Ground Support Initiative (GSI) Policy

Purpose

The Ground Support Initiative (GSI), funded through the ERAU-Worldwide Student Government Association Annual Spending Package, provides financial assistance to enhance student engagement. Funding is intended to support programs, services, and initiatives that directly benefit ERAU Worldwide students. All requests must demonstrate a clear connection to student engagement, success, the University's mission, and/or SIT Initiatives.

Please note: The Department of Student Engagement – Worldwide (DSE) will administer the GSI process while SGA provides the funding. DSE may update these guidelines as necessary to remain consistent with applicable ERAU policies, procedures, and SGA governing documents.

Eligibility

GSI funding may be requested by authorized Embry-Riddle Worldwide staff members, approved site locations, and site-based registered student organizations, subject to available funding and compliance with university policies.

GSI Guidelines

To ensure responsible stewardship of university resources:

1. All GSI requests must clearly demonstrate a direct benefit to Embry-Riddle Worldwide students.
2. Funds must be requested sixty (60) days before the event to ensure timely review.
3. GSI requests must be submitted and approved before any expenditure is incurred. Expenses incurred before approval are not eligible for reimbursement unless prior written authorization is provided by DSE.
4. Funding approval is contingent upon the availability of funds and the completeness of the request.
5. Failure to demonstrate student benefit may result in denial of the request and may impact future funding opportunities.
6. Funding is provided via reimbursement process or journal entry. Staff should submit an expense report and attach an approval notification when filing an expense report. Expenses not included in the original approved request will not be reimbursed unless prior written authorization is provided by DSE.
7. Funding is provided based on a budgetary item for each fiscal year.

The Student Government Association Executive Board, in accordance with the SGA Constitution and applicable University policies, provides oversight of the expenditure of SGA funds. DSE administers the GSI process and ensures requests comply with these guidelines and applicable University policies.

These include:

- Educational Events
- Cultural Events
- Recreational Events
- Social Events
- Athletic Events
- SGA-Branded Merchandise
- Marketing Materials
- Mailing & Shipping Expenses
- Meals on ERAU Property
- Transportation costs
- Supplementary Student Services
- Student-Run Programming Assistance/Administration

GSI-funded programs and activities must comply with applicable University nondiscrimination and equal opportunity policies. Requests that would result in unlawful discrimination or otherwise violate University policy will not be eligible for funding.

Prohibited Expenditures

- Activities/events/programs that do not provide a meaningful benefit to the student population at the applicable Site Location(s).
- Costs related to enrollment in academic courses, academic requirements, lab fees, academic-related travel, required class activities, internships, and co-op learning experiences.
- Alcoholic beverages.
- Recognition/initiation/dues as part of a national organization or honor society.
- Site-branded merchandise.
- Meals **not** on ERAU property.
- Conference registration costs.
- Lodging costs
- Creation of scholarships and/or grants.
- Academic resources that are not open to the entire Site Location.
- Purchasing finished products or elements with the intent to resell.
- Issuance of cash prizes or gift cards.
- Providing goods/services to inactive students.
- Financial assistance for costs related to graduation, including stoles and fees.
- Any expenditure that exclusively benefits an individual student, staff, or faculty member.

Some prohibited expenditures may not be listed in this funding policy due to the evolving nature of SGA funding and ERAU University Policies & Procedures. In addition to this GSI policy, all requests must adhere to Embry-Riddle University policies.

Documentation Requirements

The staff member submitting the request is responsible for providing complete and accurate supporting documentation, including:

- Copies of vendor invoices or quotes.
- Screenshots or written cost estimates when invoices are unavailable.
- A written justification explaining how the purchase or event benefits Embry-Riddle Worldwide students.
- Any additional documentation requested to support the expenditure.

Incomplete requests may be delayed or denied until all required documentation has been received.

Event Funding Requirements

If funding is being requested for an event:

- You must submit the required Worldwide RSO Expense Request Form as part of the funding request.
- Requests submitted without the completed Worldwide RSO Expense Request Form will not be processed.
- Event funding requests should include event details, anticipated attendance, how the event will be marketed, an estimated number of students who will benefit, and an explanation of how the event supports student engagement and student success.

Important Note: The eUnion form will say **Worldwide RSO Expense Request Form** at the top. This is simply because the form was originally created for use in the RSO Payment Request process. Submitting Ground Support Initiative requests is not the same as submitting an RSO request, nor is the requesting site considered an RSO for the purposes of this submission.

Financial Responsibility

The requesting staff member is responsible for ensuring that all expenditures comply with university policies and accurately reflect the approved purpose of the funding.

Failure to provide appropriate documentation or misuse of Ground Support Initiative funds may result in one or more of the following actions:

- Requirement to reimburse improperly spent funds.
- Suspension or freezing of funding privileges.
- Loss of eligibility for future Ground Support Initiative funding.
- Administrative or disciplinary action, including applicable financial penalties, in accordance with university policy.

Fraudulent use of university funds may also be referred for additional institutional review.

GSI Spending Deadlines

Please note**:** GSI requests must be submitted sixty (60) days prior to the event to allow for review and administration of the funds.

Compliance

Recipients of GSI funding are expected to maintain accurate financial records and cooperate with any review or audit of expenditures. Recipients may be asked to provide one or more of the following items for documentation:

- Receipts of purchase
- Name, ID#, and ERAU e-mail of students who benefitted from GSI funding

The university reserves the right to request additional documentation at any time.

Questions

Questions regarding the Ground Support Initiative or the funding request process should be directed to the Student Engagement Team at wwdseoff@erau.edu.

Acknowledgement

By submitting a Ground Support Initiative funding request, the requesting staff member acknowledges that:

- They have read and understand this policy.
- All information submitted is accurate and complete.
- Funds will be used solely for approved purposes.
- Site Director/SGA Ambassador is **solely** responsible for promotion, execution, and post event feedback, unless otherwise agreed upon by the SGA.
- SGA is **ONLY** responsible for funding the request.
- Required documentation will be maintained and submitted as requested.
- By submitting a GSI funding request, your electronic signature acknowledges that you have read and understand this policy and agree to comply with its requirements and applicable University policies and procedures.