Clubs & Student Groups Handbook

A comprehensive guide to the funding, services, rights, and responsibilities of clubs and student organizations seeking recognition, partnership, and funding from the UTSU.

Last amended on May 30th, 2021 by the Board of Directors.

Current to 26 July 2021

Policies for Clubs and Student Groups
of the University of Toronto Students’ Union

The University of Toronto Students’ Union (UTSU) is a not-for-profit organization incorporated under the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act (CNCA). The UTSU functions autonomously from the University of Toronto, and acts as the primary student government for over 38,000 undergraduate students at the University of Toronto’s St. George Campus.

You can learn more about how the UTSU operates at utsu.ca/governance
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CSG-001 | Guidance & Definitions

Introduction

1. The University of Toronto Student's Union is committed to providing funding and support to all partner clubs during each academic year, for the purpose of advancing the interests of the broader student body at the University of Toronto.

2. Partner clubs are entitled to apply for funding, benefit from additional club services provided by the UTSU, and receive continued administrative support from the UTSU throughout the recognition year.

Recognition & Funding Definitions

3. A “Recognized Club”, “Recognized Student Group”, or “Partner Club” shall refer to a club or student organization that has applied for recognition as a partner of the UTSU and has been approved for such recognition according to the expectations set forth in CSG-002, Partnership Criteria.

4. “Recognition Year” shall be defined as the year in which recognition may be granted to a recognized club, starting on May 1st and ending on April 30th of each year.

5. “Partner Funding” and “Basic Funding” shall be defined as the base-level of funding offered to partner clubs by the UTSU for the purposes of financing general and routine operating costs, as further established in CSG-005, Partner Funding.

General Definitions

6. A “UTSU member” shall refer to any member of the University of Toronto Students' Union as defined in UTSU Bylaw II - Membership.

7. A “leadership position” or “executive position” within a club shall refer to any member of a club who has run for and won an election within that club for a position of leadership and/or authority.
8. A “representative student society”, “affiliated student society”, or “divisional student society” shall refer to a student union, society, or association which collects membership fees from its members for the purpose of organizing and managing student life within their jurisdiction. A non-exhaustive list of such organizations is listed in Appendix A.

9. An “engineering club” shall refer to clubs:
   a. In which more than 50% of members are members of the Engineering; and
   b. Whose primary purpose is to serve the needs and/or interests of members of the University of Toronto Engineering Society.

10. “U-Life” or “Ulife” shall refer to the University of Toronto office which operates under the Office of the Vice-Provost Students, University of Toronto, responsible for maintaining the university directory of student clubs, organizations, and activities.

11. A “parent organization” or “umbrella organization” shall refer to any organization that provides resources to and coordinates an association of entities for the purpose of coordinating activities and pooling resources.

Appendices

A. The following organizations at the University of Toronto are considered to be “representative student societies”:

   a. Individual “course unions” operating under ASSU or other professional faculty
   b. Association of Part-time Undergraduate Students (APUS)
   c. Scarborough Campus Students’ Union (SCSU)
   d. Arts and Science Students’ Union (ASSU)
   e. Innis College Students’ Union (ICSS)
   f. New College Student Council (NCSC)
   g. St. Michael’s College Students’ Union (SMCSU)
   h. Trinity College Meeting (TCM)
   i. University College Literary and Athletic Society (UC Lit)
   j. Victoria University Students’ Administrative Council (VUSAC)
   k. Woodsworth College Students’ Association (WCSA)
   l. Engineering Society (EngSoc)
   m. Architecture and Visual Studies Students’ Union (AVSSU)
   n. Dental Students’ Society (DSS)
   o. Students’ Law Society (SLS)
   p. Medical Society (MedSoc)
   q. Faculty of Music Undergraduate Association (FMUA)
   r. Nursing Undergraduate Society (NUS)
   s. Undergraduate Pharmacy Society (UPS)
   t. University of Toronto Mississauga Students’ Union (UTMSU)
   u. Rotman Commerce Students’ Association (RCSA)
CSG-002 | Partnership Criteria

Preamble

1. Student groups seeking funding from the UTSU must first apply for recognition as "Partner Clubs", establishing a partnership relationship with the UTSU.

