



# Service Groups Policy 2025

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# Preamble

Service Groups are specialized UVSS departments that offer important resources for students. This policy is designed to outline the operational structures, financial details, and oversight measures, for these service groups.

This policy was passed by the Policy Development Committee. It can be amended at a quorate meeting of the Policy Development Committee and all amendments must be approved at a Board of Directors meeting.

## Part 1: Definitions

- 1.1 Board of Directors (BoD)** – The UVSS governing body of elected student representatives, and which includes the five [5] lead directors. BoD members serve a one [1]- year term beginning each May 1<sup>st</sup> and commencing each April 30<sup>th</sup>.
- 1.2 Excluded Manager** – the non-unionized staff who report to the UVSS Board of Directors, and who oversee all unionized UVSS staff. Includes the Executive Director, Constituency Groups Director, General Manager, and Human Resources and Administrative Services Manager.
- 1.3 Fiscal year** – the UVSS accounting fiscal year is May 1 - April 30.
- 1.4 Main Department** – Service groups are classified as either “Main” or “Sub” departments within the UVSS. This classification refers to their operational reporting structure and staffing model. Main Departments are responsible for overseeing their designated sub-department(s). Main departments are listed here:
  - Anti-Violence Project
  - Info Booth
- 1.5 Service Groups** – The following non-revenue generating groups operating as departments within the UVSS and which provide crucial services to students. Service Groups are named for their specific service and according to their designated fee levy but are operationally linked as main and sub-departments.
  - Anti-Violence Project (AVP)
  - Food Bank
  - Info Booth
  - Peer Support Centre (PSC)
- 1.6 The Society (UVSS)** – the University of Victoria Students' Society.
- 1.7 Sub-department** – Service groups are classified as either “Main” or “Sub” departments within the UVSS. This classification refers to their operational reporting

structure and staffing model. Sub-departments report to their designated Main department. Sub-departments are listed here, with their designated main department in square brackets:

Food Bank [Info Booth]

Peer Support Centre (PSC) [Anti-Violence Project]

**1.8 Voting Membership** – As outlined in each Service Group’s designated committee.

## **Part 2: Governance**

### **2.1 General**

These guidelines outline the mandatory minimum requirements for Service Groups to operate within the UVSS. Service Groups may not lower or overrule any requirements contained in this policy or any other UVSS policy. In case of conflicting UVSS policies, the UVSS Constitution takes priority, followed by BoD Policy, and then this policy.

### **2.2 Committee Oversight**

- a. Each Service Group has a designated committee, unless otherwise specified.
  - i. The Info Booth does not have a designated committee, as the activities of that Service Group do not change over time, except if required by law.
- b. The purpose of a Service Group’s committee is to provide oversight to the activities and endeavours of that Service Group.
- c. Committees are responsible for the following:
  - i. Ensure a Service Group carries out its mandate to the benefit of students.
  - ii. Approve expenses and budgets as outlined in this policy.
  - iii. Ensuring a Service Group is acting within the scope of its intended purpose.
  - iv. Ensuring a Service Group is acting within the scope of its financial limitations.
  - v. Make staffing suggestions to excluded managers to consider.
- d. Committees do not direct staff in day-to-day operations.
- e. Specifics regarding quorum, committee composition, and meeting frequency for each Service Group’s committee are found in the UVSS Board of Directors’ Policy.

## **Part 3: Operations**

### **3.1 General**

The operations of service groups have some variation between groups, due to financial limitations and priorities of the BoD year to year. The following work terms for UVSS staff

(excluding work study staff) are subject to the terms outlined in the USW Collective Agreement, and should this policy or any section within contradict, come into conflict with, and/ or be found in disagreement with the USW Collective Agreement, the offending clause(s) of this policy shall be unenforceable, and the USW Collective Agreement shall take priority.

### 3.2 Operational Structure

- a. For organizational efficiency and to promote financial stability, two Service Groups act as main departments while the remaining Service Groups operate as sub-departments within their associated main department.
  - i. See **Definitions** for details about each Service Groups classification as “main” or “sub” department and associated “main” or “sub” department.
- b. Staff in the main departments are responsible for overseeing staff in their designated sub-departments.
- c. Budgets, financial records and reports, and collected and disbursed designated fee levies remain distinct for each Service Group.
  - i. This may be altered by a referendum question posed to UVSS members and according to UVSS policy.
- d. Each Service Group's activities are independent of each Service Group's activities, though staff in main departments may perform duties for their designated sub-departments, and vice versa, when workload in their Service Group allows and/or at the discretion of an excluded manager. Performance of specific work duties is limited by the terms in the Collective Agreement.

