

# GSA Funding Policies

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## Contents

- 1 [PURPOSE AND HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT](#)
- 2 [FISCAL YEAR AND IMPORTANT DATES](#)
- 3 [PRIMARY FUNDING GOALS OF THE GSA](#)
- 4 [GENERAL FUNDING PROCEDURES](#)
  - 4.1 [APPLICATION PROCEDURES](#)
    - 4.1.1 [Application Procedures](#)
    - 4.1.2 [Funding for events held prior to a funding application cycle](#)
    - 4.1.3 [Funding for GSOs missing the annual application deadline](#)
  - 4.2 [FUNDING PROHIBITIONS AND DUTIES](#)
    - 4.2.1 [Expense Specific Funding Prohibitions](#)
    - 4.2.2 [General Funding Prohibitions](#)
    - 4.2.3 [Duties of Funded Organizations](#)
    - 4.3.4 [Special Requirements of GSOs associated with national organizations](#)
    - 4.2.5 [Penalties](#)
  - 4.3 [REIMBURSEMENT POLICIES](#)
    - 4.3.1 [Reimbursement Policies](#)
    - 4.3.2 [Special Cases when funds can be made available prior to events](#)
  - 4.4 [INCREASING LONG TERM ENTITLEMENTS](#)
    - 4.4.1 [Maintaining High Spending Levels](#)
    - 4.4.2 [Advanced Status](#)
  - 4.5 [DURABLE GOOD AND CAMPUS IMPROVEMENT FUND](#)
  - 4.6 [SPECIAL CASES](#)
    - 4.6.1 [Deficit Requests](#)
    - 4.6.2 [Disputing an Entitlement](#)
    - 4.6.3 [GSA Event Co-Sponsorship](#)
    - 4.6.4 [Donations to a GSO](#)
- 5 [GSA PROCEDURES FOR DETERMINING GSO ENTITLEMENTS](#)
  - 5.1 [DETERMINING AN ALLOCATIONS BUDGET](#)

5.2 [OVERVIEW OF ENTITLEMENT DETERMINATION PROCESS](#)

5.3 [ENTITLEMENT DETERMINATION PROCESS](#)

5.3.1 [Determination of Minimum Annual Entitlements \(MAE\)](#)

5.3.2 [Determination of Standard Annual Entitlements \(SAE\)](#)

5.3.3 [Determination of Advanced Annual Entitlements \(AAE\)](#)

5.3.4 [Determination of Annual Entitlements and Total Entitlements](#)

5.4 [STANDARD AND ADVANCED STATUS DETERMINATIONS](#)

5.4.1 [Advanced Status Determination Process and Goals of Process](#)

5.4.2 [GSA Recordkeeping and Reporting](#)

5.4.3 [Disputations of Advanced Status](#)

6 [REVERSIONS](#)

6.1 [REVERSION OF ENTITLEMENTS](#)

6.2 [YEAR TO YEAR SAVINGS](#)

7 [TAXES](#)

8 [ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT PROCEDURES](#)

9 [LEXICON](#)

# 1 PURPOSE AND HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

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The purpose of this document is to establish and promulgate guidelines to be used by the GSA Executive Committee (EC) in its allocation of funds to graduate student organizations (GSOs).

GSO officers seeking to understand what they must do to receive GSA funding will find Section 4 of this document most relevant. GSOs reading this document to understand how to apply for GSA funding, what they can spend money on, and how to be reimbursed, should read sections 4.1-4.3. GSOs who are interested in understanding how to maximize the amount of money they receive on a year to year basis should see section 4.4. GSOs who have other questions about specific situations they face including situations where they exhaust their budget before the year is over, have a disagreement with the GSA about how much money they were approved for, or would like to co-sponsor an event with the GSA should see Section 4.6.

Section 5 of this document is intended primarily to guide the treasurer of the GSA in calculating GSO entitlements and to inform GSOs who want are interested in understanding in detail how the GSA calculates entitlements.

## 2 FISCAL YEAR AND IMPORTANT DATES

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The GSA's fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30. The GSA's annual funding and recognition application deadline will be held at the end of the second week of the Fall Semester. The final day to submit reimbursements each year will be May 30th.

## 3 PRIMARY FUNDING GOALS OF THE GSA

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As stated in the GSA constitution, "The mission of the GSA shall be to further graduate student interests; graduate student-University relations; and the social, cultural, and academic enrichment of graduate students." This makes it clear that graduate students, their interests, and their enrichment must be the focus of all that the GSA does or seeks to do.

A complementary goal of the GSA and its funding policies is to preserve the right of graduate students and graduate student organizations to make their own decisions about what types of programming best promote their interests and to empower them with the resources to carry out that programming.

The intention of this funding policy is to serve both goals; to provide graduate student organizations with as much autonomy as possible in making decisions about how to further graduate student interests while providing sufficient oversight to ensure that those events really are aimed towards the interest of graduate students and that they are in conformity with university policy and local, state, and federal law.

## 4 GENERAL FUNDING PROCEDURES

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The intention of this section is to explain what Graduate Student Organizations (GSOs) need to know to request and receive entitlements and reimbursements under the GSA's Funding Policies. For detailed information about the internal process that the GSA Executive Committee uses to calculate the final entitlement for GSO's given their requests, see Section 5.

With limited exceptions (see 4.5 and 4.6.3), GSA funding works on an entitlement basis. What this means is that the GSA assigns GSOs a specific amount of money that they are entitled to use for an academic year on any cost that is permitted by the GSA's funding policies (see section 4.2) and it is the responsibility to GSOs to decide how to spend that money and to be familiar enough with the GSA's funding policies to ensure that they do not violate them.

