

## **The Articles of the Constitution of the University of York Graduate Students' Association**

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## The Articles of the Constitution of the University of York Graduate Students' Association

### Article 1. Preamble

- (1.1) The Graduate Students' Association exists to promote and defend the interests of all graduate students at the University. Operating within a democratic, constitutional framework, it recognises the importance of collaboration between *all* students whilst emphasising the specific characteristics of, and requirements that come with, postgraduate study.
- (1.2) Given these distinct features, the Association celebrates its independent recognition and constitution within the University structure.

### Article 2. Name and Status

- (2.1) The name of the organisation shall be The University of York Graduate Students' Association.
- (2.2) Within the aims and objectives set out in Ordinance 3 of the University of York, the Association will operate according to the rules and procedures stated in this Constitution.
- (2.3) The Association shall, at all times, endeavour to acquire and maintain charitable status. To this effect, it shall operate in such a manner as to fulfil the obligations such status entails.

### Article 3. Interpretation

- (3.1) 'GSA' and 'the Association' shall mean the University of York Graduate Students' Association.
- (3.2) 'Constitution' shall mean the Constitution of the GSA and the attached Schedules, unless the context states otherwise.
- (3.3) 'Ultra vires' shall mean beyond that which is allowed by law.
- (3.4) 'Ex-officio' shall mean being a member by virtue of one's office or position.
- (3.5) 'Pro-rata' shall mean being paid in proportion to the number of hours worked.
- (3.6) 'de facto' shall mean something which is true in practice but not in law.
- (3.7) 'Executive' shall mean the Executive Committee of the GSA, as set out in Article (13) of this Constitution.
- (3.8) 'Council' shall mean the Association Council as set out in Article (11) of this Constitution, unless otherwise stated.
- (3.9) 'GCR' shall mean Graduate Common Room.
- (3.10) 'GCRC' shall mean Graduate Common Room Committee.
- (3.11) 'RA' shall mean Residence Association.
- (3.12) 'PGCE' shall mean the 'Postgraduate Certificate in Education'.
- (3.13) 'PGWT' shall mean postgraduates who teach or graduate teaching assistants (GTA).
- (3.14) 'LGBT' shall mean lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered.
- (3.15) 'The Board' and 'the Trustee Board' shall mean the Board of Trustees, as set out in Article (9) of this Constitution.
- (3.16) 'University' shall mean the University of York.
- (3.17) 'The Registrar' shall mean the Registrar of the University.
- (3.18) 'The Governing Body' shall mean the University Council, in agreement with the Education

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Act 1994.

- (3.19) 'YUSU' shall mean the University of York Students' Union.
- (3.20) 'ISA' shall mean the University of York International Students' Association.
- (3.21) 'The Code of Practice' shall mean the University's Code of Practice for the GSA, which can be found in Appendix 1 of this Constitution.
- (3.22) 'Sports captains' shall mean all captains of Wentworth College sports teams at the University and, where appropriate, the organisers and captains of non-competitive sports organised or managed by the GSA.
- (3.23) The term 'majority', whenever referring to the casting of votes, shall mean half plus one of all ballots cast.
- (3.24) The term 'academic year' shall mean the period from the start of the first day of the Autumn term until the start of the first day of the Autumn term in the following calendar year.
- (3.25) The term 'academic term' shall have the same meaning as used by the University.
- (3.26) The term 'campus' shall refer to the campus areas of the University in the vicinity of Heslington Village, York.
- (3.27) In this Constitution, unless stated otherwise, words importing the singular shall include the plural and vice versa, and words importing the masculine gender shall include the feminine and vice versa. References to persons shall include firms and corporations.
- (3.28) In this Constitution, the terms 'graduate students' and 'postgraduate students' are used interchangeably and shall be considered equivalent.
- (3.29) In this Constitution, unless stated otherwise, role and office names shall also refer to those roles and offices when filled on an acting basis.
- (3.30) In the case of any dispute arising in respect of this Constitution, the Board of Trustees or, in cases when a meeting of the Board cannot be practically called, the President shall interpret this Constitution, and the decision given shall be binding. The decision, once made, shall act as precedent and the cause of the dispute shall be clarified through amendments to this Constitution as soon as is practicable.