2. Partner Clubs shall be expected to operate in a manner consistent with the bylaws and policies of the UTSU, and may have their recognition revoked if they fail to do so.

Recognition Requirements

3. The Vice-President Student Life shall recommend to the Clubs Committee that recognition be denied to any group that does not satisfy all of the following criteria:
   a. Recognized clubs must seek to make a positive contribution to the academic and/or co-curricular lives of University of Toronto students;
   b. Recognized clubs must not impede the legitimate, lawful activities of University of Toronto students;
   c. Recognized clubs must not discriminate on the basis of a protected ground in a protected social area, as defined in the Ontario Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.19;
   d. Recognized clubs must operate on a not-for-profit basis, such that all revenue is used to support the operations of the club, and must not use UTSU funds to support the activities of another parent or umbrella organization;
   e. Recognized clubs must be able to provide truthful and complete financial records, as well as copies of any and all current and historical governing documents, to the UTSU upon request;
f. Recognized clubs must operate in a manner consistent with the University of Toronto Policy on Open, Accessible, and Democratic Autonomous Student Organizations;

g. Recognized clubs must adhere to the codes of conduct, codes of ethics, and People & Culture Policies of the UTSU;

h. Recognized clubs shall be expected to send at least one (1) representative who is also a member of the UTSU to attend the Annual General Meetings of the UTSU each recognition year;

i. The majority of a recognized club's general membership, as well as a majority of those holding leadership positions, must be comprised of UTSU members;

j. Partner clubs must renew their recognition at the beginning of each recognition year; and

k. Representative student societies are not eligible for recognition.

Steps to Becoming a Recognized Partner

4. In order to be granted recognition, a club must:

a. Submit a completed application form, which includes:
   i. A statement outlining the purpose and mission of the club;
   ii. A complete list of members for the current year, including members’:
      1. full legal name (preferred names may be included separately);
      2. student number;
      3. full-time, part-time, or graduate status; and
      4. divisional information (faculty and/or college, and program).
   iii. Proof of recognition from Ulife; and
   iv. The most recent and currently enforced version of their constitution.

b. Sign a written acknowledgment that the club agrees to meet the requirements established in CSG-002(3);

c. Attend mandatory training modules set out by the Vice President Student Life for the recognition period in which they are applying;
   i. Signing officers of partner clubs must attend any financial reporting training modules provided by the UTSU.

d. Meet any additional criteria, as required by the Clubs Committee, that may be imposed on all clubs from time to time.
5. Any club which is denied recognition may submit a written appeal of the decision to the Vice President Student Life:
   a. The appeal will be considered in a meeting of the Clubs Committee;
      i. A written statement regarding the Clubs Committee’s decision on the appeal will be provided to the Club by the Vice-President Student Life.
   b. All appeal decisions are final;
   c. A recognition decision may only be appealed once per recognition year.

6. Any club which has their recognition revoked or denied shall immediately become ineligible for receiving funding and partner benefits from the UTSU.
CSG-003 | Partner Benefits

What’s Offered to Partner Clubs

1. After having been recognized as a partner club of the UTSU in any given recognition year, a recognized club is entitled to support, assistance, and guidance from the UTSU. Some of these benefits may include, but are not limited to:

   a. Access to the UTSU Resource Bank, subject to the relevant policies which govern how rented equipment and resources are used;

   b. Support from the UTSU’s team of Community Resource Specialists;

   c. Inclusion and advertisement of events, activities, and postings in the UTSU’s bi-weekly Clubs Digest newsletter;

   d. Meetings upon request with the Vice President, Student Life or designate;

   e. Access to training resources, including equity and anti-oppression training

   f. Access to templates and guidelines for budgets, financial accountability mechanisms, record-keeping, and more; and

   g. Support with event and activity planning and logistics.

