

Trinity Western University Graduate Student Association (GSA) Policies & Procedures

Approved by Council: February 2026

Effective Date: March 2026

The following Policies & Procedures governs the Trinity Western University Graduate Student Association (GSA), a student-led body operating under the authority of the TWU Board of Governors, TWU President and Vice President of Student Life.

Policy 1: INTERPRETATION & AUTHORITY

1. The GSA Policies & Procedures Manual may be amended by the GSA Council, with motions for suspension requiring a two-thirds (2/3) resolution of the GSA members.
2. The Policies & Procedures Manual shall be interpreted by the GSA Council.
3. The Policies & Procedures Manual shall be circulated for information to GSA Council whenever changes are made.

Policy 2: GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Section 2.1 –Council

The Council shall include at minimum a President, Executive Vice President and Vice President of Finance.

Section 2.1.1 – President

1. Serve as the Chief Executive Officer of the GSA.
2. Represent graduate students to TWU administration.
3. Meet with the university's Student Life Advisor monthly.
4. Coordinate and chair regular Council meetings.
5. Supervise Council members and set vision.
6. Build and maintain relationships with GSA members and other key contacts of the University.
7. Serve a minimum of two-four (2-4) hours every 2-week period.
8. Manage the website, calendar, and newsletter.
9. Train the incoming President during the Spring semester.
10. Must be a professing and practicing Christian and affirm TWU Statement of Faith.

Section 2.1.2 - Executive Vice President

1. Assist the President and assume all the duties of the President if for any reason the President is unable to fulfill the duties of his/her office.
2. Have an in-depth knowledge of the GSA's Constitution, Bylaws and Policies & Procedures Manual.
3. Coordinate and chair GSA meetings.
4. Be knowledgeable of Parliamentary Procedure and Robert's Rules of Order.
5. Coordinate and chair GSA Council meetings when President is unable.

6. Maintain the effective and efficient discussion of items on agenda.
7. Maintain and update the GSA Policies & Procedures manual.
8. Co-ordinate and chair the Bylaw Review Committee.
9. Serve a minimum of two-four (2-4) hours every 2-week period.
10. In the spring semester, undertake the training of and serve as an assistant to the newly elected Executive Vice President until the completion of the semester.
11. Record and maintain minutes for all Council and GSA meetings, ensuring accurate and accessible documentation.
12. Oversee all GSA elections, including ballot preparation, candidate communication, and ensuring compliance with bylaws. Serve as Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) unless a candidate, in which case Council appoints an alternate.
13. The Executive Vice President shall serve as CEO unless they are a candidate, in which case the Council will appoint an alternate CEO.

Section 2.1.3 - Vice President of Finance

1. Be responsible for ensuring that all financial procedures are followed.
2. Be responsible for managing all GSA finances and office.
3. Prepare and propose the annual GSA budget for approval by the GSA.
4. Instruct all Council members in spending and reimbursement policies of the GSA as these policies apply to them.
5. Monitor all expenditures of the GSA and ensure that all expenditures are in compliance with University regulations and GSA financial policy.
6. Notify the Council of any apparent irregularities or variances from budgetary procedures and financial policies. Keep an orderly account of all receipts and expenditures of the GSA.
7. Maintain a strong relationship with the University Finance department responsible for the accounting of the GSA.
8. Serve a minimum of two-four (2-4) hours every 2-week period.
9. In the spring semester, undertake the training of and serve as an assistant to the newly elected Vice President for Finance until the completion of the semester.

Policy 3: ELECTIONS

Section 3.1 – Chief Electoral Officer (CEO)

The Executive Vice President shall serve as CEO unless they are a candidate, in which case the Council will appoint an alternate CEO.