### Article 4. Aims

- (4.1) The aims and objectives of the GSA shall be laid down in Ordinance 3 of the University of York and will be to:
  - (a) promote and defend the educational and general interests of its members, and be the recognised representative channel between them, the University of York and other external bodies;
  - (b) further the social interests of all its members;
  - (c) promote the integration and social cohesion of its members;
  - (d) improve communication between graduates and undergraduates at the University by working in conjunction with the representative bodies of undergraduate students;
  - (e) establish contact with other graduate student bodies, and help facilitate the exchange of students and best practice between institutions;
  - (f) raise the profile of postgraduate study at the University of York;
  - (g) further such policies of the Association as are decided by its members according to the procedures laid out in this Constitution.

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### Article 5. Objectives

- (5.1) The GSA will endeavour to:
- (a) actively involve as many members of the Association as possible in all of its activities;
  - (b) consult and represent its members on a range of University committees, advancing the interests of the postgraduate community and providing it with a channel of communication to University authorities;
  - (c) support postgraduate students of the University by providing a range of academic- and welfare-related services;
  - (d) organise social events for postgraduate students of the University, both on and off campus;
  - (e) provide opportunities for postgraduate students of the University to participate in regular sporting activities;
  - (f) provide other services to its members as considered necessary in the pursuit of its aims, as stated in Article (4) of this Constitution;
  - (g) operate in an open, democratic manner.

### Article 6. Powers

- (6.1) To further its aims and objectives, but not for any *ultra vires* purpose, the Association may:
- (a) provide services and facilities for postgraduate students;
  - (b) establish, support, promote and operate a network of postgraduate student activities;
  - (c) carry out campaigning activities in relation to the development and implementation of appropriate policies;
  - (d) do other lawful things to further the Association's aims and objectives, as set out in Articles (4) and (5) of this Constitution.

### Article 7. Equal Opportunities

- (7.1) The GSA shall pursue its aims and objectives with positive inclusion of the diverse needs of all graduate students at its heart. This will include a firm commitment not to discriminate against a graduate student or group of graduate students on any grounds (including, but not limited to, nationality, age, sex, gender, race, religion, creed, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, class, unrelated criminal conviction and medical condition) and a commitment to embrace that difference and celebrate that diversity.
- (7.2) Complaints by a GSA member in relation to equal opportunities shall be dealt with in accordance with the Complaints Procedure detailed in Article (19) of this Constitution.

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### Article 8. Membership

- (8.1) There shall be three classes of membership of the GSA: Ordinary Members, Honorary Members and Reciprocal Members.
- (8.2) All postgraduate students shall be Ordinary Members of the GSA but shall have the right to withdraw from membership by following the procedures laid out in Schedule (14).
- (8.3) Non-members who are registered postgraduate students of the University may resume membership at the start of an academic year by notifying the Registrar within fourteen days of the start of the Autumn term of that year. The Registrar shall communicate any such changes in membership to the GSA, within seven days of receipt of notification by the student concerned.

#### Non-members' rights

- (8.4) Non-members of the GSA who are registered postgraduate students of the University shall not be permitted to participate in GSA affairs as electoral candidates, voters or officers, or as student representatives on University committees where the GSA appoints such representatives. Non-members shall also be disqualified from any office with direct responsibility for expenditure of any funds allocated by the GSA to any groups or Affiliated Committees.
- (8.5) Non-members who are registered postgraduate students of the University shall continue to receive all other services offered by the GSA, with the exception of loans or any other payments made on their behalf by the GSA, and loans of GSA materials and equipment. Subject to the conditions set out above, non-membership shall not be accepted as a reason for excluding any postgraduate student of the University from the activities of any society or group partly or wholly funded by the GSA.
- (8.6) Non-membership shall not be accepted as a reason for excluding any postgraduate student of the University from holding an office in any society or group partly or wholly funded by the GSA that does not involve direct responsibility for expenditure of funds received from the GSA.