### 3.3 Staff

There are three types of staff that may be paid for work in a Service Group. The coordinators and student staff are UVSS employees, while work study positions are UVic employees.

- a. Coordinators: Each Service Group that is also a main department shall have one [1] supervisory Coordinator hired for a term that aligns with the stipulations of the USW Collective Agreement.
  - i. No Service Group shall have more than one [1] supervisory Coordinator.
  - ii. Service Groups classified as sub-departments shall have no coordinator-level staff.
- b. Student Staff: Each Service Group that is also a sub-department shall have a minimum of one [1] student staff position.
  - i. Service Groups classified as main departments generally do not employ student staff as the staff in their designated sub-department can do work on their behalf when required.
- c. Work Study: Each Service Group shall apply for work study positions with UVic annually.

- i. Work Study staff are the employees of UVic, not UVSS, and the allocation of Work Study hours is entirely decided by UVic and not guaranteed to Service Groups.
- ii. The UVSS General Office Manager will inform Service Group Coordinators about requirements and timelines for all stages of the Work Study program.
- iii. Work Study staff of a Service Group may be appointed or elected to their Service Group's committee.

### 3.4 Role of Coordinators

The role of the coordinator(s) in Service Groups is to ensure the functioning and longevity of their respective Service Groups. All efforts made and endeavours undertaken by coordinators must be done with the goal of providing the resources and service expected of their department. Coordinator positions that are term contracts are designed to provide professional experience to recent UVic undergrads, or students who are in the final stages of obtaining their degree but may be filled by individuals outside this intention depending on the applicant pool at the time of hiring for coordinator positions.

- a. Coordinators' responsibilities, regardless of Service Group, include but are not limited to:
  - i. Preparation of the Annual Workplan.
  - ii. Preparation of the Annual Report, to be presented at a committee meeting.
  - iii. Ensuring that all expenditures reflect the priority of delivering exceptional service.
  - iv. Pursuit of programming, resources, and service delivery that aligns with their specified service.
  - v. Completion of administrative tasks necessary for the functioning of the Service Group.
  - vi. Ensure staff are scheduled so that at least one service group per combined main and sub-departments are available on campus to support students on regular workdays during the academic year (Sept-April, inclusive).
  - vii. Presentation of financial reports to their committee.
  - viii. Creation and review of budgets.
  - ix. Ensuring staff are aware of any applicable UVSS policies and notifying the relevant excluded manager of any breaches to policy.
- b. Regardless of the individual who completes the tasks outlined above, the supervisory coordinator is ultimately responsible for those tasks being completed.
  - i. The supervisory coordinator also has the responsibility of supervising staff in their main and sub-departments.
- c. Additional tasks and responsibilities may be assigned to a coordinator as related to their job description by their respective excluded manager.
  - i. These additional duties may not require a coordinator to perform duties outside of their job description.

- ii. Subject to limitations in all unionised staff job descriptions, coordinators may complete or delegate the above tasks to other staff members or volunteers.

### **3.5 Role of Student Staff**

Student staff positions are limited to individuals who are currently pursuing an undergraduate degree at UVic and are designed to provide students with work experience while completing their studies. These positions provide give students the opportunity to learn new skills in a professional environment and can provide the opportunity to progress into a coordinator-role, depending on staffing needs. For full details about student staff positions, please view the relevant job description. In general, student staff are either responsible for, or assist the coordinators with:

- a. Overseeing the social media communications for their Service Group, including:
  - i. Content creation.
  - ii. Responding to direct messages.
  - iii. Sharing of other Service Groups' content.
  - iv. Liaising with the Communications and Graphics departments for collaborative social media posts with the UVSS.
- b. Ensuring the Service Group has a relevant brand guide and is utilizing it in digital and print outreach or promotional materials.
- c. Tabling and other in-person outreach at events.
- d. Ensuring all resources available in a Service Group's space are up to date, liaising with community partners as necessary to accomplish this.
- e. Liaising with local organizations, community partners, and/or similar groups at other educational institutions.
- f. Assisting or leading specific programs or initiatives as they relate to their job description.
- g. Drafting the blurb for their Service Group for the UVSS Annual Report.