Section 3.2 – Election Timeline

The Chief Electoral Officer shall be responsible to conduct the following activities as part of the annual GSA Elections:

- Pre-Election Communication (Awareness-raising activities)
- Week 1: Pre-Screening & Nominations (Election launch, remains open 10 days)
- Week 1.5: Mandatory Pre-Screening (7 days)
- Week 2: Candidacy Declaration
- Week 3: Campaigning & Debates
- Week 4: Voting (7-day period from Monday–Sunday)
- Week 5: Announcement of Results
 - a. The current executive team must fulfill their roles until the end of May to assist with financial end-of-year requests and train the new team into their roles.

Section 3.3 – Campaign Regulations

The Chief Electoral Officer shall be responsible to ensure the following campaign regulations as part of the annual GSA Elections:

1. Candidates will be required to review an Eligibility Self-Check requirements list before submitting their nomination, which will be provided by the Executive Vice President.
2. Maximum campaign budget: \$100 or to be determined at Election Info Session
3. No endorsements by TWU faculty, staff, GSA-affiliated entities, or clubs.

Section 3.4 – Voting

All Executive positions are elected by eligible TWU graduate students, and voting shall take place through a medium decided by the CEO.

Policy 4: REMOVAL FROM COUNCIL

Section 4.1 – Definition

A Council member can be removed or impeached if any of the following scenarios occurs:

1. Gross misconduct;
2. Breach of fiduciary duty;
3. Repeated unexcused absences (3 or more);
4. Ethical or legal violations.

Section 4.2 – Removal or impeachment process

The removal or impeachment procedure will require the following steps:

1. Submission of a written complaint signed by two current Council members;
2. Confidential investigation by the Advisor, VP of Student Life and where necessary the President.

Policy 5: FINANCES

Section 5.1 – Budget Oversight

The VP of Finance is responsible for drafting and presenting the annual budget. All budgetary decisions must be approved by a majority of voting Council members.

Section 5.2 – Revenue

1. GSA's revenue source will normally be TWU graduate student fees.
2. Other sources of revenue will require approval by the TWU Finance Dept for proper processing and accounting procedures.

Section 5.3 – Expenditures

1. Reimbursements require prior approval and documentation.
2. Original receipts (and General Ledger codes if needed) must accompany reimbursement requests.

Section 5.4 – Compensation (note Bylaw 3: Section 3.4)

1. Council and leadership grants are provided annually as recognition of student service and leadership within the GSA.
2. Amounts are determined based on scope of responsibility, commitment required and overall expectations of each role.
3. The number of positions and specific role titles may vary from year to year based on campus needs.
4. Leadership grants for Council members shall be paid via cheque in two equal installments after the official TWU add/drop date of each Fall and Spring semester and no later than:
 - September 30
 - January 31
5. Current annual grant amounts are as follows:
 - President: \$4,800
 - Executive VP & VP Finance: \$4,300

- Student Leaders – Langley Campus: 7 positions at \$2,300 each
 - Student Leaders – Richmond Campus: 10 positions, consisting of:
 - 4 Coordinators at \$2,300 each
 - 6 Facilitators at \$1,500 each
6. Student leadership grants are deposited directly into recipients' student accounts whereas the President, Executive VP, and VP of Finance will receive direct cheques through the Student Life office.

Section 5.5 – Capital Project Cap

1. Annual cap: \$35,000. Council must approve based on student impact.
2. GSA Council team may not exceed this amount unless special approval has been granted by the Advisor and the TWU Associate Vice President of Finance.

Section 5.6 – Campus Budget Transfers

1. Langley and Richmond programming costs and student leader grants must be allocated based on Admissions enrolment data and campus-specific programming, based on official enrolment head-count.
2. Langley and Richmond student leader grants are offered equitably and based on scope of responsibility, commitment required and overall expectation for the goals of each role.
3. The number of roles offered at each campus location reflect the current needs (generally based on enrolment figures, but also considering other campus realities and opportunities), while also considering other available supports related to student leader experiences.

