

1. STUDENT GROUP PROTOCOL

I: Purpose

The purpose of this protocol is to ensure that funding considerations for recognized SMSS student groups, both new and returning, are met efficiently and effectively, and are awarded in accordance with the principles of justice, equity, and equality. Furthermore, this protocol will outline the requirements of applicants/groups applying for recognized SMSS Student Group status, the review process of the applicants, the roles and responsibilities of those doing the reviews (i.e. the Committee), and the transparency of process and confidentiality rights of applicants/groups. The protocol shall also identify how appeals regarding the Committee's decisions may be made.

II: Definitions

1. Ratified/Recognized SMSS Student Group (status): Refers to any body a) of 13 or more students who meet with b) a goal pertaining to medicine in mind, and c) have met the requirement of this protocol and been ratified as a SMSS group for the year by the Funding and Oversight Committee.
2. Student group in good standing: Refers to a returning, previously/currently recognized student group that has committed to and upholds the requirements of recognized student groups and also has no outstanding budgetary conflicts.
3. New SMSS Ratified/Recognized Student Group (or New Student Group): refers to a novel group of students who work together to accomplish their group's goals and have not been recognized as a student group in the previous application cycle.
4. Returning SMSS Ratified/Recognized Student Group (or Returning Student Group): refers to a group of students who work together to accomplish their group's goals and have been recognized as a student group in the previous application cycle.
5. Audit: VP Finance will conduct an inspection of the group's finances at any time during the academic year to ensure budgetary compliance.

III: New Student Group Ratification and Funding

1. All student groups recognized by the SMSS will be first ratified by the Funding and Oversight committee.
 - 1.1. Discussion of ratification will occur only at the October meeting.
 - 1.2. Any group ratified will become a recognized student group one (1) week after the October meeting is held.
 - 1.3. Ratification lasts one year starting from recognition until the week of the October meeting the following year

2. All ratified SMSS Student Groups will adhere to the SMSS policies and relevant governing documents. In return, they will receive the following rights and responsibilities:
 - 2.1. Right to have group events posted to the SMSS website calendar.
 - 2.2. Right to request funding from the SMSS.
 - 2.3. Right and responsibility to participate in the SMSS Student Group Fair and SMSS Student Group Roundtable Discussions
 - 2.4. Responsibility to uphold their own mandate, the mandate of the SMSS, and the College's mandate.
 - 2.5. Responsibility to conduct group business professionally and equitably.
3. All applying student groups will be required to completely fill out and submit the New Student Group Application form to the Chair of Committee (via email) no less than two (2) weeks before the October meeting of the Funding and Oversight Committee occurs. The following are reasons why an application will be denied outright, without the opportunity for appeal:
 - 3.1. The application is late.
 - 3.2. The application is incomplete.
 - 3.3. The application is inaccurate or presents falsified information.
 - 3.4. The application is identical to a previously reviewed application.
4. Executive members of Student Groups may not sit as an executive member of more than **three** student groups or hold more than two president positions. Any group found to have executives that sit on more than three groups will be asked to re-submit their application after a different executive is elected/appointed.
5. Four members from the Committee (the VPs Finance, Internal Regina Jr., Internal Saskatoon Jr., and External Jr), appointed by the Chair, shall review the minimum requirements for ratification as outlined on the ratification form, including the indicated specific criteria (i.e. Mission statement, goals, group uniqueness, equity, etc.,) each group submits, and make a recommendation to the other committee members regarding ratification.
 - 5.1. New groups will be ratified by a simple majority resolution of the Committee, on the basis of meeting the minimum requirements outlined on the New Group Ratification form.
 - 5.2. Any Committee member who sits on the executive of a Group must abstain from voting on that Group's ratification and must excuse themselves for all discussions and votes pertaining to the Group.
6. Budget requests will be granted according to the Budgetary Request Process section of this protocol. This process equally divides the allotted funds set aside for student groups by the number of eligible (ratified) student groups, while also maintaining a reserve fund.

