

POLICIES



Ratified February 2002

Amendments approved by GSA Council, April 2010

Policy I – Budget & Finances

The Graduate Students' Association Council (GSAC) shall:

1. Be responsible for the preparation of an annual budget for the period from May 1 to April 30 of the following year, to be completed by April 30.
2. Approve all budgets.
3. Be responsible for all investment decisions of the Graduate Students' Association.
4. Authorize the purchase or repair of all Graduate Students' Association assets.
 - A. If repair costs exceed amounts allocated in the approved budget, a suitable course of action must be determined at a GSAC meeting.
 - B. If repairs to an asset, valued at \$500 or more, exceed 60% of the replacement cost, a suitable course of action must be determined at a GSAC meeting.
5. Approve all contracts for the purchase of goods or services.
6. Will not approve any expenditure of funds that will place the Graduate Students' Association in a deficit situation during the current year.
7. Ensure that the financial records of Graduate Students' Association are audited annually for the information of membership no later than one month after the fiscal year end (March 31st). This may be done using internal, University auditors.
8. Have three signing authorities, the signatures of any two of which shall be required to authorize payments by the GSA.
9. Produce year end financial documents by April 30 to be passed on to the next Council.

Policy II – Office & Supplies

The Graduate Students' Association (GSA) will operate in a designated office area, which will act as an informational and meetings center as well as handle day-to-day business activities.

1. Computers

No persons other than members of the GSAC and others who may be approved by the GSAC from time to time shall be permitted to use the office computer(s).
2. Office Equipment & Supplies

All use of GSA office equipment or supplies should be related to GSA business. If supplies are used for personal ends, they must be paid for; each person must be able to produce a receipt if asked. Use of equipment and supplies for GSA matters has first priority.
3. Mail
 - A. Any member of GSA Council Executive will open all incoming GSA mail (excluding those items marked "personal and confidential" or those items appearing to be of a

personal nature). If required, a photocopy may replace the original file, so that all correspondence is available for future reference.

- B. All outgoing mail must be sealed before being placed in the outgoing mail pile. GSA stationary should not be used for personal use at any time.

4. Filing & Records

- A. The filing system shall include personnel, financial, internal, and external files, and will be maintained by GSA Council members. At least two years of records shall be maintained in the office filing system; older files may be archived as necessary.
- B. Copies of all outgoing GSA correspondence must be kept on file. GSA correspondence shall be made available to all GSA Council members to acquaint them with all actions of the GSA.

5. Confidential Records

The GSA President shall maintain all confidential records of the GSA, which must be stored in a locked cabinet when the President is not in the office. Such records include:

- i. all Closed Session meeting minutes
- ii. any contracts, pertinent correspondence, information, and personnel reviews.

6. Office Keys

- A. The GSA President will sign all key requests and manage the four sets of GSA office keys. Additional copies of keys can be obtained from the University of Lethbridge Physical Plant.
- B. All GSA Council members are authorized to receive any keys that are necessary to the execution of their duties.
- C. GSA Council members must return all keys to the GSA President at the end of their term of office. The GSA holds the right to conduct disciplinary action if a member of the GSAC fails to turn in their keys to the President.
- D. The incoming president will set a new key code for any common graduate student areas needing a door key code for the new Council year.

7. Telephones

- A. Each long distance telephone call made using the GSA office phone will need approval from two members of the executive. Absolutely no personal long distance calls, including collect calls, are to be charged to the GSA.
- B. Individuals not belonging to GSA Council may have access to the GSA office and telephone during office hours only. A form must be filled out for long distance calls.

Policy III – E-mail Ballots

1. An e-mail ballot may be used:

- A. To deal with Items For Action that are deemed by the President or, in his/her absence, another Executive Committee member, to require action prior to the next scheduled Council meeting, but are not deemed to require an emergency meeting.
- B. To approve an action that has met the conditions of prior motions which do not require further debate. In this case, the mover must clearly distinguish the rationale, budgets,

manner of voting, etc., on the ballot form.

2. All e-mail ballots must include the names of the mover and seconder.
3. E-mail ballots may be administered by email. One person shall be designated to receive the votes of GSA Council members.
4. A simple majority of all voting members of the GSAC is required to pass a motion by e-mail ballot.
5. The President may only vote to break a tie.

Policy IV – Preparation of an Agenda

1. The President shall be responsible for the preparation of an agenda for all GSA Council and GSA Executive Committee meetings.
2. Items for inclusion on the agenda must be submitted to the President a minimum of 48 hours in advance of the scheduled meeting; if a meeting is called with less than 48 hours notice, the President shall set a submission deadline that is feasible for all members.
3. The meeting agenda must be distributed to all members a minimum of 24 hours in advance of every scheduled meeting.