The Resource Bank

2. The UTSU Resource Bank provides free equipment rentals to clubs to assist with club events and programming. Using these resources carries the following expectations:

   a. Club representatives acknowledge that, once they rent a piece of equipment, all items must be returned in the same condition they were borrowed in, and must be returned on-time to ensure that other groups may also have access;

   b. Clubs acknowledge that late returns or damage to equipment may result in their partner recognition and/or funding status being jeopardized.
CSG-004 | Funding Terms & Conditions

General Limitations and Maximums for Funding

1. No partner club may receive more than six-thousand dollars ($6,000 CAD) in cumulative assistance from the UTSU in any given recognition year.

   a. From time to time, the UTSU may implement or make changes as necessary to its per-application maximums, annual maximums, and other maximum funding amounts, for the purpose of maintaining the availability of funding for recognized partner clubs throughout the year.

   b. Unless otherwise specified in this policy, resolutions of the Clubs Committee which make changes to per-application maximums, annual maximums, and other maximum funding amounts shall expire at the end of each recognition year, therefore causing temporary changes to funding amounts to be reset.

2. No UTSU clubs funding may be used towards any of the following:

   a. the purchase or subsidization of alcohol or other recreational drugs;
   b. compensation or honoraria for club executives or members;
   c. club-branded personal merchandise, including clothing, business cards, or any other form of personalized or branded products intended for individual use;
   d. capital expenses, including electronics and furniture;
   e. transportation costs that have not been explicitly pre-approved by the UTSU through the Conferences & Travel Grant;
   f. retreats or excursions for club executives and/or members;
   g. donations of any kind; and
   h. any other cost centre that is determined by the UTSU to be inappropriate.
3. Funding provided to a club by the UTSU in anticipation of a future expense must only be granted after a contract has been written and signed by two signing officers from both parties which clearly stipulates how the funds will be used and/or returned.

4. The UTSU, at its discretion, may attach additional terms and conditions to an individual funding application prior to its approval.

5. Engineering clubs, course unions, and representative student societies are not eligible for any form of clubs funding from the UTSU.

Financial Reporting Guidelines

6. Partner clubs must adhere to the following financial reporting requirements:
   a. At the discretion of the UTSU, Partner Clubs may be required to use a financial reporting template when submitting funding applications, which may include:
      i. The club's starting balance, carried over from the year prior;
      ii. A complete, itemized list of all expenses and income;
         1. For all transactions in foreign currency, a posted transaction in a club bank statement is required.
      iii. The ending balance, matching the final bank statement; and
      iv. Signature of the person preparing the report.

7. The Vice President Student Life shall be empowered to withhold funding from any club that does not satisfy the required financial reporting guidelines stated in CSG-004(6).

Timelines and Deadlines

8. Clubs must submit their funding applications prior to deadlines set by the UTSU in order to be considered. Late applications may not necessarily be accepted by the Clubs Committee, at the committee's discretion.
   a. The UTSU shall set deadlines each recognition year in order to ensure that all funding and recognition applications can be collected, considered, and processed before the end of the recognition year.
   b. The latest deadline the UTSU may set for clubs recognition and clubs funding applications to be submitted shall be April 10th of each recognition year.

9. No application for any type of funding or assistance may include expenses which were incurred more than twelve (12) months prior to the application being submitted, or expenses which were incurred prior to the current recognition year.
a. Receipts for expenses incurred more than twelve (12) months before the submission of an application shall be deemed as invalid and not considered.

b. Receipts for expenses incurred during a previous recognition year shall also be deemed as invalid and not considered.

Preference Given to Desirable Applications

10. Preference for funding may be granted to certain clubs by the Clubs Committee if:

a. A club has a consistent history of financial responsibility, record-keeping, and operational efficiency when managing funds provided by the UTSU;

b. A club has clearly presented to the UTSU that they have developed or are developing a consistent source of revenue that reduces or will reduce the expenses to which the UTSU is being asked to pay for;

c. A club has a consistent history of sending representatives to UTSU initiatives and events, including Annual General Meetings;

d. A club has a large membership in proportion to most other applicants and impacts a large community on campus;

e. The event, program, or service a club is requesting funding from the UTSU for has been created to serve the needs of a marginalized or underrepresented student community;

f. The event, program, or service a club is requesting funding from the UTSU for is unique and not reflected in the activities of another club; and/or

g. The event, program, or service a club is requesting funding from the UTSU for is a collaborative activity that involves other clubs and campus groups.

