

Trinity Western University Graduate Student Association (GSA) Bylaws

Approved by Council: February 2026
Effective Date: March 2026

The following Bylaws govern the Trinity Western University Graduate Student Association (GSA), a student-led body operating under the authority of the TWU Board of Governors, through the TWU President and Vice President of Student Life. These Bylaws are binding upon the GSA Council and the general graduate student membership.

The mission of the GSA is to represent, serve and empower graduate students at Trinity Western University, while promoting a mature and active commitment to Jesus Christ among its members.

To realize its mission, the GSA will:

1. Advocate for graduate student needs and concerns to the university administration.
2. Initiate and implement a network of communication by which student concerns and interests are positively represented to the various sectors of the University.
3. Facilitate academic, spiritual and social activities in order to emphasize a greater sense of community.
4. Allocate student fees transparently and responsibly.
5. Encourage and support spiritual and intellectual pursuits on and off campus that are consistent with the mission.

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Bylaw 1: DEFINITIONS & INTERPRETATION

Section 1.1 – Definitions

In the Bylaws, the terms listed below shall have the following meanings. Similarly, the terms have the same meaning in the GSA Policies & Procedures Manual.

1.1.1 “Academic Year” means the period commencing the beginning of September in any given calendar year, and concluding at end of August of the following calendar year;

1.1.2 “Advisor” means the TWU Vice President of Student Life or their delegate;

1.1.3 “Bad Standing” refers to a member that has lost some of their membership rights as explained in Bylaw 2.3;

1.1.4 “Bylaws” means the bylaws of GSA;

1.1.5 “Board of Governors” means the Trinity Western University Board of Governors;

1.1.6 “By-Election” means any election in respect of a vacancy for one or more Council positions held in accordance with the Bylaws;

1.1.7 “Candidate” means a person who, after the nomination period has closed, is deemed eligible to run for a Council position;

1.1.8 “Chief Electoral Officer” means the Council member (usually the Executive VP) who is responsible for the fair and impartial administration of the annual GSA election process as set out in Policy 3;

1.1.9 “Clubs” refers to any voluntary, member-driven organization that is dedicated to a particular interest or activity which aligns with GSA’s mission and Bylaws;

1.1.10 “Code of Conduct” means the TWU Student Code of Conduct accountability policy and process;

1.1.11 “Constitution” refers to the body of Articles as stated in the Constitution document of the GSA;

1.1.12 “Conflict of interest” means situations where a student’s private interests (financial, personal or relational) could improperly influence or bias their official duties, potentially compromising integrity and decision-making for the GSA. In any situation where a conflict of interest concern exists, the Advisor must be involved in the resolution;

1.1.13 “Council” means the governing body of the GSA and at minimum includes a President, Executive Vice President and Vice President of Finance;

- 1.1.14 “Election” means the election of Officers for Council;
- 1.1.15 “Fall Semester” means the period from September to December of each calendar year;
- 1.1.16 “General Meeting” means the Annual General Meeting and any Special General Meeting;
- 1.1.17 “GSA” means the Graduate Student Association of Trinity Western University;
- 1.1.18 “Member” means a member of GSA who meets the criteria set out in Bylaws: Section 2.1 and who is not currently under suspension or probation from the University;
- 1.1.19 “Officer” means a member of the Council and any other member voted into the Council as a representative;
- 1.1.20 “Ordinary Resolution” refers to the reinstatement of a member’s standing and:
- a. a resolution passed at a General Meeting by a majority of the votes cast;
 - b. a resolution consented to in writing, by at least 2/3 of the members; and
 - c. a resolution passed by Referendum by a simple majority of the votes cast, in accordance with the Bylaws;
- 1.1.21 “Parliamentary Procedure” means the set of rules and customs for orderly, fair meetings, ensuring all voices are heard, majority rule is respected, minority rights are protected and decisions are made efficiently through structured debate, motions and voting; for this purpose Robert’s Rules of Order is the manual used to determine protocol;
- 1.1.22 “Policies” means the policies of GSA, amended from time to time, together with any new, amended or replacement policies; it also refers to policies of the University to which GSA must follow;
- 1.1.23 “Proposal” means a request or suggestion by a member for action they wish the Council to consider;
- 1.1.24 “Referendum” means the process where members are to vote on a question relating to the business or affairs of GSA that has been referred to them for a direct decision;
- 1.1.25 “Research and Academic Support” means the governing sub-committee body of TWU Senate that oversees academic freedom, monitors research policies and advises Senate on research matters ensuring research aligns with University strategy and ethical standards;
- 1.1.26 “Senate” means TWU’s highest academic governing academic body, responsible for overseeing academic policy, curriculum, degree requirements, program establishment and academic standards;
- 1.1.27 “Special Resolution” refers to the process by which a member is placed in bad standing and:
- a. a resolution passed at a General Meeting by at least 3/4 of the votes cast by the members;