Policy V – Expenses Reimbursement

1. Any individual travelling on behalf of the GSA, and on business related to the GSA, shall use the least expensive of the following options, and be reimbursed the costs as indicated. Time restrictions should be taken into consideration when selecting the most cost-effective mode of transportation.
 - A. Private vehicle
 - i. Reimbursement for travel expenses within City of Lethbridge corporate limits shall be as authorized by GSA Council. A record of mileage and purpose must be presented.
 - ii. Travel outside City of Lethbridge corporate limits shall be reimbursed at a rate equal to the University of Lethbridge travel policy.
 - iii. Other than the rate per kilometre, the owner of the vehicle is not to receive any other form of compensation for use of his/her vehicle,
 - iv. Owner of vehicle and passengers travel at their own risk.
 - v. The owner of the vehicle is to carry a minimum of \$1,000,000 third-party liability insurance, and is personally responsible for any collision coverage.
 - vi. Whenever possible a single vehicle is to be used.
 - B. Rental vehicle (without driver), with applicable collision insurance, where it can be determined that the size of vehicle required is available, and that the daily or weekly

rate, plus mileage charge and fuel, will provide a reduction from the costs estimated for option A.

C. Public transportation – airplane, bus, or taxi

- i. Whenever possible economy or student rates are to be obtained.
- ii. Arrangements are to be made in advance to obtain the best rate. Any increase in cost caused by delay on the part of the individual will be required to be repaid unless GSA Council approval is obtained for the additional expense.

2. Daily living expenses – *Per diem*

It is the intent of this policy to cover the expenses of an individual who is required to attend to GSA business outside City of Lethbridge corporate limits, and is unable to return to his/her place of residence during mealtimes.

If meals are not provided at the individual's accommodation or meeting venue, an expense claim will be allowed, in the amount determined by the University of Lethbridge per diem policy. Receipts are not required to be provided. Alcoholic beverages are excluded.

3. If an advance is required for travel, a request should be submitted to the President and/or VP Finance at least five days before the date of departure. It is the traveller's responsibility to furnish details in ample time for the advance to be granted. Receipts and a written statement of expenses are required for expenses under Section 1. A written statement of expenses is required for expenses under Section 2. Written reports must contain dates covered, kilometres travelled (if required for reimbursement) and expenditures. Receipts must be dated and issued by the vendor/service provider.
4. If any GSA related expenses are incurred by individual council members, receipts documenting the costs should be submitted to the VP Finance for reimbursement. If receipts are lost or misplaced credit card statements or bank records (debit purchase) can be used. If it was a cash purchase, two members of the Executive must sign off on the expense and a detailed record should be filed with VP Finance records.

Policy VI – SGS Study Carrel Space Assignment

1. Applications for the SGS Study Carrel Space will be made available online via the GSA website.
2. Completed applications can be returned to the GSA office for the VP Internal to review.
3. If there are more applications than available Carrel Spaces, the applications will be brought before the next GSA Council meeting for review and to make a decision.
4. The School of Graduate Studies administers the Study Carrel space. The VP Internal will provide them with the accepted application and the student will need to see the SGS to get a key to the space.
5. The student must provide the Cash Office with a deposit in order to get a key to the carrel.

Policy VII Council Honorariums

1. Each elected/appointed GSA Council member is eligible to receive an honorarium.
2. Council members will only receive an honorarium if they fulfill their obligations as denoted in the member specific duties bylaws (Bylaw IV through XIII, respectively), i.e. regular attendance of Council meetings and provide proper notification if unable to attend a meeting. The decision to award each member's honorarium will be at the discretion of the other Council members.
3. Honorarium monies will be paid out of the GSA Council budget.
4. Honorariums are awarded to council members at the end of their term.
5. Positions that are filled part-way through a Council year will receive a pro-rated honorarium as computed using the number of months they served on Council, i.e. 8/12 of the total honorarium if they served for eight (8) of the twelve (12) months in the full term.
6. Honorariums for council positions are as follows:
 - a. President - \$1500/year
 - b. Vice Presidents (3) - \$1200/year
 - i. Vice President Internal - \$1200/year
 - ii. Vice President External - \$600/year (see note below)
 - iii. Vice President Finance - \$1200/year
(**Note:** Included in the duties of the Vice President External is an automatic appointment to the Executive of the Alberta Graduate Council. The AGC furnishes this Executive position with an honorarium of \$600/year. In the interest of balancing the honoraria across the Vice Presidential positions, the VP External receives an additional \$600 from the U of L GSA, thereby levelling the Vice Presidents at an honorarium of \$1200/year. In the event that any changes occur to the AGC or U of L GSA honorarium policies, modification to the Vice Presidents' honorarium will need to be revisited to maintain equality.)
 - c. Representative (9) - \$300/year
 - i. M.A./M.F.A. Representative
 - ii. M.C. Representative
 - iii. M.Ed. Representative
 - iv. M.Sc. Representative
 - v. M.Sc. Health Sciences Representative
 - vi. M.Sc. Management Representative
 - vii. Ph.D. Representative
 - viii. FNMI Representative
 - ix. International Student Representative
 - x. Off-Campus Research Representative