### **3.6 Job Descriptions**

- a. Work Study job descriptions are updated each spring and submitted to UVic for approval annually.
- b. Job descriptions for unionised staff roles (coordinators and student staff) are updated as per the guidelines and agreements made between the union and the UVSS.
  - i. The relevant excluded manager will advise staff when job descriptions are eligible for review and will advise staff on the process and timelines as required.
  - ii. All job description updates are subject to approval by the USW union and must abide by any restrictions outlined in the USW Collective Agreement

## Part 4: Financial Management

### 4.1 General

Service Group Coordinators shall work with their staff team to compile a budget for each distinctly fee-levied Service Group for which they are responsible, annually. These budgets span the fiscal year and items included in the budgets must be within the scope of the Service Group's activities and show fiscal responsibility. Annual budgets must be approved by the relevant excluded manager and the relevant group's committee, in that order.

### 4.2 Budgeting Schedule

The following dates may vary depending on where they fall on the calendar week but are generally indicative of the timing and schedule for key budget-related dates.

**February 1** The relevant excluded manager notifies the coordinators of the budgeting timeline for the year.

The relevant excluded manager shall request that UVSS Accounting create a budget template and complete the labour section for all Service Groups. The relevant excluded manager is responsible for providing this template and relevant financial reports to the coordinators.

Coordinators collaborate with their staff, and other relevant volunteers, to draft the budget.

**April 15** Final draft budget presented and passed by voting membership. A Service Group's voting membership may pass their budget before this date if the draft budget has been approved by the relevant excluded manager. Coordinators gather and finalize the list of signing authorities.

**April 30** List of signing authorities with emails and final budget sent to the relevant excluded manager and the Director of Finance & Operations with minutes of the meeting at which the budget was passed by voting membership.

**May 1\*** The relevant excluded manager emails approved budgets to the Accounting Manager and gives them a directive to release funds from the Service Groups Base Fund as it is received, if applicable.

If a Service Group's budget is not passed by May 1st because quorum is not met, fees will not be released until quorum is met at a subsequent committee meeting.



\*The Director of Student Affairs and the relevant excluded manager may conditionally approve the Service Group's budget upon meeting with both the relevant Coordinator and at least one non-staff signing authority to release the fees.

### 4.3 Budget Submissions

- a. The relevant excluded manager or the Director of Student Affairs will provide coordinators with a budget template. This template will be prepared by UVSS Accounting and will be an Excel document. Service Groups are not to convert this template to any other format (i.e.: Google Sheets).
- b. Before fees are released, each Service Group's budget must be approved, in the following order, by:
  - i. The relevant excluded manager; and,
  - ii. The relevant Service Group's committee.
- c. All finalised budgets must be sent to the relevant excluded manager and the Director of Student Affairs along with minutes of the meeting at which the voting membership passed the budget.
  - i. The relevant excluded manager is responsible for submitting finalised budgets to UVSS Accounting.

### 4.4 Funding

- a. **Service Group Accounts** – The UVSS shall maintain the following trust accounts for the purposes specified below:
  - i. One trust account for each Service Group for its operations.
    - A. Collected fees are held in internal accounts for all levied groups. Service Groups must not have external bank accounts.
- b. **Collection of Funding and Initial Disbursement** – The UVSS shall collect all Service Group respective fee levies and directly deposit those funds in the respective group's restricted account.
- c. **Funding Eligibility** – In order to be eligible for funding, a Service Group must:
  - i. Hold regular committee meetings as described in the Board of Directors Policy; and
  - ii. Present a budget for the upcoming fiscal year alongside financial actuals of spending in the current fiscal year to their committee.

### 4.5 Financial Responsibility

- a. Service Groups may not budget for a yearly accumulated deficit, unless they have sufficient funds in their trust account to cover that deficit, and the deficit is eligible to be covered by the funds in their trust account.

