



GSA Board Policy

The Graduate Students' Association of the University of Alberta

Last updated:

27 July 2022

(DD Month YYYY)

Certified by:

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User's Guide to GSA Board Policy

- GSA Board Policy was created by Motion of the GSA Board on 1 December 2010, and subsequently codified in GSA Bylaw by GSA Council on 14 March 2011.
- As per GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section A.BYL.3.1, "GSA Board Policy details high-level operational policies of the GSA."
- As per GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section A. BYL.3.2, "GSA Board Policy is under the jurisdiction of the GSA Board and may be amended by a simple majority vote of the GSA Board at any meeting of the GSA Board, with changes to be reported to GSA Council."
- As per GSA Bylaw and Policy, Sections F.POL.3.2.a and Section F.POL.3.2.b, "the GSAB [GSA Board] is the senior administrative authority of the GSA as delegated to it by GSA Council" and "the GSAB is the discussion forum for the GSA Officers and Directors."
- Please check the GSA website or consult the Executive Director (or delegate) for the most up-to-date copy.
- Footnotes indicate the date changes were made following approval by the GSA Board.
- All sections have tables at the beginning which note any other specifically related sections of GSA Bylaw and Policy or GSA Board Policy that should be consulted, note the existence of any related forms, and provide definitions of recurring terminology used within that section (if any). When reviewing a section that notes other specifically related sections of GSA governing documents, users should turn to those sections to ensure they have a full understanding of the topic at hand.

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Section 1: GSA Electronic Resources and Office Security¹

Other Specifically Related Sections of GSA Governing Documents	None
Related Forms	None
Definitions	None

1. The Executive Director (ED) (or delegate) will provide Directly-Elected Officers (DEOs), Council-Elected Officers, and staff with GSA-owned CCIDs (@ualberta.ca email account) and passwords.
 - 1.1 Those receiving GSA-owned CCIDs may not change the passwords to accounts; the GSA retains the right to change the password to accounts at any time.
2. If a DEO, Council-Elected Officer, or staff member uses personal electronic devices (phone, tablet, personal computer, etc) to access GSA resources (reports, meeting materials, etc), those devices must be password protected and encrypted.
 - 2.2 If an individual loses their personal device or suspects that their GSA-owned CCID password has been compromised, they must alert the ED (or delegate) immediately.
3. The ED (or delegate) will provide DEOs and staff with the necessary keys, access cards, and alarm codes to access the GSA office during and after business hours; these remain the property of the GSA and may be changed or rescinded at any time.
 - 3.1 If an individual loses their key or access card or suspects that their alarm code has been compromised, they must alert the ED (or delegate) immediately.
4. Upon the departure or end of term of a DEO, Council-Elected Officer, or staff member, it is that individual's responsibility to ensure that all GSA property is returned. Further, any confidential GSA documents saved to personal electronic devices should be destroyed.
 - 4.1 The ED (or delegate) will ensure that any passwords associated with an individual's duties are changed, and that the individual's alarm code is disabled.

¹ Approved by the GSA Board on 29 March 2017 and amended on 27 June 2018.

Section 2: GSA Recognition Awards: Nomination and Adjudication Processes²

Other Specifically Related Sections of GSA Governing Documents	GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section H: Performance, Conduct, Responsibilities, and Attendance, and the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board, GSA Policy, Performance and Conduct, Conflict of Interest, and Conflict on Commitment GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section O: GSA Recognition Awards
Related Forms	GSA Recognition Awards nomination forms available on the GSA website
Definitions	“Working Day” is defined as a day that the GSA office is open

1. GSA Recognition Awards: Nomination and Adjudication Processes
 - 1.1 Adjudication criteria for all GSA Recognition Awards are set out in GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section O: GSA Recognition Awards. Nomination criteria and information is available on the GSA website.
 - 1.2 The GSA’s timeline for advertising (and associated methods) and accepting nominations will be determined by the Executive Director (ED) (or delegate), in consultation with the GSA Awards Selection Committee (GSA ASC).
 - 1.3 The ED (or delegate) will ensure that nominations are pre-screened for completeness and eligibility.
 - 1.4 The ED (or delegate) will ensure that, prior to the nomination deadline, the members of the GSA ASC are contacted to schedule training meetings.
 - 1.5 Once the deadline has passed, the ED (or delegate) will ensure that GSA ASC members are notified of the total number of nominations for each award, and arrange for individual review and adjudication of nominations.
 - 1.6 Each nomination will be individually scored according to the adjudication criteria set out in GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section O: GSA Recognition Awards.
 - 1.6.a To review nominations, each adjudicator will be placed in a private room. Adjudication guidelines, a score sheet, and randomly assigned nominations are provided. Relevant conflict of interest policy will be adhered to.
 - 1.6.b Each nomination will be scored initially by two (2) adjudicators independently; they will not be provided with each other’s scores.