Section 4.1 explains the application process that GSOs must use to receive an entitlement for a given academic year, details the situations in which GSOs can spend money prior to the finalization of their entitlement, and explains how the GSA will treat groups that apply for entitlements after the annual application deadline. Section 4.2 details the GSA's restrictions on what GSO's can spend their entitlement

money on, the duties of recognized organizations that have received entitlements, and the penalties for violations of these restrictions and duties. Section 4.3 explains the process by which GSOs which have received an entitlement can request reimbursement and checks from the GSA after they spend money on their events and programming. Section 4.4 summarizes how GSOs can ensure that they are able to receive the highest entitlements possible on a year to year basis. Section 4.5 explains how GSOs can receive special funding for durable goods, which they are prohibited from spending their entitlement funds on. Section 4.6 explains how the GSA will treat special cases that occur when GSOs overspend their entitlement, disagree with how the GSA calculated their entitlement, or would like additional GSA funding support for an event which they believe is in the greater interest of the graduate student community.

At different points this document refers to “annual entitlements” and “total entitlements.” It is important to note that these are not interchangeable terms. For most GSOs these values will be the same, but for GSOs which carry year to year deficits or savings, there will be a difference (see sections 4.6.1 and 6.2.) An annual entitlement is the amount of money that the GSA grants a GSO based on the GSA’s annual budget for GSO entitlements. A total entitlement is the total amount of money that the GSA determines that a GSO is allowed to spend in a specific academic year (which includes that GSOs annual entitlement, savings, and deficits.)

## 4.1 APPLICATION PROCEDURES

### 4.1.1 Application Procedures

To receive GSA funding for a given academic year, GSOs must submit a recognition and funding request application by the end of the first two weeks of the fall semester. The GSA’s application deadline will be advertised through its website and through its events list. It is the responsibility of GSOs to be sure they are informed of the application deadline. All recognition and funding requests must be made using the GSA’s online application form. Both the recognition and the funding requests are submitted at the same time through the same application. No GSO will be allocated funding unless they are also recognized. A complete recognition application must include the following:

- A list of the organization’s current graduate student officers and their emails
- A current constitution
- A list of the emails of the current graduate student members of the organization (official university email accounts preferred)
- A designated contact person who is to be contacted in case the EC has a question regarding the request (this person must be a graduate student member of the organization)
- Information on whether the GSO is an academic GSO associated with a curriculum code (or codes) or a non-academic GSO

The funding half of the application will ask GSOs to submit a requested funding value for the academic year. This funding value should represent a realistic estimate of how much funding is required to carry out

that GSOs planned programming. Each GSO will be assigned a maximum funding value that reflects the largest funding value that they can request from the GSA in that year. This maximum funding value will be calculated and made available to GSOs by the GSA when the funding application opens. For GSOs that have been recognized and funded in the two years prior to the current funding cycle, the GSA calculates each GSO's maximum funding value by identifying the largest annual spending by that GSO in the two years prior to the current funding cycle and multiplying that value by 1.5. New GSOs or GSOs that have not been funded in the last two years will be assigned maximum funding values of \$1500. GSOs that have not spent more than \$1000 in the past two years will be assigned a maximum funding value of \$1500. The highest maximum funding value that any GSO will be assigned is \$7500.

At the completion of the GSA's funding application cycle, the GSA will inform each GSO that applied of their unfinalized total entitlement. This entitlement will represent the amount of money that that GSO can be reimbursed for that year. In general, no GSO should expect to receive their full requested funding value as an entitlement. The money that can be reimbursed is not event specific and GSOs can decide for themselves how they would like to divide the money between events that they choose to run.

However, no reimbursements for costs submitted in violations of the funding prohibitions and duties in section 4.2 will be reimbursed. It is the responsibility of GSOs to ensure that they are completely familiar with the restrictions listed in 4.2 and that no member of their GSO violates these policies in the running or spending associated with that GSO's events.

No GSO may submit reimbursements until their total entitlement is finalized. For a GSO to finalize their entitlement, that GSO must have a representative of the GSO submit a funding contract to the GSA. The funding contract will ask that GSO's representative to verify that they understand the GSA's funding rules and to certify that they will take responsibility for ensuring their GSO's compliance. Upon the submission of the funding contract, that GSO's total entitlement will be approved and the GSA will begin processing that GSO's reimbursement requests.

#### 4.1.2 Funding for events held prior to a funding application cycle

A GSO can be funded for an event held prior to a funding application cycle, but after the conclusion of the previous year's cycle (such as an orientation), if the following conditions are met.

- The GSO holding the event has been recognized by the GSA at least once in the past two years or is applying as an academic GSO
- No funds for the event are in violation of any of the funding prohibitions listed in section 4.2.
- The total funds spent for the event are under \$1000, the GSA's guaranteed minimum annual entitlement for GSOs
- The GSO applies for funding for the year through the application procedures listed in 4.1.1 and finalizes their entitlement prior to submitting their reimbursement request

Note that if a GSO is reimbursed for funds for an event prior to the finalization of their total entitlement, the amount reimbursed will be subtracted later from their total entitlement. For instance, a GSO spending \$500 on an orientation at the beginning of the year and is later finalized for a \$3000 total entitlement, will

only be able to spend \$2500 in the remainder of the year.

### 4.1.3 Funding for GSOs missing the annual application deadline

The GSA will set aside a small amount of its annual budget for GSOs to a “Late Groups Fund” for groups that for any reason miss the annual application deadline. This category will both include pre-established groups that miss the deadline and groups that form for the first-time mid-year. Late groups who submit their recognition application and who contact the GSA Treasurer will be awarded \$1000 annual entitlements on a rolling basis until the Late Groups Fund is exhausted.