- i. No Service Group may budget for labour expenses to be higher than the anticipated funding that group receives from designated fee levies.
- b. Funds held in a trust account are often the result of previously collected and unspent student fees and may be spent in the following ways:
  - i. As one [1] or more capital expenditure(s).
  - ii. To cover a budgeted deficit, provided that the relevant excluded manager and their voting membership agree to the budgeted deficit.
  - iii. For special programming, initiatives, and/or capacity-building which are anticipated to have long-term positive impacts on their Service Group, and which are presented, in the form of a project proposal, to, and approved by, both their relevant excluded manager and their committee.
- c. If a Service Group does not have funds held in trust and their accumulated deficit is larger than the projected regular semesterly fees for the same semester, then the UVSS will work with the staff and relevant signing authorities to draft a recovery budget that will be in place until the accumulated deficit is recompensed.
  - i. For Interpretation, “regular semesterly fees” include only the amounts designated to each Service Group by their respective fee levies.
  - ii. A recovery budget may be imposed on a Service Group by a UVSS excluded manager or UVSS Lead Director if a Service Group is unwilling to participate in the creation of a recovery budget.
  - iii. A recovery budget is meant to address departmental overspending. This does not apply to any deficits caused by external factors, and in those circumstances, the UVSS reserves the right to act as excluded management and the Board of Directors see fit, within the parameters established in the USW Collective Agreement.
- d. When a recovery budget is in place, the UVSS will not sign off on any cheque requisitions for spending outside of the parameters set by the recovery budget.
- e. When a recovery budget is in place, other financial sanctions such as holding back funding, temporarily halting spending, and removing signing authorities, may be imposed by the UVSS if the Service Group is not compliant with the recovery budget.
  - i. Signing authorities may only be removed as a sanction if there is a pattern of non-compliant spending submitted with their signature.
- f. A recovery budget is subject to the following stipulations:
  - i. It may not reduce a coordinator’s contractually guaranteed hours.
  - ii. It may not reduce any staff member’s benefits.
  - iii. It may prevent the hiring of new positions or the filling of vacant roles, except in the case of the supervisory coordinator.
  - iv. It may, if any coordinator’s contract ends, reduce the hours offered in a new contract to the minimum allowable under BC Labour laws and the USW Collective Agreement.

- v. It may, according to stipulations in the USW Collective Agreement, lower the number of student staff hours, or lay-off the student staff.
- vi. It may not reduce non-staff expenditures by more than 75%.
  - A. For interpretation, “non-staff expenditures” here refers to all non-labour expense lines combined, to allow a Service Group’s recovery budget flexibility to their needs (i.e.: a recovery budget does not simply reduce each expense line by up to 75%).
- g. A Service Group may apply for and successfully achieve grant monies from external sources at any time.
  - i. A recovery budget may be recalled if the scope and amount of an achieved grant is deemed by the Director of Finance and Operations and the relevant excluded manager to sufficiently offset the Service Group’s projected or accumulated deficit.
- h. In the case where a group has a net accumulated deficit at the end of the fiscal year, any requests for emergency funds may be approved by the UVSS Board of Directors.

## 4.7 Signing Authorities

- a. The maximum number of signing authorities per Service Group shall not exceed seven [7].
  - i. UVSS Excluded Management and elected Lead Directors shall not count toward a Service Group’s maximum number of signing authorities, as they are granted signing authority for all groups due to the nature of their positions.
- b. The majority of signing authorities for a Service Group must be UVSS members in good standing, unless that Service Group is exempt from having a designated committee.
  - i. In the case of Service Groups that serve both undergraduate and graduate students, there may be up to one [1] signing authority who is a member in good standing with the Graduate Students’ Society (GSS).
- c. All supervisory coordinators for a Service Group are signing authorities for the main and sub-departments associated with their group.
- d. Non-supervisory coordinators may or may not be signing authorities.
  - i. Coordinators may not sign on behalf of any other group.
  - ii. Coordinators and UVSS excluded management are the only non-student signing authorities permitted for Service Groups.
  - iii. If a Coordinator is also a UVSS or GSS member in good standing, they shall not be considered a student for the purposes of this policy and determining signing authorities.
- e. Student staff employed by a Service Group may or may not be a signing authority for that Group.