² Approved by the GSA Board on 17 October 2012. Amended by the GSA Board on 18 September 2013, 10 September 2014, 26 August 2015, 29 March 2017, 27 June 2018, 17 April 2019, and 25 September 2019.

- 1.6.c The Chair and Vice-Chair of the GSA ASC will not be involved in the initial rounds of assessment as they may be called upon serve as a third adjudicator in cases of scoring discrepancy; in such cases a new score will then be reached using the two (2) closest scores.
- 1.6.d In cases where previously successful nominees have again been nominated for the same award adjudicators will be provided with the initial successful nomination package to compare with the current nomination package. Nominees will only be assessed on merits achieved since their previously successful nomination.
- 1.7 After the initial assessment process is completed, scores are compiled and nominations are ranked according to their total score.
- 1.8 The final list of proposed recipients will be voted on for approval by the GSA ASC, by email or in a meeting where required as determined by the GSA ASC Chair.
- 1.9 All adjudicator files are confidential and all adjudication decisions are final.
- 1.10 Once approved, recipients of GSA Recognition Awards will be notified via email.
- 1.11 Original copies of successful nominations will be retained by the GSA for a period of five (5) years. Unsuccessful nominations will be shredded by the GSA.

Section 3: GSA President's Citation: Terms of Reference³

Other Specifically Related Sections of GSA Governing Documents	GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section F: GSA Standing Committees
Related Forms	None
Definitions	None

1. The purpose of this citation is to acknowledge those individuals who have assisted the GSA Board (GSAB) in terms of 1) infrastructure development, 2) significant contributions of time and energy to supporting GSA Board initiatives (including joint Students' Union or University initiatives) above and beyond their expected duties/positions, or 3) who have upheld and exceeded standards of collegial governance in working with the GSAB to see critical initiatives come to fruition.
 - 1.1 The eligibility and suitability of an individual for this citation is left to the discretion of the GSAB.
 - 1.2 There is no application form for this citation and self-nominations are not accepted.
 - 1.3 A Motion must be made by a member of the GSAB recommending that an individual be chosen as a recipient of this citation during a closed session meeting of the GSAB.
 - 1.4 The number of recipients for this citation is determined by the GSAB.
2. A plaque will be presented to the recipient(s) of this citation at the annual GSA Awards Night.
 - 2.1 The recipient(s) of this citation are determined by early February.

³ Approved by the GSA Board on 6 February 2013. Amended by the GSA Board on 5 February 2014, 29 March 2017, and 27 June 2018.

Section 4: GSA Meeting Rooms: Bookings by Groups or Individuals External to the GSA⁴

Other Specifically Related Sections of GSA Governing Documents	None
Related Forms	GSA Meeting Room Booking Form, available on the GSA website
Definitions	“External to the GSA” is defined as members of the broader University community or GSA members aside from Directly-Elected Officers and GSA staff

1. The GSA offices in Triffo Hall contain two (2) meeting spaces that can be requested to be reserved on an occasional basis by groups or individuals external to the GSA (1-34 and 1-13).
2. Groups or individuals external to the GSA interested in booking a GSA meeting room are directed to fill out a GSA Meeting Room Booking Request Form available on the GSA website and submit it to the GSA office.
 - 2.1 In filling out the form, interested parties are asked to provide the following information: first and last name; a valid U of A email address; a registered student group name (if applicable); department (if applicable); GSA membership status (if applicable); date(s) requested; start time (8:30 am earliest) and end time (3:30 pm latest) for the booking; indication of which room they would like to book (1-34 with a maximum occupancy of six (6) people or 1-13 with a maximum occupancy of eight (8) people); a brief description of the purpose of the meeting; and a signature and date.
3. Once a room booking request form has been received by the GSA office, the availability of the requested space will be assessed and the requester of the meeting room booking will be notified.
4. Approval of a request to book a meeting room is conditional upon filing the form referred to above and the GSA reserves the right to change/substitute the room(s) selected.
 - 4.1 By signing the GSA Meeting Room Booking Form, groups or individuals wishing to book a meeting room are agreeing to use the GSA space only for the purpose indicated on the form and to leave the room in the condition it was found in.

⁴ Approved by the GSA Board on 24 April 2013. Amended by the GSA Board on 14 October 2015, 29 March 2017, and 27 June 2018.

