

# Graduate Student Association

## Grant Applications Policies and Handbook

1. Introduction .....	2
2. Grant Overview.....	2
a. Types of grants and who may apply	
b. Award amounts	
c. What is covered	
d. Where to get an application and where to send it	
e. Deadlines	
3. Application Overview.....	6
4. Grant Policies.....	9
5. Examples.....	10
6. Changes and Revisions to the Handbook.....	16
7. Business Office Procedures.....	17

## 1. Introduction

This document is intended to explain all the guidelines and policies concerning Graduate Student Association (GSA) grants. It is also intended to serve as a guide so that applicants can fill out their applications without any problems. No document will probably be able to answer all questions that arise, so please feel free to email the GSA president about any questions ([gsa@unco.edu](mailto:gsa@unco.edu)). While the president can not guarantee a full review of your grant before the due date, the president can answer any questions and will try to help ensure the application is complete.

## 2. Grant Overview

### a. Types of Grants

Any University of Northern Colorado (UNC) graduate student who is in good standing with the University may apply for a GSA grant. Both master and doctoral students are eligible.

Applicant must be currently enrolled in a Graduate program at the University of Northern Colorado. If you have completed less than 18 total Graduate credit hours at UNC, you must be enrolled full time (9 credits) to be eligible.

GSA grants can be written for three types of expenses.

**1) Research expenses.** If your research requires you to purchase certain materials or for items such as copying expenses, you can request a GSA grant to help cover some of the expense. In section C, the items that can and cannot be approved are listed.

**2) Presenting at a Conference.** If you are invited to present at a conference, you can request a GSA grant to help cover some of the travel/conference expenses. In section C, the travel expenses that can and cannot be covered are listed.

**3) Attending at a Conference.** If you wish to attend a conference, you can request a GSA grant to help cover some of the travel/conference expenses. Please also note Conference Attendance grants have a lower maximum amount of funding.

\*Please note there are two types of applications. There is one application for Research grants and another application for Conferences (presenting or attending). Please be sure to submit the correct one as the requirements for each application are different.

In regards to conferences, a conference that may be considered a professional development conference is acceptable for funding. However, all grants should have a UNC faculty sponsorship. GSA does not consider UNC staff (ex: Director of Student Activities, Director of Financial Aid, the Dean of Students, etc.) an acceptable sponsor. The applicant must have FACULTY sponsorship (see Section 3 for more details).

Graduate students may receive two grants per fiscal year.

### **b. Award Amounts**

This will vary from year to year. For the 2009-10 year, the following awards are available:

- Research and Conference Presentation – up to \$600
- Conference Attendance – up to \$200

Unfortunately, GSA has a finite amount of money. In the past we have found that if we were to completely fund graduate student's conference and research expenses, we would be severely limited in the number of students we could issue grants to.

Instead, GSA has decided to put certain funding caps for each type of request. While this means the GSA grants cannot fully fund most people's expenses, it is the fairest means of dispersing the funds available to us.

GSA considers its grants to be supplemental in nature. This means the grants are intended to help offset the expenses for graduate students, not fully cover them. The GSA strongly stresses that you not count on the funding as guaranteed. Due to the varying amount of requests we receive and the change in budget each year, we cannot promise everyone will get the maximum amount of funding.

Depending on the number of grants, GSA may implement the following rule. The 2nd grant will only be eligible for half of the 1st grant caps. In other words, if you apply for a Conference Presentation grant (current cap of \$600) and then later apply for a Research grant, you would only be eligible to receive up to \$300 (half of \$600).

### **c. Expenses covered by GSA grants.**

Since UNC has a wide range of graduate programs and with that, GSA has recognized that there will be a wide range of expenses our graduate students have. Therefore, the GSA grants set out to be flexible in what graduate students may use them for. However, there are a couple of items grants cannot be used for.

#### Conference/Travel Expenses

For travel, GSA grants will cover the following conference expenses:

- Airfare travel
- In-state mileage (generally a set number of cents per mile, which is set by the University)
- Hotel accommodations
- Conference registration fee (NOT a membership to the organization)
- Transportation (car rental, airport shuttle, etc.)

- Parking

This is a list of expenses **NOT** covered by GSA funds.

