



## **By-Law: Accountability**

This By-Law describes the accountability of Sabbatical Officers and Part-Time Officers at the GSA.

### **1. Introduction**

#### **1.1. Interpretation**

This By-Law shall be subject at all times to the provisions of the Articles and shall be read in conjunction therewith.

#### **1.2. Alterations of the By-Law**

These By-Laws shall be amended from time to time by Association Council by a two-thirds majority.

### **2. Scrutiny Officers**

#### **2.1. Status**

Scrutiny Officers shall be responsible for holding Sabbatical Officers and Part-Time Officers to account. The GSA shall have at least 3 Scrutiny Officers. This involves ensuring that Sabbatical Officers and Part-Time Officers are:

- 2.1.1. Working towards their manifesto promises
- 2.1.2. Following their objectives
- 2.1.3. Fulfilling their role descriptions as set out in the GSA By-Laws
- 2.1.4. Implementing any GSA policies and motions passed at Association Council.

#### **2.2. Election**

Scrutiny Officers will be elected in accordance with GSA By-Laws on election rules and regulations. The Scrutiny Officer role is open to all postgraduate students at the University of York.

### **2.3. Duties**

Scrutiny Officers must attend:

- 2.3.1. Training events
- 2.3.2. Council Meetings (as a non-voting member)
- 2.3.3. Accountability Committee meetings

### **3. Holding Part-Time Officers to Account**

Part-Time Officers should attend every Association Council meeting, unless they are unable to attend in which case apologies must be sent. Should any Part-Time Officer be absent without having given notice of apology on two consecutive occasions, they shall be deemed to have resigned. Any member deemed to have resigned under this section may appeal to the Association Council.

Part-Time Officers must submit a maximum 200 word report to each Association Council meeting to report on any progress they have made in regards to their manifesto promises or objectives. Each report shall be taken as read with the opportunity for Council members to ask any questions should they wish. Reports must be submitted by the Association Council paper deadline so they can be included in the papers and published on the GSA website.

### **4. Holding Sabbatical Officers to Account**

#### **4.1. Accountability Reports**

Sabbatical Officers shall produce accountability reports which shall be presented at the Accountability Committee, Association Council and published on the GSA website. The principle aim of this is to scrutinise the performance of the Sabbatical Officers in relation to the following that they are:

- 4.1.1. Working towards their manifesto promises
- 4.1.2. Following their objectives

- 4.1.3. Fulfilling their role descriptions as set out in the GSA By-Laws
- 4.1.4. Implementing any GSA policies and motions passed at Association Council.

#### **4.2. Accountability Committee**

Sabbatical Officer Accountability Reports shall be discussed at the Accountability Committee which is set out below.

### **5. Accountability Committee**

#### **5.1. Role of the Accountability Committee**

The principal aim of the Accountability Committee is to scrutinise the performance of the Sabbatical Officers. The Accountability Committee shall consist of three Scrutiny Officers who shall form a panel. Additional Scrutiny Officers may attend, however, only three will form a panel and have voting rights. They shall scrutinise the Sabbatical Officers in relation to the following, that they are:

- 5.1.1. Working towards their manifesto promises
- 5.1.2. Following their objectives
- 5.1.3. Fulfilling their role descriptions as set out in the GSA By-Laws
- 5.1.4. Implementing any GSA policies and motions passed at Association Council.

#### **5.2. Membership and Attendance**

Membership consists of a minimum of three Scrutiny Officers who form a panel and the Clerk (secretary). Other Council members may attend upon request to the Chair of the Accountability Committee

#### **5.3. Chair**

At each meeting, the three Scrutiny Officers on the panel must decide who shall Chair the meeting. This must be noted down for the minutes and it is the responsibility of the Chair to report to the next Association Council meeting the outcomes of the Accountability Committee. If the Chair is absent for the Association Council meeting, other panel members must report to the Council instead.

