

GVSU GSA Funding Board Bylaws (*Approved 05/05/2025*)

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A. Annual Budgeting Process and Funding Request Timeline

1. Grand Valley State University (GVSU)'s fiscal year begins on July 1st and ends on June 30th of the forthcoming year. The annual budgeting process of individual Registered Graduate Student Organizations (Grad RSOs) should follow the university's budget planning milestones and timelines. Grad RSOs should set their organizational budget for the forthcoming fiscal year no later than the end of September.
2. The annual budget approved for the Graduate Funding Board (conference and events) will be determined by the Graduate School and the GSA Executive Board (E-Board) each year.
 - a. The funds approved in the annual budget for graduate student professional development will be allotted into **four quarterly terms** (see below Section A.4). The amount awarded for each term is determined by the GSA E-Board.
3. Funding requests will be awarded *until* funds are depleted for each **quarter**. If leftover funds are available, they will be rolled into the next term.
 - a. The dates in which the professional development event takes place is the term in which the funding request will be applied to (See below section A.4).
 - b. Funding requests may be submitted in **the prior term or during the term** in which the professional development event takes place. For example, if a student is attending a conference from November 5th - 8th (second term), they may submit a funding request in the 1st or 2nd term (See Quarter Term Timeframe, Section A.4).
 - c. If the conference/event dates fall between two quarters, the **last day** of the conference/event will be the term funds will be assigned to. For example, if the conference is from March 29th (3rd term) to April 2nd (4th term), funds will be assigned to the 4th term.
4. Quarter Terms timeframes:

Quarterly Terms	Last day of Professional Development Event
1st	July 1st - September 30th
2nd	October 1st - December 31st
3rd	January 1st - March 31st
4th	April 1st - June 30th

B. Registered Graduate Student Organizations (Grad RSOs)

1. Graduate programs and students at GVSU are encouraged to form Registered Graduate Student Organizations (Grad RSOs). Grad RSOs increase their program's on-campus and off-campus event participation. On-campus events are to be organized professionally and planned to ensure success.
2. Promotion of events and communication between the related departments of GVSU are

significant components of designing successful events. Grad RSOs must regularly disseminate curriculum, discipline-specific content, and co-curricular information to their members. They also contribute to and influence the greater GVSU graduate student community through social media networks and online platforms. Grad RSOs should also consider fundraising for their on- and off-campus programs, events, and conferences.

C. Graduate Funding Board Overview

1. The Graduate Student Association (GSA) serves as the control body of the Graduate Funding Board (i.e., Funding Board), and the GSA Finance Officer chairs its meetings. The GSA has no formal role in approving funding requests; that is the responsibility of the Funding Board, except outside of the academic year (May-August) when the GSA E-Board approves requests.
2. Representatives from current Grad RSOs will fill positions within the Graduate Funding Board, with each Grad RSO allotted one voting seat. While each Grad RSO must have a Finance Officer, the organization may choose to delegate a member to represent its interests at each Funding Board meeting.
3. Once the GSA budget has been determined, any President or Funding Officer of a Grad RSO at GVSU can submit a funding proposal via LakerLink to be reviewed and voted upon by the Graduate Funding Board.
4. The Graduate Funding Board reviews each request during the academic school year, and then decides to approve or deny.
5. The GSA E-board will review and approve funding requests submitted outside the academic year (i.e., May-August). However, *if* the funding request can wait to be reviewed by the full Graduate Funding Board during the academic school year, then the GSA E-board can decide that the funding request decision be delayed until a full Graduate Funding Board meeting can discuss the request.
6. The Funding Board must achieve a quorum to allocate resources. A quorum is defined as 40% + 1 of active Grad RSOs.
7. Every Grad RSO is expected to have representation at every Funding Board meeting. Acceptable representation (in order of preference) includes the Finance Officer, President, or other E-Board member.
8. Repercussions for missed meetings: If a Grad RSO fails to send a representative to three or more meetings, this Grad RSO will be ineligible for funding for the remainder of the fiscal year (which ends on June 30). The Finance Officer may appeal their ineligibility to the GSA Finance Officer. Once submitted, the GSA E-board will review the appeal, which may or may not result in repercussions. A maximum of three meetings and no more than two consecutive meetings may be appealed during an academic year. The GSA E-Board may override the appeal process in the event of extenuating circumstances.
9. A simple majority of Grad RSO representatives present at the meeting determines all voting.
10. Grad RSOs must have an E-Board member representative present when requesting funding.
11. If the Grad RSO with a funding request is unable to send a representative to the meeting, they must contact the GSA Finance Officer via email at least 48 hours before the meeting to ask that their funding request be delayed until the next Funding Board Meeting. Grad RSOs can only

