agreement (Appendix A)

The Student Group Agreement outlines the responsibilities and expectations of Student Groups under the GSA Bylaws and Student Group Policy. Each year, a Student Group executive must confirm the group's agreement with the terms and conditions outlined in the Agreement.

A signed copy of the Agreement must be included with the annual Change of Information submission. The same Agreement applies to Consortiums.

Annual Requirements for Student Groups

Annual Report

Due: April 30 (or the next business day)

All Student Groups must submit an Annual Report to the Executive Coordinator at the close of each academic year.

The Annual Report should be approximately 2 – 4 pages in length and include:

- Executive names and email addresses for the outgoing executives.
- Executive names and email addresses for the incoming executives (if known).
- Total number of members.
- A list of activities and events, including a brief description of each activity or event and the total number of activities and events.
- Financial statements (income statement, cash balances, and outstanding items).
- Issues or concerns (if applicable).

Student Group Governance

Membership

Membership of a Departmental Graduate Association (DGA) consists of all Active Members of the graduate programs within that University of Calgary department. DGAs must not charge a membership fee.

A Graduate Student Group (GSG) must have a minimum of ten (10) members, at least two-thirds of whom must be Active Members.

Executive Elections

All registered Student Groups must hold annual elections for their Executive positions. If no students are interested in running for an Executive position, the positions may be filled by appointment.

A Student Group must have a minimum of three (3) Executive positions, all of which must be held by Active Members. At a minimum, these positions are:

- President
- Vice President
- Treasurer

The GSA strongly recommends that all Executive positions be filled through a democratic election process.

If you have questions about the GSA election process or Student Group governance, please contact the Executive Coordinator at **governance.gsa@ucalgary.ca**.

Student Group Governance

Executive Transitions

Depending on your Student Group's bylaws and governance structure, Executive members will likely change from year to year. To support a smooth transition, the GSA recommends the following best practices:

- Use general email addresses (e.g., through Gmail) that can easily be transferred to incoming executives.
- Store Student Group documents in a shared online platform, such as Dropbox or Google Drive, so they remain accessible to future executives.
- Ensure incoming executives receive all important documents, contacts, and information about Student Group procedures.
- Encourage each Executive member to prepare an annual summary of completed and ongoing initiatives, events, and responsibilities to assist future Executive teams.

Student Group Funding

Purpose: Non-restricted funding to support SG operations.

Amount: \$500

Eligibility:

Each active Student Group can apply for one Operational Grant per year (April 1 – March 31) after submitting the Annual Report.

To be eligible to receive the 2026-2027 Student Group Grant, your student group must have completed the following:

- Submitted the 2025-2026 Annual Report form
- Submitted the 2026-2027 Change of Information form through Good Grants
- Submitted an email request for the 2026-2027 Student Group Operational Grant

Student Group Funding

How to apply:

After your 2026-2027 Student Group Renewal form has been submitted in Good Grants, send an email to **governance.gsa@ucalgary.ca** with the following subject line:

Request: student group name, 2026-2027 Student Group Operational Grant (ex. Request: GSADGA, 206-2027 Student Group Operational Grant)

After your email has been received you will be sent one of two emails through Good Grants:

- Approval Email
 - A GSA Banking Information form (and instructions on how to submit it) will be assigned to your 2026-2027 Student Group Renewal application in Good Grants
 - Once you submit your GSA Banking Information form, through Good Grants, your payment will be manually processed
 - Once your payment is submitted to GSA Finance, you will be sent a confirmation email through Good Grants
- Reporting Required Email
 - If you have not submitted your 2025-2026 Annual Report you will be asked to do so

Quality Money Grant

Individual graduate students may apply for a Quality Money Grant to support Student Group events, projects, and initiatives.

Event Support

The GSA provides guidance and support to Student Groups planning events, including assistance with high-risk events and insurance requirements.

High-Risk Events

If your event is not considered high risk, you do not need to notify the GSA.

If your event is considered high risk, please contact the GSA at **admin.gsa@ucalgary.ca** at least three (3) weeks before your event. The GSA will provide further instructions and advise you of any documentation that may be required.

