

## GRADUATE FUNDING BOARD BYLAWS - v14, 9/15/2020

---

I. Introduction – The Budget Process.....	2
A. Financial Reporting.....	2
B. Timeline and Milestones in the Annual Budgeting Process .....	2
II. Funding Requests.....	3
A. Registered Graduate Student Organizations .....	3
B. Graduate Funding Board and Funding Requests in LakerLink .....	3
C. Presenting a Request to the Graduate Funding Board .....	5
D. Eligible Organizations.....	6
E. Budget Request Deadline.....	6
F. Spending Approved Funding .....	6
C. The Do’s and Don’ts .....	9
D. Funding Timeline (pre-paid and post-reimbursed expenses).....	10
E. Travel Expense Reimbursement.....	10
F. Fundable Expenses.....	10
G. Expenses Not Fundable.....	11
H. Cancellation Policy .....	12

## **I. INTRODUCTION – THE BUDGET PROCESS**

### **A. FINANCIAL REPORTING**

The Graduate Student Association (GSA) evaluates the funded programs at the end of every fall and winter semester based on the successful completion of past events, the benefits provided to the graduate student body, and the number of graduate student members involved and/or affected by programs, events and conferences.. Grand Valley State University determines the allocation of aggregate funding for GSA and affiliated related graduate student organizations based on the current budget picture, prior year spending, the successful completion of past events, as well as, rollover balances (unused funding) from the previous year.

### **B. TIMELINE AND MILESTONES IN THE ANNUAL BUDGETING PROCESS**

1. GVSU's fiscal year begins on July 1st and ends on June 30th of the forthcoming year.

The annual budgeting process of individual graduate organizations should follow the university's budget planning milestones and timelines. Registered graduate organizations should set their organizational budget for the forthcoming fiscal year no later than the end of September.

## II. FUNDING REQUESTS

### A. REGISTERED GRADUATE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

1. Only Graduate Registered Student Organizations (RSO) can receive funding. The registration process is described in the RSO handbook: <http://www.gvsu.edu/rsohandbook/>
2. Colleges and students at Grand Valley State University (GVSU) are encouraged to form and register their own Graduate RSO. Graduate Registered Student Organizations strive to increase and balance their on-campus programs and off-campus event participation. On-campus events are to be organized professionally and ensured to be successful.
3. Promotion of events and communication between the related departments of GVSU are to be considered as major components of designing successful events. Graduate Student Organizations are intended to disseminate curriculum-, discipline- and field-related information to their member students regularly. They are intended to contribute to and influence the greater graduate student community through their social media network. Graduate Student Organizations do their best to fundraise for their on- and off-campus programs, events and conferences.

### B. GRADUATE FUNDING BOARD AND FUNDING REQUESTS IN LAKERLINK

1. GSA serves as control body of the Graduate Funding Board and the Finance Officer of GSA chairs the Funding Board meetings. GSA has no formal role in approving funding request.
2. Positions within the Graduate Funding Board will be filled by representatives from current graduate student organizations, whereby each student group is allotted one voting seat on the Graduate Funding Board. While each graduate student organization is required to have finance officer, the graduate student organization may choose to delegate any member to represent their interests at each meeting.
3. Once the GSA budget has been determined, any registered graduate organization at Grand Valley State University can submit a funding proposal via LakerLink (<http://www.lakerlink.com/>) to be reviewed and voted upon by the Graduate Funding Board.
4. The funding request of the organization needs to be related to the mission of the organization. Organizations need to seek the approval of the Graduate Funding Board after finalizing and submitting their funding requests in LakerLink. Organizations may wish to consult the Finance Officer of the Graduate Student

Association (gsa\_finance@gvsu.edu) before submitting or finalizing their funding requests.

