



QUALITY MONEY HANDBOOK

2024-2025



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PURPOSE OF THE QUALITY MONEY PROGRAM



The Graduate Students' Association of the University of Calgary (GSA) is committed to providing a strong foundation for our members and community by offering valued services and programs that support and empower graduate students during and after their academic endeavors.

Quality Money is one way that the GSA invests in the graduate student community.

Emphasis is placed upon project applications that impact the graduate student experience while attending the University of Calgary (UCalgary) by promoting community-focused excellence and the GSA's Strategic Plan to broaden and deepen student engagement, while addressing critical barriers to thriving

There are various sources of funding for supporting graduate students, each with their own criteria and goal. Quality Money is geared toward projects that have not started yet.

HOW IT STARTED

In 2002/2003 the University launched a unique partnership with the GSA and the Students' Union (SU) - "Quality Money"- giving the GSA and SU the opportunity to invest discretionarily in student initiatives and opportunities to enhance the student experience. As part of the yearly tuition consultation process, the University proportionally distributes this money by population to both the GSA and the SU. Each year, the GSA puts out a call for Quality Money applications in order to solicit project applications from interested parties across the University. See our website for a list of funded projects and application deadlines. These projects start as simple ideas and proposals from graduate students and from the GSA and have ultimately improved the graduate student experience at UCalgary.



ELIGIBILITY

Graduate students as well as established university partners are eligible to submit applications for Quality Money. Projects that are already finished and student research projects relating to a thesis or other academic submission at the University of Calgary are not eligible for Quality Money.

POLICIES REGARDING THE BUDGET LINES CAN BE FUNDED BY QUALITY MONEY

IF THE PROJECT INVOLVES HIRING, GRADUATE STUDENTS SHOULD BE GRANTED PRIORITY. HIRING A GRADUATE STUDENT MUST BE DONE THROUGH THE METHODS OUTLINED BELOW:

When hiring a student in an academic capacity (research support, working at an academic event, etc.), this must be done through supervisor sponsorship. A supervisor can be a Professor, Instructor, Dean, Associate Dean, or Graduate Program Administrator. A signed support letter from the position supervisor must be included with the application.

- These funds will be transferred from the GSA to the supervisor's faculty and paid to the student using the fund, department, business unit, project, and activity codes provided by the supervisor.
- Any student hired in an academic capacity must be hired through the Collective Agreement with the University of Calgary as their employer.

QUALITY MONEY CANNOT BE USED TO FUND THE PURCHASE OF ALCOHOL; AND

QUALITY MONEY CANNOT BE USED FOR HONORARIA, CASH PRIZES, OR GIFTS. SPEAKER FEES ARE ELIGIBLE; HOWEVER, AN INVOICE/RECEIPT IS REQUIRED FROM THE SPEAKER. ALL QUALITY MONEY EXPENSE ITEMS REQUIRE AN INVOICE OR RECEIPT.

When hiring a graduate student outside of a research capacity, invoices must be provided by the student hired. The responsibility of reporting income received through Quality Money will be absorbed by the student hired.

- Invoices must contain the date, dollar value paid, and a description of services rendered to be considered valid.
- This income will be classified as self-employment unless the student has a registered business.



DGAS APPLYING FOR QUALITY MONEY, PLEASE NOTE THAT THE DGA EVENT GRANT GIVEN TO ALL DGAS IN THE FALL/WINTER TERM SHOULD BE ALLOCATED BEFORE APPLYING FOR QUALITY MONEY. AS A DGA, THE BUDGET IN YOUR APPLICATION MUST REFERENCE THE EVENT GRANT EITHER BEING USED WITHIN THE PROJECT OR STATE ITS INTENDED USE IN THE RELEVANT SEMESTER. IF YOUR APPLICATION DOES NOT REFERENCE THE EVENT GRANT, THE FULL AMOUNT WILL BE SUBTRACTED FROM THE QM PROJECT BUDGET IF APPROVED IN THE RELEVANT SEMESTER.

