GSA

Graduate Students' Association

SUMMER ELECTIONS 2017

President Nomination Pack

yorkgsa.org/elections

#GSAelections

Thank You

Congratulations on collecting or downloading this nomination pack and taking a keen interest in being a candidate in this year's Graduate Students' Association Elections.

The GSA is the primary representative body for all registered postgraduate students at the University of York. Postgraduates are automatically members of the GSA, are encouraged to take part in any of our activities, and are welcome to use any of our services.

The GSA aims to provide a social community for postgraduates through our dedicated postgraduate welcome week, regular events, trips and free sport. We also represent postgraduate views on a variety of university committees, provide academic & welfare support and offer advice on all postgraduate matters. Furthermore the GSA provides services to the university's large & diverse postgraduate community.

As a democratic student led organisation, voting for who will represent the views of postgraduates to the university is one of the most important tasks in the year.

Those who are successful in the elections will have huge opportunities to influence a wide range of people who influence the experience of postgraduate students at the University of York.

Those who will prosper in these elections will be those of you who know what makes your fellow students tick and what is ticking them off during your time at University. Your campaign must confirm to voters that you are the candidate who can make the changes that they want to see happen.

We have attempted to anticipate most of the information candidates will require. If you have any questions at all, please ask me or any of the current officers. Alternatively election staff will be available for drop-ins and can answer any queries or offer practical advice on all aspects of campaign planning; from designing manifestos through to managing campaign budgets and all points in between.

It only leaves me to wish you the best of luck in your efforts and to thank you for taking this interest in being part of the leadership of this fantastic organisation.

See you soon!

Peter Gorbert, GSA CEO

Dates For Your Diary

Sessions in RED are mandatory and failure to attend sessions will result in you being unable to run for elections.

- Nominations Open: Monday 8th May - 9am
- Nominations Close: Friday 19th May - 5pm
- We recomend speaking to a GSA Officer or staff member in the GSA Office before nominating yourself for elections. Office hours are 10am - 4pm Monday - Friday

- Candidate Training and Workshops: Tuesday 22nd May - Friday 26th May (exact time and dates TBC)

- Campaigning Starts: Monday 29th May - 9am
- Voting Opens: Monday 5th June - 9am
- Campaigning Ends: Friday 9th June - 5pm
- Voting Closes: Friday 9th June - 5pm

- All promotional material must be down by: Friday 9th June - 6pm

- Results Night Event: Friday 9th June - 8pm

Role Description

President

Start Date

September

Minimum Commitment

Full time - 37.5 hrs per week with some evening and weekend commitments.

Remuneration

£18,500 per annum

Who can stand for this role?

All postgraduate students studying at the University of York may stand.

What does the job entail?

The role is integral to the GSA and Principal Officers will represent York's postgraduate students to the University and external stakeholders, ensuring the needs and views of Postgraduates are considered in relevant decisions.

The role of the President specifically covers the representing of the membership to the University, as well as internal and external stakeholders. This role will focus primarily on the academic aspects of postgraduate life and ensuring university decisions take these into consideration.

You will be expected to take a proactive approach to the role, including leading change through proposing new policy where needed.

The President will also be a Trustee of the Association and have significant, and shared, budgetary responsibility.

Place of Work: The Graduate Students' Association, The University of York, Heslington, York, YO10 5NG. The post may require some minimal travel within the UK.

Benefits

26 Days per year (pro-rata) holiday

Duration of Post

1 year post, with possibility of extension for a 2nd year on election

Responsible for: 3 Faculty Reps and Council Chair

Specific Duties:

- To represent the views, needs and interests of postgraduate students at Senior University and GSA committees.
- To be the recognised leader and spokesperson for the organisation and the membership.
- To research, formulate, write and propose policy or strategy, where required.
- To work closely with members of the University Executive board as well as other stakeholders to ensure that all new policy and decisions are taken with an understanding of the Postgraduates view and ensuring coherence on policy where possible.
- To be an active member of the GSA Council and other relevant GSA structures.
- Coordinate and support the postgraduate faculty and course reps including convening regular faculty fora.
- Provide feedback from postgraduate students for key players in the university, the local and national communities.
- Assisting the University with departmental reviews, ensuring postgraduates are receiving quality teaching, careers advice, supervision and support, where required.
- To act as a signatory on the GSA bank account and manage relative budgets in agreement with the CEO and Vice President Wellbeing and Community.
- To act as a responsible trustee and director to the organisation.

This list is not exhaustive.

General Duties:

- To provide high levels of representation to all postgraduate students
- To provide a high level of constituent care, including being non-judgmental and open-minded approach to representation and support and being considerate of the views of others at all times
- To provide timely updates and feedback to all stakeholders, including members, fellow Officers, the GSA Staff and University staff as required
- To signpost stakeholders to relevant services and provisions
- To act at all times as an ambassador for the postgraduate student body and for the GSA
- To actively uphold the principals of the GSA's Officers' Code of Conduct
- To take an active role in the GSA's campaigns, activities and research
- To actively engage in the compiling of GSA led reports
- To work in partnership with GSA Staff.
- To proactively engage in raising awareness of postgraduate issues by talking to students
- To support with the running of GSA led campaigns and events
- To attend university and other stakeholder events as an ambassador of the GSA
- To ensure proper preperation is made to represent students at univertsity committees

This list is not exhaustive.