5. Budget requests for each event or conference should be separate, i.e., events should not be combined when they are submitted. Only in the case where the events are exactly the same (or repeated) may they be submitted in the same request. Additionally, related room reservations must be confirmed before the request is presented.
6. Organization must do their best to provide detailed and accurate request details. This includes, but is not limited to, getting food estimates from Campus Dining, looking up hotel estimates, etc. If a calculated number is requested, there should be an attached document that details said calculation(s).
7. The Graduate Funding Board approves or denies funding requests, and RSOs need to be present when requesting funding. A request is voted on only when quorum of at least 50% + 1 of the graduate RSOs are in attendance (i.e., if there are 18 organizations then at least 10 organizations would need to be in attendance). Additionally, all voting is determined by simple majority.
8. Every Registered Student Organization is expected to have representation at every funding board meeting. Acceptable representation (in order of preference) includes the Finance Officer, a member of the e-board, or any official member of the organization (registered on LakerLink).
  - a) Repercussions for missed meetings: If an RSO fails to send a representative to three or more meetings, this RSO will be ineligible for funding. The Finance Officer may appeal the absence. Once submitted, GSA will review the appeal, which may result in no repercussions. A maximum of three meetings and no more than two consecutive meetings may be appealed during an academic year.
    - i. GSA e-board may override appeal process in the event of extenuating circumstances.
9. After the meeting, the funding request(s) of the organization will be marked as approved, partially approved, or denied in LakerLink.
10. In the event of a tie, the Chair of the Graduate Funding Board can either cast a vote or table the funding request for a future meeting.
11. The Chair of the Graduate Funding Board will be the active Financial Officer of the Graduate Student Association, who represents the entire graduate student body. No funding decisions can be made without the Chair present.

12. Meetings are attended by GSA advisors and staff from The Graduate School.
13. Minutes will be taken during each meeting and uploaded to the GSA website to ensure effective communication paths. Members at the committee will have knowledge of approved funding requests in LakerLink after the meeting.
14. Brief summary of “How to submit a funding request”:
  - a) Submit your request at 7 days in advance of the Graduate Funding Board meeting.
  - b) Submit the request through LakerLink. Instructions on the submission process can be found here:  
  
<http://www.gvsu.edu/gsa/documents-and-resources-9.htm>
  - c) See Graduate Funding Quick Guide for more details:  
  
[http://www.gvsu.edu/cms3/assets/C1327597-CA41-2C52-D968CE5D03904636/financecommittee/graduate\\_finance\\_committee\\_quick\\_guidev3\\_1.pdf](http://www.gvsu.edu/cms3/assets/C1327597-CA41-2C52-D968CE5D03904636/financecommittee/graduate_finance_committee_quick_guidev3_1.pdf)

#### C. PRESENTING A REQUEST TO THE GRADUATE FUNDING BOARD

1. Make sure your request has been submitted via LakerLink.
2. The Chair of the Graduate Funding Board will determine the meeting schedule for funding requests. The dates, times and locations will be posted to the GSA website.
3. A graduate student representative must be present at the scheduled meeting (preferably an officer of the organization).
4. Present a brief synopsis of your event, which will be followed by a question-and-answer period for funding board members.
5. Be prepared to answer questions about the funding request at the planned event.

D. ELIGIBLE ORGANIZATIONS.

1. To be eligible for funding, a requesting organization must:
  - a) Be in good standing with the University.
    - i. Be registered on LakerLink with a complete roster (President, Financial Officer, 2 other Officers, Campus Advisor).
    - ii. Have an updated LakerLink profile, which must be renewed at the beginning of the academic year.
    - iii. Have no outstanding judicial sanctions with the Student Organization Review Board (SORB).
  - b) Be in good standing with the GSA
    - i. Adhering to the attendance policy

E. BUDGET REQUEST DEADLINE.

1. Budget requests must be submitted BEFORE the travel or event occurs (i.e. before money is spent). Budget requests must be submitted in LakerLink at least 7 days prior to the Funding Board Meeting. Budget requests will be considered and awarded on a rolling basis as funds are available.
2. For the approval of budget requests in LakerLink, the Graduate Funding Board meetings will be held monthly during fall/winter semesters. Based on need additional ad-hoc meetings can be scheduled including spring/summer.

F. SPENDING APPROVED FUNDING.

1. Organizations must consult with the Graduate School BEFORE spending the approved funding. Funds spent before consulting with the representatives of the Graduate School could result in the cancelation of registration fees and other inconveniences. Contact with the Graduate School can be obtained via phone (616-331-7123) or [fountain@gvsu.edu](mailto:fountain@gvsu.edu).