PILLARS

This section describes the GSA Quality Money Pillars which comprise the GSA Strategic Plan, and the UCalgary's Ahead of Tomorrow priorities.

The GSA supports all graduate students by ensuring needed services, communities, advocacy, and growth opportunities are available and accessible to them.

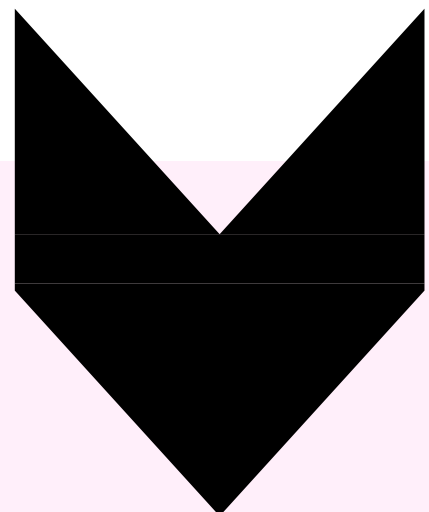
The UCalgary's Board of Governors (BoG) provides the GSA with Quality Money, in an amount defined by the BoG each year, to improve the experience of graduate students on campus. The BoG asks the GSA to utilize Quality Money in a way that follows the University's Ahead of Tomorrow Strategic Plan (2023-2030).

However, as the BoG provides funds to both the SU and the GSA, it is important to differentiate the ways in which projects are approved and funded. As the GSA represents graduate students, it is important that Quality Money allocations are aligned with the GSA's Strategic Plan and its own vision and priorities, as well as the University's.

As such, the GSA has developed the following GSA Quality Money Pillars to provide guidelines for the GSA's Board of Directors when reviewing Quality Money applications:



- 01. STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT**
- 02. ENRICHING TEACHING AND LEARNING**
- 03. SUSTAINABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY**



PILLARS



01.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

The Student Engagement and Development pillar focuses on projects that aim to engage graduate students in their communities, amplify graduate student voices, or help graduate students develop their skills and abilities.

These projects may include, but are not limited to:

1. Career exploration and skills development
2. Symposia
3. Conferences
4. Leadership development
5. Workshops
6. Cultural events
7. Speaker series
8. Sports activities



Successful applications must align with at least one of these pillars:



02.

ENRICHING TEACHING AND LEARNING

The Enriching Teaching and Learning pillar focuses on projects that aim to enhance the teaching and learning of graduate students, as well as opportunities for graduate students to improve their own teaching or collaborate with other departments across campus.

These projects may include, but are not limited to:

1. Teaching and Learning projects
2. Research Analysts
3. Workshop series

03.

SUSTAINABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

The Sustainability and Accessibility pillar focuses on projects that aim to make programs more sustainable or accessible for graduate students. These projects could remove barriers to thriving, promote balanced well-being, or improve organizational sustainability.

These projects may include, but are not limited to:

1. Enhancing graduate student spaces
2. Journal digitization projects
3. Design competitions
4. Development of online materials and resources



APPLICATION

Link to the application form can be found at gsa.ucalgary.ca/financial-support/quality-money-program.

Applications should be submitted through the GSA website's application submission link on the same page.

If you have questions, please send an email to the GSA Executive Coordinator at governance.gsa@ucalgary.ca

OVERALL REQUIREMENTS

APPLICATION

The applicant needs to complete and submit the Quality Money application form. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted. A successful application will have well defined goals which are in line with the GSA Quality Money Pillars. Moreover, the application should contain a detailed and reasonable budget and show how graduate students benefit from the proposed project. The applicant is encouraged to view Quality Money as "seed" money and seek to grow their project. Therefore, the applicant is encouraged to seek out other sources of funding and include these in the proposed budget.