- Spouse/child/friend travel expenses are not eligible for GSA funding. The GSA grant is to cover *your* expenses
- Alcohol and food purchases are not covered
- Membership fees. Many organizations that hold conferences require presenters to join their organization. You cannot use GSA funds to pay for membership costs, though you can use GSA funds to pay for the registration fees
- Any cost not associated with going to a conference. In the end, the GSA reserves the sole right of determining what a legitimate expense is.

GSA conference grants are only for applicants who physically attend their conference. If an applicant receives a GSA award for a conference, but does not actually attend the conference, the applicant's GSA award is considered void. Applicants who do not attend their conference in person may NOT use the award even if the applicant has already incurred some expenses. **Receiving a Conference award is dependent on the applicant attending the conference in person.**

Applicants may appeal to the GSA President for exceptions. Any applicant who does not attend a conference but turns in their GSA grant award to pay for some expenditure can be charged for violation of the student code of conduct by the Dean of Students. Students should also be aware that there are legal consequences for cashing in a GSA award for a conference they did not actually attend.

### Research Expenses

The GSA understands that many graduate students will be doing a wide variety of research and will be try to accommodate them. However, certain items cannot be bought with GSA funds.

Also, keep in mind that the GSA expects that any permanent equipment/non-consumable materials bought with GSA grant money ***will stay with the University***. You are buying this with student money, and the equipment will stay here so that future students can use it as well. ***This even includes items that were partially funded by GSA monies.***

These are some of the items that cannot be bought with GSA funds.

- Textbooks, music scores, etc.
- Payments to individuals (research assistants, etc). **This includes transcriptions done by peers who are not certified transcriptionists.**
- research subject incentives (food, money, gift cards, etc.)
- Thesis/dissertation publishing expenses (copy and binding costs)
- Fees involved in the publication of research
- Tuition costs

- Software that is available on campus (i.e. you cannot use GSA money to buy your own copy of SPSS). In general, graduate students requesting money to buy a specialized software program need to understand they must make a strong case as to why they need this program, why it is vital to their research, and exactly which *University computer* the software will ultimately end up. Again, this is a material the university will keep so that future students can have use of it.

#### **d. Where to get an application and where to send it**

In order to keep costs to a minimum and provide as much funding for grant awards, GSA does not print applications for applicants to pick up. All applications are available on GSA's website ([www.unco.edu/gsa](http://www.unco.edu/gsa)) for applicants to download and print out.

Applications must be turned into the GSA President's desk in the UC, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor student activities. They may also be faxed in to 970.351.1055. No emails will be accepted.

The address if you wish to mail in the application.\*

Graduate Student Association  
Campus Box 78  
University of Northern Colorado  
Greeley, CO 80639-0142

\*If you mail in, the post mark date will not count. Only the day GSA receives the grant will count. Please realize that when mailing to the university, there is roughly a delay of one day between the letter arriving at the University mail center and then to the GSA. If mailing from Colorado, it is strongly encouraged to mail at least 1 week in advance; 2 weeks if outside of the state. Otherwise, faxing the application is advised.

**DO NOT SEND APPLICATIONS TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL – THEY DO NOT TAKE APPLICATIONS.**

#### **e. Deadlines**

On the GSA website, in the Grant Funding section, the current deadlines will be posted.

GSA grants are broken up into four sessions, generally: Fall, Spring, and two summer sessions (summer is broken up for budgetary purposes).

The deadlines section will show when applications for each session will be made available, when the deadline to turn in applications for each session is, and when students can expect to find out about their funding.

GSA only accepts applications for the current session (For example, during the Fall, only Fall grant applications will be accepted. GSA will not accept applications for the spring until the stated date).

### 3. Application Overview

All materials must be submitted with the applications and in the order listed by the application. Any missing materials may be considered grounds for automatic dismissal.

The GSA President will try to review all the applications turned in. However, as it gets closer to the deadline, the GSA President cannot guarantee a review or that their review means all materials are present.