#### Ordinary membership

- (8.7) There shall be three classes of Ordinary Members:
- (a) full-time registered postgraduate students;
  - (b) part-time registered postgraduate students and postgraduate students listed on the long-term register;
  - (c) all Principal Officers of the GSA who do not qualify for ordinary membership as per Articles (8.7a) and (8.7b) above.
- (8.8) Any current or previous postgraduate students of the University, employees of the University, undergraduate students aged over 21 and designated partners of Ordinary Members of the GSA, may apply to become an Honorary Member of the GSA for the period or remainder of one academic year.
- (8.9) The granting of Honorary Membership shall be at the discretion of Association Council.
- (8.10) Association Council may grant Honorary Membership for Life to any individual it believes has rendered especially meritorious service to the GSA. Names of all such members shall

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be listed in the Association by-laws.

- (8.11) Reciprocal Membership will be granted to all graduate students from other universities.
- (8.12) Members of the GSA specified in Articles (8.7a) and (8.7b) shall be entitled to use GSA facilities and services as determined by the Executive.
- (8.13) Members specified in Article (8.7c) shall be entitled to all services and facilities subject to restrictions specified for non-members in Article (8.5).
- (8.14) Honorary and Reciprocal Members shall be entitled to all services and facilities subject to the restrictions specified for non-members in Articles (8.4), (8.5) and (8.6).

### Article 9. Board of Trustees

- (9.1) The responsibility for overseeing the administration and management of the Association shall be the duty of the Board, which (subject to the Education Act 1994, this Constitution and the Code of Practice) may exercise all the powers of the Association. No alteration of the Constitution or the Code of Practice shall invalidate any prior act of the Trustees that would have been valid if that alteration had not been made. A quorate meeting of the Trustees, as defined in Article (9.13), may exercise all powers exercisable by the Trustees.
- (9.2) The Board's responsibilities shall include, but not be limited to, ultimate responsibility for the:
  - (a) governance of the Association;
  - (b) budget of the Association (subject to approval of the University if required under the Education Act 1994);
  - (c) management and staffing of the Association.
- (9.3) In conducting its responsibilities, the Board of Trustees may establish subcommittees to discuss business matters, with a membership to be decided by the Board.
- (9.4) The Board shall not have the authority to block any discussion or decision made by Referenda, Association Council or the Executive, except on the following grounds:
  - (a) material financial considerations and/or policy that would require expenditure outside of the elected budget;
  - (b) requirements of charity or education law or other legal requirements;
  - (c) any matter that would otherwise be *ultra vires* of the Association;
  - (d) any matter that would place the Association at a risk considered unacceptable by the Board.
- (9.5) The Board may define any topic affected by the above considerations as Restricted Business and it shall not be discussed by any body of the Association other than the Board of Trustees.
- (9.6) The Board shall present a written report to the Council and the membership on matters affecting the Association each academic year, with not more than fifteen months between each presentation.