Examples of high-risk events include, but are not limited to:

- Alcohol service
- Off-campus events (within Alberta)
- Out-of-province events
- Events involving vulnerable populations
- Contentious topics
- Events with a risk of physical injury

If you are unsure whether your event is considered high risk, please contact the GSA for guidance.

Event Support

Event Planning Resources

The Events Handbook provides general guidance on planning events, including risk mitigation. Please note that some GSA procedures have changed since the handbook was published. Where there is any discrepancy, this handbook is the official source for current GSA policies and procedures.

Commercial General Liability Insurance (Appendix B)

The Co-operators General Insurance Company has partnered with the Graduate Students' Association of the University of Calgary to provide a Commercial General Liability policy for Student Groups. This policy provides liability coverage for Student Groups, their members, and volunteers in the event of occurrences where responsibility for bodily injury or property damage is alleged.

Regular meetings of GSA Student Groups held at coffee shops, workshops, classrooms, and other on campus facilities are covered under this policy.

Some events may require additional liability coverage to supplement the existing Commercial General Liability policy. If additional insurance is required, it must be obtained before the event takes place.

Refer to **Appendix B** to help determine whether additional liability coverage may be required for your planned event or activity.

Hosting Your Events

Student Groups are responsible for ensuring that their events comply with all applicable University of Calgary policies, procedures, and safety requirements.

Booking Campus Space

For booking GSA spaces (board room and That Grad Space) contact admin admin.gsa@ucalgary.ca. For booking campus spaces visit the [UCalgary Campus Space Booking Form](#) page.

Food and Alcohol

Events involving food, alcohol, or catering may be subject to University of Calgary requirements and additional approvals. Student Groups should review UCalgary's Alcohol Policy and if there are any questions contact the GSA before making arrangements to ensure all applicable policies are followed.

Hosting Your Events

Waivers

Student Groups are responsible for determining whether participant waivers are required for their events and for ensuring that appropriate documentation is completed when necessary. Please review applicable insurance policies when required.

Raffles

Student Groups planning to hold a raffle are responsible for complying with all applicable provincial legislation and licensing requirements. Visit AGLC's website to learn more.

Copyright and Media

Student Groups are responsible for ensuring that any movies, television programs, documentaries, or other copyrighted content shown at an event are used in accordance with applicable copyright laws and licensing requirements.

If you have questions about planning an event or are unsure of the applicable requirements, please contact the GSA at askgsa@ucalgary.ca.

Student Group Benefits

Last Defence Lounge (LDL) Discount

Registered Student Groups may be eligible for discounts at the Last Defence Lounge (LDL) for informal gatherings. Eligibility, discount availability, and applicable terms are determined by the LDL and may change over time.

To ensure your Student Group receives any applicable discounts, please keep your Executive contact information up to date with the GSA.

For current discount information or to inquire about booking a larger event, please contact the LDL directly.

GSA Promotional Items

Registered Student Groups and Consortiums may request GSA promotional items to use as giveaways at events.

Promotional items are provided on a first-come, first-served basis, are subject to availability, and are not guaranteed. Student Groups may submit up to two (2) requests per academic year. The type and quantity of promotional items available are determined by current inventory and at the discretion of GSA staff.

To request promotional items, please contact [**admin.gsa@ucalgary.ca**](mailto:admin.gsa@ucalgary.ca).

Student Group Benefits

Equipment Rentals

The GSA maintains a selection of equipment that may be available for Student Group events.

Equipment rentals are subject to availability and may require a signed rental agreement. To inquire about available equipment or request a rental, please contact **admin.gsa@ucalgary.ca**.

Engagement and Conduct

The GSA encourages graduate students to actively participate in Student Group activities throughout the year. Student Groups and their members are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects positively on themselves, the University of Calgary, and the Graduate Students' Association.

Student Groups must comply with the University of Calgary's Non-Academic Misconduct Policy and all other applicable University policies and regulations.

Diversity, Equity, and Respect

The GSA is committed to fostering a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment for all aspects of the graduate student experience. Discrimination, harassment, and intolerance are prohibited. Behaviour that undermines the dignity, safety, or well-being of Student Group members or others will not be tolerated.