OPERATIONAL

Once approved and funded, the applicant should show financial responsibility and record measurable impacts of the project (e.g., number of graduate students attending an event compared to overall attendance). Also, the applicants are required to publicly recognize the GSA in their project by way of branding and/or other promotional mediums that recognize the GSA's contribution to the project/event.

The following is a list of minimum expectations:

- Financial responsibility (e.g., gather receipts and provide proof of spending);
- Record data regarding how the goals of the project are met (e.g., number of students attended/ impacted);
- GSA branding (e.g., [GSA Quality Money logo](#) on posters, web site, or photos of the event); and
- Seek additional sources of funding for the subsequent years (if applicable).

REPORTING

In this phase, the applicant should complete the report form, and provide a detailed account of how the Quality Money was spent and describe how the project met its goals. Consider the impact of your project and how it can benefit a large and diverse audience of graduate students. Therefore, the applicant should provide all the information that was recorded in the previous phase.

The applicants will be required to provide a short description of their project and its result, which will be presented on the GSA website.

The minimum requirements for this phase are as follows.

- Report on how the proposed goals were achieved, including the impact on graduate students (e.g., using the supporting data recorded in previous phase); and
- Report on the actual budget and supporting materials such as receipts and proof of spending.

EVALUATION

PROCESS

The GSA Board of Directors (BoD) reviews and is responsible for final decisions for all Quality Money applications. Applications are reviewed for completeness and eligibility. Incomplete and/or late applications will not be accepted. As funds are limited, this is a competitive process, and there is no guarantee an application will be funded or that it will be funded in full.

After the deadline of each intake cycle, the BoD will review each application and rate them based on the criteria described above. The applicants will be notified once a decision is made regardless of the decision. The GSA and successful Quality Money recipients will enter into an agreement with respect to the funding made available through the Quality Money Program. These funds will be used solely for the purpose for which the proposal is granted, or, if the original purpose is altered with the written consent of the GSA.

Projects that occurred prior to the intake deadline will not be considered. If an application is rejected, the applicant may re-apply for the next intake cycle. At the end of the project, the applicant is required to submit a report detailing their accomplishments and the actual expenses. If the actual expenses are less than the proposed budget, the applicant will be asked to return the difference to the GSA. Receipts and proof of spending must be submitted.

For projects that span more than one (1) year, the applicant needs to provide a budget for each year. Note that the applications can only be approved for one (1) year. At the end of the year, the applicants are required to submit a complete final report. If the applicant wishes to receive funding for the next year, the applicant is required to submit a new application and reference their previous successful application. The chances of receiving funding for subsequent years are higher if the project met the intended outcomes in the previous year, and if the applicant demonstrates that the project is reducing its reliance upon Quality Money. However, it is important to note that the funding for subsequent years is NOT guaranteed.

CRITERIA

When evaluating QM applications, the BoD will be evaluating 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 and Sustainability (if applicable);
- Reasonableness of Budget.



The Quality Money projects are expected to have a reasonable impact upon graduate students. For example, they may have a large impact upon a small group of students or a small impact upon a large group of students. The applicant is expected to describe the scope of their project and the resulting outcomes for graduate students, to help the BoD better decide on their application.

Moreover, the applicant is expected to provide a detailed budget for their application. A budget template is provided in the application form. Applicants must include other sources of funding in the detailed budget, not just the anticipated Quality Money funding. Successful applicants are expected to spend the Quality Money according to the proposed budget as closely as possible. In the reporting phase, the recipients of Quality Money must report the actual expenses in the same manner as the proposed budget. In case the actual expenses are less than the proposed budget, the recipient of the Quality Money will be required to return the difference to the GSA.

Since Quality Money is to be viewed as "seed" money, the applications which have other sources of funding and a sustainable plan for project continuation may receive more favorable treatment than those solely dependent upon Quality Money. Ensure that a list of other funding sources is provided in your project application.