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- (9.7) The Board shall meet at least once per academic term.
- (9.8) No person may be appointed as a Trustee in circumstances that, had he already been a Trustee, would have disqualified him from acting as such by law.
- (9.9) The composition of the Board will be:
- (a) all the Principal Officers of the Association (*ex officio*);
  - (b) two Ordinary Trustees, elected to the Board from the ordinary membership of the GSA, excluding the Officers of the GSA, in accordance with Article (9.14) and Schedule (5);
  - (c) three appointed External Trustees.
- (9.10) Ordinary Members of the Association may not be appointed as External Trustees.
- (9.11) The Association General Manager (or a suitable senior staff member to be appointed by the Board) shall attend all Board meetings and act as the Secretary to the Board.
- (9.12) The Trustees shall agree the regulation and operation of their meetings through the establishing of by-laws.
- (9.13) A meeting of the Board shall only be quorate if at least six Trustees are present, with at least one Trustee from Article (9.9a), (9.9b) and (9.9c) being present.
- (9.14) Elections for the Ordinary Trustees shall take place alongside the elections for Principal Officers of the Association, and they shall take office at the same time as Principal Officers.
- (9.15) Ordinary Trustees shall remain in office until seven working days before the start of the next academic year.
- (9.16) External Trustees shall be appointed by a simple majority vote of Association Council, from such persons as have been recommended by the Board of Trustees.
- (9.17) The term of office for all External Trustees shall be three calendar years, calculated from their date of appointment.
- (9.18) An External Trustee may serve a maximum of two terms, either consecutively or non-consecutively.
- (9.19) An office of Trustee will be considered vacant if a Trustee:
- (a) is disqualified from acting as such under section 72, subsection 1 of the Charities Act 1993;
  - (b) gives notice of resignation to the President or, in the absence of a President or if the President himself wishes to give notice of resignation, to the Secretary to the Board [as appointed per Article (9.11)];
  - (c) becomes incapable through injury or ill health;
  - (d) fails to attend three consecutive meetings and he is, at the discretion of the Board, removed by a resolution achieving a simple majority;
  - (e) is removed from the Board by a motion of no-confidence passed either by

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Association Council or a Referendum.

- (9.20) If an Officer Trustee ceases to be a Trustee through the above provisions he shall not cease to be an Officer as a result.
- (9.21) In the event of a vacancy on the Board of Trustees, a Trustee shall be appointed to the vacancy by a simple majority vote of Association Council, from such persons as have been recommended by the Board of Trustees, for the remainder of the term.
- (9.22) The Trustees may, by power of attorney or otherwise, appoint any person to be the agent of the Association for such purposes and on such conditions as they determine.
- (9.23) The Trustees may delegate any and all of their powers or functions to any committee or body, or the implementation of their resolutions and the operational management of the Association, to any person or committee, subject to the provisions set out in the by-laws regarding the operation of the Board.

### Article 10. Governance

- (10.1) The GSA shall be governed by its members under this Constitution (consisting of Articles and Schedules) and its by-laws [detailed in Article (22)].
- (10.2) The main policy-setting body of the Association shall be Association Council [detailed in Article (11)].
- (10.3) The body responsible for the day-to-day running of the organisation, and implementing the policy set by Association Council, shall be the Executive Committee [detailed in Article (13)].
- (10.4) The Executive shall be held responsible to Association Council, and may establish temporary policy subject to the ordinances laid down by the University, the resolutions passed at Association Council and by Referenda, and the concerns of the Board of Trustees.
- (10.5) The Executive shall also be held accountable to the Board of Trustees through the presentation of its activities to the Board at least once per academic term.

### Article 11. Association Council

#### Role of Association Council

- (11.1) Association Council shall be the governing and policy-making body of the Association, subject to the decisions of Referenda.
- (11.2) Association Council shall exercise all powers of the Association, subject to the Board of Trustees' legal and financial responsibilities. These powers shall include the ability to:
  - (a) set, amend and repeal the policy of the Association;
  - (b) instruct and hold to account the Officers and Executive Committee of the Association;
  - (c) decide on a motion to repeal, amend or add to the Constitution;
  - (d) decide on a motion of censure of or no-confidence in any of the Association's Officers and Trustees;

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- (e) debate on a motion to determine the opinion of the Association on any policy issue;
- (f) mandate elected representatives and Officers of the Association to express a particular view on a particular issue, or to carry out a particular function.

(11.3) Association Council shall not have the power to:

- (a) mandate the Trustees, Association Officers or members of Council to break the law;
- (b) discuss or debate any matter defined by the Board of Trustees as Restricted Business [as per Article (9.5)];
- (c) discuss or debate any matter related to gross misconduct alleged to have been committed by Association Officers, other members of Council or Association staff.

### Membership

(11.4) Association Council shall have a membership as set out in Schedule (1) of this Constitution.

(11.5) No one person may fulfil more than one role on Association Council with the exception of the Chair of Association Council.