## 4.2 FUNDING PROHIBITIONS AND DUTIES

This section lays out the limits of what the GSA can reimburse GSOs for, the duties of any organization that receives GSA funding, and the penalties of violating these limits or duties.

### 4.2.1 Expense Specific Funding Prohibitions

All GSA funded events shall be limited by the following expense specific funding limitations.

- Food: For no event shall a GSO be allocated funding for meals greater than the following rates.
  - o Snacks: \$5/attendee
  - o Meals: \$15/attendee
  - o Meals with speakers or invited guests: \$30/attendee with a maximum of \$300 per meal for all attendees minus the speaker or invited guest.
- Speakers and Invited Participants: For no event shall a GSO be allocated funding for the expenses of speakers and other invited participants exceeding the following limitations.
  - o \$1000 honoraria per person
  - o \$1000 per person in travel expenses to and from the event
  - o \$250 per person per night of lodging
  - o \$46 per person per day of meal expenses
- Alcoholic Beverages: No GSO shall be allocated funding to pay for alcoholic beverages
- University Personnel Honoraria: No GSO shall be allocated funding to pay honoraria to personnel or students of Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey.
- Durable Goods: No GSO shall be allocated funding to pay for durable goods such as sports equipment, office equipment, gifts or subscriptions to periodicals. GSOs may receive funding for semi-durable goods for use during the event such as posters, decorations, name tags, pens, or table tennis balls. GSOs that wish to purchase durable goods should apply for the Durable Good Fund (see section 4.5.)
- Prizes: No GSO shall be allocated funds to pay for prizes of any kind. This includes academic prizes, artistic prizes, or prizes distributed through a lottery.

## 4.2.2 General Funding Prohibitions

All GSO events are subject to the following funding prohibitions.

- **Violations of Law or Rutgers Policies:** The GSA shall not allocate funds to any event any part of which violates the laws of the city of New Brunswick, the county of Middlesex, the state of New Jersey, the United States of America, or any other jurisdiction which is relevant to the event in question, nor shall the GSA allocate funds in violation of official policies of Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey.
- **Worship and Proselytizing:** The GSA shall not allocate funds to events involving religious proselytizing or worship.
- **Fundraising:** The GSA shall not allocate funds to events with a monetary fundraising component. This applies both to events the purpose of which is to fundraise for a GSO and events the purpose of which is to fundraise for an external body such as a non-profit organization.
- **Field Trips:** The GSA will not fund a field trip (transportation costs and cost of admission) unless the following special conditions are met.
  - a. The field trip is relevant to the mission of the GSO holding the field trip.
  - b. The GSO receives special permission from the GSA Treasurer or business Manager allowing them to run the field trip. This process will take two to four weeks because the university must approve the trip.
  - c. The field trip is advertised over the GSA events list as open to all graduate students.
- **Off-Campus Events:** The GSA shall not allocate funds to any events which do not take place on a Rutgers university campus or within the immediate vicinity of the campus, with the exceptions listed below.
  - a. Dinners in local restaurants including an invited guest or visiting speaker.
  - b. Events which GSOs can make the case would not be possible on a campus venue.
  - c. Field trips, when they meet the conditions above.

## 4.2.3 Duties of Funded Organizations

The following is a list of duties which must be carried out by any GSO that receives funding from the GSA.

**Duty #1.** All events for which the GSA allocates funds must be open to any and every Rutgers graduate student who wishes to attend that event. It is the responsibility of the event organizer to anticipate and accommodate graduate student interest in the event. Graduate students may not be turned away from or denied admittance to any portion of a GSA funded event for any reason.

**Duty #2.** All events for which the GSA allocates funds must be primarily planned and organized by graduate students and should be intended primarily for a graduate student audience. The GSA allocates funding to GSOs for the sake of empowering them to plan and run their own programming to benefit other graduate students, it does not allocate funding to them to supplement faculty, undergraduate, or



“departmental” programming. In certain situations, collaborations between graduate students and other university constituencies may be acceptable provided that graduate students are centrally involved in the planning of the event and the event is of particular interest to graduate students. GSOs who are considering such collaborations are advised to inquire with the GSA treasurer whether the event would be appropriate for GSA funding.

Duty #3. All events for which the GSA allocates funds must be adequately publicized. Programs and Events must be publicized at least to the membership of the organization concerned. Conferences must be publicized to the entire Rutgers graduate student community through the GSA Events List at a minimum.

Duty #4. All advertisements and publicity for a GSA funded event must include a statement which announces that the event is (at least in part) sponsored by the GSA.

Duty #5. After each event which receives funding from the GSA the sponsoring GSO is responsible for providing the EC with a Post-Event Report as a requirement for receiving reimbursement. This requirement applies even if some portion of the costs for the event were paid by the GSA in advance. (See Section 4.3 for more information about Post-Event Reports and GSA reimbursement policies.)

Duty #6. Each GSO must send a representative to officially attend a minimum of six council meetings per year. A GSO receiving recognition mid-way through the year may not miss more than one council meeting from the time at which they are recognized until the end of the year. A GSO representative has officially attended a meeting of the GSA Council if they have signed the attendance sheet at the beginning of the meeting and has remained at the meeting until it is officially adjourned.

Duty #7. No GSO can open or maintain a bank account. Any existing GSO bank accounts must be converted to Rutgers accounts or to the GSA.