request a funding delay for one term.

12. If a Grad RSO that is requesting funds does not have a representative at the meeting and has not requested a delay 48 hours in advance, their respective funding request will be denied.
13. The Graduate Funding Board Chair will be the GSA's active Financial Officer, representing the entire graduate student body. In case of emergency, any other GSA E-Board member may act as a substitute; no funding decisions by the Graduate Funding Board can be made without a representative of the GSA E-Board present.
14. In the event of a tie, the GSA Finance Officer, who chairs the Graduate Funding Board, (or proxy GSA officer) casts the deciding vote.
15. Meetings are attended by at least one GSA faculty advisor; staff from the Graduate School may also attend.
16. The Meeting Minutes notes will be recorded by the GSA Administrative Officer during each meeting and uploaded to the GSA website to ensure effective communication paths.

D. Budget Request Deadline

1. Budget requests must be submitted and approved BEFORE the travel and/or event occurs.
2. Budget requests must be submitted in LakerLink at least 7 days (one week) prior to the Funding Board Meeting.
3. Budget requests submitted **outside** of the academic year (May-August) must be submitted at least 3 weeks BEFORE the travel and/or event occurs, and the GSA Financial Officer must be contacted (e-mailed) on the day of submission to ensure they are aware of the submission.
4. Budget requests will be considered and awarded on a quarterly basis as funds are available.
5. The Graduate Funding Board will meet monthly during the Fall and Winter semesters (September-April) to approve budget requests in LakerLink.
6. Additional ad-hoc meetings of the GSA E-board will be scheduled based on need, outside of the academic year (May-August).

E. Eligible Grad RSOs and Individuals

1. **Grad RSOs:** To be eligible for funding, a requesting organization must:
 - a. Be in good standing with the University, in accordance with the Office of Student Life at GVSU.
 - b. Be a registered GVSU Grad RSO on LakerLink with a complete roster (President, Financial Officer, 2 other officers, and an Advisor). The RSO registration process is described in the [RSO handbook](#).
 - c. Have an updated LakerLink profile, which must be renewed as required by the Office of Student Life.
 - d. Have no outstanding judicial sanctions with the Student Organization Review Board.
 - e. Be in good standing with the GSA Funding Board by adhering to the attendance policy.
2. **Individuals and Grad RSOs:** To be eligible for funding, a requesting individual or individuals requesting funding through a Grad RSO must:
 - a. Be enrolled in at least 3 graduate credit hours a semester.

- b. Have a graduate GPA of 3.0 or higher (for those who have completed at least one semester).
 - c. Be enrolled in a graduate program at GVSU.
 - d. Be a registered member of the GSA on LakerLink.
 - e. Attend two GSA Funding Board meetings in total, including the meeting in which they are requesting funding and the one after the requested funding has been granted. Individuals may be represented by their RSO in these meetings if their request was submitted through the RSO.
 - f. An individual student whose program does not have a Grad RSO must join the GSA via Lakerlink, after which they can apply for funding and must attend and vote on other funding requests in the Funding Board Meetings that they attend.
3. Enrollment and travel funding information for Grad RSOs and individuals:
- a. The student(s) must be enrolled at GVSU during the semester of their professional development event.
 - b. Students attending a professional development event outside of the academic year (May-August) must be enrolled and in good academic standing (at GVSU) for the following fall semester.
 - c. Individual graduate students can receive funding through GSA once per fiscal year (i.e., July 1 - June 30).
 - d. The [GVSU Student Code of Conduct](#) and the [Grad RSO Handbook](#) apply to all participants in funded travel.