Trustee Duties:

1. To ensure the GSA complies with and fulfils its legal obligations.
2. To contribute to the development and implementation of the GSA's strategic vision.
3. To engage in collective decision making regarding resources and finances of the GSA, ensuring financial stability.
4. To ensure that staff of the GSA are well supported and supervised so that they may do their job efficiently and effectively.
5. To ensure that all decisions taken are in the interest of postgraduate students and will not harm the image or reputation of the GSA.

This list is not exhaustive.

The Life of a Full Time Officer

Whichever role you have chosen to stand for, you are putting yourself forward for a unique job that carries responsibilities and opportunities quite unlike those you would normally associate with a graduate job or a sabbatical year.

The Role

The Officer Team consists of the President and Vice President Wellbeing and Community, who are each responsible for teams of volunteer students. Each have their own jobs to do but must also spend a lot of time working together as a team. Like any job, there are minimum requirements – with occasional evenings and weekends, and as you will be an ambassador for the GSA there will be times you need to dress smartly and ensure you behave appropriately.

As Trustees, the Officer Team are responsible for setting the direction of the GSA for the year they are in charge, and making day-to-day decisions about how the GSA is run. If successfully elected to one of these roles you will have a budget to control and campaigns which you are responsible for. There can be lots of meetings to attend and reports to write, but don't be put off by this – they are necessary formalities needed to put your ideas into action, and more than balanced out by the time you will spend talking to postgraduates.

The Lifestyle

As well as the day to day work, there will be a range of conferences, seminars and training events aimed at giving you more knowledge, confidence and insight towards achieving your goals – so you can expect to be doing some travelling around the country from time to time visiting other institutions and building a network of contacts. The social life of an Principal Officer can also be whatever you want to make of it – at the very least you will get to attend a number of high-profile award ceremonies.

Relationships

Your diary will have a significant number of discussions (some formal, some less so) with University managers, GSA staff, external organisations, and of course – students. You may have to demonstrate your ability to maintain calm in the face of disagreement from time to time, so staying focused on the best interests of our membership as well as being able to politely disagree with others will ensure that the GSA will remain influential and not left outside the numerous decisions that impact on our members every year.

You will also need to maintain relationships with various student groups including student societies. As a leader of the organisation, and to avoid any accusation of bias or conflict, it is strongly recommended that you don't sit on the committee of any student society whilst you are a student officer. This also helps to ensure that your focus remains on your officer role and to avoid accusations of favouritism or conflict of interest.

Staff support

You will have at your disposal a team of dedicated staff, employed to perform specific duties within the GSA, and to offer their knowledge and expertise to help you achieve your goals.

Team Work

You will need to work as part of a close knit team of staff and students. A big part of this will be about learning to get your point across and debate topics without taking things personally. The postgraduate community is a diverse mix with many different opinions and you will need to be able to reflect this in your role.

Being the figurehead

Having your picture as part of any number of posters, handbooks news articles, web posts will be second nature by the time Welcome Week comes around. Officers will get used to total strangers approaching and saying anything from "you're that person in the GSA…I think…" to "What are you going to do about..?" Be prepared to say "I don't know, tell me more about that?" to even occasionally "thanks, it's great to hear that you enjoyed the event…" Being in the spotlight might take some getting used to, but there will be a number of you all in the same situation with whom you can relate.

Representing the needs of 4500+ students

There will be a number of times when people will ask you, "and what do postgraduates think about this?" Clearly the variety of postgraduates at the University of York is remarkable, whether considering faith or ethnicity through to the mode of study chosen by students here. What this adds up to is one thing – student interests and opinion is not a simple matter and often there are specific groups of students with specific needs that shouldn't be forgotten. This is an advantage when dealing with those who expect the simple answer; we can be seen as far more influential when we have knowledge of extra options or needs.

How to Write a Manifesto

Writing an election manifesto needn't be something to tear your hair out about. Essentially, your manifesto should state what you would plan to do in your time in office and what changes you would make. It is not an excuse to bad mouth your opposition, or make unrealistic promises. Take some time before you write to think about what you believe you can achieve and what the voters would respond to.

Some top tips for writing your manifesto:

- Find out more about the GSA and the role by coming into the office and talking to the CEO and current officers
- Be concise and use clear language. Avoid long, complicated words – you won't win awards for being clever and you might just alienate important voters.
- Make sure you have clearly stated what position you are running for and where students can go to vote (www.yorkgsa.org/elections).
- Set out your goals for your time in office and ensure they are realistic & achievable – officers are answerable to the student body who might decide to ask why you've not managed to rebuild the GSA building. Work out what would make you vote for someone and think about which points would appeal most to students.
- Your manifesto is about you and not about your opponents. Avoid discrediting or disrespecting others and making reference to members of staff is a big no-no!
- Be relevant. There's not much point telling everyone you like cute pussy cats when you're standing for President. However, instances where you have shown leadership, tenacity, and tact would indicate to voters your suitability for the role.
- You have a maximum of 1000 characters so keep it concise. Voters will want to read what you have to say and are likely to give up if you have written the equivalent of the Oxford English Dictionary.
- Be creative and inspiring.

Once you have drafted your manifesto, you can run it past the Elections Team by popping in to the GSA Office in Vanburgh College or by emailing it to elections@yorkgsa.org.

Good Luck!