- b. a resolution consented to in writing by all of the members; and
- c. a resolution passed by Referendum by at least 3/4 of the votes cast, in accordance with the Bylaws;

1.1.28 “Spring Semester” means the period from January to April of each calendar year;

1.1.29 “Student” means a graduate student enrolled at TWU;

1.1.30 “Student leader” means a currently enrolled TWU student that has accepted an offer to serve in an official student leadership role during the academic year.

1.1.31 “Summer Semester” means the period from May to August of each calendar year;

1.1.32 “TWU” means Trinity Western University;

1.1.33 “Trinity Western University” means the University whose main campus is currently located at 22500 University Drive, Langley, BC.

1.2 - Interpretation

As in Article VIII: Limitations of the GSA Constitution, the definitions in Bylaw 1.1 that may need clarity will be determined by request to the current GSA President, Advisor and VP of Student Life. Their interpretation will be final.

Bylaw 2: MEMBERSHIP

The GSA shall consist of Council members, officers and members.

Section 2.1 - Membership Eligibility

1. Membership eligibility shall include:
 - a. All graduate students enrolled in a minimum of one course (credit-bearing or not).
 - b. Students who have paid all applicable GSA fees.

Section 2.2 - Membership Rights

All eligible Members may:

1. Vote in elections, referendums, and general meetings.
2. Run for office as outlined in Bylaw 4.
3. Participate in GSA programs.
4. Access Council minutes and governing documents.
5. Serve on committees.

6. Any member of the GSA may propose changes in Bylaws by submitting them in writing to the GSA Council. The proposed changes, to be effective, must be approved by GSA and the Advisor and/or their designate respectively, posted for a period of one (1) week or more and then ratified by a majority vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the GSA members' voting.
7. A member may be asked to participate in a Council meeting if invited by the Council to do so.
8. A member may submit a proposal that the Council considers and take subsequent action.

Section 2.3 – Bad Standing

1. A member may be placed in bad standing by a Special Resolution, provided that:
 - a. notice of the Special Resolution includes a brief statement of reasons for it;
 - b. the Council has sent written notice of the Special Resolution to the member, along with the statement of reasons; and
 - c. the chairperson of the General Meeting provides the member with an opportunity to make statements to the members present before the Special Resolution is put to a vote.
2. A member in bad standing shall be ineligible to hold or be nominated for elected office of the GSA.
3. A person who has been placed in bad standing may be re-admitted as a member of the GSA or restored to good standing, as the case may be, by an Ordinary Resolution.
4. A person placed in Bad Standing may request an appeal only if the following conditions exist:
 - a. New information has become available after the vote, and/or
 - b. Evidence is provided proving there was a mistake in the initial process.

In this situation, an appeal may be made to the GSA President who will consult with the VP of Student Life and Advisor to consider if the additional information warrants a redo of the initial vote. The majority decision of a second vote will then be final.

Bylaw 3: GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The Council shall include at minimum a President, Executive Vice President and Vice President of Finance, all of which can be considered TWU student leader roles. All of these roles are elected and a more detailed list of responsibilities can be found in the GSA Policies & Procedures manual.

Section 3.1 - President

The President is the Chief Executive Officer representing and overseeing all aspects of the GSA.

Section 3.2 - Executive Vice President

The Executive Vice President is the chief parliamentarian for the GSA and chairs GSA meetings. In the event the President is unable to complete their term of service, the Executive Vice President shall assume that role.