Discrimination, whether intentional or unintentional, is the unfair treatment of individuals or groups based on prejudice, stereotypes, ignorance, or fear, without a bona fide or reasonable justification. The **Alberta Human Rights Act** prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, physical or mental disability, age, marital status, family status, ancestry, place of origin, source of income, sexual orientation, and political beliefs.

Engagement and Conduct

Harassment

The University of Calgary is governed by the Alberta Human Rights Act. Harassment is a form of discrimination that involves unwelcome conduct or attention that a person knows, or reasonably ought to know, is unwelcome. Such conduct may be intimidating, threatening, demeaning, or abusive and may be accompanied by direct or implied threats to a person's academic standing, employment, or participation in Student Group activities.

Harassment creates a hostile environment and may interfere with an individual's ability to pursue their education, research, or work. It may be discriminatory, sexual, or personal in nature. Discriminatory harassment includes unwelcome behaviour directed toward an individual or group based on a protected ground under the **Alberta Human Rights Act**. Racial and religious harassment are examples of discriminatory harassment. Sexual harassment is a specific form of discrimination based on gender and is addressed under the University of Calgary's applicable policies.

Appendix A(i): Student Group Policy

Student Group Policy

Student Groups are expected to review and comply with the policy in its entirety.

Appendix B: Liability Insurance

Commercial General Liability Insurance

The Co-operators General Insurance Company has partnered with the Graduate Students' Association of the University of Calgary to provide a Commercial General Liability policy for Student Groups. This policy provides liability coverage for Student Groups, their members, and volunteers in the event of occurrences where responsibility for bodily injury or property damage is alleged.

In some circumstances, additional liability coverage may be required to supplement the existing Commercial General Liability policy. Additional coverage may be added to the existing policy or obtained as a separate policy, depending on the nature of the event or activity.

Examples of additional coverage include Party Alcohol Liability, Exhibitor Liability, Liquor Liability, Server Liability, Special Event Liability, and Event Cancellation insurance.

Appendix B: Liability Insurance

When Is Additional Coverage Required?

Additional liability coverage may be required depending on the nature of your event or activity.

Consider the following questions:

- Will alcohol be served?
- Will there be live entertainment?
- Will admission be charged?
- Will the event last more than one day?
- Approximately how many people will attend?
- Is the event being organized solely by members of the Graduate Students' Association, or are other organizations involved?
- Is the event consistent with the GSA's guiding principles?

The GSA's guiding principles focus on supporting the social, academic, and professional well-being of graduate students through events, programming, financial support, and professional development opportunities.

Appendix B: Liability Insurance

As a general guide:

- Events involving alcohol require standalone Liquor Liability coverage.
- Events involving live entertainment require standalone Special Event Liability coverage, unless the entertainment is hosted at the Last Defence Lounge and operated by the GSA.
- Events with paid admission or lasting more than one day require Special Event Liability coverage.
- Events organized jointly with other organizations require Special Event Liability covering all organizing groups.
- Large events (more than 50 attendees) may require additional coverage depending on the nature of the event.
- Off-campus events may require additional coverage depending on the specific activity.
- Events that are unrelated to the GSA's purpose require Special Event Liability coverage.

Examples

Regular Student Group meetings held at coffee shops, workshops, classrooms, and other on-campus facilities are generally covered under the Commercial General Liability policy.

A Student Group barbecue where alcohol is served and live entertainment is provided may require additional Liquor Liability and Special Event Liability coverage.

Appendix B: Liability Insurance

Obtaining Additional Coverage

If you are unsure whether additional coverage is required, contact the GSA to discuss your event. The GSA will work with The Co-operators to determine whether the existing policy can be extended or whether additional insurance must be obtained.

Where standalone coverage is required, Student Groups may obtain the appropriate policy through The Co-operators.

Contact Information

- Truman Insurance Agency Inc.
- Phone: (403) 221-7257
- Email: [**Truman_Insurance@cooperators.ca**](mailto:Truman_Insurance@cooperators.ca)