Policy VIII – GSA Funding

1. GSA Travel Award Application

- A. This award was established by the GSA to assist with travel costs for full-time graduate students who are presenting at an internationally recognized conference within Canada or elsewhere.
- B. The conference must be attended in the semester following application and the student must have been admitted to their graduate program of study at the U of L prior to the conference.
- C. Students may only receive this award once per degree level.
- D. Fifteen (15) awards of \$500 are given out in a 12 month period, 5 per academic term.
- E. The award is administered by the Office of Student Finance and Scholarships, and is directly funded through annual transfers from the GSA QIP account.

2. Student Thesis Needs Stipend Request

- A. This grant was established to assist graduate students in meeting the basic equipment and thesis needs that they are otherwise lacking.
- B. Fifteen awards of a maximum of \$100 each shall be awarded during a council year (five per term).
- C. Students may only receive this award once per degree level.
- D. Funds will be awarded upon providing a receipt of the expenditure.

3. Student Event Financial Assistance Request Form

- A. The GSA has funding available to support its members in planning academic or social events. To be considered for financial assistance, an event must contribute to the advancement of the GSA's mandate.
- B. Applications must be received at least two weeks before the date of the event, and may be submitted online to gsa@uleth.ca or to the GSA office, D413.
- C. Funding applications will be considered on an individual basis by the GSA Council.
- D. Any one group may apply for this funding a maximum of one time per GSA Council term (defined as: May to April the following year).
- E. GSA funding cannot be used to cover any expenses associated with alcohol.
- F. Depending upon the nature of the event, attendees may be required to sign waivers of

responsibility before funding is provided.

- G. The maximum amount that will be awarded for any event is the lesser of \$500 or 50% of the budgeted cost of the event. Six (6) awards of \$500 can be given out during a GSA Council term.

Policy IX – GSA Listserve Policy (gsa-notice-1)

1. The purpose of the GSA list serve is to disseminate information that may be of interest to any graduate student, with the exception of illegal activities.
2. The VP Internal is responsible for designing an appropriate disclaimer for all notices.

Policy X – U-Pass Program and Opt-out

1. The U-Pass is provided by the GSA to graduate students through an agreement between the GSA and Lethbridge Transit.
2. U-Pass stickers will be distributed at new student orientations and through several scheduled periods at the beginning of the Fall and Spring academic terms.
3. An opt-out period is scheduled at the beginning of the Fall and Spring term (with a deadline set to match the Health & Dental opt-out). Information Technology administers a web-based opt-out system. They need to be contacted before the term begins in order to update the dates and amounts in the web-form. They will provide a comma-delimited text-file containing all the data required to verify the opt-out students and create a mailing list for distribution their opt-out refund cheques.
4. Visiting graduate students and those who begin over the Summer are able to opt-into the U-Pass program and can receive a U-Pass sticker by providing proof of current registration and paying the U-Pass fee. These fees are accumulated and provided to Lethbridge Transit.

Policy XI – QIP Account

1. The GSA has a Quality Initiatives Program (QIP) account to fund student initiatives.
2. If untouched, the carry-forward from the account passes on to the next fiscal year.
3. The new amount deposited into the account is determined by the total QIP amount that administration gives to students in a given academic year, and by the percentage of the total student body represented by graduate students, i.e. if QIP is \$300,000 and graduate students represent 5% of the student body, then the GSA component of the QIP is \$15,000.
4. The QIP funds are intended to be used on one-time expenses and cannot be used to cover any operating expenses. Examples of uses: the GSA Multidisciplinary Research Conference, new student orientations, etc.

5. On-going transfers of QIP funds are possible and agreements describing the transactions are required. An annual transfer has been created to give \$7,500 of QIP funds to the Scholarships and Student Finance office to fund fifteen (15) GSA Travel awards valued at \$500 each. Another annual transfer has been created to give \$3,000 to LPIRG to fund projects and activities that include graduate students.
6. As per the University Carry-over policy, any unused QIP funds given to other groups, i.e. LPIRG, must be returned to the QIP account at the end of the fiscal year.