2. Organizations are not permitted to sign contracts. All contracts require approval from the Graduate School before confirming with a guest speaker, as only a designated university official can sign contracts on behalf of Grand Valley State University. Students cannot sign contracts on behalf of Grand Valley State University, as they are not enforceable. A contract signed by students without having consultation with the Graduate School will result in the student being personally responsible for the contract's obligations including monetary obligations.
3. Every registered student organization will designate a Financial Officer (identified in LakerLink) who will serve as the exclusive contact with the Graduate School to arrange payments and reimbursement.
4. The Graduate School and the Finance Officer of Graduate Student Association must be immediately notified of any modifications on previously approved items.
5. For reimbursements, the Graduate Student Organization should submit the event assessment form, the reimbursement forms and all the receipts of costs, fares and fees, related to an event, including the confirmation forms for food, room reservation and lecturer's fee, not later than 14 days after the event.
6. Organizations must fill out an event assessment form after each event.
7. Brief summary of "What to do once your request is approved:"
  - a) Read the comments posted on your approved funding request in LakerLink.
  - b) DO NOT SPEND FUNDS until you get approval through the staff at the Graduate School. They will assist you with the logistics of placing orders, purchasing items, and processing reimbursements. (See II.F.1 above)
  - c) Adhere to student organization policies/procedures found in [www.gvsu.edu/rsohandbook](http://www.gvsu.edu/rsohandbook)
  - d) Direct any questions to the Graduate School.

### III. GRADUATE FUNDING GUIDELINES

#### What is Fundable?

- A. Travel to academic conferences/meetings sponsored by professional organizations will be given highest priority.
1. Funding can be used for lodging, transportation, and conference registration fees. Conference fees will only be approved at the early-bird rate. Meals are not eligible for reimbursement.
    - i. While COVID-19 restrictions are preventing travel to academic and professional conferences, graduate students are encouraged to request funding to attend virtual conferences
  2. Transportation may include airfare, bus, or car rental fees. Fuel costs will not receive funding whether using a personal or rental vehicle.
  3. GSA will not fund any travel associated with credit bearing graduate coursework or academic program requirements (or options) including, but not limited to, required or elective courses, internships, fieldwork, or service learning trips.

GSA will only allow one organization per graduate program to receive travel funding for the same event when participants are eligible through the umbrella grad program organization (e.g., honor societies). This is intended to eliminate the proliferation of additional organizations for the sole purpose of accessing a greater proportion of travel funding and to maintain equity in the funding process for students in all graduate programs.

#### B. Events

1. Academic and professionally focused events/programs.
2. Food requests will only consider requests that include a quote from Campus Dining at Grand Valley.
3. Rental equipment from GVSU is eligible for funding.
4. Anything that will become the personal property of an attendee cannot be approved for funding. (e.g., clothing, gift cards, prizes, swag/promotional items).
5. Speaker gifts/honoraria (up to \$50) can only be requested for non-GVSU faculty/staff/students.

Formatted: Indent: Left: 0", Line spacing: Multiple  
1.08 li



### C. THE DO'S AND DON'TS

1. Travel to professional conferences/meetings sponsored by recognized professional organizations will have priority.
2. A graduate student can receive funding through GSA once per year.
3. The selection of participants can take place after the program has been funded by the Graduate Funding Board; however, the organization must make sure that there is adequate interest in the conference from students.
4. Participants must be registered members of a Graduate Student Organization in LakerLink.
5. The applicant must be enrolled during the semester of his/her travel. If a student is traveling between semesters, he/she must also be enrolled for the semester following travel.
6. Those who receive funding are expected to report the results of their participation in such a way that the greater graduate community will benefit.
7. Students who received funding should encourage their graduate community, especially their program peers, to consider similar opportunities.
8. Funding cannot be extended for additional expenses once a funding request is approved. Only the originally approved expenses will be reimbursed as stated in the original funding request.
9. Students who are first authors on a presentation must first apply to the Graduate Academic Conference Fund. If they are unable to receive funding, they may apply through GSA for funds.