7. The Chair of Committee will be responsible for informing all applicant groups whether or not they have succeeded in being ratified no more than one (1) week following the October meeting.
 - 7.1. Successful applications will receive the following information:
 - 7.1.1. An outline of how to get SMSS funds/the funding they have received.
 - 7.1.2. An outline of further steps the group may take/upcoming important dates.
 - 7.1.3. An attachment outlining the rights and responsibilities recognized SMSS student groups are bound by and to.
 - 7.2. Unsuccessful applications will receive the following information:
 - 7.2.1. A specific request for more documentation should it be required.
 - 7.2.2. The failing ratification criteria that must be amended or resolved prior to re-submission of the application.
8. In order to attract new members to their group, two executive members from an unrecognized student group may attend the first year Student Group Fair.
 - 8.1. The Student Group Fair is regularly held in September.
 - 8.2. Interested groups should contact the Student Group Coordinator by September 1st at smss.sgcoord@gmail.com.

IV: Returning Student Group Ratification and Funding

1. Recognition as a SMSS Student Group lasts one year. All Student Groups must recertify each year by submitting the Returning Student Group Application form to the Chair of Committee no later than one (1) week prior to the October meeting of the Funding and Oversight Committee.
 - 1.1. Ratification lasts from one week after the Committee's October meeting is held until the week of the same meeting the following year.
 - 1.2. NOTE: The Returning Student Groups Application form includes both information for the year coming as well as a number of places to report on the group's activities from the last year. Both parts are considered mandatory.
 - 1.3. Returning Student Groups are required to elect their President and at least one (1) other executive member (strongly recommended to be treasurer) at the end of April, prior to turnover. Groups are required to elect at least one (1) member at both the Saskatoon and Regina sites.
2. All ratified SMSS Student Groups will adhere to the SMSS policies and relevant governing documents. In return, they will receive the following rights and responsibilities:
 - 2.1. Right to have group events posted to the SMSS website calendar.
 - 2.2. Right to request funding from the SMSS.
 - 2.3. Right and responsibility to participate in the SMSS Student Group Fair and SMSS Student Group Roundtable Discussions

- 2.4. Responsibility to uphold their own mandate, the mandate of the SMSS, and the College's mandate.
- 2.5. Responsibility to conduct group business professionally and equitably.
3. The following are reasons why an application will be denied outright, without the opportunity for appeal:
 - 3.1. The application is late.
 - 3.2. The application is incomplete.
 - 3.3. The application is inaccurate or presents falsified information.
 - 3.4. The application is identical to a previously reviewed application.
 - 3.5. The group fails to provide required documentation.
 - 3.6. NOTE: If less than one Executive member from the group failed to participate at the SMSS Student Group Roundtable Discussions, or the group failed to participate at the Student Group Fair they will automatically receive only **half or less** of the budget they request. This breach of professional responsibility may also result in denial of the application and/or denial of all funding for the year.
4. Executive members of student groups may not sit as an executive member of more than **three** student groups or hold more than two president positions. Any group found to have executives that sit on more than three groups will be asked to re-submit their application after a different executive is elected/appointed.
5. Four members of the Committee (the VPs Finance, Internal Regina Jr., Internal Saskatoon Jr., and External Jr.), appointed by the Chair, shall review the minimum ratification requirements as outlined by the Returning Student Group form (i.e. Mission statement, goals, group uniqueness, equity, etc.) each group submits, and make a recommendation to the other committee members regarding re-ratification.
 - 5.1. Returning groups will be ratified by a simple majority resolution of the Committee.
 - 5.2. Any Committee member who sits on the executive of a Group must abstain from voting on that Group's ratification and must excuse themselves for all discussions and votes pertaining to the Group.
6. Budget requests will be granted according to the Budgetary Request Process section of this protocol. This process equally divides the allotted funds set aside for student groups by the number of eligible (ratified) student groups, while also maintaining a reserve fund
 - 6.1. Fiscal irresponsibility, as defined by the VP Finance, found as part of this audit may impact the funding of the new budgetary request.
 - 6.2. Ongoing issues with a group's finances or professionalism issues may result in suspended ratification.
7. The Chair of the Committee will be responsible for informing all applicant groups whether or not they have succeeded in being ratified no more than one (1) week following the October meeting.
 - 7.1. Successful applications will receive the following information:
 - 7.1.1. An outline of the funding they have received.