Section 5: GSA Media, Social Media, and Visual Identity⁵

Other Specifically Related Sections of GSA Governing Documents	GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section D: GSA Officers
Related Forms	None
Definitions	<p>“External to the GSA” is defined as members of the broader University community or those not affiliated with the University</p> <p>“Substantive Changes” is defined as alterations to the colour of the GSA logo and the incorporation or removal of individual design components (both visual and written components)</p> <p>“Working Day” is defined as a day that the GSA office is open</p>

1. In line with the “Communications” section of the University of Alberta’s Statement of Ethical Conduct, official GSA communications in all forms of media and electronic/social media reflect “high ethical standards, mutual respect and civility.” Additionally, the GSA is compliant with Canadian Anti-Spam Legislation.
2. All media (print, television, radio, and electronic) requests for comment and interviews on any issue are directed to the President for response.
3. All substantive content on the GSA website is approved by the President and/or GSAB prior to posting.
 - 3.1 Non-substantive and editorial changes to the GSA website (eg removing out-dated images or information, closing grant applications due to insufficiency of funds in compliance with GSA Policy and in consultation with the appropriate Vice-President, etc) may be made by the Executive Director (ED) (or delegate).
4. All materials submitted to the GSA for considered inclusion in the GSA newsletter will be vetted by the ED (or delegate).
 - 4.1 The ED (or delegate) will determine the timing of when content will appear and its ordering within the GSA newsletter based on deadlines, timelines, etc identified in said content.
 - 4.2 Draft GSA newsletters will normally be circulated to the GSAB for review and approval approximately one (1) working day before they are sent to the graduate student community using email addresses accessible through the GSA’s Third Party Information Sharing Agreement with the University (provided no concerns are brought forward when the draft is circulated).
 - 4.2.a The GSA newsletter will clearly identify the GSA as the sender and will include a clear unsubscribe mechanism. Requests to unsubscribe will normally be processed in one (1) working day.
 - 4.3 The GSA newsletter may include:

⁵ Approved by the GSA Board on 15 May 2013. Amended by the GSA Board on 18 September 2013, 5 February 2014, 14 January 2015, 29 March 2017, and 27 June 2018.

- 4.3.a GSA sponsored events and GSA announcements.
 - 4.3.b Postings from GSA service providers, as specified in the signed agreements with those providers.
 - 4.3.c Scholarship, bursary, and award opportunities applicable to the graduate student community.
 - 4.3.d Academic events and opportunities, both on and off campus.
 - 4.3.e Non-academic events on campus that have a broad interest base (such as Sustainability Awareness Week, International Week, etc).
 - 4.3.f Professional development opportunities on campus (including teaching and research assistantship employment opportunities, provided they are in compliance with the Graduate Student Assistantship Collective Agreement).
 - 4.3.g Advertisements for University of Alberta courses applicable and beneficial to a wide range of graduate students.
- 4.4 Requests for volunteers to participate in surveys, focus groups, and other research participation opportunities, as well as professional development opportunities off campus, will be explicitly vetted by the President.
- 4.5 The GSA newsletter will not include solicitations for merchandise or services, or from students seeking to make personal connections with other students or locate research subjects, or employment opportunities except as outlined above.
5. The ED (or delegate) is designated as the administrator of the GSA's Facebook page, Twitter account, and Instagram account.
- 5.1 The GSA Facebook page's settings will be such so as to prohibit posts from the public; only those designated as the administrator of the page will be able to post.
 - 5.2 The content on the GSA Facebook page, Twitter account, and Instagram account will align with the GSA Board Strategic Work Plan.
 - 5.3 The President and those designated by the President, may compose Facebook posts, tweets, and Instagram posts, to be circulated to the ED (or delegate) prior to posting.
 - 5.4 Any individuals posing questions or directing comments to the GSA Facebook page, Twitter account, or Instagram account (via direct messages or comments on GSA posts) will be directed to the ED (or delegate) and the President will be made aware of such instances. The President will make decisions as to how such comments will be addressed.
 - 5.5 Statistical information regarding the GSA Facebook page, Twitter account, and Instagram account will be gathered regularly by the administrator of the page and reported to the GSAB.
6. All requests for use of the GSA logo (excepting requests from parties to whom the GSA is providing funding/sponsorship or with whom the GSA has a signed agreement) must be approved by the President.
- 6.1 Substantive changes to the GSA logo initiated by the ED (or delegate) will be approved by the GSAB.

Section 6: External Grants⁶

Other Specifically Related Sections of GSA Governing Documents	GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section K: Finances GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section N: GSA Graduate Student Groups
Related Forms	None
Definitions	"Groups external to the GSA" is defined as non-GSA University offices and administrative units, and student groups ineligible to register with the GSA

1. The GSA Board (GSAB) may approve requests for grants from groups external to the GSA under the following conditions:
 - 1.1 The request for funding is consistent with the mandate (purpose) of the GSA and aligns with the GSA's vision, mission and/or Board Strategic Work Plan.
 - 1.2 If the request is to support a conference (or equivalent), the conference (or equivalent) must be open to all graduate students.
 - 1.3 The organization making the request must be non-commercial and non-partisan in nature; must agree to use the GSA logo in promotional materials; and must report back to the GSAB that the grant was spent for the purpose for which the money was provided.
2. The GSAB may approve external grants up to \$300 by a simple majority. Amounts over \$300 require a unanimous vote of those present.
 - 2.1 All external grants will be drawn from the "External Grants" budget line within the GSA's annual budget.
3. GSA Graduate Student Groups and graduate student groups who would otherwise be able to register with the GSA but have not pursued said registration are ineligible to apply for an External Grant.
4. All requests for grants made by groups external to the GSA will be assessed by the GSAB. Decisions regarding the approval of such requests and the amounts granted will be reported to GSA Council.

