



# Graduate Students' Association

University of Alberta

### Member Fees:

The GSA membership fee is currently \$156.02 annually for full-time graduate students and \$117.01 annually for part-time graduate students. The GSA is a fee-driven organization and the collection of the GSA membership fee supports every aspect of the organization's infrastructure (including staff and office administration costs, legal team, audit provision, advocacy work, the provision of services, etc).

Information about the GSA's budget can be found here: <https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-students-association/about/budget-and-audit/index.html>.

GSA members also pay the following fees associated with selected GSA services:

Fee	Year Implemented	Fall Term Fee	Winter Term Fee	Spring/Summer Term Fee
GSA Dental Plan	1994	\$225.49	\$0.00	\$0.00
GSA Health Plan	2003	\$299.89	\$0.00	\$0.00
Graduate Student Assistance Program	2008	\$10.90	\$10.90	\$0.00
U-Pass	2007	\$180.00	\$180.00	\$180.00
CJSR (campus radio station)	2001	\$1.00	\$1.00	\$0

### Member Benefits:

The GSA, pursuant to its mandate under the *Post-Secondary Learning Act*, provides a wealth of services to its members that enrich the graduate student experience at the University of Alberta. As a member of the GSA, you have access to the following benefits:

- Access to over \$960,000 annually in funding in the form of:
  - GSA Academic Travel Grants of \$1,000 for doctoral students and \$500 for masters students to help offset the cost of participation in academic activities such as conferences (regardless of whether presenting or not) and research trips that are directly related to a GSA member's current academic programs

780-492-2175  
[www.ualberta.ca/graduate-students-association](http://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-students-association)  
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- GSA Child Care Grants of \$1,000 per member per child under the age of 18 per year to help offset the cost of child care for GSA members at the University of Alberta
- GSA Emergency Bursaries of up to \$4,000; a non-repayable bursary for GSA members who need assistance due to an unanticipated emergency
- GSA Recognition Awards totalling over \$18,500 distributed to GSA members who have distinguished themselves in research, teaching, academic achievement, leadership, and service to the University and to the wider community, as well as an additional \$750 for the Indigenous Graduate Student Award
- \$36,000 provided to graduate student groups to support their activities (such as hosting seminars, colloquia, and other events) through the GSA Graduate Student Group Grant, as well as over \$17,000 provided to graduate student groups (for the benefit of their members) in association with their participation in the governance of the GSA at the level of GSA Council
- The Graduate Student Assistance Program (established by a referendum vote in 2008 and voted to be continued in a 2021 referendum vote), which provides confidential counselling services on a broad range of issues including, but not limited to: anxiety, stress, depression, conflict, managing multiple life roles, etc; also offers a wealth of health promotion programs and services including nutritional and fitness consultations, legal and financial consultations, and a health and wellness library of articles and e-courses
- The U-Pass (established by a referendum vote, with subsequent agreements approved in referenda), which provides unlimited access to public transit using the Edmonton Transit System, Fort Saskatchewan Transit, Leduc Transit, Spruce Grove Transit, City of St. Albert Transit, and Strathcona County Transit
- The GSA Health and Dental Plan (established by a referendum vote), which provides prescription drug, dental, and vision coverage for GSA members and their spouses/partners and dependents (if GSA members choose to enrol them)
- Preferred home and auto insurance rates through TD Insurance Meloche Monnex
- Bookable meeting room spaces and a GSA feeding and care space for infants and children in Triffo Hall
- Partnership with Kids and Company daycare providers to improve access to off-campus childcare for graduate students
- \$12,000 provided to the Academic Success Centre and the Career Centre to provide direct programming that benefits the academic and professional development of GSA members

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- \$25,000 provided to the Campus Food Bank in support of their operations, which serve a population of users of whom over 60% are graduate students
- Numerous GSA outreach and recognition events (fall orientation, winter orientation, departmental orientations, two annual social events, GSA Awards Night, and monthly GSA coffee social events) to connect graduate students, onboard them to the University of Alberta, and celebrate their achievements
- A Discover Governance program to facilitate involvement with the GSA and student governance more broadly
- Advocacy on behalf of graduate students (the GSA has seats on all the major governing bodies of the University and brings graduate student issues to the table and GSA executives also meet regularly with senior University Administrators and members of the provincial government about matters affecting graduate students)
- The GSA is a founding member of the Alberta Graduate Provincial Advocacy Council, the advocacy and lobbying group representing graduate students across the country, and has observer status with the federal advocacy and lobbying group the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations
- The GSA also offers advising services to its members on a range of issues and serves as a point of assistance; elected leaders and GSA staff meet individually with hundreds of graduate students each year to provide peer support and advising
- Pursuant to the *Post-Secondary Learning Act*, the GSA negotiates a collective agreement for graduate students appointed as Teaching Assistants, Research Assistants, and Graduate Research Assistant Fellowship holders and the GSA meets regularly with academically-employed graduate students to advise them on the provisions of the collective agreement and help them resolve issues
- The GSA, as a labour union, has a faculty steward network to further assist graduate student workers

More information about GSA services can be found here: <https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-students-association/services/index.html>.

More information about the Graduate Student Assistantship Collective Agreement can be found here: <https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-students-association/collective-agreement/index.html>.

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### *University Advocacy:*

The vision and mission of the GSA are to advocate for all graduate students to the University of Alberta and the Alberta Government for a safe, supportive, respectful, accessible, and inclusive community that fosters the multi-faceted roles played by graduate students. To this end, the GSA is the representative organization of the over 8,000 graduate students at the University of Alberta and the GSA student leaders regularly solicit feedback from GSA members through GSA Council and other mechanisms, and bring that feedback forward to the University.

The GSA has seats on all the major governing bodies of the University, from Faculty Councils to General Faculties Council, and brings graduate student issues to the table at all levels of University governance (including the University Board of Governors, where decisions about tuition and fees are debated and voted on). Likewise, the GSA student leaders meet regularly with senior University Administrators about matters affecting graduate students, such as the need for quality supervision to be an institutional priority and the necessity of having predictability, transparency, and affordability with respect to tuition and fees.

Recent successes of GSA advocacy work have included: changes to Alberta's Tuition and Fees Regulation in 2018 (after years of advocacy to the government) that greatly benefit graduate students by ensuring enhanced transparency and stability around tuition and fees increases, concrete action and policy development related to improving the quality of graduate student supervision from 2019 onwards (with formal policy changes implemented in 2021), the creation of a Charter of Student Rights in 2020, the prevention of an across the board 7% tuition increase for all graduate students in 2020, the lowering of several non-instructional fees during the COVID-19 global pandemic, ongoing negotiated funding from the University for the Graduate Student Support Fund, and the extension of funding from the University for the Graduate Student Assistance Program.

More information on the GSA's advocacy priorities on behalf of its members can be found here:

<https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-students-association/about/strategic-work-plan/index.html>

More information on the GSA's past advocacy work on behalf of its members can be found here:

<https://www.ualberta.ca/graduate-students-association/about/strategic-work-plan/swparchive.html>

*We are here to help, provide a wealth of services, advocate for our members, and improve the graduate student experience.*

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