- i. If a student staff member is a signing authority, they shall count as a student member, and not as a staff member, for purposes of interpreting “signing authorities” in this policy.
- f. Service Groups with a designated committee shall have a minimum of three [3] signing authorities, unless that minimum does not allow for the majority of signing authorities to be students, in which case the minimum number of signing authorities is increased to the lowest number needed to satisfy the requirement that the majority of signing authorities are student members.
- g. Student Signing Authorities must be chosen from a Service Group’s voting membership, except for student staff signing authorities.
- h. The supervisory coordinator of a Service Group shall provide updated signing authority lists to the UVSS General Office Manager any time there is a change to the list, and at a minimum of once per year.
- i. Signing authorities shall abide the requirements for spending on behalf of a Service Group as outlined in this and other UVSS policies and shall provide all required documentation for any purchases or expenses.
- j. All signing authorities are accountable to the committee of their respective Service Group and UVSS leadership, particularly the Director of Finance and Operations and their relevant excluded manager, especially regarding financial mismanagement.

## 4.8 Auditing

- a. Service Groups are included in the UVSS’ annual audit.
- b. Should an audit indicate financial irregularities that cannot be accounted for, or should spending fail to comply with internal regulations outlined in this or any UVSS policy, the Service Group shall be subject to financial sanctions by the UVSS, including but not limited to holding back funding and temporarily halting spending.
  - i. Before financial sanctions can be put in place, the Director of Finance & Operations and the relevant excluded manager shall meet with the relevant Service Group’s Coordinator and at least one student voting member to clarify the nature of indicated financial irregularities.
  - ii. Upon meeting with the relevant Service Group’s Coordinator and student voting member, the Director of Finance & Operations shall bring proposed financial sanctions to a UVSS Board of Directors meeting, which must be approved by a two-thirds majority vote.
  - iii. Financial irregularities include, but are not limited to, the following:
    - A. Significant expenses not budgeted or approved as per UVSS spending policies, procedures and/or guidelines.
    - B. Expenses made for personal use rather than the Service Group’s use.

- c. Financial irregularities may be brought forward by any UVSS Lead Director, UVSS staff person, work study staff working for the Service Group, voting and non-voting members of the Service Group's committee, or any other individual who could reasonably be expected to have knowledge of financial irregularities within a Service Group.
  - i. If concerns about financial irregularities are brought forward outside of the annual audit, the steps toward investigating and rectifying shall be the same as if the irregularities were identified during the audit.

## 4.9 Spending

Service Groups must spend monies allocated to them in a responsible manner that adheres to UVSS policies and bylaws, applicable federal and/or provincial legislation, and any requirements or restrictions placed upon specific funds obtained through grants or other external funding.

- a. The preferred method of spending funds on for the purposes of a Service Group is to do so using an excluded manager's UVSS credit card and submitting a Visa Requisition form. This is to reduce the amount of money the UVSS owes to students or staff.
- b. Alternative spending options include: cheque requisitions, as in the case of honorariums or reimbursements; Electronic Funds Transfers (EFTs) for established vendors; and FAST charges through UVic.
  - i. When in doubt as to which spending option is most appropriate, the relevant Service Group's Coordinator should reach out to the relevant excluded manager or UVSS accounting.
- c. Regardless of method of spending, all Service Groups require documentation to justify their expenses. This documentation includes:
  - i. A receipt that clearly shows the items purchased (i.e.: itemized) and the date of purchase.
  - ii. Any additional documentation that can verify the purpose for the expense. This can include, but is not limited to: advertisement (such as a social media post) for specific events programming and/or initiatives; a screenshot of text communications discussing the expense; and/or alternative quotes for similar expenses.
  - iii. If the purchase is below \$500, it must be accompanied by written approval from two signing authorities of the group making the purchase, one of which must be a student.
    - A. For interpretation, "written approval" is understood to be: one signing authority signing the cheque or visa requisition form and the other acting as the requestor on that same form; or
    - B. as two signing authorities signing the relevant visa or cheque requisition form, one of whom is also the requestor.