(11.6) A non-*ex officio* position on Council will be considered vacant if:

- (a) the person filling that role ceases to be an Ordinary Member of the GSA under Article (8.7);
- (b) a motion of no-confidence in that person is passed by Association Council or Referendum;
- (c) the person filling that role submits his resignation, in writing, to the Chair of Association Council or, in the event that he is also the Chair, to his Deputy (the resignation does not have to be accepted for it to take effect);
- (d) the person filling that role takes on another role on Association Council and Article (11.5) precludes him from fulfilling both roles.

(11.7) In the event of a vacancy in any non-*ex officio* position on Council [excepting Chair of Association Council, see Article (11.10)], then the position will remain vacant until a by-election may be completed. A by-election shall not be held if the office becomes vacant during the Summer term or Summer vacation. If no nominations are forthcoming in a by-election for the position then the Council may, by majority vote, appoint any Ordinary Member of the GSA to the role for the remainder of the term of office, subject to his willingness to do so.

### Chair of Council

(11.8) The Chair of Council will be elected by and from all Ordinary Members of the Association in accordance with Schedule (5) and in the same way as the Non-Principal Officers of the Association.

(11.9) Unless the position becomes vacant through the provisions of Article (11.6), the Chair of Council will hold office until the next scheduled election for Non-Principal Officers has been completed, as detailed in Schedule (5).

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- (11.10) In the event of a vacancy in the office of Chair of Association Council, the Deputy Chair of Council shall assume the role until a by-election is completed. If the Deputy is not willing to take the role or the role of Deputy also becomes vacant, the Council shall, by simple majority vote, appoint any Ordinary Member of the Association to the position of Chair of Council on an acting basis until a by-election is completed. A by-election shall not be held if the office becomes vacant during the Summer term or Summer vacation. If no nominations are forthcoming in a by-election for the position of Chair of Association Council then the Council may, by majority vote, appoint any Ordinary Member of the GSA to the role for the remainder of the term of office subject to his willingness to do so.
- (11.11) The duties of the Chair of Association Council shall be to:
- (a) chair all meetings of Association Council;
  - (b) prepare the agenda for all Association Council meetings;
  - (c) remain impartial on all matters;
  - (d) keep a record of the attendance at, and minutes of, all Association Council meetings;
  - (e) appoint a Deputy Chair of Council to assume the responsibilities above during his absence, or in the event of the position becoming vacant through the provisions of Article (11.6).
- (11.12) The Deputy Chair of Council must be appointed from the members of Association Council and, if his membership of Association Council ceases, then he shall also lose his position as Deputy Chair of Council.

### Meetings

- (11.13) The frequency and regulations of Association Council meetings shall be as detailed in Schedule (2).
- (11.14) An extraordinary meeting of Association Council may also be called by the Chair of Council and must be called within two weeks following:
- (a) a majority vote of the Executive Committee;
  - (b) the written request of five members of Council submitted to the Chair of Council.

## Article 12. Referenda

- (12.1) All decisions made by the Executive Committee or Association Council, including votes of censure and amendments to this Constitution, can be superseded by the decision of a Referendum, details for which can be found in Schedule (3).
- (12.2) Decisions of Referenda that affect the responsibilities of the Board of Trustees shall be implemented by the Board unless they conflict with their constitutional, legal or financial responsibilities. Where a conflict does arise, the President shall firstly attempt to resolve it, but failing that, the matter shall be referred to a Pro-Vice Chancellor of the University for a final decision.

## Article 13. Executive Committee

- (13.1) The Executive Committee shall be a subcommittee of Association Council that shall be responsible for the day-to-day administration and management of the activities of the Association, subject to the responsibilities of the Board of Trustees.
- (13.2) The Executive Committee shall be responsible for enacting and pursuing all policy passed at Association Council or by Referenda.
- (13.3) Subject to the responsibilities of the Board of Trustees, the Executive shall ensure that the funds provided to the Association by the University and from other sources are used in accordance with:
- (a) the Education Act 1994;
  - (b) this Constitution;
  - (c) the Code of Practice;
  - (d) any other restrictions imposed on the Association by law and resulting from its charitable status.
- (13.4) Subject to University restrictions and this Constitution, the GSA representatives on all University committees shall be appointed by a majority vote of the Executive.
- (13.5) The Executive Committee shall be held accountable to the members, Association Council and Board of Trustees through the accountability procedures detailed in Schedule (12).

