

GSO Budget and Group Funding Policy
Approved February 1, 2016 by GSO General Assembly

Article I. GSO Mission in Relation to Group Funding.

Section 1. The Graduate Student Organization (GSO) receives funding from the University to support its operations and to provide programming for the graduate student body. In this capacity, the GSO acts as a steward of University funding.

Section 2. The GSO works to ensure that its budgets are inclusive and that its fiscal decisions are transparent.

Article II. Purpose of Group Funding Policy.

Section 1. The Graduate Student Organization allots funding to graduate student groups recognized by the GSO and by the University in order to fulfill the GSO's responsibility to "create opportunities for graduate students to develop professionally, socially, and academically."

Section 2. The GSO takes seriously its responsibility to provide programming that meets the needs of a diverse range of students and seeks to maximize the value returned to students from the GSO budget.

Section 3. The GSO believes in using tools to foster transparency and accountability in order to ensure that student funds are being spent responsibly.

Section 4. Accordingly, this policy seeks to recognize groups' needs for clear guidance about funding procedures and the GSO's decisions about what sorts of funding will best serve the student body's interests, while simultaneously taking steps to ensure that responsible groups are rewarded in future rounds of funding allocations. It therefore continues, codifies, and formally establishes the accountability procedures first laid out in the Spring 2016 semester by the Executive Board at the time.

Article III. The GSO Funding Authority.

Section 1. The Constitution delegates the review of student group funding requests (hereafter "Requests") to the GSO Executive Board (requests less than \$500) or to the GA (requests greater than \$1000). Requests shall be reviewed at open meetings, all those present will have the chance to ask questions, and then the Treasurer will propose a funding amount to the board. The Executive Board will then vote yay or nay on the Treasurer's proposed amount.

Section 2. Four members of the board shall constitute a quorum. In the case of a tie vote within the board, the side on which the Treasurer has voted will be deemed to have carried.

Section 3. No member of the Board may review a Request in which he or she has an interest as an officer of the applying graduate student group. If members fail to recuse themselves, the Treasurer may disregard their vote. The Treasurer's decision may be overturned only by a vote of five of the seven members of the GSO Board.

Section 4. The Treasurer, as Chair of the Funding Process, must officially hear all requests. He/she will review all Requests for procedural defects and make such minor corrections as he or she sees fit.

Article IV. Group Funding Procedures.

Section 1. Graduate student groups receiving funds must comply with all University policies to remain in good standing with the GSO. Student groups must also remain in compliance with the Constitution's Article VIII (GSO Group Access to Benefits). Student groups must be recognized by the Center for Student Engagement (CSE), have a CSE-granted cost center number, and have completed GSO's group initiation procedures to be eligible for funding.

Section 2. Funding requests will be heard starting in orientation week (mid-August) by the Executive Board. During this time the Executive Board will hold an open meeting every two weeks. Request time should be scheduled at the end of the agenda, and group leaders may email the Treasurer their attendance. Prior to the first GA meetings, the Executive Board may award requests larger than \$500 at the Treasurer's discretion. Starting at the first GA meeting, requests of any amount may be presented to the GA at monthly meetings. Requests of less than \$500 may be presented to the Executive Board every four weeks at Board meetings. Either a GA meeting or an Executive Board meeting should be scheduled every four weeks (e.g. if the GA meeting is on September 1, the Executive Board meeting should be September 15, to allow leaders multiple opportunities to make requests). Hearings will stop April 15, as all funds need to be spent by the last week of classes. A list of meeting dates should be published by the Executive Board by August 1.

Section 3. The Authority will take cognizance of the following group-level factors in allocating GSO funds for groups:

- Active membership size (as measured by number of members on Hoyalink). Groups with fewer than 10 active members (including hidden members) on their Hoyalink page may not apply for GSO funds.
- Mission of the group
- The history of the group in using GSO funds fully, responsibly, and in keeping with their purposes as stated in previous years' requests
- The ability of the group to carry out the events for which it is submitting Requests

Section 4. The Executive Board will evaluate each Request for individual events on the basis of the following factors:

- Breadth of Appeal: evaluates whether the topic have a broad or narrow appeal to the student body—that is, will it attract many or few students. Self-estimated attendance targets will be only one piece of evidence employed in evaluating this score.
- Cost Effectiveness: evaluates whether the budget, as submitted, covers all reasonable expenditures and only reasonable expenditures.
- Quality of Proposal: evaluates how well thought-through the proposal is.
- Need for GSO Funding: evaluates whether the event requires GSO funding to happen or whether the event would take place without GSO funding. All things equal, GSO will fund events that would not otherwise take place.
- Uniqueness and Originality: evaluates whether the proposal would yield an event or resource not duplicated by existing campus initiatives or other projects in the funding pool.
- Equity: whether the group has already received substantial funding or not.

Section 5. The president or treasurer of a group must present the event in person to the GA or GSO in person no less than two weeks before the date of the event. Multiple events may be presented at the

same time. Funding will be decided at the time of the meeting and the presenter will receive notice of their funding at the same time. Appeals of less than \$100 can be made to the Treasurer via email; appeals of more than \$100 must be granted through the Executive Board.

Section 6. Groups must inform the Chair under which Category of Funding they are submitting each Request. The Categories of Funding are:

- Academic Events, designed to support students' academic growth and interactions with faculty
- Social Events, designed to support recreational interactions among the graduate student body
- Networking Events, designed to support opportunities for students to meet with valuable professional contacts for career-building purposes
- Service Events, designed to support Georgetown students' participation in charitable and voluntary events.
- Diversity Events, designed to recognize the contributions of diverse cultures and experiences to the University community.

