



UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION INC.

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SPECIAL INTEREST AND INTERNATIONAL CLUBS RECOGNITION POLICY GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

The Graduate Student Association encourages, supports and sponsors the formation, growth and activities of clubs that benefit the graduate student community with services **not already being provided by any other GSA club**. This allows groups of students who share common interests to carry out activities as organized bodies for educational or recreational purposes. The Graduate Student Association has the authority and responsibility to recognize special interest and international clubs, and to ensure that recognized clubs conform to the policies, which it endorses, and to University rules and regulations.

Recognized campus clubs are urged to address the overall spirit of the principles of non-discrimination (e.g. age, race, sex, religion, disability, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, etc.) by encouraging broad participation in their activities and programs. Furthermore, student clubs are encouraged to plan their activities in functional and accessible facilities providing reasonable services and accommodations when meeting on or off campus. All club events MUST be held in public places. Under no circumstances can events be held in a private residence.

The GSA reserves the right to deny recognition to new clubs, and to review, sanction or revoke existing ones when it deems it appropriate.

RECOGNITION OF CLUBS

Recognition implies that the club has been incorporated into the Graduate Student Association. It allows the clubs to use University facilities, services, rental equipment, advisory services, publicity outlets, and to seek funding from the GSA for its activities.

Special interest and international clubs must be recognized by the GSA Board of Directors every year either during the Early Recognition process (the deadline of which is **March** of the previous academic year), or **by the December Board of Directors Meeting**.

All newly recognized clubs will receive \$400 for their first year and can then apply for a full budget the following year, upon successful review by the GSA Vice President. Special Interest club budgets are

awarded per semester (half for Fall and half for Spring). International club budgets are awarded per year (full amount in the Fall).

REQUIREMENTS FOR RECOGNITION OF STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

For the purposes of this document, a **graduate student** is a student who pays or would pay the Graduate Mandatory Student Activity Fee (i.e. not Medical, Dental, Law, Graduate Management Association, School of Pharmacy Student Association, etc.).

In order for a student club to qualify for recognition:

1. Its membership must be open to any member of the graduate student body of the University at Buffalo who chooses to belong (see Membership section).
2. It must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the GSA Board of Directors that its purposes are of cultural, social, or educational nature and that its overall purpose will be of general benefit to the university's graduate student community. Religious clubs will not be funded unless the goal of the club is purely academic. Religious clubs will only be recognized and funded if their purposes are strictly cultural, social, or educational and do not involve religious worship, proselytization, or other religious activities, in accordance with the GSA's status as a 501(c)(3) organization.
3. It must show that its purposes materially differ from any other GSA club already established on this University.
4. It may not have an affiliation with any third-party organization whose rules may supersede those of the Graduate Student Association, or who charge dues for membership.
5. It must comply with the [GSA Template Club Rules and Polices](#).
6. It shall hold regularly scheduled meetings at least once a month, and it shall furnish minutes of all its proceedings, copies of which will be sent to the GSA office to be kept on file.
7. All special interest and international clubs must send a representative to GSA Board of Directors meetings; no person can represent more than one club at Board of Directors meetings.
8. If the Board representative is missed at two consecutive Board of Directors meetings, the club shall have its budget frozen, to be reinstated only when a representative appears at a subsequent Board meeting.
9. All club meetings and events must be **advertised**, and the official name of the club, as stated in its By Laws, shall be used. All club activities may be publicized and announced via the GSA website's calendar and the GSA Facebook page.

PROCEDURES FOR ANNUAL/NEW CLUB RECOGNITION

Clubs seeking recognition MUST provide the following documentation to the Vice President for review and consideration:

- Club Recognition Form (including complete Member List)

- Club Data Form
- Officer Election Verification Form
- Board Sheet
- Statement of Purpose
- Mission Statement for posting on GSA Website (one paragraph description of the club, which should include a statement of purpose, and examples of previous and planned activities.)
- Board of Directors Election Verification Form (International Clubs Only)
- Proposed Budget Sheet
- By Laws
- Photocopies of valid student I.D. cards of the officers and six members of the club (total of ten ID copies needed)

*The above forms are available at the GSA office, 310 Student Union or at:

<https://ubwp.buffalo.edu/gsa/club-forms/>

The deadline for documentation submission is at least one week before the Board of Directors meeting where the recognition is to be considered. Failure to meet the deadline will result in the delay of the club recognition until the next Board meeting. Recognition pending required documents will not occur.