#### 4.2.4 Special Requirements on GSOs Associated with National Organizations

The GSA places additional duties on GSOs that share the name of or are otherwise associated with national organizations as a condition for recognition, funding, and promotion. These duties are university requested and are placed with the intention of distinguishing the GSA’s institutional support for graduate students from the GSA’s support for external organizations not accountable to Rutgers.

For all GSOs using the name of a national organization or otherwise associating with an organization outside of Rutgers

- 1) Governance of the organization must be fully independent from the external organization and the GSO must stipulate in its constitution that its decision making is the sole discretion of its graduate student membership, and that the GSO aligns with the mission of Rutgers
- 2) Any advertisements for new membership by the GSO must make clear that the advertisement is for membership in the student organization at Rutgers and not the external organization
- 3) Any events or programming organized by the GSO must be full organized and planned through the GSO and all promotion for said events and programming must make clear that it is organized by the GSO and not an external organization

- 4) The official name of the GSO must include “graduate student chapter” or similar phraseology to make clear that the GSA’s recognition or support of the organization is of a graduate student organization and not an external organization
- 5) Evidence of any situation where an external organization is involved in the decision making or event organizing the GSO, in violation of these policies will be grounds for revoking the GSA’s recognition of the GSO, including any funding commitments to the GSO.

#### 4.2.5 Penalties

Funds spent in violation of any general or expense-specific funding prohibition will not be reimbursed. Events held without submission of a Post Event Form as required by Duty 5 will not be reimbursed. The GSA reserves the right to withhold reimbursement from any events held by GSOs which violate Duties 1, 2, or 3 and depending on the severity of the violation may impose more extreme penalties including the revocation of that GSO’s recognition and annual entitlement, or the denial of funding for the entirety of the fiscal year following the one in which the violation(s) took place. The imposition of any penalty exceeding the withholding of reimbursement will not occur without a vote of the GSA council on the matter in question.

### 4.3 REIMBURSEMENT POLICIES

#### 4.3.1 Reimbursement Policies

To release funds for reimbursement, the GSA must receive a complete post event form from the GSO which ran the event. Post event reports must include:

- Original receipts for the expenses for which reimbursement is being requested
- A copy of the publicity material used for the event illustrating that the event was advertised appropriately (see Duty 3)
- A sign in sheet reflecting the actual attendance at the event
- The signature of either the GSO’s specified contact person, or an officer of the GSO
- A working contact email for the signee

**Post-Event Reports must be submitted no later than 90 days following a funded event.**

For a check to be issued to a visitor to Rutgers, the GSA may require the visitor’s SSN and home address, prior to the check being written. If the visitor is not a US citizen, a passport number and the country of issue are may be required. No checks will be issued without this information (when applicable.)

The GSA will not under any circumstances reimburse any expenses that are in violation of the funding prohibitions or duties listed in Section 4.2. It is the responsibility of a GSO’s officers to be familiar with these policies and to ensure that any student who spends money on behalf of that GSO is familiar with the policies.

The GSA will not under normal circumstances reimburse any expenses that are in excess of a GSO’s total

entitlement. If a GSO finds itself in a situation such that a student in their GSO has spent funds in excess of that GSO's total entitlement, their only option is to submit a deficit request. If reimbursement of a GSO is funded through a deficit request, the reimbursement amount will be subtracted from that GSO's total entitlement in the next calendar year. Requests for \$200 or more above a GSO's total entitlement may subject the GSO to additional penalties in the next calendar year. For a full explanation of deficit requests see Section 4.6.1.

#### 4.3.2 Special Cases when funds can be made available prior to events

Funds may be made available to a GSO in advance of an event in the following two circumstances, provided that the funds requested do not cause that GSO's funding to exceed its yearly entitlement. Receiving funding in advance of an event does not relieve the GSO running the event from the responsibility of submitting a Post Event Report after the event is concluded.

- **Honoraria:** After an allocation has been made for honoraria for a speaker, a GSO may request that a check be made available to be presented to the speaker at their event. For the check to be prepared in time, the GSO must submit an "Honorarium Request Form" available from the GSA website. To provide sufficient time for processing, honorarium request forms must be submitted at least two weeks in advance of the event (four weeks in advance if the recipient is a non-US citizen).
- **Large Expenses:** Provided that a GSO has received an entitlement for the year, a GSO may request that a payment for an event expense be made directly by the GSA prior to the start of the event provided that the cost of the expense is greater than \$500 and that funding the event would not go over that GSO's total entitlement. For the GSA to perform this service, an invoice for the expense must be submitted to the business manager of the GSA at least two weeks prior to the occurrence of the event.

### 4.4 INCREASING LONG TERM ENTITLEMENTS

This section details the actions GSOs can take to increase their entitlements on a year to year basis.

#### 4.4.1 Maintaining High Spending Levels

The GSA's funding policies are meant to reward GSOs that spend a high percentage of their entitlements with larger possible entitlements in future years. For instance, suppose that a GSO applies for funding and receives a maximum funding request value of \$2000 based on its last year of spending, makes a funding request for \$1750, and is awarded a \$1500 entitlement. If the GSO spends \$1000 of their entitlement that year, their maximum funding request value for the next year will remain \$2000. However, if the GSO spends their full \$1500 entitlement, then they will see their maximum funding request value in the next year rise to \$2250.

#### 4.4.2 Advanced Status

A GSO that regularly contributes to the GSA by meeting its duties during a given academic year, may be awarded advanced status by the GSA for the subsequent academic year. During academic years when GSO funding requests exceed the GSA's available money, GSOs with advanced status will receive a

higher percentage of what they request than GSOs without advanced status. For a GSO to receive advanced status three of the following five criteria must be met. For a precise layout of how advanced status influences how the GSA awards entitlements see Sections 5.2 and 5.3.