**It is the sole responsibility of the applicant to make sure all materials are turned in and completed correctly.**

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#### **General Rules for both Conference and Research Grants**

Application: Be sure to fill out everything. This information is needed to pass on to the business office so they can reimburse GSA awardees. All signatures must be present, **including the faculty signature**. Please no email confirmations from faculty.\*

\*You may have the faculty member print out the page with the faculty signature and have the faculty fax or mail to the GSA separate from your application. In that case, make sure they clearly label it with your name and Bear number, and you must notify the GSA President via email.

Again, the application must be complete by the deadline; waiting on a faculty signature is not a reasonable excuse. Furthermore, it is the applicants' responsibility to ensure faculty filled out the Faculty signature section completely and correctly.

Faculty signature must be a UNC faculty member. Any status of faculty is acceptable (for example: adjunct, associate, full, etc.), but they must be listed as a faculty member. GRAD STUDENTS WHO TEACH (either as a TA at UNC or at another univ.) ARE NOT CONSIDERED FACULTY AT UNC. Being instructor on record is not equivalent to faculty member.

#### **Conference Grant Application (Attendance and Presentation)**

For the expense section in the application, you are allowed to guess on your expenses. You do not have to provide receipts at the time you turn in the application. You do not have to keep it within the grant caps (but remember you will not be given more than the cap).

- Cover letter: This is a brief letter (roughly 1 page or less) that explains why this conference will be beneficial in your academic career. Describe the conference (who attends, what is discussed, and any other information you believe relevant),

and also describe your role at the conference and what you hope to gain from it. Please address the letter to “GSA”.

- Conference documentation: This can be a webpage printout of the Conference’s homepage. Applicants do not need to print out every webpage from the conference website, just the main page clearly showing the title of the Conference, which organization, and the dates. This could also be a brochure from the conference (though usually applicants don’t have these till after the conference).

For those presenting:

- Brief abstract of the presentation. Generally this can be the same abstract/project description you turned into the conference reviewers.
- Confirmation of presentation acceptance. Generally most conferences will send presenters an email letter stating their acceptance. This email will suffice as long as it is clear you are accepted. Emails that are vague and do not clearly state you are accepted to present at a certain conference will not be considered acceptance letters.

Other items that can be considered as confirmation is a copy of a program listing you as a presenter. Please be sure the page includes the name of the conference, what time, and where you will be presenting.

If you have any questions about if your item counts as an acceptance, please notify the GSA President BEFORE the deadline. Likewise, if a conference is set to occur in the grant timeline but you have not gotten a confirmation letter, notify the GSA President beforehand.

Award letters can be granted on a contingency basis, meaning you receive the reward once a confirmation has been accepted. Please note, the only reason GSA will award a grant on a contingency basis is for those applicants who are waiting on presentation confirmation. Contingency will only be granted to those who notify the GSA President before the deadline.

### **Research Application**

- Application: Same as for Conferences, see above. Please be sure to fill out the Graduate Research Grant Application.
- Cover letter: Brief letter that explains how this research will contribute to your academic career. The length should be roughly 1 page or less. Explain the project very briefly (save most of the description for the Project description section) and how completing this research will further your career. Address if the research is for a thesis or dissertation, if you plan to publish or present the

findings, and any other information you see as relevant. Address the letter to “GSA”.

- **Brief Project Description:** This can be your planned abstract. Describe the project, a quick overview of the supporting literature, proposed subjects and methods, how data will be (or was) analyzed, and conclusions if there are any.
- **Budget Expense Sheet:** This should be a detailed and itemized list of proposed expenses. Please be sure to give exact name of any equipment (brand, model number). Include a total of all expenses. You do not have to keep it within the grant caps (but remember you will not be given more than the cap).

Please try to avoid the use of acronyms, instead give the full title of the expense item. (e.g. Figural Intersection Test instead of “FIT”). Since there are some many fields the GSA grants cover, this ensures the reviewers know exactly what items you are requesting money for. Also, do not list any items with ambiguous names (e.g. “Online Survey”). Please be as exact with the title as possible. If it is an item you created yourself, list that title as whatever you would label the item for your experiment (e.g. “Feelings Response Survey” instead of “survey”).

In general, try to be as exact as possible about your expenses, what exactly they were for, and exactly how much for each item.

- **Copy of Internal Review Board (IRB) approval letter or UNC Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) approval letter.** Or, if these do not apply to your research, a statement as to why your research does not fall under either of these university review policies.