F. Eligible for GSA Funding

1. The GSA is eligible to fund any organizational/professional travel or on-campus programming **with a clear benefit to the graduate student community.**
2. Travel to academic professional development events (conferences, meetings, symposiums, forums, conventions, etc..) sponsored by professional organizations will be given the highest priority.
3. Graduate students are encouraged to request funding to attend virtual professional development events. Funding may be used for registration fees for virtual professional development events.
4. The GSA will only allow one Grad RSO 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 funding and to maintain equity in the funding process for students in all graduate programs.
5. Professional development event funding:
 - a. Professional development event registration fees:
 - i. Early bird registration is strongly encouraged for professional development event registration fees.
 - ii. Any late fees added to professional development event registrations will not be considered for funding.
 - iii. Meals are not eligible for reimbursement unless included in the professional development event fee.
 - iv. *Reasonable air, bus, train, or car rental fees to/from the hotel, airport, or professional development event site. (*Defined as the cost of a standard advance

- purchase air ticket, Greyhound bus fare, or Amtrak train fare).
 - b. Transportation:
 - i. Car rental fees will be reimbursed only if the travel to the professional development event necessitates a car to attend fully.
 - ii. Car rental fees will not be reimbursed when traveling to the professional development event takes place by plane, train, or bus.
 - iii. Drivers are expected to obey all federal and state laws while driving.
 - iv. When using a rental vehicle, fuel costs are covered if included in the final rental price of the vehicle.
 - v. Personal vehicle use is allowed, subject to official GVSU travel policies: Mileage costs are reimbursable at the GVSU Travel Policy rate while using a personal vehicle. However, car rental is encouraged.
 - vi. Airfare: Economy (*no* upgrades or additional baggage fees will be reimbursed).
 - c. Lodging:
 - i. Hotels, private rentals (Vrbo, Airbnb...) are eligible for funding..
 - ii. Other lodging preferences must be discussed with the GSA Finance Officer before submitting a funding request to ensure funding eligibility.
- 6. On-campus events/programming with clear benefit to the graduate student community:
 - a. Academic and professionally focused events/programs.
 - b. Food: GSA will only consider requests that include a quote from [Laker Food Co.](#) at GVSU.
 - c. Rental Equipment from GVSU is eligible for funding. Please talk to the GSA Financial Officer before submitting requests on rental equipment to ensure funding eligibility.
 - d. Speaker gifts/honoraria can only be requested for up to \$50.00 and only for staff/faculty/students outside of the requesting graduate program. Gift cards cannot be funded.
 - e. Gifts/honoraria are subject to the review of the Graduate Funding Board and the Graduate School.
- 7. Miscellaneous
 - a. Additional funding requests beyond the scope of identified fundable expenses may be considered by the Graduate Funding Board at the discretion of the Finance Officer in collaboration with the GSA Faculty & Staff Advisors and The Graduate School personnel.
 - b. Students presenting their research as first authors must submit a separate funding request for the Graduate Academic Conference Fund. If the Graduate Funding Board approves the conference attendance of a selected student who also received funding from the Graduate Academic Conference Fund, the maximum funding from both sources *combined* will be \$1000.

G. Ineligible for GSA Funding

1. Travel already supported by another source of Student Life Funds (i.e., no double dipping).
2. Attendance at events for personal career development (interviews, job fairs, etc.).
3. GSA funding will not be awarded to GVSU adjunct, regular faculty or staff as they have other avenues for funding travel; however, graduate students with assistantships are eligible.
4. Meals*, tips, and traffic citations will not be reimbursed. These are considered individual costs.