1. Is the GSO an academic GSO? 2. Has the GSO publicized at least three events to the GSA Events List or another venue aimed at a wide multi-departmental audience in the last academic year and has the GSO notified the treasurer of the GSA of such prior to the conclusion of the last academic year? 3. Has the GSO missed fewer than six GSA council meetings in the last academic year? 4. Has the GSO spent at least 90% of its annual entitlement in the last academic year? 5. Has a member of the GSO volunteered to assist with a GSA-run event or committee and has the GSO notified the treasurer of the GSA of such prior to the conclusion of the last academic year?

These conditions are meant to reward GSOs that regularly fulfill their duties, while also providing ways for GSOs who fail to meet some duties to still receive advance status. The two most common profiles of GSOs receiving advance status would be 1) an academic GSO that regularly attends council meetings and does not request more money than it will spend and 2) a non-academic GSO that regularly advertises its events to a wide audience, regularly attends council meetings, and does not request more money than it will spend. For an extended discussion of how advanced status works and the goals of this point-based system, see Section 5.4.

At the opening of each annual funding application cycle, the GSA will publish and make accessible its listing of which GSOs it has counted as meeting advanced status and which conditions those GSOs meet. If a GSO believes that it has met the conditions for advanced status, it must notify the GSA treasurer prior to the funding application deadline. For a description of how the GSA will handle disputes about advanced status see Section 5.4.3.

## 4.5 DURABLE GOOD AND CAMPUS IMPROVEMENT FUND

At the discretion of the EC, each year the GSA shall allocate a certain amount of funds for the Durable Good and Campus Improvement Fund (abbreviated “the Durable Goods Fund”). GSOs that would like to purchase durable goods other than those listed as acceptable in Section 4.2.2 may request funding through the Durable Good fund on a rolling basis by submitting a durable goods request form. Funds allocated through the Durable Good fund do not subtract from GSO’s total entitlements and unlike entitlements are item specific. For instance, if a GSO is allocated \$30 through the Durable Good funding for a coffee maker, the GSA will not reimburse that GSO for spending \$30 on a toaster or anything other than a coffee maker.

Requests for items through the Durable Goods Fund will be processed on a rolling basis and may require up to a month or more for the GSA to approve the request. GSOs shall under no circumstances assume that a Durable Goods Fund request will be approved until it receives specific confirmation from the GSA that the request has been approved. The GSA will not approve Durable Goods requests until it has received confirmation from the university that the type of item being requested at the price point requested is an acceptable use of GSA funds. The EC will have the right to publish guidelines pertaining to how much funding can be approved for specific categories of durable goods.

Items purchased through the Durable Goods Fund will be considered GSA property on loan to GSOs and

not GSO property. In situations where a GSO no longer has use for a durable good, it must return the item to the GSA and may under no circumstances give the item away. The GSA retains the right to request proof that an item purchased through the Durable Good Fund is still in possession of a GSO that has requested it and is being used as intended.

No GSO may be funded for a specific item through the Durable Goods Fund more than once every three years. Prior to the approval of funding for a replacement of an item previously purchased through the Durable Goods Fund, the GSA may require that the broken item be returned to the GSA.

## 4.6 SPECIAL CASES

### 4.6.1 Deficit Requests

A deficit request is a request by a GSO to receive reimbursement for spending that exceeds the total funding entitlement for that GSO in the academic year in which the deficit request is made. In general, GSOs will not be reimbursed for spending that exceeds their total entitlement. The intention of the deficit request system is to avoid situations where individual graduate students spend money in excess of their GSOs total entitlement without realizing it and are denied reimbursement because of their GSO's poor bookkeeping. It is not intended as a way for GSOs to intentionally run more events than their total entitlement should allow.

To receive reimbursement through a deficit request, a GSO must submit a deficit request form. In order for deficit request forms to be approved three conditions must be met. First, the event or program for which the reimbursement is being requested must not have occurred after the GSO submitting the request had submitted another deficit request form. For instance, if a GSO submitted a deficit request form on March 2nd, and then later held an event on March 3rd and submitted a second deficit request form for that event, this would be denied. After a deficit request has been submitted by a GSO, that GSO should cease further programming requiring GSA funding for the remainder of the year. Second, there must be no obvious cause for suspicion that the GSO is intentionally exploiting the deficit request system to exceed their total entitlement. For instance, if a deficit request form was for an amount near or exceeding the full initial entitlement of the GSO and the GSO had held many other events in the same year, then that deficit request would be denied. Third, the deficit request must be under \$200. Requests over \$200 may be approved only by a special decision of the EC.

Upon approval of a deficit request, a reimbursement check for the requested amount will be issued and a deficit amount will be recorded in the GSA records. In the academic year following the one where the deficit request is approved, this deficit will be subtracted from that GSOs total entitlement for the year. For instance, if a GSO would have received a \$3000 total entitlement but had a \$500 deficit from the previous year, they would receive a \$2500 total entitlement instead.

### 4.6.2 Disputing an Entitlement

For the most part the GSA's process of determining total entitlements is a mathematically driven process and not the result of specific judgments on the part of the EC or the GSA treasurer (see section 5.) For this reason, there are a relatively small number of points on which an entitlement may be disputed. This

section summarizes the types of disputes and the procedures for resolving them.

➤ **Mathematical Error in the Calculation of Total Entitlement from Annual Entitlement:** A GSO may challenge that the GSA made a mathematical error in the determination of their total entitlement. The calculation of total entitlement, assuming that the annual entitlement is correct, is a matter of addition and subtraction, and upon GSO request the GSA will correct this error if it was made.