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

REPORTING

The recipient of Quality Money will provide the GSA with the necessary information required to enable the GSA to determine whether the recipient is complying with the conditions on which the Quality Money was provided. It is imperative that the recipient spend the funds as set out in the Quality Money application. The recipient of Quality Money will permit a representative of the GSA to examine any books or records to determine whether the Quality Money has been used as set out in the Quality Money application. If the recipient does not comply with the terms and conditions for which the Quality Money was given, or if the information provided by the recipient to obtain the Quality Money is determined by the GSA to be false, misleading, or inaccurate, the GSA may require that the recipient repays all or part of the Quality Money fund immediately to the GSA.

The recipient will recognize and permit the GSA to recognize the contribution from the GSA for this project. The recipient will place the GSA Quality Money logo, which will be provided in order to meet the requirements of the GSA's style guide, on all publications and documents pertaining to the project.

A final written report, including the submission of the final budget, expenses, and proof of spending, will be submitted to the GSA Executive Coordinator at governance.gsa@ucalgary.ca within 30 days of the end of the initiative. Unspent funds are due at this time as well. The report shall include:

- An overview of the status of the initiative;
- A detailed spending report for all expenditures related to the life of the initiative with proof of payment (i.e., receipts and invoices - itemized and tallied);
- An assessment of the outcomes and impacts of the initiative, for example, the number of graduate students impacted, photos of graduate student participations, written feedback from students, etc; and
- Suggestions for the future of the initiative, and where possible, will include student feedback that measures the efficacy of the initiative.



EXTENSION REQUEST

An approved QM project can request an extension if the awarded QM funds are still available.

The applicant is required to fill out the Quality Money Extension Request Form. The complete Extension Request Form must be sent to the GSA Executive Coordinator prior to the original project end date together with the Quality Money Report form.

If the Extension is within 30 days of original end date and the project scope does not change, it will not require GSA Board approval. If it is beyond 30 days, the applicant must send an email to the GSA Executive Coordinator, sign a contract for the extended portion of the project, and fulfil all standard QM project requirements. Extension requests submitted after the original project end date or requiring more than 30 days will require GSA Board approval.

An approved QM project can only be extended once, and the extension will only be granted up to one (1) full calendar year.

No cheque will be reissued for QM extension request, and the applicant must use the remaining fund grant from the original QM approval.

SPECIAL SITUATIONS

If the approved project is greatly delayed due to unexpected reasons, the applicant can submit the Extension Form without the Quality Money Report.

If there is a drastic change to the original approved QM project and cause misalignment of the project with the Quality Money Pillars, the applicant must inform the GSA so that the GSA can decide whether to continue QM funding for the project.

SAMPLE BUDGET

Item Description	Unit Cost	Year 1 cost	Funding Source
Room booking	\$300	\$300	Faculty of Arts
Speaker Hotel	\$150 per night, 2 nights per event	\$150	Department of English
Speaker per diem expenses	Up to \$75 per day for 2 days	\$150	EGSA DGA
Event Refreshments (excluding alcohol)	\$200 per event	\$200	GSA Quality Money
Event AV services	\$300 per event	\$300	GSA Quality Money
Advertising	\$500 in first year and \$250 per year after	\$500	GSA Quality Money
GSA branding - use of logo on presentation and materials	\$0	\$0	
	Total	\$1,300	
		\$300	Faculty of Arts
		\$150	Department of English
		\$150	EGSA DGA
		\$1000	GSA Quality Money

FEATURED PROJECT INTERSECTIONALITY SYMPOSIUM



In the 2021-2022 academic year, three different GSA committees (EDI, Gender and Sexuality Alliance, Mental Health and Wellness) collaboratively organized a panel discussion series funded by the Quality Money program.

The organizers hosted three discussion panels as well as a gallery of artwork and prose submitted by students' personal experiences with Intersectionality.

This panel series contributed to creating a more inclusive and safer environment for graduate students who are placed at divergent intersections. This event also provided an opportunity for UCalgary graduate students to educate themselves to enable them to act towards making a change.