The Treasurer may reassign Requests to the category he or she believes to be most fitting.

Section 7. Each Request must include:

- A date for the event for which funds are being requested
- A description of what the event will consist of and how it meets GSO's goals for receiving maximum value per dollar spent
- A budget detailing expenses for food, marketing, and other expenses
- Estimated minimum, likeliest, and maximum attendance
- An indication of whether the event is open to all Georgetown graduate students or closed only to group's members. If the event is closed, 10% less funding will be allocated than requested.
- An indication of whether the event is the group's single most important initiative for the semester. The Authority will consider this information before making their final allocations at their discretion.

Section 8. Food and beverage expenses funded by GSO are capped at \$12 per head for lunches, \$15 per head for dinners, and \$8 per head for breakfasts, teas, or other events. The Treasurer will adjust budgets before their consideration by the Executive Board so that these maximums are obeyed.

Section 9. The GSO prohibits GSO groups from using GSO funds for the following activities:

- the purchase of alcoholic beverages
- the purchase of membership dues in national organizations
- any events or expenses at which graduate students will not be the predominant (>75%) intended audience
- events that are less than two weeks away or have already taken place

Section 10. After carrying out the adjustments and other procedures outlined above, the Treasurer will propose an amount for each event to the Executive Board. The Board will then vote yay or nay on the Treasurer's proposal. In the event of a "nay" vote, the Board may vote to readjust the Treasurer's proposal and re-vote, or to deny funding to the event.

Section 11. The Treasurer will notify the presenter of funding status immediately following the meeting. If any funding other than the Requested Total was allocated, the Treasurer will briefly explain why. The

Secretary or Communications Chair will include the following information in the public meeting minutes: the group name, the event description, and the amount funded.

Section 12: The Treasurer will ensure that approximately 50% of total group funds are spent on events taking place in the fall and 50% on events taking place in the spring. The Executive Board should use its judgment to ensure equitable distribution of funds by prioritizing requests of those groups who have not yet received any funding over those groups that have already received funding. However, the Executive Board should balance this interest with the attempt to spend as close to 50% of funds as possible in each term, recognizing that certain groups may be more or less active in a given term. Funds *may* be allocated the term before they are going to be spent.

Section 13. Groups that did not receive funding under the Executive Board's decisions may file an Amended Request, in writing, no later than three days after the decision. The Amended Request should be directed to the Treasurer. Groups may amend their requests for clarity and may lower their request for funding by no more than 10 percent (but they may not increase it). Within one week after the appeals deadline, the Executive Board will use the Groups Budget to fund Amended Requests in full, partially, or not at all, as they see fit. The decisions of the Executive Board will be final.

Section 14. All group funding allocations made by the Treasurer should be communicated with CSE.

Article V. Responsibilities of Groups Receiving GSO Funding.

Section 1. Graduate student groups receiving funds from the Authority or the Appellate Board agree to abide by CSE and GSO's procedures for events as contained in this policy.

Section 2. Graduate student groups will make clear to their members and attendees that the event has been funded wholly or partly by the Graduate Student Organization. The GSO's logo must be prominently displayed on all promotional materials for events receiving GSO funding.

Section 3. If an event has been marked "open" to the public, the group must create a Hoyalink event with the location and time of their event. A flyer is encouraged but not required. This advertisement should be posted two weeks prior to the event date or as soon as the event logistics have been confirmed. Once the GSO website has been built, advertisements for "open" events may be posted on the GSO website event calendar in lieu of on Hoyalink. Again, these events should be posted two weeks prior to the event date or as soon as the event logistics have been confirmed.

Section 4. If the event is "open" to the public and was awarded greater than \$250 in GSO funds, they must also submit a 50 to 75 word event description for inclusion in the weekly GSO email before a Sunday that is at least one week prior to the event date. This deadline will ensure that the event is sent out in at least one GSO weekly newsletter before the event.

Section 5. GSO Executive Board members and their staff may choose to conduct spot checks of GSO-funded events to ensure that funds are being spent properly.

Section 6. The Executive Board will, in keeping with the Constitution, bar student groups from receiving future GSO funding should any misappropriations or fraudulent activity be discovered. Further, the GSO will work with the University to recover any misappropriated funds.

Section 7. Graduate student group leaders may be required to meet with the Treasurer for updates to club funding policies and processes. Failure to attend required meetings may result in sanctions against groups at the discretion of the Club Penalties Commission, which is outlined in Article VI.

Article VI. Sanctions for Violations of Group Funding Responsibilities

Section 1. The GSO Club Penalties Commission (CPC) will be composed of a member of the General Assembly, an officer of a GSO group, and chaired by the Secretary of Groups. The Graduate Assistant of the Center for Student Engagement will provide information support for the committee by accessing and obtaining back-end information, such as Hoyalink event approvals, as necessary. Members of the Club Penalties Commission may be nominated by the Executive Board or the General Assembly, and they must be approved by majority vote by the General Assembly at the beginning of the academic school year.

Section 2. One role of the CPC is to penalize groups that do not meet the responsibilities of funded groups as outlined in Article V. CPC members will convene once per semester during study period or finals period in order to review the violations of each group and assign penalties. These penalties will be applied to the group budgets in the subsequent semester.

Article VII. Amendments

Section 1. Proposed amendments to this document must be agreed upon by all GSO Executive Board members and then presented to the GSO General Assembly for a vote. Amendments may be passed by a majority vote of the GSO General Assembly.

Section 2. After the passage of amendments to this document, GSO student groups must be informed that there have been changes to the policy. Groups must be given at least two weeks' notice before the amendments go into effect.