### Membership

- (13.6) The members of the Executive shall be all Officers of the GSA [see Article (14)].
- (13.7) The Executive may co-opt any individual to help it in the discharge of its duties. Such a person may not vote at committee meetings nor shall his presence count towards the quorum.

### Rules and Regulations

- (13.8) Executive meetings will be conducted in accordance with the rules and procedures laid out in Schedule (4).

## Article 14. Officers of the Association

- (14.1) Within the GSA, there will be two types of Officer:
- (a) Principal Officers (held as part-time paid posts);
  - (b) Non-Principal Officers (held as voluntary, unpaid posts).
- (14.2) Principal Officers of the GSA shall hold office from seven working days before the start of the academic year following their election until seven working days before the start of the next academic year.
- (14.3) Principal Officers may stand for re-election but shall not hold paid elected office in any students' union at the University for more than two years in total (in accordance with the

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Education Act 1994).

- (14.4) Non-Principal Officers of the GSA shall hold office from the next working day following their election until the first day of the next academic year.
- (14.5) Elections for Officers shall be conducted in accordance with the rules laid out in Schedule (5).
- (14.6) The Principal Officers of the GSA shall be the:
- (a) President;
  - (b) Academic Affairs Officer;
  - (c) Welfare Officer;
  - (d) Services Officer;
  - (e) Finance Officer.
- (14.7) The Non-Principal Officers of the GSA shall be the:
- (a) Events Officer;
  - (b) Sporting Activities Officer;
  - (c) Communications Officer;
  - (d) International Students' Officer;
  - (e) Communities, Charities and Volunteering Officer;
  - (f) Campaigns Officer.
- (14.8) The minimum responsibilities and requirements of each Officer are detailed in Schedule (6). The specific responsibilities and requirements of each Officer are detailed in Schedule (7).
- (14.9) No one person may hold more than one Office of the GSA at any given time.
- (14.10) An Office of the GSA is vacant if all those filling that role:
- (a) no longer hold Ordinary Membership under Article (8.7);
  - (b) are subject to motions of no-confidence passed by Association Council or at a Referendum;
  - (c) submit their resignation, in writing, to the Chair of Association Council, except when an Officer is the Chair of Association Council, in which case his resignation should be submitted to the Deputy Chair of Association Council (acceptance of this resignation by the Chair or Deputy Chair is not required for the resignation to take effect);
  - (d) take over other Offices of the GSA following election.
- (14.11) If a Non-Principal Office of the GSA becomes vacant, a by-election for the post shall take place, except when the Office becomes vacant during the Summer term or Summer

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vacation, in which case the post may remain vacant until the next academic year, at the discretion of the Executive Committee.

- (14.12) If a Principal Office of the GSA becomes vacant, a by-election for the post shall take place, except when the Office becomes vacant any time during the last 10 weeks of the Summer term or the Summer vacation, in which case the post shall remain vacant until seven working days before the start of the next academic year, in agreement with Article (14.2).
- (14.13) By-elections for Officers, if required, shall be held within four weeks of the Office becoming vacant, except that elections shall not take place during the Christmas, Easter and Summer vacations, but should be held within four weeks of the start of the following academic term.
- (14.14) If no nominations are forthcoming during a by-election for the post of a GSA Officer, Association Council may appoint an Ordinary Member of the GSA to the post, subject to that person's willingness to hold the post.
- (14.15) In the event of an Office becoming vacant or the number of Officers filling that Office drops below the minimums expressed in Schedule (7) of this Constitution, Association Council may appoint an Ordinary Member to fill that Office on an acting basis, for the intervening period between the vacancy and the completion of an election or by-election, subject to that person's willingness to hold the post. If the number of Officers filling an Office drops below the minimums expressed in Schedule (7), the holding of a by-election shall be at the discretion of Association Council. If an Officer leaves but the number of persons filling his Office does not drop below the minimum, the other persons filling that Office shall retain their positions.
- (14.16) By-elections for Officers shall be conducted in accordance with the rules laid out in Schedule (5).
- (14.17) Except where University regulations stipulate otherwise, the elections for the Graduate representative on the University Senate shall be held in accordance with the rules laid down in Schedule (5). Any Ordinary Member of the GSA, other than those defined in Article (8.7c), shall be eligible to stand.