#### 4. Grant Policies

This section is just a general overview of how GSA reviews grants and what factors are considered.

Overall, GSA is dedicated to providing support to all graduate students through its grants. When considering grants, GSA does not take academic field into account. This means Educational Psychology conference grants are given more weight than Music conference grants. Generally the reputation of a conference is not a considered factor, but the reviewers do hold the option to.

Reward amounts are decided by a committee vote. The review committee consists of the current GSA President and the representatives of the GSA council. The council consists of two representatives from each of the four colleges with graduate programs (EBS, PVA, HSS, & NHS).

Each grant session, the committee decides how to distribute the award money and what criteria for measuring grants will be used. Except for the policies stated above, GSA does not set a firm policy in terms of reward guidelines so that it can remain flexible to changing demands of graduate students.

All grant awards and dismissals are done by a committee vote.

Also, students may decide themselves how to allocate their grant money for the acceptable expenses (as outlined by their award letter). However, for students attending or presenting at a conference, you **MUST** show the Business Office your conference registration receipt. You do not have to use your award money to pay for it, but you must present it to the Business Office in order to receive funding.

## 5. Examples

Below are examples from various sections of the grant that applicants have had the most questions about. These examples are intended to serve as a guide, not an exact model of how to write the grant. Also included are some examples of unacceptable sections.

### Conference Documentation

The screenshot shows the website for the Association for Psychological Science (APS) 20th Annual Convention in Chicago, held from May 22-25, 2008. The page is viewed in Internet Explorer. The header includes the APS logo and a member login section. A navigation bar contains links for Convention Home, Online Program, Registration, Hotel, and Travel Information. The main content area features a banner for the convention and a 'Program Highlights' section with four featured speakers:

- Keynote Speaker:** Shelley Taylor, University of California, Los Angeles. Topic: [Stress and Health Across the Lifespan](#).
- Bring the Family Speaker:** Laura L. Carstensen, Stanford University. Topic: [Long Life in the 21st Century](#).
- Presidential Symposium Chair:** John T. Cacioppo, University of Chicago, APS President. Topic: [Psychology as a Hub Science](#).
- Inside the Psychologist's Studio:** Daniel Kahneman, Princeton University. Topic: [Inside the Psychologists Studio: Interview with Daniel Kahneman](#).

The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the Start button, several open applications (Inbox - Microsoft Out..., Association for Psy..., GRANT DOCUMENTS, Graduate Student As...), and the system clock showing 11:25 AM on 5/22/2008.

Printing out this webpage would be acceptable. Not that you can see the name of the Organization (APS), the title of the convention (APS 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention), the date, and where the convention is being held.

Acceptable Expense sheet (\*Prices are random and for example purpose only)

John Doe Expense sheet			
<u>Item</u>	<u>Cost Per Item</u>	<u>Qty</u>	<u>Price</u>
Cortisol Assay Kit -Used to collect and measure cortisol	\$100.00	1	\$100.00
Response Survey Copy costs -Used to gauge participants feelings after study	\$0.08	500 copies	\$40.00
			Total: \$140.00

Or

Susan Doe Expense Sheet						
					Copies	cost
Figural Intersection Test	(8 pages, 100 copies)				800	80
BLOT test	(30 pages, 100 copies)				3000	1200
						1280

This would be acceptable, though GSA prefers applicants do not use acronyms (Bond’s Logical Operations Test instead of BLOT).

Unacceptable Expense Sheet

- |                                                                                                                                                     |        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Online questionnaire</li> <li>2. Communication expense for negotiation with some organizations</li> </ol> | \$1000 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|

The items are very abstract (exactly which online questionnaire, what exactly are the communication expense?) and there is no per item cost break down.

• Flight costs	\$500
• Thesis binding costs	\$100
• SPSS program	\$300
Total	\$900

The first problem is it is not clear where the flight is to. You do not have to name a specific airline or flight, but if there are travel costs, you should name the city, state, country. Also Thesis binding and SPSS are not eligible expenses for GSA funding.