➤ **Mathematical Error in the Calculation of Annual Entitlement:** A GSO may challenge that the GSA made a mathematical error in the determination of their annual entitlement. Because the calculation of annual entitlement takes into account information from all other GSOs, the only way in general for the GSA to correct such errors would be to recalculate the annual entitlement of all GSOs. If this is found to be the case that this type of error has been made, a council vote will be taken at the next scheduled council meeting on how to proceed.

➤ **Error in Financial Record Keeping:** A GSO may challenge that the GSA made an error in the record keeping of GSO savings and deficits. If a GSO makes this challenge, the GSA will have two weeks to provide the GSO with documentation (deficit request or savings request forms) to prove that the GSA's records are correct. If the GSA is unable to provide this documentation in the two-week time frame, the issue will be resolved in the GSO's favor. A small fund will be budgeted each year by the GSA treasurer to fund GSOs in the event of these challenges.

➤ **Error in the Determination of Advanced Status:** If a GSO believes that the GSA has made a mistake in the determination of whether the GSO should have advanced status, it is the responsibility of the GSO to raise this concern to the GSA prior to the funding application deadline for the cycle. The GSA will openly publish information about which groups have advance status when the funding application opens for GSOs to check against their own records. For full details of how disputes of this kind will be treated by the GSA see Section 5.4.3. Advanced status cannot be disputed after the funding application deadline has passed.

### 4.6.3 GSA Event Co-Sponsorship

If a GSO believes that an event they would like to hold will be of significant interest to the larger graduate community, that GSO can request GSA co-sponsorship. GSA co-sponsorship may involve support from GSA officers and staff in the running and publicizing of the event and the provision of additional GSA funding for the event. The procedures and amount of funding that can be provided for co-sponsorships of this sort will depend on the nature of the event and the portion of the GSA's larger budget funding for the event can be drawn from. Interested GSOs should contact a member of the GSA EC, or, in the case that they would like to co-sponsor with a specific GSA committee, should contact a member of the relevant committee.

### 4.6.4 Donations to a GSO

The GSA is not able to accept donations made by external donors or bodies to help to fund GSOs. If an academic GSO is in a situation where it would like to accept a donation, the best thing for them to do is to contact their department to discuss how to set up a university financial account through the Rutgers University Foundation or to contact the Foundation directly.

# 5 GSA PROCEDURES FOR DETERMINING GSO ENTITLEMENTS

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The intention of this section is to set out the process by which the GSA will calculate total entitlements for GSOs in a given cycle.

## 5.1 DETERMINING AN ALLOCATIONS BUDGET

Prior to the determination of GSO entitlements, the treasurer of the GSA or the EC must determine what specific amount of the GSA's annual budget can go towards GSOs in some form or another as opposed to other aspects of the GSA's functioning. Once this amount is determined, it must be divided between the external allocations fund, the disputes fund, the late groups fund, and the durable goods fund. An overview of the function of these funds will follow.

- The External Allocations Fund (EAF): The external allocations fund contains the funds that will be used to fund GSO entitlements for the year. In general, all funds over and above what is required to fill the other three funds should be placed in the external allocations fund.
- The Disputations Fund: The disputes fund is a small fund set aside to fund GSOs in the event that human error on the part of the GSA leads a GSO to receive an entitlement of lesser value than they should have received based on the GSA's funding policies.
- The Late Groups Fund: The late groups fund is a small fund set aside to provide some annual entitlement money to groups which form mid-year or groups that miss the GSA's ordinary funding deadlines. In accordance with section 4.1.3, each late group is funded \$1000 in annual entitlement money if their entitlement is drawn from this fund. Groups apply to this fund on a rolling basis until the fund is exhausted for the year. As such, the amount set for this fund should reflect the GSA's best judgment of how many new groups are likely to start during the year and how many established groups have missed the GSA's funding deadline.
- The Durable Goods Fund: The durable goods fund is intended to fund the purchase of durable goods that may not be purchased by GSOs using entitlement funds. The full aims of this fund can be found in section 4.5.

## 5.2 OVERVIEW OF ENTITLEMENT DETERMINATION PROCESS

The following outlines the general procedure that the GSA will apply to determine each GSO's total entitlement. Section 5.3 provides a more detailed mathematical breakdown of each step.

First, the GSA will fund all GSO requests up to \$1000 (the guaranteed funding minimum). The GSA will determine what remains of the EAF after the funding of the guaranteed funding minimum and will divide

this between a standard pool and an advanced pool. During the first year after which these funding policies take effect, 100% of funds will be set to the standard pool. The funds in the standard pool will be compared to the remaining money requested by GSOs and the difference between the money requested by GSOs and the money in the standard pool will be applied as a flat percentage cut on what each GSO requests. For instance, if only 80% of what GSOs request above \$1000 is available in the standard pool, then all GSOs will receive 80% of what they requested above \$1000.

If money has been added to the advanced pool, then after the allocation of funds to GSOs using the standard pool, the total amount requested by GSOs with advanced status above what they received through the previous step will be compared to the amount of funds in the advanced pool. The funds available in the advanced pool will then be distributed across the advanced status GSOs in the same way as the funds in the standard pool were distributed across all GSOs. The criteria for the determination of advanced status are listed below in section 5.4. The total amounts received by each GSO through the previous three steps will then be determined and that sum will be each GSO's annual entitlement. Each GSO's total entitlement will be determined by adding the value of any GSO savings or subtracting the value of GSO deficits from their annual entitlement.