Clubs will be invited to a hearing before the Executive Committee for the purpose of clarification (if necessary). The Vice President presents the club's request for recognition to the Board of Directors for consideration and final action.

PROCEDURES FOR EARLY RECOGNITION (FOR EXISTING CLUBS ONLY)

1. Eligibility- Special Interest and International Clubs who have been previously recognized by the Board of Directors are eligible to submit for renewal of recognition and funding for the next budgetary year. Clubs who have missed three or more Board meetings in the current year are not eligible for renewal by this process.
2. Clubs seeking recognition MUST provide the following documentation to the Vice President for review and consideration:
 - Renewal of Recognition Form (including complete Member List)
 - Statement of Purpose
 - Proposed Budget Sheet

CLUB RULES AND POLICIES

Each student club must adhere to the Template GSA Club Rules and Policies, as stated in the GSA By Laws. If additional regulations are needed for club management purposes, they must be submitted to the GSA Vice President for review and approval prior to the club's vote to adopt any changes.

MEMBERSHIP

1. Club membership must be open to all **graduate students** and include a minimum of TEN currently enrolled graduate students to qualify for recognition.
2. Each club should be made up of a minimum of **FOUR** departments
3. 30% of club membership cannot belong to any one department.

4. Voting membership is limited to currently enrolled graduate students. Thus, some clubs may choose to include other individuals in their programs and activities, but those individuals shall not be officers or voting members.

OFFICERS

1. All officers of the club's Executive Board (E-Board) must be currently registered UB graduate students who have paid their graduate student activity fee. When new officers are elected, new documentation must be submitted to the GSA.
2. All club elections must be held online via UBLinked. Please refer to the [GSA Club Election Policy](#) for more details.
3. Only 50% of the E-Board officers can be from the same department.
4. In accordance with the [GSA By Laws](#) (Article X, Section 2.E), each club must have a President and Treasurer. No student should run for more than one E-board position. If a candidate wishes to run for and serve in the role of Board of Directors member in addition to an E-board role, they must be elected into both positions individually.
5. Special interest and international club officers cannot hold office in any other international or special interest club. They can be part of the active membership of any number of them.
6. Departmental club officers can hold office in a maximum of one special interest or international club.

WITHDRAWAL OF RECOGNITION

Recognition of clubs may be revoked for any of the following causes:

1. Disregard of any of the requirements for student clubs.
2. Knowingly sponsoring, urging, or engaging in actions on or off campus by individuals, clubs or groups which violate the GSA By Laws, University rules and regulations, local, state or federal laws.
3. Fiscal irresponsibility.
4. If the Board of Directors representative is missed at three meetings, GSA recognition will be withdrawn from the club.

The sanctions may include but are not limited to one or more of the following: budget freeze, probation for a specified time, suspension of recognition for a specified time, and revocation of recognition.

FUNDING OF ACTIVITIES

Examples of allowable expenditures for special interest and international clubs include:

- Speakers
- Films, Slide Shows, Videos and Other Media Presentations
- Stationary, Postage, Office Supplies
- Printing and Publication
- Socials, such as parties, orientations, and coffee hours. All club events MUST be held in public places. Under no circumstances can events be held in a private residence.

REVIEW PROCESS

The Vice President shall review all requests for recognition based on the following criteria:

- Service to the GSA constituency
- Service to the club's membership
- Fiscal responsibility

The Vice President will also take into consideration whether or not clubs have:

- Hosted at least one event in each semester, based on the club's recognition date
- Co-hosted any events with other special interest and/or international clubs
- Followed their proposed budget plan