Section 5.7 – Student Leader Selection Process

1. Non-council positions for Langley and Richmond campus locations are offered each year via the Student Life application, interview and selection process managed by Student Life staff.
2. For Langley campus positions, the Associate Director of Graduate Student Life works with the Director of Graduate Student Life to ensure selection of best qualified candidates.
3. For Richmond campus positions, the Associate Director of Student Life (Richmond) works with the Director of Graduate Student Life to ensure selection of best qualified candidates.
4. GSA Council may encourage qualified students to apply, as well as make recommendations of students to the Student Life staff conducting the selection process.

Section 5.8 – GSA Fees

1. General Assessment - A student fee shall be charged by TWU upon enrolment in any eligible graduate studies courses.

2. General Rate - A graduate student fee will be charged along with tuition for any graduate course enrolments. For current rates, refer to the Tuition and Fees section of the TWU website.
3. Allocation and Use - While GSA fees collected belong to TWU, the Council maintains responsibility and control over the allocation and use of revenue from fees, with supervision by the Advisor and Finance department. Unspent funds carry over into the following year's account under the same supervision.
4. Changes - Recommendations for changes to GSA fees shall be submitted to Student Life by November 1 of a given year for consideration, approval and implementation for the following academic year. Students must be publicly notified of any changes to fees at least 6 weeks prior to the implementation of changes.

Section 5.9 – Emergency Fund

1. Purpose of the Fund - The GSA Emergency Fund exists to provide short-term, compassionate financial assistance to graduate students experiencing unforeseen, urgent financial hardship that significantly impacts their ability to study, live, or remain in a stable situation. The Fund reflects the GSA's commitment to community care, Christian hospitality, and responsible stewardship of student fees.
2. Scope of Support - The Emergency Fund may support expenses arising directly from unexpected hardship. Eligible categories include but are not limited to:
 - Housing-related crises:
 - Sudden displacement;
 - Loss of belongings from emergency events;
 - Emergency relocation or temporary housing;
 - Unexpected increases in housing expenses;
 - Funding is not intended to support on-campus housing challenges.
 - Medical and health emergencies:
 - Urgent out-of-pocket medical costs not covered by MSP or extended health;
 - Emergency dental procedures;
 - Mental-health related crises requiring immediate support.
 - Urgent travel due to crisis:
 - Family medical emergencies;
 - Bereavement travel.
 - Emergency issues and displacement:
 - Ties to countries experiencing war, unrest, or natural disaster;
 - Refugee or newcomer emergencies.
 - Unexpected loss of income or essential resources:

- Sudden job loss;
- Critical funding interruptions for students dependent on assistance or scholarships.

Notes:

- The Fund is intended to directly benefit eligible student applicants, and not dependents, friends or relatives.
- The Fund does not cover tuition, fees, fines, elective travel, or ongoing/long-term financial needs.
- All funding is subject to available funds within the annual GSA budget.
- The maximum individual funding per semester shall be up to \$500, unless otherwise adjusted by the GSA Executive and Finance Committee based on budget capacity.

3. Eligibility Criteria - To be eligible, applicants must:

- Be currently enrolled in a graduate program and in good standing at Trinity Western University (Langley or Richmond);
- Reside in Canada at the time of application;
- Be experiencing a recent and unforeseen financial hardship that can be documented;
- Demonstrate that the hardship is:
 - unexpected,
 - temporary in nature, and
 - materially impacting their ability to continue their studies or maintain basic stability.

4. Required Documentation - Applicants must submit one combined PDF file containing the following:

- Proof of current TWU course enrolment;
- Written explanation of the financial hardship, including:
 - origin of the emergency;
 - amount requested;
 - household income context;
 - how one-time funding will address the situation;
 - applicant's plan moving forward.
- Expense documentation appropriate to the category of need:
 - *Housing*: lease copies, moving receipts, or emergency housing invoices;
 - *Medical*: receipts, invoices, emergency care documentation;
 - *Travel*: flight or transportation estimates or receipts;
 - *Displacement or international crisis*: passport copy, immigration documents, or context-specific verification.