(*Meals will only be covered if they are included in the registration fee.)

5. 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.
6. Individuals can obtain no more than \$1,000 in funding from domestic or international travel to professional development events.
7. **Maximum funding:** Grad RSOs will receive a maximum of \$10,000 for a professional development event regardless of the number of members attending, with a maximum funding of \$1,000 per person, whichever amount is less (e.g., 10 members fully funded for \$1,000 = \$10,000).
 - a. Grad RSOs may receive funding for multiple professional development events per fiscal year, pending funding availability, but individual students within the Grad RSOs are only eligible for funding once a year.
 - b. Funding amounts are subject to change with the annual budget. The Graduate Funding Board Finance Officer will release information if funding amounts differ from those listed in the bylaws.
8. Any costs above and beyond the maximum amount of funding awarded to a student or Grad RSO will be covered by the individual.

H. Preparing, Submitting, and Presenting a Funding Request

For up-to-date instructions on how to submit a funding request, go to [this document](#).

I. Spending Approved Funding

1. Spending

- a. Those with approved funding should carefully read the comments posted on the approved funding request in LakerLink.
- b. Every Grad RSO will designate a Financial Officer (identified in LakerLink) who will serve as the exclusive contact with the Graduate School to arrange payments and reimbursement.
- c. The Graduate School and the Finance Officer of GSA must be immediately notified of any modifications to previously approved items.
- d. Funding is STRICTLY AVAILABLE for items AS OUTLINED IN APPROVED FUNDING REQUEST. **Changes CANNOT be made after the request is approved.**
- e. If costs go up after a specific amount is approved, additional costs will be the responsibility of the student(s).
- f. Funds **will not be reimbursed** for students deemed ineligible for funding (see Section E: Eligible Grad RSOs and Individuals).
- g. After funding is approved, students may NOT change their type of lodging from hotel/motel to Airbnb or VRBO. If they do, funding will not be provided.
- h. If a proposer is concerned about potential increases in travel/lodging costs, it is recommended that they increase their request to account for potential price increases.
- i. **Unused funds may not be used for unapproved/additional/items or upgrades**, including

but not limited to additional workshops and/or additional professional development event registrations for students not listed in the funding request.

- j. All students must adhere to [RSO policies/procedures](#).
 - k. Organizations may obtain guidance on spending approved funding from the GSA Financial Officer..
 - l. **Students are not permitted to sign contracts** as they are not enforceable and could create personal liability for the student. GVSU faculty and staff with signature authority for GSA funds include advisors of Grad RSOs, the Vice Provost of the Graduate School, the Graduate School Professional Support Staff, and the GSA advisors.
2. **Reimbursement details:**
- a. In the case of travel to a professional development event, students seeking reimbursement must submit their receipts and mailing address (to receive the reimbursement check) via email to the Finance Officer for their Grad RSO. **Only the Grad RSO Finance Officer can submit the receipts to the GSA Finance Officer.** If an *individual* was approved for funding by the GSA *without* using an RSO, then that individual will need to submit the receipts directly to the GSA Finance Officer. See Section I.3 (Reimbursement Process) for more details.
 - b. For professional development events hosted by a Grad RSO, the Grad RSO's Finance Officer should submit all receipts to the The GSA Finance Officer for expenses incurred related to an event, including the confirmation forms for catering, room reservations, and lecturer's fees, not later than 14 days after the event.
 - c. *Complete receipts* must be provided as a **PDF**. Screenshots, partial receipts, and receipts forwarded as part of an email body will NOT be accepted. Each receipt must be its own PDF document.
 - d. Bus, train, airfare, and car rental fees will be reimbursed only after the professional development event.
 - e. Registration fees, airfare, or lodging will not be prepaid by the GSA before the professional development event.
 - f. Airfare, lodging, professional development event fees, and other expenses can be prepaid by individual students *before* a funding request is submitted; **however, if the funding request is denied, there will be no reimbursement by the GSA.** It is up to the Grad RSO/individual to ensure the request, and participants, are eligible for reimbursement and that the request is submitted in a timely fashion.
 - g. Meals, fuel, and parking costs cannot be reimbursed. (Meals can only be funded if they are included in the professional development event registration fee.)
 - h. For hotels that require a credit card to be presented at check-in or check-out, the student will use their own card. They will then be reimbursed for *eligible* charges (In the approved budget submitted to the GSA Funding Board) after the professional development event. Eligible charges include the room rate, taxes, fees, and parking.
 - i. Those who have received email confirmations for registration or airfare should include the entire email, not just the portion showing payment.
 - j. **Lodging receipts** must include the name of the student, the name and address of the hotel, Airbnb, or VRBO, the check-in and check-out dates, the number of nights stayed, a breakdown of nightly room charges, taxes, and fees, and proof of payment.
 - k. **Transportation receipts** must show:
 - i. The student's name.