## Article 15. Salaries and Remuneration

- (15.1) Principal Officer salaries are to be fixed at the same level by the Board of Trustees on the University of York's Administrative and Related Salary Scale, and paid on a *pro-rata* basis.
- (15.2) Any request for a review of the Principal Officers' salary scale point must be submitted to the Board of Trustees. A change to the scale point may not take place more than once every three years.
- (15.3) The Principal Officers or Principal Officers-elect must abstain from voting on any decision pertaining to salary levels or re-grade requests for the roles of Principal Officers.

### Staff salary increases and re-grades

- (15.4) Proposals for staff salary re-grades are to be presented to the Board of Trustees in closed session by the President or, in the absence of the President, the Finance Officer.
- (15.5) Board of Trustees decisions regarding staff re-grades should only be discussed in closed session, be signed and dated by the Chair of the meeting, and filed in the staff members' personnel files.

## Article 16. Subcommittees of Association Council

- (16.1) Association Council shall have the following permanent subcommittees, the terms of reference, membership and further details of which can be found in Schedule (9), with the exception of the Executive Committee, which is detailed in Article (13) of this Constitution:
- (a) Academic Affairs Committee;
  - (b) Affiliated Committees' Co-ordination Committee;
  - (c) Communications Committee;
  - (d) Equality, Welfare and Diversity Committee;
  - (e) Events Committee;
  - (f) Executive Committee [see Article (13)];
  - (g) Sports Committee.
- (16.2) Association Council shall have the power to form and dissolve other subcommittees, and set the membership and terms of reference as and when required.
- (16.3) All subcommittees of the Association shall be open to all members of the Association, except when a closed session is entered.

## Article 17. Affiliated Committees

- (17.1) There shall be an Affiliated Committee for every one of the following:
- (a) Graduate Common Rooms in Colleges or on other University premises (Graduate Common Room Committees);
  - (b) communal graduate residences provided by the University where GCRs do not exist (Residence Associations).
- (17.2) Every Affiliated Committee shall be listed in the by-laws.
- (17.3) The aims of each Affiliated Committee must include the:
- (a) furtherance of the social interests of all its members;
  - (b) promotion of the integration and social cohesion of its members;
  - (c) representation of its members' interests to the GSA and other relevant bodies.
- (17.4) Each Affiliated Committee shall consist of at least, but not be limited to, one elected Officer, and must include a Chairperson;
- (17.5) No one person may fill more than one of the positions in any Affiliated Committee at any given time.
- (17.6) All Affiliated Committees will be funded in accordance, and comply with, the rules set out in Schedule (8).

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- (17.7) Each Affiliated Committee shall be ruled by its own constitution that must, along with any changes to it, be approved by Association Council. Each Affiliated Committee should ensure that it also adheres to this Constitution. The membership of each Affiliated Committee should include only members of the GSA.

### Article 18. Affiliation to External Organisations

- (18.1) Notification of all new affiliations to external organisations shall be made to the membership and the University. Such notice shall include the name of the organisation and the affiliation or subscription fee, in accordance with the Education Act 1994.
- (18.2) Details of all affiliations to external organisations, including the name of the organisation and affiliation fee, in each case shall be included in the Association's Annual Report, which shall be made available to the membership and the University.
- (18.3) There shall be external organisations in continuous affiliation. Association Council shall not approve these affiliations on an annual basis; however a Referendum or motion at a meeting of Association Council may vote to cease this affiliation, in accordance with the Education Act 1994.

