



QUALITY MONEY HANDBOOK

2025 - 2026

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INTAKE PERIOD

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INTAKE PERIODS 2025 - 2026 (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

- JULY 15 - AUGUST 12
- SEPTEMBER 17 - OCTOBER 15
- JANUARY 14 - FEBRUARY 11

APPLICANTS WILL BE NOTIFIED OF THE RESULTS **WITHIN FOUR WEEKS** FOLLOWING THE CLOSE OF THE INTAKE PERIOD.

OVERVIEW

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HOW IT STARTED

The Quality Money program was established in 2002/2003 through a unique **partnership between the University of Calgary, the Graduate Students' Association (GSA), and the Students' Union (SU)**. Created as part of the annual tuition consultation process, the program **allocates funds proportionally** to the GSA and SU based on student population.

PURPOSE

The goal of Quality Money is to **invest in student-led initiatives** that enrich the graduate student experience by fostering community, supporting professional and personal development, and addressing barriers to success. Each year, the GSA invites applications for new projects that align with its strategic priorities and have a lasting, positive impact on the graduate student community.

ELIGIBILITY

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WHO CAN APPLY

- Current graduate students.
- Established University partners (e.g., Food Hub).

REQUIREMENTS

All expenses must be supported by an invoice or receipt.

Projects must align with at least one of the GSA Quality Money Pillars (pg. 6).

DGAs that have received an event or interdepartmental grant must allocate those funds before applying for Quality Money.

- The event grant must be referenced in the Quality Money application—either by:
 - indicating how it will be used within the project, or
 - stating its intended use for the relevant semester.

Where possible, please submit letters of support (financial and otherwise) with your application.



HIRING WITH QUALITY MONEY

Speaker fees are eligible for funding, however a valid invoice or receipt must be provided by the speaker.

Graduate students must be prioritized for paid roles.

When hiring a graduate student in:

- **Academic roles** (e.g., research, academic event support)
 - The student be hired via a **supervisor** (e.g., professor, instructor, dean, associate dean, graduate program administrator).
 - The student must be hired through the **Collective Agreement** with the University of Calgary as the employer.
 - A signed **letter of support** from the position supervisor must be included with the application.
 - Funds are transferred from the GSA to the faculty to process the payment.



HIRING WITH QUALITY MONEY

When hiring a graduate student in:

- **Non-academic roles** (e.g., podcaster, pancake flipper, etc.)
 - The student hired must provide an **invoice** for their services. The invoice must include the **date, amount paid, and a brief description of the work completed.**
 - The hired student is responsible for reporting any income received through Quality Money on their tax return. This income is considered self-employment unless the student has a registered business.

ELIGIBILITY

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QUALITY MONEY CANNOT BE USED FOR

- Alcohol
- Honoraria, gifts, or cash prizes
- Any expense without valid receipts/invoices
- Projects unrelated to graduate student benefit
- Projects that are already finished
- Projects that begin before the application deadline
- Student research projects related to a thesis or other academic submissions

QUALITY MONEY PILLARS

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PRIORITIES

The Graduate Students' Association (GSA) receives Quality Money funding through the University of Calgary's Board of Governors, reflecting a valued partnership in enhancing the graduate student experience. Projects supported through this program are expected to align with the University's **Ahead of Tomorrow Strategic Plan** (2023–2030). To ensure projects also reflect the unique priorities of graduate students, the **GSA's Strategic Plan** (2023–2026) serves as an additional framework for guiding funding decisions.

In alignment with both the University's and the GSA's strategic plans, the Quality Money Pillars were established to reflect graduate student priorities and guide the evaluation of all proposals.

QUALITY MONEY PILLARS

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**SUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS MUST ALIGN WITH
AT LEAST ONE OF THESE PILLARS:**



PILLAR 1 STUDENT ENGAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT

This pillar supports projects that foster community, amplify graduate student voices, and promote skill development.

