



**Graduate
Students'
Association**

UNIVERSITY OF YORK

COUNCIL
ELECTIONS

Nomination pack

Thank You!

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

Being a member of the GSA is an amazing opportunity. You will have a chance to represent students and make sure their voices are heard. You will be able to make changes in the university and influence the life of nearly 4000 postgraduate students of University of York. The sense of achievement is amazingly rewarding. You will also gain lots of soft skills and experience that will help improve your employability skills. Some of you will be setting goals, preparing meeting agendas, chairing meetings, and organising campaigns.

You will be able to set the direction of York Graduate Students' Association and run projects to improve students' experience. So well done, for having the desire to be part of that. Looking forward to working with those of you who will win the elections, but believe me, you are all winners. Participating in the elections by itself is an invaluable experience. You will have the chance to meet students from different backgrounds and with different interests, discuss with them their needs, issues and have an insight to their challenges. We have attempted to anticipate most of the information candidates will require. If you have any questions at all, please ask me or Fatma. 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!

Charlotte Chamberlain, GSA President, October 2017

NOMINATION CHECKLIST

What needs to be done	By when	More information
Check your eligibility	Before you nominate yourself	Check your eligibility to run by reading the guidelines on the GSA Website
Find out about the role you would like to run for	Before you nominate yourself	You can visit the GSA Office to speak to the officers or a member of staff Monday – Friday 10am-4pm, read up about the roles on the GSA website, or send an email to matt@yorkgsa.org to ask more about the roles
Write your manifesto	Before nominations close at 23:59 on Sunday 15 th October	Write up a short manifesto about why voters should vote for you. We recommend you write this on a Word document before filling out the application form
Submit your nomination	Before nominations close at 23:59 on Sunday 15 th October	Fill out an application form online and submit your manifesto

The life of a GSA Council Representative

Whichever role you have chosen to stand for, you are putting yourself forward for a unique experience that carries responsibilities and opportunities quite unlike those you would normally experience at University.

The role

The GSA Council consists of a Chair, 9 representatives and the two full-time Officers of the GSA. Every individual has their own areas of responsibility but must also work together as a team with the other officers and representatives to get the best from the experience.

At Council, you will feed back issues that are affecting the students that you represent, submit, discuss and debate policy motions to set the GSA's stance on a particular issue and hold the fulltime officers to account for their work.

Probably the most important thing to note is that these roles exist to assist in setting the direction of the work of the full-time officers; so that our activities are always led by those who are most affected by the issues at hand.

The lifestyle

As these roles are voluntary and not 'jobs' in the traditional sense of the word, the amount of time that you dedicate will be based upon the time that you have available and your own passion for achieving meaningful change for students in the area that you happen to represent. As a guide, 2 hours per week averaged out over the year would be a good place to start and you can expect to develop a number of skills that will set you in good stead for when you leave university.

All members of the GSA Council will be expected to attend the Council meetings, which take place 5 times during the academic year and last for approx. 2 hours. For some roles, there will be the occasional additional meeting or forum to attend such as Agenda setting meetings for the Chair of Council and Faculty Forums for the Faculty Representatives.

There will be a range of potential training opportunities and sometimes, if you are elected to attend as a delegate by your peers, conferences aimed at giving you more knowledge, confidence and insight towards achieving your goals.

The social life of a Council Rep can also be whatever you want to make of it – at the very least you may be invited to attend the annual Awards, Election Results Nights and often... a post Council social.

Relationships

Sometimes you may meet with members of university staff or be invited to feedback the opinion of the students who you represent at university committees. 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 your peers on GSA Council and various student groups including student networks. Networks can often be an incredible source of feedback and student contribution, and it is important that you make contact as early as possible. An example of where this relationship would be invaluable would be between the Equality Officer and the LGBT Network.

Support & Resources

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. Council members may also have access to a budget that is set aside for delivering campaigns in the area that they happen to represent.

Representing the needs of 4,000 postgraduate 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.

ROLE DESCRIPTION: STUDENT COUNCIL ROLES

Start Date: 1st November 2017 (successful candidates will be expected to attend 1 day of training and induction at the end of October)

Expected hours of work: These are voluntary roles, to which you can devote as much time to as you feel able. An average of 2 hours per week over term time is a guideline for the minimum time required to make the most of the roles.

Remuneration: Voluntary role.

Who can stand for these roles?

Any postgraduate student studying at the University of York in October 2017 can stand. However you must continue to be a student in order to retain a council position.

What do these roles entail?

GSA Council is a group of students, who are elected each year, who come together to create policy, make change and campaign for a better experience for postgraduate students. The roles are all part-time commitments which you must take on alongside your studies (i.e. you must be a student here next year). Some have a specific focus, such as Events Officer, others have a more wide ranging portfolio of responsibilities. The membership of Student Council is designed to ensure that the voices of the whole diverse range of students that study at the University of York are heard, and able to influence the campaigning and policy work of the GSA.

Role Descriptions

Student Council Chair

- To Chair all meetings of the GSA Council.
- To be the driving force for the work of GSA Council, ensuring that the elected officers are held to account, and working with the elected officers to ensure that policy resolutions are actioned.

Events Officer

- To recruit a team of events volunteers to run GSA events.
- To support with the running and planning of GSA events and trips.
- To gather student feedback on current and future events and trips.

Sports Officer

- To support with the running of GSA sports sessions.
- To coordinate postgraduate sports teams.
- To gather student feedback on current and future sports sessions.

Equality Officer

- To ensure the GSA is representative and accommodating of all groups.
- To support the GSA with running of equality campaigns.

Communities Officer

- To support the 5 Network coordinators

- To represent the postgraduate community to the University
- To represent the postgraduate community in the City.

Volunteering Officer

- To work with the university to ensure volunteering opportunities are available for postgraduates.
- To work with the GSA to create volunteering opportunities for postgraduates.

Colleges Officer

- To liaise with GCRC's and CSA's to ensure the needs of postgraduates are known and taken into account.
- To be a bridge between the GSA and College committees.

Duties of all Student Council Representatives

In addition to the specific responsibilities listed above, the elected representatives of the GSA Council are required to adhere to the following principles of the organisation:

- To attend all meetings of Student Council (approx. 5) and other meetings as required during the academic year.
- To hold the elected Officers of the GSA to account for their work.
- To contribute to the creation, discussion and debate of policy motions submitted to the GSA Council for approval.
- To uphold the values of the GSA in the manner they conduct themselves, particular regard should be given to the values of equality & celebrating diversity, which are at the centre of every aspect of the GSA.
- To conduct one's self in a professional manner that will reflect well on the GSA.

Dates for diary

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

- Nominations Open: Monday 2nd October – 12:00
- Nominations Close: Sunday 15th October – 23:59
- Election Briefing sessions – Tuesday 17th October – 13:00 or 17:00
- Campaigning Starts: Wednesday 18th October – 00:00
- Voting Opens: Monday 23rd October – 12:00
- Campaigning Ends: Friday 27th October – 17:00
- Voting Closes: Friday 27th October – 17:00
- All promotional material must be down by: Friday 27th October – 18:00
- Results announced – Tuesday 31st October

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:

- 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.
- Use a font that is easy to read and at a suitable size. Text should be no smaller than font size 12.
- 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 Union 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.
- Keep it to a maximum of one side of A4. 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 Offices in Vanbrugh or by emailing it to elections@yorkgsa.org

Remember, the deadline to submit your final manifesto is Sunday 15th October at 23:59 using the form on the GSA Website

Good Luck!