## Acceptable Confirmation of Presentation

Dear John Doe

Congratulations! I am pleased to inform you that your poster submission, An Item Response Theory Analysis of the Tower of Hanoi-Revised, has been accepted for presentation at the 2008 APS Annual Convention in Chicago. It is with particular pleasure that we have accepted your submission, since we received a near record number of excellent proposals this year and could not accommodate all of them. Please note that this acceptance notification is being sent only to you. I ask that you notify any other authors or presenters affiliated with this submission.

Your poster presentation has been scheduled as part of Poster Session V, with Board Number 095. This poster session will be on May 24, from 8:00AM to 9:00AM in the Exhibit Hall of the Sheraton Chicago Hotel. You will be provided with one side of a four feet high by eight feet wide (4' x 8') free-standing bulletin board, and tacks, to display your poster presentation.

You can preview how your poster submission will appear online and in the convention program book by clicking on the following link:

[http://www.psychologicalscience.org/convention/program\\_2008/search/viewposter.cfm?abstract\\_id=14664](http://www.psychologicalscience.org/convention/program_2008/search/viewposter.cfm?abstract_id=14664).

The full poster session schedule is as follows:

Thursday, May 22, 2008

Poster Session I at 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM (Setup 5:00 PM – 6:00 PM)

Friday, May 23, 2008

Poster Session II at 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM (Setup 7:00 AM - 7:50 AM)

Poster Session III at 1:30 PM - 2:30 PM (Setup 12:30 PM – 1:20 PM)

Poster Session IV at 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM (Setup 3:00 PM – 3:50 PM)

Saturday, May 24, 2008

Poster Session V at 8:00 AM – 9:00 AM (Setup 7:00 AM – 7:50 AM)

Poster Session VI at 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM (Setup 11:00 AM – 11:50 AM)

Poster Session VII at 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM (Setup 2:00 PM – 2:50 PM)

Poster Session VIII at 4:00 PM – 5:00 PM (Setup 3:00 PM – 3:50 PM)

Sunday, May 25, 2008

Poster Session IX at 8:00 AM – 9:00 AM (Setup 7:00 AM – 7:50 AM)

Poster Sessions X at 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM (Setup 11:00 – 11:50 AM)

(Posters and symposia will run through 1:00 PM Sunday. The Festschrift in honor of Elliot Aronson will run through 5:00 PM on Sunday.)

Each presenter must register for the convention and pay the appropriate convention registration fee. No one, including presenters and authors, will be allowed into any convention session, including Poster Session V, without registering. Register before March 31, 2008 and save with the Early Price registration fees. You can join or renew your APS Membership at the same time that you register for the convention by selecting 'Join or Renew' on the registration form. Registration information is available online at <http://www.psychologicalscience.org/convention/registration.cfm>.

We also suggest you make your hotel reservations as soon as possible. Please visit

<http://www.psychologicalscience.org/convention/hotel.cfm> for information on how to book a room at the Sheraton Chicago and receive the APS specially-negotiated rate of \$179 per night plus tax.

Congratulations again on having your poster accepted and thank you for participating in this year's APS Annual Convention. We look forward to your presentation in Chicago.

Sincerely,  
Jean Piaget  
2008 APS Program Chair

Applicant's name, title of the conference, where it is at, presentation information (time, place, how to do it) are all in the email. Simply printing this out would be acceptable.

The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "20th Annual Convention Program Book - Windows Internet Explorer". The address bar shows the URL: [http://www.psychologicalscience.org/convention/Program\\_2008/search/results.cfm](http://www.psychologicalscience.org/convention/Program_2008/search/results.cfm). The page content includes the APS logo and the following text:

**Association for Psychological Science**  
**20th Annual Convention**  
**Chicago, IL**  
**May 22-25 2008**

Navigation buttons: [Find a Presentation](#), [Find a Presenter](#), [Browse Program](#), [My Itinerary](#)

**Search Results**

To view details about a presentation, click on the presentation title. To find additional programs by a particular presenter, click on their name. To add a presentation to your itinerary, click on the "Add to Itinerary" button to the right of the presentation. [Search Again](#)