- 7.1.2. An outline of upcoming important dates.
- 7.2. Unsuccessful applications will receive the following information:
 - 7.2.1. A specific request for more documentation should it be required.
 - 7.2.2. The failing ratification criteria that must be amended or resolved prior to re-submission of the application.

V: Budgetary Request Process

1. Budgetary requests will consider the following sections of the documents for New and/or Returning Student Groups: Ratification Form and Budget Form.
2. As there are many SMSS Student Groups, groups are reminded that the Committee shall endeavor to provide them with the maximum appropriate funding given the constraint of the funding to which the SMSS has access.
 - 2.1. As such, no less than 15% of the overall SMSS budget shall be spent on student group funding.
 - 2.2. Groups are asked to be professional and respectful of the needs of other groups applying. Therefore, groups should tailor their budgets to reflect efficient use of funds and not request funding in excess of need or in excess of the SMSS guidelines.
 - 2.3. The Committee reserves the right to limit funding requests in excess of need and/or in excess of the SMSS guidelines. These adjustments may not be appealed.
 - 2.4. The Committee reserves the right to re-allocate any excess funds to other student financial supports such as the Travel Awards or Student Initiatives funding.
3. The SMSS funding guidelines will be presented as part of the application form
 - 3.1. Funding allocation for Student Groups will be as follows:
 - 3.1.1. A total budget of “x” for Student Groups will be set for the upcoming academic year as a portion of the Overall SMSS budget. For example, this total amount “x” may be \$15,000.
 - 3.1.2. Of this total amount “x” a portion will be set aside as a reserve. For example, this may be \$5000 of a total \$15000 budget.
 - 3.1.3. The remaining funds “y” will be divided equally amongst the total number of successfully ratified student groups to set the allotted funds of “z”. For example, \$10,000 will be divided among 20 ratified groups totaling \$500 for each group.
 - 3.1.4. All ratified student groups are eligible for funding up to the determined amount “z” (e.g. \$500) in the form of retroactive reimbursement. Therefore, student groups may decide to spend up to that amount on various events, and are required to maintain their receipts for reimbursement.
 - 3.1.5. For reimbursement, only the student group’s Treasurer/VP Finance or equivalent will contact the SMSS VP Finance, to present receipts for reimbursement of the club’s spent funds, up to the allotted amount “z”.

3.1.6 If student groups require funding beyond that allotted amount “z” (eg \$500), they will be required to contact the SGC and VP Finance to provide a rationale for the extra requested funds, as well as a specific event budget and outline. These extra funds will be awarded from the set reserve amount “x” (eg. \$5000).

3.1.6.1 While it is encouraged that groups apply for extra funding as soon as possible, Groups must submit their request for extra funding no later than 2 weeks prior to their event. The Funding and Oversight Committee will review the request, through an online or in person meeting/discussion, and provide an answer within one week of the request submission.

- 3.2. Meal funding for group executive and/or group general meetings cannot be included in the group’s budget request.
4. The committee shall vote on the budget recommendations of the appointed members after all anomalies have been discussed.
- 4.1. The voting shall be by simple majority.
- 4.2. Any Committee member who sits on the executive of a Group must abstain from voting on that Group’s budget request and must excuse themselves for all anomaly discussions and votes pertaining to the Group.
- 4.3. Budget fulfilment will be the responsibility of the VP Finance, as dictated by the Chair.

VI: Audits and Outcomes with Regards to Funding

1. Student groups are required to comply with any audit request from the SMSS VP Finance.
2. Student groups should seek to have consistently updated financial records that they should be able to produce in the case of an audit within a week (7 days).
3. Student groups that fail to comply with audit requests or are found to have been fiscally irresponsible as part of an audit investigation shall be required to repay their budget for the current academic year to the SMSS by Nov 1 of that year and will furthermore be disallowed from requesting financial compensation from the SMSS for a period of one (1) year.

VII: Revocation of Recognized SMSS Student Group Status

1. The Committee reserves the right to revoke SMSS Student Group status following any of the following:
 - 1.1. A breach of professionalism by the offending student group.
 - 1.2. Continuous fiscal irresponsibility or inappropriate budgeting.
 - 1.3. Failure of a student group to stand out as unique/novel.