- ii. The name of the airline, bus, or train company.
 - iii. The dates of travel, the departing and destination cities.
 - iv. The ticket or confirmation number, and the flight, bus, or train route details.
 - v. A clear breakdown of all charges, including the ticket price, taxes, fees, and any applicable baggage fees.
 - vi. It is important to note that transportation upgrades, travel insurance, room service, and meals not included in the professional development event registration fee are not reimbursable expenses.
- I. GVSU Conference Services confirmation forms should be submitted to the Graduate School as soon as possible, as they require an approval signature.

3. Reimbursement Process

- a. The Grad RSO's Finance Officer or individual student (if an individual request), should submit all receipts and documentation to support reimbursement to the GSA Finance Officer for expenses incurred related to the professional development event within 14 days of the event.
- b. When requesting reimbursement, all requests must be made to the GSA Finance Officer. After reviewing and approving the request, the GSA Finance Officer will then submit the reimbursement materials to the Graduate School support staff for processing.
- c. When requesting reimbursement, the Grad RSO's Finance Officer must submit to the GSA Finance Officer all detailed receipts (PDFs) along with a table with the name and GVSU e-mail address of each student, the **approved** amounts from each receipt to be reimbursed, and the mailing address for the check to be sent. Reimbursement requests are to be easily identifiable with each attendee. Also include the professional development event name, location, and dates and any other relevant information.
- d. Before reaching out with questions regarding travel expense reimbursements, please refer to the GSA Funding Board website, the FAQ, and the Funding Bylaws. If the answer still cannot be found, email the GSA Finance Officer.
- e. Upon receiving complete receipts from the GSA Finance Officer, The Graduate School will facilitate the timely processing of reimbursements.

4. Reporting:

- a. Within 14 days of professional development event, the Grad RSO Finance Officer (or individual student that received funding who did not go through an RSO) should submit a report to the GSA Finance Officer that includes the following information:
 - i. Amount of funding used
 - ii. What funding was used for
 - iii. The benefit of such funding provided to the graduate community
- b. Students who received funding should encourage their graduate community, especially their program peers, to consider similar opportunities.

J. Cancellation Policy

- 1. Cancellation of the travel without just cause, as determined by the GSA Funding Board, will exclude future opportunities for funding for that individual and/or Grad RSO.
- 2. Exceptions will be considered for unforeseeable emergencies and individual health-related

problems that prevent or hinder a student's or Grad RSO's participation.

K. Financial Reporting

1. The GSA evaluates the funded GSA-sponsored 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 professional development events. GVSU determines the allocation of aggregate funding for GSA and affiliated Grad RSOs based on the current budget picture, prior years' spending, the successful completion of past events, and rollover balances (unused funding) from the previous year.