## **5.4. Administrative Arrangement for Meetings of the Accountability Committee**

### **5.4.1. Frequency**

The Accountability Committee should meet in between every Association Council meetings. For the first Association Council meeting of the year, Sabbatical Officers must present their accountability reports to Council and from thereon will be scrutinised at the Accountability Committee.

Should there not be enough Scrutiny Officers to hold a meeting, the responsibility of holding the Sabbatical Officers to account shall fall to Association Council

### **5.4.2. Clerk to the Accountability Committee**

The Representation and Democracy Coordinator shall provide administrative support to the Accountability Committee and shall act as Clerk.

### **5.4.3. Agenda and Papers**

Sabbatical Officer reports should be circulated to Accountability Committee members at least 3 clear days in advance of the meeting date.

The agenda shall follow the format outline in Annex A.

### **5.4.4. Minutes**

The Clerk to the Accountability Committee is responsible for recording accurate minutes of a meeting. Panel Members must approve that the minutes are an accurate record of the meeting before they are submitted to the next Association Council for inclusion in the papers. Association Council papers will then be published on the GSA website. The Accountability Committee shall ensure proper minutes are made for the purpose of:

- 5.4.4.1. All meetings of the Accountability Committee, including recording the names of those present at the meeting
- 5.4.4.2. Recording questions ask to Sabbatical Officers and responses given
- 5.4.4.3. The response of the panel to each accountability report

## **5.5. Proceedings**

The Accountability Committee, when scrutinising the Sabbatical Officers shall proceed as follows:

- 5.5.1. The Sabbatical Officer is given 5 minutes to bring anything additional to the attention or highlight anything in their report to the Accountability Committee.
- 5.5.2. 5 minutes is then given for the Accountability Panel to ask any questions to the Sabbatical Officer on their report or verbal statement. Questions may only be asked if in relation to the following:
  - 5.5.2.1. Working towards their manifesto promises
  - 5.5.2.2. Following their objectives
  - 5.5.2.3. Fulfilling their role descriptions as set out in the GSA By-Laws
  - 5.5.2.4. Implementing any GSA policies and motions passed at Association Council.

The panel is not there to give an opinion on the work rather to assess whether they are successfully performing their role. Should Scrutiny Officers not adhere to this, they may face removal from their role.

- 5.5.3. The Sabbatical Officer will then leave the meeting to allow the panel to discuss the report further and deliberate whether they are satisfied with the report presented.
- 5.5.4. The Sabbatical Officer will then return to the meeting and be informed whether the panel is satisfied with their report and to give any recommendations or further actions they would like to see.

- 5.5.5. This process will then be repeated for the other Sabbatical Officers until all Sabbatical Officers have had their reports scrutinised.

## **5.6. Reporting to Council**

- 5.6.1. The minutes of each Accountability Committee meeting must be included in the papers of each Council meeting along with the accountability reports of the sabbatical officers
- 5.6.2. The Chair of the Accountability Committee meeting must present the minutes and highlight any key matters to Council
- 5.6.3. Council members may question the panel members about the meeting or ask Sabbatical Officers further questions which they feel should have been covered in the Accountability Committee meeting
- 5.6.4. Council must receive the minutes and report from the Chair before voting on whether they approve the outcome of the Accountability Committee meeting
- 5.6.5. Should Council be dissatisfied with the outcome of the Accountability Committee, they can vote to reject the outcome and thus send the matter back to the Accountability Committee to look into further and report back. Council should instruct what they would like the Accountability Committee to focus on if this is the case. This meeting should be held as a separate, extraordinary meeting in addition to the next scheduled Accountability Committee meeting

**Annex A:**



**Accountability Committee Agenda**

**Date:**

**Time:**

**Location:**

- 1. Adoption of the agenda**
- 2. Matters Arising**
- 3. Feedback from Association Council**
- 4. Reports**
  - a. Written Reports from Sabbatical Officers
    - i. President
    - ii. VP Wellbeing and Community
    - iii. VP Academic
- 5. Any Other Business**