Unsuccessful Applications

11. When the UTSU disburses funds to its partners, the UTSU is obligated to hold its partners accountable for tracking and reporting how those funds are used. The UTSU therefore reserves the right to deny a club access to funding if the UTSU is unable to reliably account for how and why UTSU funds are used by a recipient club.

12. The UTSU reserves the right to withhold funding for the following reasons:

a. An application is deemed to be incomplete, incorrect, insufficient, or otherwise ineligible based on criteria that must first be met in order for it to be approved;

b. The Clubs Committee determines that a club is no longer eligible for funding or recognition due to a violation of CSG-002, Partnership Criteria; or
c. The Clubs Committee determines that approving an application may duplicate the activities and operations of an existing club which has already had a funding application approved by the UTSU for similar purposes.

d. An application was submitted after a deadline set by the UTSU for the submission of applications.

13. In the case that a club is denied funding:

a. Partner clubs which have their funding application(s) denied may request that they receive a written explanation from the Clubs Committee for why their application was denied.

b. Partner clubs reserve the right to re-submit a funding application.

   i. All decisions by the Clubs Committee after resubmission are final.
CSG-005 | Basic Funding

Preamble and Scope

1. Funding for the purpose of supporting the general operations of recognized clubs shall be allocated on a rolling basis by the UTSU Clubs Committee, following the recommendation of the Vice-President, Student Life.

2. Funding applications may include requests for expenses already made, as well as expected future expenses, within the current recognition year.

3. Basic Funding may only be used for the following purposes:

   a. General administrative costs and operating expenses associated with managing a club, including:

      i. website costs, including hosting, design, and accessibility audits;

      ii. administrative, service, and bank-processing fees;

      iii. materials such as stationary, banners, tablecloths, and signs;

      iv. health and safety costs, such as first aid kits and training expenses; and

      v. minor food and beverage expenses, not exceeding $50.00 CAD per recognition year, for regular and annual meetings of club members.

   b. Other purposes which are from time to time deemed appropriate by the UTSU.

4. Applications for Basic Funding may be approved up to a maximum of five hundred dollars ($500 CAD) per year.

   a. Funding is not guaranteed, and is reliant upon a successful application. Clubs are encouraged to refer to CSG-004, Funding Terms & Conditions.
Application Criteria and Process

5. The UTSU Clubs Committee shall meet at least once per month to consider new funding applications, with applications being considered on a rolling basis.

6. Clubs may submit multiple applications for Basic Funding each recognition year, as many times as needed until their maximum support amount is reached.

7. Each application for Basic Funding must include the following:
   
a. A brief statement which explains how the applicant club intends to collect, store, and use funds provided by the UTSU;
   
b. A budget which outlines, in detail, any and all incurred or anticipated revenues and expenses for the current recognition year;
      
      i. For expenses already incurred, legible and verifiable receipts must be included and itemized in the budget.
      
      ii. For expenses not yet incurred, any and all supporting documentation must be provided, such as invoices, quotes, and requests for proposal.
   
c. A statement of financial activities for the past recognition year which outlines all of the activities, revenues, and expenses made by the club in full;
      
      i. Statements of financial activities are encouraged to be submitted in a format which allows for direct comparison to the club’s existing budget.
      
      ii. Statements of financial activities must acknowledge any and all funding previously received by the club from the UTSU.
      
      iii. Clubs shall be entitled to receive a budget template and assistance from the UTSU upon request to meet the above requirements.
8. After submitting an application, the club shall receive a receipt from the UTSU acknowledging that their application has been received. Once a decision has been reached by the Clubs Committee at its next meeting, the club will be notified.