## 5.3 ENTITLEMENT DETERMINATION PROCESS

This section details the process by which the GSA will determine the total entitlement of each GSO. The process described here is a GSA internal process. GSOs will receive notification of their total entitlement, and whether they are given advanced status if an advanced pool is assigned that funding year. All other values described below are values to be used during the calculation of total entitlement and will not generally be communicated to GSOs unless a calculation is disputed.

### 5.3.1 Determination of Minimum Annual Entitlements (MAE)

To perform this calculation the GSA requires 1) the value of the external allocations fund, and 2) the requested funding values of all GSOs recognized for the year at the time of the funding application deadline.

Each GSO requesting over \$1000 will be assigned a minimum annual entitlement (MAE) of \$1000. Each GSO requesting under \$1000 will be assigned an MAE equal to the value of what that GSO requested. The sum of all GSO MAE's will be taken and subtracted from the total value of the external allocations fund to determine the after-minimum external allocations budget (AMEAF).

### 5.3.2 Determination of Standard Annual Entitlements (SAE)

To perform this calculation the GSA requires all information from 5.3.1.

The GSA will divide the AMEAF into a standard and an advanced pool. In the 18/19 academic year, 100% of the AMEAF will be allocated to the standard pool. In all future academic years, the distribution of AMEAF will be determined by a majority vote of the EC. In the event that no vote is taken or no consensus is reached, the standard pool will receive 70% of the AMEAF and the advanced pool will receive 30%.



Each GSO will have their MAE value subtracted from their requested funding value to determine their after-minimum request value (AMR). The ratio of the sum of all AMR values to the total value of the standard pool will be taken and rounded down to the nearest hundredths place. This ratio is the standard pool ratio (SPR.)

If the SPR is 1 or greater, each GSO will be assigned an SAE equal to their AMR, and the difference between the value of the standard pool and the sum of all AMR values will revert to the GSA to be allocated to other parts of the budget.

If the SPR is less 1, then each GSO's SAE will be calculated by multiplying their AMR by the SPR and rounding up to the nearest whole number.

### 5.3.3 Determination of Advanced Annual Entitlements (AAE)

To perform this calculation the GSA requires 1) all previous information and 2) documentation of which GSOs hold advanced status.

Each GSO will be assigned an after-standard request value (ASR.) The ASR of all GSOs that do not have advanced status will be set to 0. To calculate the ASR value for GSOs with advanced status, the GSA will subtract their SAE from their AMR value. The ratio of the sum of all ASR values to the total value of the advanced pool will be taken and rounded down to the nearest hundredths place. This ratio is the advanced pool ratio (APR.)

If the APR is 1 or greater, each GSO will be assigned a AAE equal to their ASR, and the difference between the value of the advanced pool and the sum of all ASR values will revert to the GSA to be allocated to other parts of the budget.

If the APR is less 1, then each GSO's AAE will be calculated by multiplying their AMR by the SPR and rounding up to the nearest whole number.

### 5.3.4 Determination of Annual Entitlements and Total Entitlements

To perform this calculation the GSA requires 1) all previous information and 2) records of the previous year's records of GSO savings and GSO deficit requests.

The annual entitlement of GSOs represent their share of the external allocations fund for the year. The annual entitlement for each GSO is calculated by adding together that GSO's MAE, SAE, and AAE.

The total entitlement of GSOs represent the total amount that they can spend for the year based both on their share of the external allocations fund and on any deficit requests or savings request that have been approved in preceding years. Note that no GSO can have both a savings request and a deficit request in a single year, so there will only be one relevant document. The total entitlement for a GSO with a council approved savings request will be equal to the annual entitlement of that GSO plus the value of the savings request. The total entitlement for a GSO with an approved deficit request will be equal to the annual entitlement of that GSO minus the value of the deficit request. The total entitlement of GSOs that do not hold current savings or deficit requests will be equal to their annual entitlements.

## 5.4 STANDARD AND ADVANCED STATUS DETERMINATIONS

### 5.4.1 Advanced Status Determination Process and Goals of Process

This section details the process the GSA will use to assign GSOs advanced status. Whether or not a GSO is assigned advanced status is significant for the calculation of that GSO's total entitlement in years when the GSA's advanced pool is funded. The intention of advanced status is to reward GSOs who regularly fulfill their duties and to discourage behavior that is detrimental to the overall working of the GSA's funding process. Below, all criteria relevant to the determination of advanced status are listed and briefly explained. A GSO is assigned advanced status if and only if a positive answer can be given to at least three of the following questions.

1. Is the GSO an academic GSO? 2. Has the GSO publicized at least three events to the GSA Events List or another venue aimed at a wide multi-departmental audience in the last academic year and has the GSO notified the treasurer of the GSA of such prior to the conclusion of the last academic year? 3. Has the GSO missed fewer than three GSA council meetings in the last academic year? 4. Has the GSO spent at least 90% of its annual entitlement in the last academic year? 5. Has a member of the GSO volunteered to assist with a GSA-run event or committee and has the GSO notified the treasurer of the GSA of such prior to the conclusion of the last academic year?

This system is intended to meet two goals. The first goal is to ensure that any GSO that is regularly fulfilling its duties will be assigned advanced status without needing to do anything extra. For instance, an academic GSO that is regularly attending GSA council meetings and spending the money that it requests and receives as an entitlement will receive advanced status without any further requirement. Alternatively, a non-academic GSO that is advertising to a broader community than a single department (as is required), regularly attending GSA council meetings, and spending the money that it requests and receives as an entitlement will receive advanced status without any further requirement.

The second goal is to provide GSOs that fall short on some duties additional ways that they can achieve advanced status. For instance, an academic GSO that misses too many GSA council meetings or requests and is funded for an entitlement that they are not able to spend will still be able to achieve advanced status for the next academic year if they make a point of publicizing more of their events to a larger campus audience or provide a volunteer to contribute to a GSA event.