Section 3.3 - Vice President of Finance

The Vice President of Finance is the Council member who is responsible for overseeing and maintaining the financial records of the GSA, by working in close contact with the Finance department of the University.

Section 3.4 - Compensation

The guidelines for compensation as listed in the Policies & Procedures Manual (Section 5.4) can only be revised after approval by the Advisor and VP of Student Life.

Bylaw 4: ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND LIMITATIONS

Section 4.1 – Eligibility for GSA Council

1. Be enrolled in at least one graduate course at TWU and maintain a minimum cumulative 2.75 GPA.
2. Be able to serve a full executive term.
3. Sign and uphold the TWU Code of Conduct.
4. Support the mission and objectives of GSA.
5. At a minimum, the President must be a professing and practicing Christian and affirm the TWU Statement of Faith.

Section 4.2 – Conflict of Interest

1. Members must disclose potential conflicts of interest.
2. Members may not vote on personal or financial matters where conflict of interest exists.

Section 4.3 – Council Authority Limitation

No Council member may unilaterally bind GSA to financial or legal obligations without majority Council approval. Similarly, no Council member may bind GSA to other commitments or obligations without majority Council approval.

Section 4.4 – Provisional Leadership Planning

In the event that one or more Council members are unable to perform their duties as stated in the Bylaws, the Advisor works with the existing Council to determine suitable interim assistance.

Section 4.5 – Resignation/Removal/Replacement

If the President resigns or is removed, the Executive Vice President shall assume the role until a by-election is held (unless within 60 days of the President’s term in office, in which case Executive Vice President shall complete the term).

Vacancies in other roles will be filled via by-election or temporary appointment as deemed appropriate by the existing Council with input from the Advisor.

Bylaw 5: FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

GSA records shall be subject to an annual audit in partnership with TWU’s Finance department and external auditors. Records shall be kept in accordance with all TWU financial controls.

The GSA annual budget must also be posted to the GSA website for accountability to the members regarding management of funds.

Bylaw 6: STUDENT ADVOCACY AND REPRESENTATION

Section 6.1 – Purpose

GSA shall advocate for current graduate student interests in the context of University administration and other stakeholders.

While partnerships or collaborations with other areas (similar but not limited to undergraduate students, prospective graduate students, and alumni) is possible, they do not normally fall within the scope of GSA’s advocacy.

Section 6.2 – Forums and Feedback

To better understand student needs, GSA may use the following methods:

1. Conduct surveys and polls as needed.
2. Collect and analyze feedback.

Section 6.3 – Formal Representation/Meetings

1. The President must attend Senate and meetings of the Research and Academic Support (RAS) committee.
2. The Executive VP must attend Graduate Academic Council (GAC) meetings.
3. The VP Finance must coordinate and facilitate meetings with stakeholders to ensure financial success of the GSA.
4. At minimum the President shall meet with the Advisor monthly, and where possible the Council with the Advisor monthly.

Bylaw 7: AMENDMENTS

Bylaws must be reviewed at a minimum of every two (2) years and may be amended by using the following procedures in the sequence listed:

1. Any member may propose an amendment.
2. Council reviews the proposal and approves or modifies.
3. The Advisor and VP of Student Life consider the amendment and must give their approval.
4. A vote is then conducted for the GSA members that occurs after a minimum of one-week advance notice of proposed amendment.
5. Any proposed amendment that receives a minimum two-thirds (2/3) approval by the members is then considered an official amendment to the Bylaws.

Bylaw 8: REFERENDUM

A referendum is the process by which a business matter or concern is addressed, and follows these steps in the order listed below:

1. Any member may propose;
2. Council considers the proposal and decides if it should be put to a vote;
3. If a proposal proceeds to a vote, the vote must pass by a two-thirds (2/3) majority to be enacted;
4. Once a vote is approved, Council takes action that the referendum call for.

CERTIFICATION

These bylaws were reviewed, amended, and adopted by the GSA Council as of February 2026.

President, GSA

Executive Vice President, GSA

Vice President of Finance, GSA

Student Life Advisor, TWU

APPROVALS

VP Student Life, TWU

President, TWU