- iv. If the expense is above \$500, the Service Group's voting membership must approve the expense before it is incurred.
  - A. This approval must be recorded in committee meeting minutes or in the form of electronic votes submitted by screenshotting the original messages and must be attached to the receipt and relevant paperwork when submitted for payment.
- v. If the expense is above \$1500, the Service Group must obtain the approval of the relevant excluded manager prior to making the purchase and after the committee has voted in favour of the expense.
  - A. That same excluded manager must sign the paperwork before it is submitted to Accounting.
- vi. The only type of spending that does not require the signature of a student is when staff are accessing benefits or professional development monies as granted by the UVSS and / or the USW Collective Agreement.
  - A. This spending requires the signature of an excluded manager, regardless of amount.
- d. An excluded manager may approve expenses of any dollar value for a Service Group in absence of that group's committee's approval.
  - i. An excluded manager may not overrule a committee vote that declines expenses for a Service Group, unless those expenses are crucial for that group's operations.
  - ii. When an excluded manager approves any expense(s) without a committee vote, their approval(s) must be presented at the following committee, and the committee reserves the right to question any approvals and expenses granted without their vote.
- e. If a Service Group is exempt from having a designated committee, then all expenses above \$500 for that group must be approved by an excluded manager and a UVSS Lead Director.
- f. It is considered best practice for the relevant excluded manager to sign or initial all expenditures made by Service Groups, and UVSS Accounting may use their discretion to hold payments that do not have this signature or initial until an excluded manager reviews the expense and accompanying paperwork.
- g. If a Service Group fails to provide appropriate documentation or fails to follow internal guidelines for spending practices, see the following courses of action:
  - i. For a first-time issue, the relevant excluded manager will review relevant spending policies, guidelines, and / or practices with the relevant Coordinator.
  - ii. If continued infractions occur, the Service Group may be temporarily restricted from using any excluded manager's UVSS credit card, and / or may face other restrictions as appropriate to the type and level of infractions.

- h. Visa Requisitions require completion of the Visa Requisition Form and the Visa Tracker (both provided by the UVSS).
- i. Cheque Requisitions require completion of the Cheque Requisition Form (provided by the UVSS).
- j. A Service Group shall not transfer funds from any source that is not that Service Group to any recipient.
  - i. Funds received through grants shall be exempt from the above statement.
- k. In the case that a Service Group's budget is not passed by April 30th, that Service Group will not be able to make purchases or spend money in any way other than staff wages until their budget is passed by their membership or conditionally approved by the Director of Finance & Operations and the relevant excluded manager.
  - i. Any Directors with questions about spending by Service Groups shall contact: the applicable Service Group Coordinator or committee, the Director of Finance & Operations, and / or the relevant excluded manager.

## 4.10 Gifts

- a. Gifts consist of all non-monetary compensation to an individual or group that is not a donation.
- b. Items presented as gifts shall be left up to the discretion of the voting membership but must not include alcohol or gift cards.
- c. Voting members are not eligible for gifts solely because they have fulfilled the duties of their roles.
- d. Coordinators and Service Group voting members are prohibited from buying gifts for themselves or each other with student fees.
  - i. If a Service Group member is the recipient of a gift, that member must not be present during either the motion or voting to approve the allocation.
  - ii. Service Group members may receive a gift as recognition of volunteer work done for the Service Group. In this case, such gifts shall not exceed \$50 in value.

## 4.11 Honorariums

- a. Honorariums consist of all extra-contractual monetary compensation to an individual or group and which are not donated monies.
  - i. Honorariums are money given as a token of appreciation for services and / or labour and are not intended as payments which reflect adequate or above average compensation.
- b. Honorariums should be limited to participation in events organized by the Service Group issuing the honorarium, such as: performance as an entertainer, conducting or facilitating a workshop, or other similar activities.

- i. Payments for performances and workshops should range from \$50 to \$500 depending on the length of the event, preparation time, and education or professional designation of the presenter or performer.
  - ii. When issuing payments for the above types of services, Service Groups should assess whether the individual(s) receiving payment should invoice the Service Group for their time or skills instead of filing payment(s) as an honorarium(s).
- c. Service Groups shall not receive funds from any source which are designated for use toward any honorarium payment(s) for purposes organised or originating outside of that Service Group.
- d. Cheque requisitions for honorariums must be accompanied by the Honorarium Request Form.
- e. Service Group members may receive honoraria for services rendered for the Service Group, including workshop facilitation, but must not be present during either the motion or voting regarding their payment.
- f. UVSS staff are not eligible for honorariums, regardless of whether they fulfill any of the above services for a Service Group.
  - i. If a UVSS staff member should receive payment for services to a Service Group that they do not normally work for, that Service Group is responsible for paying that staff member's normal wage and any applicable overtime.