

Student Groups Policy

Policy Statement

Student Groups are designed to support graduate students who wish to self-organize into specific interest groups or collective communities. The GSA can provide resources to help these groups achieve their specific mandate if they register and adhere to the policy provisions below, and the University of Calgary and GSA Code of Conduct. This document provides guidelines to Student Groups and their members.

Reason for Policy

The purpose of this document is to:

1. Provide clarity regarding the GSA's relationship with all Student Groups;
2. Outline the criteria for Student Groups to obtain and maintain official Registered status with the GSA;
3. Provide grounds by which a Student Group could temporarily or permanently lose their status with the GSA;
4. Outline the terms by which officially recognized Student Groups may access Association services, resources, and other benefits; and
5. Ensure that Student Groups and their Executives are responsible for being aware of and adhering to this policy document.

Statement of Independence

All Student Groups operate autonomously as an unincorporated entity in a similar structure as a student club and function independently of the Association according to each Student Group's own bylaws.

Although Student Groups may apply to receive support from the Association, a Student Group may exist as an Unregistered (or Deregistered) Group and will receive no access to GSA resources. Including insurance grants, use-sharing agreements, and other perks as described in this policy document and the Student Group Handbook.

Applicability

This document applies to all Registered Student Groups, including Legacy Graduate Students Groups (GSGs) or Legacy Department Graduate Associations (DGAs).

Definitions

All defined terms which are used, but not defined herein, and which are defined in Article 1 of the Bylaws of the Graduate Students' Association of the University of Calgary, shall have the meaning given to them in the 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.

“Applicable Laws” means the Graduate Students' Association and University of Calgary Bylaws, Policies, Procedures and Code of Conduct.

“Disband” means the dissolution of any Student Group.

“De-registered” means a Student Group whose registration is revoked or not renewed. Herein, either temporarily or permanently.

“Event Organizer” means the main person who oversees an event or is the representative of the event on behalf of the registered student groups.

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

“Legacy” means a group that was certified before ratification of this policy, but after the incorporation of the GSA as a prescribed provincial entity.

“Registered” means a Student Group that is registered and in good standing within the GSA and able to access perks as related in this policy and the Student Group Handbook.

“Student Groups” are autonomous organizations made up exclusively of Active Members linked by a common academic or other interest. This includes what used to be known as DGAs / GSGs / Consortiums.

“Unregistered” means any Student Group that has not sought or has not received approval from the GSA to be a Registered Student Group.

Group Composition

Outlines the composition of all Registered Student Groups as follows:

1. Have a Chair, President, Presiding Officer, or equivalent;
2. Have a Treasurer or equivalent;
3. Have an independent bank account, with two signing authorities, for the receiving of funds;
4. Have a list of active members; and
5. Have Executive names and contact information.

Benefits

All Registered Student Groups in good standing will have access to benefits provided by the GSA to support group operations.

General Liability Coverage

- a. All Registered Student Groups in good standing will have access to the Association's insurance coverage.

Compliance

1. A Student Group:

- 1.1. Is formed and/or exists on its own and independent of the GSA.
- 1.2. Will be an autonomous organization that cannot be created or disbanded by the GSA.
- 1.3. May register with the GSA in accordance with the Association's procedures.

2. Registered Student Group:

- 2.1. Should NOT duplicate an existing Registered Student Group.
- 2.2. Should consist of a minimum of 10 members.
- 2.3. Must add value to the graduate student experience on campus by creating an inclusive, respectful and enjoyable environment for active members.
- 2.4. Must submit an updated Student Group change of information form each academic year in accordance with GSA timeline.
- 2.5. Must submit an Annual Report to the GSA no later than **April 30** of each academic year, which includes but is not limited to a financial statement of all

- spending done using GSA-supported funds; a description of events hosted throughout the year; issues or concerns, etc.
- 2.6. Must have and adhere to fair, complete and properly ratified bylaws or Terms of Reference (TOR).
 - 2.7. Should conduct itself in a way that does not harm the integrity of the GSA or any third parties that provide support to the GSA and fellow Student Groups.
 - 2.8. Must comply with Applicable Laws that are relevant to Student Groups' operations, including the annual Student Group Agreement.
 - 2.9. Student Groups must update the GSA, through their year-end report, on financial assets.

Non-Compliance

Applies to all Registered Student Groups, including Legacy Graduate Student Groups (GSGs) or Legacy Department Graduate Associations (DGAs). Failure to comply with this document may result in temporary or permanent termination of registered status and the end of all incentives provided under the benefits.

1. Temporary de-registration

- a. A Student Group will become temporarily de-registered and will no longer be able to leverage GSA resources if they do not submit all required documents by the deadline.
- b. A two (2) week re-submission notice would be sent out to the Student Group.
- c. The Student Group may have the temporary de-registration lifted by submitting all missing documents within six (6) months of the re-submission notice.

2. Permanent de-registration

- a. A Student Group will be permanently de-registered by the GSA Elected Council under the prevailing circumstances: i) discrimination and/or harassment; ii) physical and/or substance abuse; iii) administrative and/or operational failures; and iv) disruptive activities and/or misrepresentation.
- b. In all cases of violation of the present policy or any related agreement and before any measure is applied by the Association, one or more of the following appropriate measures would apply: i) review of the complaint; ii) issue a letter of warning; and iii) a withdrawal of recognition of the Student Group by the Association.

Complaints, Disputes, and Appeals of Decisions

1. Eligibility to file a complaint

Subject to the provisions of this process, and defined in Article 11 of the Association's Bylaws, a Member in Good Standing, Elected Council, and any Third Parties that provide support to the GSA and fellow Student Groups may make a charge against the Member (the "Accused").

2. In the event of any dispute, the complainant must first:

- 2.1. Notify the GSA President, any member of the Elected Council and/or the Executive Director;
- 2.2. The complaints or charges will be reviewed, and, if required, the Elected Council will make the appropriate determination in accordance with Article 11.2.1.1.
- 2.3. Where a complaint proves to be valid, and the sanction impacts the Labour Component of the GSA, additional support to adjudicate will be deferred to the provisions in Article 11.2.1.2.

3. Appeal

- 3.1. A permanently de-registered Student Group wishing to appeal any decision made by the Association may do so through the Trials and Charges process laid out in the Association's Bylaws.

Reporting of Administrative Procedures

An Association staff member would be delegated to:

- a. Provide an extension to any reporting deadlines as laid out in this policy;
- b. Maintain and update Registered Student Group-related forms, documents and information on the Association's website and other communication channels;
- c. Receive, organize, and forward Registered Student Group requests and funding requests to the Elected Council;
- d. Inform the Student Group of the final decision made by the Elected Council concerning Student Group Registration and funding requests;
- e. Issue cheques or digital payments to Student Groups with approved funding.