- 1.3.1. This shall be decided only by a 3/4th vote of committee
 - 1.3.2. This is subject to appeal. The appeal shall be respectful, fair, and completed in a timely fashion. The Chair shall control how the appeal process occurs and may request the final decision be decided by a vote of all SMSS Officers.
 - 1.3.3. NOTE: Student Groups that fail to be ratified or have ratification status revoked lose the rights entitled to recognized student groups but are not required to cease functioning within the College of Medicine. These groups can seek ratification the following October.
2. The Committee shall treat all incidents regarding revocation of status seriously and with utmost confidentiality.
 - 2.1. The same will be expected of all persons involved in the revocation process. Committee members and SMSS members in violation (e.g. rumour spreading, etc.) shall be held accountable (See SMSS Accountability Policy) and may be referred to the UGME office for a breach of professionalism.

VIII: Confidentiality and Transparency

The SMSS reaffirms its commitment to individual confidentiality as part of an unbiased process as well as our organization's responsibilities of fair conduct and the transparency we owe our membership.

Confidentiality shall be addressed in the following ways:

1. The members of the Committee agree to keep information discussed as part of the scoring process confidential.
2. The Committee meeting minutes and discussions shall be considered closed with communications to general members being the responsibility of the Chair and, in a limited manner, the VP Finance (as part of the SMSS budget declarations).
3. Appeals shall be handled in a confidential manner. Confidentiality will be expected from both Committee membership and the appealing applicant during the appeal process.

Transparency shall be addressed in the following ways:

1. Following the Committee's decisions, a list of total funding amounts shall be made accessible to general members. This will occur no later than one (1) month after the decisions are finalized.
2. This protocol, as well as all relevant information regarding applications, shall be made permanently available to general members on the SMSS website.

IX: Appeals

Appeals for funding decisions, Student Group ratifications, and/or revocation will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Appeals should be rare and the process the Committee follows will be carried out by the Chair. Any concerns about the processes or decisions of the Committee should be addressed to the Chair (smss.sgcoord@gmail.com) NO LATER than one month (30 days) after a decision is made.

X: Roles and Responsibilities

1. SMSS Student Groups Coordinator (SGC)
 - 1.1. Chair the Committee
 - 1.2. Receive and distribute student group applications to Committee members in accordance with this protocol
 - 1.3. Counsel potential applicants regarding their applications and interpretation of this protocol as requested
 - 1.4. Communicate decisions of the Committee to applicants/groups, regardless of application success
 - 1.5. Maintain records in accordance with this protocol
 - 1.6. Mediate disputes between student groups and other student groups, the Committee, or the SMSS. This responsibility may at times overlap with that of the SMSS VP Internals, in which case the positions are to coordinate to find an outcome mutually agreeable to all parties

XI: Maintenance of Records

The Chair of the Committee shall hold all received applications and communiques (original and de-identified applications, email exchanges, etc.) on the SMSS SGC account from the time they are received, throughout the student group funding process, and for a period of two (2) years after a decision regarding student group status/funding is made. Once the Committee has decided upon applications, only the SGC (Chair), VP Finance, and individuals outlined on the group's application (or their positions' successors) are able to request access to the records.

This may be subject to change in the case of a decision appeal or unidentified extenuating circumstances. The applications and all documents on file for an approved student group will be curated by the SGC throughout the year for use the following year when the group applies for status as a returning group.

XII: Resources and Contact Information

Resources:

1. SMSS Policy: The SMSS Funding and Oversight Committee

2. SMSS Constitution
3. Robert's Rules of Order

Contacts:

1. SMSS Student Group Coordinator -> smss.sgcoord@gmail.com (General Information, Primary Contact, Committee Chair)
2. SMSS Vice-President, Communications -> smss.vpcommunications@gmail.com (Transparency inquiries)
3. SMSS Vice-President, Internals -> smss.vpinternal@gmail.com; vpregina.smss@gmail.com (General information, SMSS and Governing)

XIII: Review

This protocol is subject to review and approval by the SMSS Council. Restructuring the protocol shall fall to the SMSS Funding and Oversight Committee, unless otherwise outlined by the SMSS Council. This protocol is to be reviewed one year after its inception (i.e. in 2020), and every three years thereafter (i.e. 2023, 2026, 2029, etc.). Restructuring shall follow the same schedule, or as needed.