9. The Clubs Committee of the UTSU will approve or deny all applications in accordance with CSG-004, Funding Terms & Conditions.
CSC-006 | Partnership Grants

Purpose & General Criteria for All Grants

1. The following grants shall be made available to recognized clubs during each given recognition year. All funds provided by the UTSU must be used in accordance with the terms and conditions agreed upon at the time a grant application is approved.

2. Grants shall be awarded to recognized clubs after the following conditions are met:

   a. The grant application has been approved by the UTSU after having met all the criteria required for the specified grant and has met all the requirements established in CSG-004, Funding Terms & Conditions;

   b. The club has provided legitimate, legible, and verified receipts for all expenses already incurred;

   c. In the case that a club has not yet incurred expenses for which the grant is intended to pay for, the relevant signing authorities of a club have agreed to a contract which defines how these expenses will be incurred, and how remaining funds will be returned to the UTSU if gone unused;

      i. Applications seeking a pre-approval for future expenses must be submitted at least four (4) weeks prior to that expense needing to be incurred by the club, in order to ensure an approval is not rushed.

   d. The club has continued to meet its obligations under CSG-002, Partnership Criteria, and has agreed to any additional terms and conditions as determined by the UTSU in exchange for receiving the specified grant.

3. A club may apply to a grant or grants multiple times in a recognition year, so long as they have not exceeded any maximums or limitations as established by CSG-004, Funding Terms & Conditions or by the criteria of a grant itself.
Social, Athletic, and Academic Events Grant

4. The Social, Athletic, and Academic Events (SAAE) Grant is intended to help clubs cover the expenses associated with hosting social, athletic, or academic events in the given recognition year. This grant provides funds for individual events organized by partner clubs that aim to foster community and improve student life in any of these contexts.

   a. A new application must be submitted each time a club wishes to receive funding for an event under the Events Grant.

   b. Depending on the contents of an application, the Events Grant may cover up to 75% of the costs associated with organizing an event, up to $3,000 CAD.

   c. Applications must be submitted at least four (4) weeks prior to the event taking place in order to be considered by the Clubs Committee for pre-approved funding from the UTSU.

      i. While grants may be approved retroactively for expenses already incurred by a club, such applications are not encouraged due to the possibility that they may not be approved.

   d. In order for an application to be successful, it must include the following, in addition to meeting the criteria defined in CSC-004(2):

      i. A description of the event which includes all relevant information pertaining to its purpose, logistics, intended audience, and impact;

      ii. An event budget which includes a brief explanation of each expense;

      iii. A description of the measures that are either being taken or need to be taken to ensure the safety and accessibility of the event;

      1. Clubs may request that the UTSU's Accessibility Resources Fund (ARF) be used in addition to the funding provided by this grant in order to make approved events more accessible.

      iv. Any other supporting information or documentation that a club wishes to provide that may assist the UTSU in approving their application.

Sustainability Initiatives Grant

5. The Sustainability Initiatives Grant is intended to assist clubs in their activities which aim to further sustainability goals across campus. This grant provides funding support for activities, activism, projects, and initiatives where the primary purpose is to advance sustainability at the University of Toronto and the surrounding community.

   a. A new application must be submitted each time a club wishes to receive funding for an initiative under the Sustainability Initiatives Grant.
b. Depending on the contents of an application, the Sustainability Initiatives Grant may cover up to 75% of the costs associated with organizing and executing an initiative, up to $1,500 CAD.

c. Applications must be submitted at least four (4) weeks prior to the beginning of an initiative in order to be considered by the Clubs Committee for pre-approved funding from the UTSU.

   i. While grants may be approved retroactively for expenses already incurred by a club, such applications are not encouraged due to the possibility that they may not be approved.

d. In order for an application to be successful, it must include the following, in addition to meeting the criteria defined in CSG-004(2):

   i. A description of the initiative, which includes all relevant information pertaining to its purpose, logistics, intended audience, and impact;

   ii. A budget which includes a brief explanation of each expense;

   iii. Any other supporting information or documentation that a club wishes to provide that may assist the UTSU in approving their application.