### 5.4.2 GSA Recordkeeping and Reporting

It is the responsibility of the EC to maintain organized and accurate records of whether GSOs meet criteria 1, 3 and 4. GSOs who meet criteria 2 or 5 are responsible for reporting this to the GSA. For criteria 2, GSOs should provide a listing of at least events advertised and the venues in which they were advertised. For criteria 5, GSOs should report the name of the event or committee for which they contributed a volunteer and the name of the volunteer. Once GSOs have reported this information, it is the responsibility of the EC to maintain a record that the information has been reported.

It is the responsibility of the EC to publish and make accessible to GSOs its record of which GSOs have received advanced status and which criteria the GSA believes that they have met and failed to meet for the

previous year at the opening of the GSA's annual funding and recognition application. It is essential that GSOs have this opportunity to challenge the GSA's judgments.

### 5.4.3 Disputations of Advanced Status

It is the responsibility of any GSO that intends to challenge the GSA's judgement of whether they have advanced status to do so prior to the annual funding cycle deadline for which the status applies and the responsibility of the EC to publish sufficient information to allow them to do so (see 5.4.2).

Any GSO that challenges the GSA's judgement and claims to have advanced status will be considered to have advanced status for the funding cycle unless the GSA is able to verify that its claims are incorrect prior to the funding cycle deadline. If it is determined later that the GSO did not meet the criteria for advanced status, the value of their AAE (see section 5.3.3) will be deducted from their total entitlement and the GSO will be notified of this deduction. If the GSO has already spent a sufficient amount of its money that the deduction of the AAE would make their remaining entitlement negative, then the negative amount will be carried forward to the next year as a deficit. Money deducted from GSOs based on these procedures will revert back to the GSA's general budget.

For the purposes of resolving a dispute about criteria 3, it will be the responsibility of the GSA to produce records that verify that the GSO missed at least three council dates. For the purposes of resolving a dispute about criteria 4, it will be the responsibility of the GSA to provide the values of that GSO's previous year's annual entitlement and actual spending value to show that it is below 90%. For the purposes of resolving a dispute about 2 or 5, it will be the responsibility of the GSO making the dispute to provide email records showing that the GSA was informed in the previous academic year that the GSO met the relevant criteria.

## 6 Reversions

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### 6.1 REVERSION OF ENTITLEMENTS

In general, all funding which is allocated to a GSO as an entitlement in a given fiscal year, but which is not spent by the final day of the Spring semester for that fiscal year, shall revert back to the GSA. The only exception to this policy is defined in 6.2.

### 6.2 YEAR TO YEAR SAVINGS

If a GSO ends the academic year with entitlement funds unspent they can request that the unspent money be saved and added onto their entitlement in future years. Allowing a GSO to hold on to unspent funds from year to year is equivalent to letting that GSO hold money back from being distributed among all other registered GSOs in future academic years. In addition, allowing a GSO to hold on to unspent funds increases the work on the GSA treasurer. For those reason, for a GSO to be allowed to carry unspent

money forward, the following conditions must be met.

- The unspent portion of the entitlement is greater than \$200 but no more than \$1500
- The GSO requesting savings submits a GSO Savings Request Form prior to an annually scheduled council meeting designated for the approval of GSO Savings Requests
- The GSO requesting savings presents their motivation for the savings request before the GSA Council during that meeting
- The GSA Council votes to approve the GSO savings request during that meeting

GSO savings requests are approved on a year to year basis unless otherwise stipulated by the GSA Council. Therefore, a decision to allow a GSO to save a portion of money one year will not guarantee that GSO the right to save the same portion of money in future years.

For the purposes of the determination of advanced status (see section 4.4), GSO savings is considered unspent money.

## 7 TAXES

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The payment of any applicable federal, state, or local taxes on funds received from the GSA is the sole responsibility of the recipient of those funds.

For tax purposes the GSA may require the social security number of any individual, or the federal tax identification number of any corporate entity, which is funded by the GSA. Presentation of the above-mentioned official identification numbers (when applicable) shall be required prior to funding allocation.

## 8 ADOPTION AND AMENDMENT PROCEDURES

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This document was initially passed on April 8, 2018 as a standing policy of the EC. As a standing policy of the EC, this document would remain in force in perpetuity unless abolished by a majority vote of the EC or a decision by the GSA Council. As of April 8, 2018 this document was also passed as a formal resolution of the GSA Council. As a formal decision of the GSA Council, by Article 2. Section B. Subsection 2. of the GSA constitution, this document may now only be abolished or amended by a substantive vote of the GSA Council.

As per article IV. Section B. Subsection 9 of the GSA constitution, changes to this document in general shall not take effect until the beginning of the semester after which the changes are passed. Changes specifically pertaining to speaker honoraria and travel expenses shall not take effect until the academic

year after which the changes are passed.

In the exceptional circumstance that a change in Federal, State, Local law or Rutgers Policy is made and this policy is found to be in violation of that law or policy, a vote of the EC is sufficient to modify the policy so as to eliminate the violation and the change to policy will be made effective immediately.

## 9 LEXICON

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Certain terms used in these policies are defined as follows:

- ‘The GSA’ refers to the Graduate Student Association of Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey–New Brunswick.
- ‘The EC’ refers to the Executive Committee of the Graduate Student Association of Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey–New Brunswick.
- ‘Graduate students’ refers to constituents of the GSA, or all those persons who contribute to the GSA as part of their University-collected student activity fee.
- ‘GSO’ refers to any organization of graduate students which is recognized by the GSA Council