These projects include, but are not limited to:

- Career, skills and leadership development
- Speaker series
- Symposia and conferences
- Cultural events
- Sports activities

QUALITY MONEY PILLARS

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PILLAR 2 ENRICHING TEACHING & LEARNING

This pillar supports projects that enhance graduate education, improve teaching skills, and encourage cross-departmental collaboration.



These projects include, but are not limited to:

- Teaching and learning projects
- Research analysts
- Workshop series

PILLAR 3 SUSTAINABILITY & ACCESSIBILITY

This pillar supports projects that improve access, reduce barriers, promote well-being, or strengthen long-term program viability for graduate students.



These projects include, but are not limited to:

- Enhancing graduate student study and recreational spaces
- Journal digitization projects
- Online resource development

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS & REPORTING

APPLICANTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO VIEW QUALITY MONEY AS SEED FUNDING AND TO SEEK ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF SUPPORT.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Submit online: gsa.ucalgary.ca/financial-support/quality-money-program.

Incomplete or late applications will not be considered.

QUALITY MONEY RECIPIENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Recipients are expected to:

- Include GSA branding on all promotional materials.
- **Submit a final report** within 30 days of project completion including:
 - A brief overview of the project.
 - A detailed spending report with proof of payment (e.g., receipts, invoices).
 - An assessment of project outcomes and impact on graduate students.
 - Suggestions for future improvements and student feedback.
- Return any unused funds to the GSA.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS & REPORTING

EXTENSIONS

If a project is delayed, an extension request must be submitted before the original end date. Each project may only be extended once, for up to one calendar year (pending GSA Board approval).

GSA Board approval is required if:

- The request is submitted after the original end date, or
- The extension is for more than 30 days beyond the original end date.

SPECIAL SITUATIONS

Should the scope of an approved project change, the applicant is required to notify the GSA by contacting [**governance.gsa@ucalgary.ca**](mailto:governance.gsa@ucalgary.ca) with a detailed description of the proposed changes. The GSA Board will review the request, and the applicant must wait for approval before proceeding.

EVALUATION PROCESS & CRITERIA

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The GSA Elected Council is responsible for reviewing all Quality Money applications and making final funding decisions. As funding is limited, the process is competitive, and approval—whether full or partial—is not guaranteed.



EVALUATION CRITERIA

QM applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Strength of connection to the GSA Quality Money pillars
- Potential impact on graduate students
- Practicality of timeline
- Measurability of outcomes
- Project's future direction
- Sustainability (if applicable)
- Efficient use of financial resources

FAQS & CONTACTS

FAQS

Q: What if my project spans more than one year? Applications can only be approved for one year.

A: Applicants must reapply each year.

Q: What if my application is rejected?

A: Applicants can re-apply in the next intake cycle.

Q: Can I apply to multiple intake periods for the same project?

A: Yes. If your project was not funded or requires renewed funding, you may reapply in a future intake cycle. Each application must be self-contained and meet all current requirements.

Q: Can I apply for multiple projects in the same intake period?

A: Yes. Multiple applications are allowed as long as each project is distinct and separately justified.

Q: What qualifies as a valid receipt or invoice?

A: A valid receipt or invoice must include the vendor name, a description of goods or services, the date, the total amount paid, and proof of payment.

Q: What if I underestimate or overestimate my project costs?

A: Any unused funds must be returned. If costs change significantly, contact the GSA as soon as possible. Additional funding is not guaranteed.

FAQS & CONTACTS

FAQS

Q: Can undergraduate students or staff be involved in my project?

A: Yes. However, the primary beneficiaries must be graduate students, and graduate students must be prioritized for any paid roles.

Q: Are travel and accommodations eligible expenses?

A: Typically not. Travel expenses may only be approved if they are essential to the project and benefit graduate students. Pre-approval is required.

Q: What happens if I miss the reporting deadline?

A: Failure to submit the final report within 30 days may result in ineligibility for future funding and may require repayment of awarded funds.



FOR SUPPORT & INQUIRIES CONTACT:

Vice President Finance & Services

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Executive Coordinator

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