**4 events found**

**Results Page: 1**

1	<a href="#">Examining the Benefits of GSA Grants in a mid-size University</a>	
	John Grad	
	Poster	
	Learning, Competitiveness, and Achievement - Board: LA-025	
	Location: Chicago 6	
	Date/Time: Friday, May 23, 2008 12:30 PM - 1:30 PM	
2	<a href="#">[REDACTED]</a>	
	Poster	
	Poster Session V - Board: V-095	
	Location: Exhibit Hall	
	Date/Time: Saturday, May 24, 2008 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM	
3	<a href="#">[REDACTED]</a>	
	Poster	
	Poster Session III - Board: III-117	

The browser's taskbar shows the Start button, several open applications (Inbox - Microsoft Out..., 20th Annual Conve..., GRANT DOCUMENTS, Graduate Student Ass...), and the system clock showing 12:17 PM.

Title of conference, information about the conference, applicants name, title of presentation, when and where, and what type are all given. Simple printing this out would be acceptable.

\*Note, you still have to include documentation about the conference. You should not simply submit this page and intend for it to count as both.

Unacceptable Confirmation of Presentation

Dear Susan,

The project looks interesting. Once the reviewers have put the schedule together, I'll be in touch.

John

The first problem is there is no clear statement that the applicant has been accepted to present. Second, no information about the conference is given, nor is it clear that the person sending the email is associated with the conference.

## 6. Changes and Revisions to Handbook

This section is for those who are familiar with GSA's rules and procedures to quickly look and see if there have been any changes to the handbook.

- April 1, 2008 – Minor editing to make the document more readable. No major changes in content.
- May 18, 2008 – Eligibility included in handbook in Section 2.a. (was included on the website, also here to make sure the rules are clear).
- July 7, 2008 – New rule added to Section 4. Grant Policies. The rule that was added stated conference grant awardees must present their conference registration receipt to the Business Office.
- July 24, 2008 – Clarification added to Section 2.c. Conference awardees who do not actually attend their conference may not collect a GSA award. Non-attendance of the conference applied for automatically makes the GSA grant award void.
- August 12, 2008 - Correction of grammar to Section 2.c. “Receiving a Conference award is dependent of the applicant attending the conference in person” changed to “Receiving a Conference award reimbursement is dependent on the applicant attending the conference in person.”
- November 5, 2008 – Clarification added to Section 3. Reorganized so that there was a general rules for both Conference and Research applications. Clarified faculty signature to acknowledge faculty signature must be a UNC faculty member. Section 2, C & D had one amendment and one clarification. C – GSA retains all rights to decide what is a valid expense. D – clarified and highlighted that applications should not be sent to Graduate School in Carter.
- November 5, 2008 – Section added to Section 2. Clarification that conferences for professional development are acceptable, as long as the applicant has faculty sponsorship.
- July 24, 2009. Minor editing for year change and clarity of content. Added to Conference/Travel Expenses do's and don't. Updated information on Research Application. Added clarification to Research Expenses “don'ts” to include transcriptions. (Transcriptions are an ok expense if they are done by a certified transcriptionist.)

## 7. Business Office Procedures

This section briefly explains some of the procedures for how to receive reimbursement from your GSA grant.

Most importantly, **SAVE ALL OF YOUR RECEIPTS!**

**INTERNATIONAL TRAVELERS, BE SURE TO RECEIVE APPROVAL FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION!**

Do not just drop your receipts off at the GSA desk. By university regulations, the GSA President cannot issue out money. This has to be done through the Business Office.

Please be sure to read your award letter and follow the instructions presented on it.

If, for any reason, you cannot go to the Business Office, applicants should contact them and arrange a means of getting the applicant's receipts to the Business Office. The Business Office contact information is as follows:

Donna Steffins: [Donna.Steffins@unco.edu](mailto:Donna.Steffins@unco.edu)

Cherise Dekraai: [Cherise.Dekraai@unco.edu](mailto:Cherise.Dekraai@unco.edu)

Phone number: 970.351.1308 or 1309

If you need to mail in your receipts, please contact the Business Office (NOT the GSA President) and make arrangements directly with them. This will expedite the process for all parties.

Also, please be sure to be courteous with the Business Office employees. They are bound to follow University protocols and procedures. Applicants who are found to be overly rude or hostile to the Business Office employees may have their GSA grant revoked by the GSA President.