### Article 19. Complaints

- (19.1) Complaints about an Officer, the Board of Trustees, any Officer of an Affiliated Committee, any non-*ex officio* member of Association Council or an Association matter shall be dealt with via the Complaints Procedure detailed in Schedule (11).
- (19.2) Any member who lodges an official complaint will also be advised of the mechanisms in this Constitution to censure, or remove, Officers through a vote of no-confidence [detailed in Schedule (12)] and to change Association policy through Referenda [detailed in Schedule (3)].
- (19.3) Any complaint about a member of Association staff will be dealt with via the Staff Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures, included in the GSA's Staff Handbook.

### Article 20. Freedom of Information

- (20.1) A copy of this Constitution, including any amendments, the by-laws, the Annual Report, budget, accounts and minutes of all meetings held shall be available to any member, alongside any plans for the Association's activities not considered to be sensitive to the aims and objectives of the Association.

### Article 21. Indemnity

- (21.1) Every member of Association Council, elected or co-opted, every Officer of a properly elected Affiliated Committee, and employees of the GSA shall be entitled to be indemnified out of GSA funds for all or part of any losses or liability that he may sustain or incur in or about the execution of his GSA duties, and no such person shall be liable for any loss, damage or misfortune that may happen to or be incurred by the GSA or its Affiliated Committees in the execution of his GSA duties, provided that such losses are not the direct consequence of any negligent or malicious act.

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### Article 22. Association By-Laws

- (22.1) There shall be a document entitled the by-laws that will contain all the rules and regulations regarding the running of the Association.
- (22.2) The by-laws may be set by the Executive, Association Council and Board of Trustees.
- (22.3) By-laws set by the Executive must not contradict, amend or repeal any by-laws or policy set by Association Council, Referenda or the Board of Trustees. By-laws set by Association Council must not contradict, amend or repeal any by-laws or policy set by Referenda or the Board of Trustees.
- (22.4) The by-laws will include (but shall not be limited to) rules for equipment hire, academic and welfare provision, a list of Affiliated Committees, a list of active Association policy and an Officer Code of Conduct.
- (22.5) An up-to-date copy of the by-laws will be detailed in a version-managed document.
- (22.6) Rules and regulations contained in the by-laws will apply until they are overturned (either by Referendum or resolution of Association Council, the Board of Trustees or the Executive) and should be accompanied by explanatory text where appropriate.

### Article 23. Amendments to this Constitution

- (23.1) Amendments to the Articles of this Constitution shall only be made by Association Council or Referenda [see Schedule (13)] and must subsequently be approved by the Governing Body.
- (23.2) Association Council may only pass amendments to the Articles of this Constitution with a three-quarters majority, and at least three-quarters of eligible members must be present.
- (23.3) Association Council may only pass amendments to the Schedules of this Constitution with a two-thirds majority.
- (23.4) Referenda may only pass amendments to this Constitution with a two-thirds majority and such a Referendum shall only be quorate if 10% of those eligible vote (in accordance with the Code of Practice).
- (23.5) Amendments to spelling, grammar and the ordering of the articles can be made by Association Council in Category Two business [as defined in Schedule (2) of this Constitution].
- (23.6) Association Council shall review this Constitution every year (in accordance with the Education Act 1994) and shall vote on any changes considered to be necessary.
- (23.7) The membership shall, within a reasonable period of time, be informed of any amendments to this Constitution, except those made through the provisions of Article (23.5).

### Article 24. Dissolution

- (24.1) The Association may not be dissolved or otherwise wound up by the Board of Trustees unless a motion to that effect has first been put and passed by a two-thirds majority at two Referenda held not less than one calendar month apart.

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- (24.2) If, after the discharge of the debts and liabilities of the Association, there remain any net assets, they shall not be distributed to the members but shall be held in trust by the University and distributed to any other charity pursuing similar aims and objectives as this Association.