5. Application Process

- Applicants must complete the GSA Emergency Fund Application [Form](#) online.
- All required documents must be uploaded as one PDF.
- Hard copies may be requested by the adjudication panel where clarification is needed.
- Applicants may be contacted for follow-up questions to verify details.

6. Adjudication and Decision-Making

- Applications will be reviewed by a panel consisting of:
 - the GSA Executive and
 - the Student Life Advisor.
- The adjudication panel will assess:
 - eligibility,
 - severity and urgency of hardship,
 - clarity of documentation,
 - availability of funds.
- Decisions will be communicated within four (4) weeks of receiving a complete application, with consideration for emergency situations requiring a quicker response.
- All decisions of the panel are final. No appeal process is offered due to the emergency nature of the fund.
- GSA reserves the right to decline applications that do not meet criteria or lack proper documentation.

7. Fund Disbursement & Safeguards

- Funding requests will be submitted using the TWU Disbursement Form, with approved funding issued via cheque after being processed according to TWU Finance protocols.
- Funds will be paid directly to the student.
- To prevent misuse, falsification of documents may result in:
 - repayment of funds;
 - disciplinary referral to TWU Graduate Studies;
 - ineligibility for future GSA emergency funding.
- Annual budget caps, internal audits, and year-end reporting as it relates to emergency funding will be conducted to ensure transparency, accountability, and responsible stewardship.

8. Confidentiality

The GSA will maintain confidentiality and handle all applications with discretion. Information will only be shared with the adjudication panel and TWU Finance where required.

9. Relationship to Other Supports

Students must apply for other relevant supports first if they are eligible (e.g. TWU emergency bursaries, insurance coverage). The Emergency Fund is intended as a last-resort, emergency stop-gap, not a replacement for institutional financial support or long-term aid.

Policy 6: STUDENT LEADERSHIP PARTICIPATION

GSA Council is required to participate in and support the following Student Leader and graduate student activities throughout the Fall and Spring semesters:

1. Student Leader Orientation Week (SLOW) – last Sunday through Thursday of each August; (mandatory)
2. Winter Leadership Conference – early January each year with exact date TBA; (mandatory)
3. GSA Office – collaborate and support events involving the GSA Office in Kuhn Centre during each semester; (mandatory)
4. Graduate student daytrips and retreats – various dates each semester; (encouraged & optional)
5. Student Leader monthly team meetings – various dates each semester; (encouraged & optional)
6. Campus seasonal large events (Langley & Richmond campus locations) featuring GSA awareness & promotions– various dates each semester; (encouraged & optional)

Policy 7: DEPARTMENTAL MEETINGS

Section 7.1 – Onboarding & Training

In addition to the regular onboarding and orientation that all student leaders receive, the GSA Council will meet with the following TWU department areas as part of their preparation and coaching as new Council members:

1. Advisory – meet with the TWU Advisor regularly throughout the term of service for training and updates;

2. Risk Management – meet with the Associate Director, Insurance & Risk Management early Fall to be aware of risk, liability and insurance considerations related to GSA activities;
3. Student Code of Conduct – meet with the Director of Residence Life & Student Code of Conduct early Fall to be aware of TWU’s guiding policy and process around student conduct cases;
4. Financial Accountability – meet semesterly with the Associate Vice President of Finance to maintain financial accountability and transparency related to GSA budgeting.

APPENDIX

Important Dates

Summer

- Executive handover transition meetings (as needed)

Fall

- SLOW: Last week of August

Spring

- Student Leadership Winter Conference (early January)
- Annual Elections
 - Pre-Election Communication: Last week of January
 - Pre-Screening & Nominations: Third week of February
 - Mandatory Pre-Screening: First week of March
 - Candidacy Declaration: Second week of March
 - Campaigning & Debates: Third week of March
 - Voting: Last week of March
 - Announcement of Results: First week of April
 - Reimbursements Due: Last day of class
- Transition Documents Due: Last day of class
- Transition Documents Handover: Last day of April