10. Each applicant must submit two (2) travel conduct forms to the Graduate School one week prior to the event (revised Behavioral Contract and Travel Release Statement which include consent form), in alignment with the university's general travel funding requirements. The Code of Student Conduct and the RSO Handbook apply to all participants in funded travel. GVSU university-wide funding guidelines are to be considered and obeyed. For further information please the visit the Graduate Funding Board website:

[http://www.gvsu.edu/gsa/about-Graduate Funding Board-10.htm](http://www.gvsu.edu/gsa/about-Graduate%20Funding%20Board-10.htm)

E. FUNDING TIMELINE (PRE-PAID AND POST-REIMBURSED EXPENSES)

1. The registration fees, air-fare, or lodging can be pre-paid before the conference. Bus, train, and car rental fees will be reimbursed after the conference. Meal, fuel, and parking costs cannot be reimbursed (meals can only be funded if they are included in the registration fee).
2. In the case of group travel to a conference, the reimbursement forms along with receipts and other supporting documents need to be submitted by one representative to the Graduate School in a sealed envelope. Reimbursement forms and attachments need to be easily identifiable with each attendee. Documents must include the names, G-Numbers of the participants, Conference name, location and dates. Reimbursement forms submitted by individual attendees will not be accepted or processed.

F. TRAVEL EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

1. Appropriate reimbursement forms need to be submitted within 14 days upon completion of travel. Travel reimbursement forms are to be directed to the Graduate School. Any questions and requests regarding travel expense reimbursements are to be directed to the Graduate School (Irene Fountain; 318 DeVos Center, Pew Campus: 616-331-7123, mail: [fountaii@gvsu.edu](mailto:fountaii@gvsu.edu)).
2. The Graduate School will facilitate the timely processing of reimbursements.

G. FUNDABLE EXPENSES

1. Organization travel/professional field trip with a clear benefit to the graduate student community.
2. Professional conference (In-person or virtual participation).
3. Airfare.

4. Airport, train or bus station transfer to/from hotel or conference site (excludes taxi, UBER, LYFT).
5. Reasonable air, bus or train fare\*. Car rental fees will be reimbursed only if the travel to the event/conference will take place primarily by car. Car rental fees will not be reimbursed when traveling to conferences take place by plane, train or bus. Drivers are expected to obey all federal and state laws while driving. \*Reasonable air, bus, or train fare is defined as the cost of a standard advance purchase air ticket, Greyhound bus fare or Amtrak train fare.
6. Conference registration fees. (Strongly encourage early bird registration – Late fees will not be considered for funding.)
7. Lodging.

#### H. EXPENSES NOT FUNDABLE

1. The Graduate Funding Board will only fund student travel for a member who has not been awarded funds from another university fund designed for student travel. A separate funding request for the Graduate Academic Conference Fund must be submitted for students presenting their research as first authors. If the Graduate Funding Board approves conference attendance of a selected student, who also received funding from the Graduate Academic Conference Fund, the funding from the Graduate Funding Board will be cancelled. However, an exception can be made when a University Department co-sponsors travel. This can be used as funding for the trip as well.
2. Attendance to events for personal career development (Interviews, Job Fairs, etc.).
3. Funding will not be provided to students who are enrolled in less than 3 credit hours a semester.
4. As they have other avenues for funding travel, GSA funding will not be awarded to adjunct or regular faculty or staff; however, graduate students with assistantships are eligible).
5. Funding will not cover fuel or mileage for personally owned vehicles.
6. Meals\*, taxi fares and traffic citations will not be reimbursed. These are considered individual costs. (\*Meals can be covered if they are included in the registration fee.)
7. Individuals can obtain no more than \$750 in funding for domestic or international travel to conferences.

8. RSOs will receive a maximum of \$7,500 for a conference travel event regardless of the number of members attending. GSA is the only exception.
9. Any expense incurred prior to Graduate Funding Board approval will not be reimbursed. (If it was purchased before it was approved for funding, it is student's responsibility).

I. CANCELLATION POLICY

1. Students attending a conference must sign a letter of agreement / a consent form which shows that the student has serious intention and possesses the necessary individual financial contribution for his/her travel. Cancellation of the travel will exclude future opportunities for funding for that individual.
2. Exceptions will be considered for unforeseeable family crises and individual health related problems which prevent or hinder a student's participation.