⁶ Approved by the GSA Board on 7 August 2013. Amended by the GSA Board on 27 April 2016, 29 March 2017, and 27 June 2018.

Section 7: Directly-Elected Officer Vacation and Leave⁷

Other Specifically Related Sections of GSA Governing Documents	GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section D: GSA Officers GSA Bylaw and Policy, Section H: Performance, Conduct, Responsibilities, and Attendance, and the GSA Appeals and Complaints Board
Related Forms	GSA President and Vice-President Vacation or Leave Request
Definitions	“Working Day” is defined as a day that the University is open

1. Directly-Elected Officers (DEOs) are subject to the DEO vacation and leave policy in effect at the time of their election.
2. Absences for GSA-related representation and advocacy work are excluded from this GSA Board Policy.
3. Any unauthorized absences are considered unpaid leave.
4. In planning absences and ensuring they do not have any conflicts of commitment, DEOs are expected to meet the conditions of their portfolios as outlined in GSA Bylaw and Policy.
5. DEOs should schedule vacations and academic leaves as early in their term as possible and, before scheduling vacations or academic leave, are asked to:
 - 5.1 Discuss proposed absences with fellow DEOs to ensure there is adequate coverage during absences.
 - 5.2 Consult with the Executive Coordinator (EC) concerning scheduling.
 - 5.3 Prepare colleague(s) who will be substituting.
6. The three (3) leaves outlined below cannot be combined:
 - 6.1 Vacation: DEOs are eligible for up to ten (10) working days of paid vacation during their term in office.
 - 6.1.a Under compelling circumstances, vacations longer than ten (10) working days may be approved.
 - 6.1.b There is no vacation pay out on any time not taken upon term expiry or termination.
 - 6.1.c Vacation time cannot be carried over should a DEO be elected for an additional term.
 - 6.1.d DEOs are asked, if possible, to refrain from submitting vacation requests in April (given the importance of the transition and onboarding processes that occur in this month) and in late-August (to ensure the GSA is able to participate in the many orientation opportunities that arise during this period).
 - 6.2 Compassionate Leave: DEOs may be eligible for compassionate leave with length of leave considered on a case-by-case basis, and with the approval process aligning with that of other

⁷ Approved by the GSA Board on 25 September 2013. On advice from the GSA Accountant and as delegated by the GSA Board, the GSA Budget and Finance Committee amended this GSA Board Policy on 27 April 2015. Amended by the GSA Board on 27 June 2018, 26 February 2020, and 27 July 2022.

leaves as described below.

- 6.3 Academic Leave: DEOs may be eligible for an academic leave, normally no more than a total of fifteen (15) working days, for proposed absences related to research and major academic milestones (including research which requires travel, travel for academic program work such as required academic conferences, and preparation for candidacy exams or dissertation defenses).
7. The President, who consults with the Executive Director (ED) (or delegate) before a decision is made, approves requests from Vice-Presidents.
 - 7.1 The Councillors on the GSA Board (GSAB) approve requests from the President in consultation with the ED (or delegate) before a decision is made. This approval occurs outside of a GSAB meeting. In the event that these positions are vacant, the Vice-Presidents approve requests from the President in consultation with the ED (or delegate) before a decision is made. This approval occurs outside of a GSAB meeting.
8. Exceptions to this GSA Board Policy may be approved by the Councillors on the GSAB, in consultation with the ED (or delegate). This approval occurs outside of a GSAB meeting.
9. Leave forms are available from the EC. DEOs must complete the Vacation and Leave Form and give it to the President, with copies to the ED (or delegate) and the EC.

Section 8: Human Resources⁸

Other Specifically Related Sections of GSA Governing Documents	None
Related Forms	None
Definitions	None

1. The GSA will employ an Executive Director (ED) as its most senior manager.
2. The terms and conditions of employment, as well as job responsibilities and reporting structure, of the ED position will be stipulated in a contractual agreement signed by the President and the ED.
3. The process to be used with respect to the recruitment and hiring of the ED will be developed by the President in consultation with the GSA Board and other GSA senior staff members, and with legal advice.
4. The ED may hire additional staff members and manage them in accordance with the provisions of either the GSA-NASA Collective Agreement or contractual letters of employment.

⁸ Approved by the GSA Board on 27 June 2018.