Conferences & Travel Grant

6. The Conferences & Travel Grant is intended to help clubs cover travel costs associated with getting club members and/or equipment to and from official events and conferences where they are representing the club in a professional context. This grant provides funding support for club representatives who would otherwise experience difficulty accessing funds in order to travel for official club business.

   a. A new application must be submitted each time a club wishes to receive support for travel expenses under the Conferences & Travel Grant.

   b. Depending on the contents of an application, the Conferences & Travel Grant may cover up to 50% of the costs associated with sending club representatives to an off-campus event or activity, up to $1,000 CAD.

   c. Applications must be submitted at least four (4) weeks prior to an anticipated departure date in order to be considered by the Clubs Committee for pre-approved funding from the UTSU.

      i. While grants may be approved retroactively for expenses already incurred by a club, such applications are not encouraged due to the possibility that they may not be approved.

      ii. Applications for the reimbursement of travel expenses will not be considered if submitted more than four (4) weeks after the date of departure.
In order for an application to be successful, it must include the following, in addition to meeting the criteria defined in CSG-004(2):

i. A description of the purpose of the trip, which includes the destination, route, timeline, mode of transportation, any intended stopovers, and a rationale for how receiving support will benefit the club or its members;

ii. A cost analysis that shows that the selected mode of transportation is the least expensive option available to the club;

iii. A brief statement from each beneficiary of their financial need;

iv. A travel budget which includes a brief explanation of each expense, as well as any other relevant information pertaining to the trip cost;

v. Any other supporting information or documentation that a club wishes to provide that may assist the UTSU in approving their application.

Equity & Accessibility Initiatives Grant

7. The Equity & Accessibility Initiatives Grant is intended to help clubs cover costs associated with organizing initiatives and events which promote and advance the goals of equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility on campus.

a. A new application must be submitted each time a club wishes to receive support for an event or initiative under the Equity & Accessibility Initiatives Grant.

b. Depending on the contents of an application, the Equity & Accessibility Initiatives Grant may cover up to 75% of the costs associated with sending club representatives to an off-campus event or activity, up to $2,000 CAD.

c. Applications must be submitted at least four (4) weeks prior to an event or initiative’s start date in order to be considered by the Clubs Committee for pre-approved funding from the UTSU.

i. While grants may be approved retroactively for expenses already incurred by a club, such applications are not encouraged due to the possibility that they may not be approved.

d. In order for an application to be successful, it must include the following, in addition to meeting the criteria defined in CSG-004(2):

i. A description of the event or initiative which includes all relevant information pertaining to its purpose, logistics, intended audience, and impact, as well as a brief rationale for how the event or initiative will further EDI&A goals at the University of Toronto;

ii. A budget which includes a brief explanation of each expense;
1. Clubs may request that the UTSU’s Accessibility Resources Fund (ARF) be used in addition to the funding provided by this grant in order to make approved events more accessible.

   iii. Any other supporting information or documentation that a club wishes to provide that may assist the UTSU in approving their application.

Arts & Music Grant

8. The Arts & Music Grant is intended to assist clubs in their activities which aim to contribute to the University of Toronto’s vibrant artistic community. This grant provides funding support for events, initiatives, and projects which provide students the opportunity to express themselves in the visual or performing arts.

   a. A new application must be submitted each time a club wishes to receive funding for an event, initiative, or project under the Arts & Music Grant.

   b. Depending on the contents of an application, the Arts & Music Grant may cover up to 75% of the costs associated with organizing and executing an initiative, up to $1,500 CAD.

   c. Applications must be submitted at least four (4) weeks prior to the beginning of an event, initiative, or project in order to be considered by the Clubs Committee for pre-approved funding from the UTSU.

      i. While grants may be approved retroactively for expenses already incurred by a club, such applications are not encouraged due to the possibility that they may not be approved.

   d. In order for an application to be successful, it must include the following, in addition to meeting the criteria defined in CSG-004(2):

      i. A description of the event, initiative, or project, which includes all relevant information pertaining to its purpose, logistics, intended audience, and anticipated impact;

      ii. A budget which includes a brief explanation of each expense;

      iii. Any other supporting information or documentation that a club wishes to provide that may assist the UTSU in approving their application.