

## **By-law: Association Council**



### **By-Law: Association Council**

#### **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.

##### **1.3. Implementation of Decisions**

Decisions made by Association Council shall become effective on completion of the meeting concerned, unless otherwise stated.

#### **2. The Role of Association Council**

2.1. Association Council shall be the policy making body of the GSA, subject to the provisions of Article 12.

2.2. Association Council shall have the ability to:

2.2.1. set, amend and repeal policies or bylaws of the GSA;

2.2.2. instruct and hold to account the Principal Officers of the GSA;

2.2.3. decide on a motion of censure or no-confidence in any of the Officers or Trustees of the GSA;

2.2.4. mandate elected representatives and Officers of the GSA to express a particular view on a particular issue, or to carry out a particular function.

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### **3. Membership of the Association Council**

3.1. Association Council shall be made up of a class of members, elected or appointed by the members to represent the membership as a whole and shall be made up of;

3.1.1. The Principal Officers

3.1.2. Three elected representatives of the academic faculties across the University being one each of Sciences, Social Sciences and Arts and Humanities.

3.1.3. Twenty-one elected members holding the following roles:

3.1.3.1. Council Chair

3.1.3.2. Participation Officer

3.1.3.3. Sports Officer

3.1.3.4. Volunteering Officer

3.1.3.5. Colleges Officer

3.1.3.6. PGT Students' Officer

3.1.3.7. MRes Students' Officer

3.1.3.8. PhD Students' Officer

3.1.3.9. BAME Students' Officer

3.1.3.10. LGBTQ+ Students' Officer

3.1.3.11. Disabled Students' Officer

3.1.3.12. International Students' Officer

3.1.3.13. Women, Trans and Non-Binary Students' Officer

3.1.3.14. Student Parents, Guardians and Carers Officer

3.1.3.15. Distance Learning Students' Officer

3.1.3.16. Working Class Officer

3.1.3.17. Religions/Faith Officer

3.1.3.18. Sustainability Officer

3.1.3.19. Online Learning Students' Officer

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3.1.3.20. Part-Time Students' Officer

3.1.3.21. GTA Officer

### **4. Quoracy of the Association Council**

4.1. Quoracy of the Association Council shall be 50 percent of the current in-post voting members of Council plus one.

### **5. Administrative Arrangements for Meetings of the Association Council**

5.1. Frequency of Meetings:

At least six meetings of the Association Council shall take place in each academic year on dates to be agreed and published at the start of the academic year.

5.2. Convening a Meeting:

Meetings of the Association Council shall be convened on behalf of the Chair by the Clerk to the Association Council. Notice of the meeting, together with the agenda, Officer reports, motions, and minutes from the previous meeting, shall be sent to each member of the Association Council via email and shall be displayed on the GSA's website at least 3 working days prior to the meeting..

5.3. Notice of Meeting:

Notice of Council meetings shall be effected by at least 5 working days before the meeting.

5.4. Attendance:

Members attending Council meetings must register with the Clerk of the Meeting. Apologies must be sent prior to the start of the meeting via email to [representation@yorkgsa.org](mailto:representation@yorkgsa.org), any voting member who is not registered at the start of the meeting will be recorded as absent.

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Should any member of the Association Council 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.

5.5. Clerk to Association Council:

The Representation and Democracy Coordinator of the GSA shall appoint a Clerk to the Association Council.

5.6. Extraordinary Meetings:

An extraordinary meeting of Council may be called by the Chair of Council at the request of the Sabbatical Officer Team or at least 25% of in-post voting members of Council.

## **6. Agenda and Papers**

6.1. Submission of Motions and Reports:

Motions, minutes and reports for inclusion on the agenda shall be submitted via the [representation@yorkgsa.org](mailto:representation@yorkgsa.org) email address or equivalent before the published date on the GSA website. Any student may submit a motion, paper or report to the Association Council. Motions shall be written in accordance with Annex A.

6.2. Agenda:

The agenda, papers for the meeting and minutes of the previous Council meeting shall be published on the GSA website and circulated to members via email at least 3 working days in advance of the meeting. The Clerk to the Association Council shall be responsible for drafting the agenda paper for approval by the Chair.

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### 6.3. Order of Business:

Only the business published on the agenda shall be transacted at a meeting of the Association Council, the exception to this includes: any other business not having previously appeared on the agenda, if, in the opinion of the Chair, it is a matter of extreme urgency which cannot reasonably be left over until the next meeting of the Association Council. No new motions may be voted upon in any other business. The order of business shall be as detailed in Annex B.

#### 6.3.1. Any Other Business

Any person wishing to raise an item under any urgent business should consult the Chair prior to the meeting. Such an item is taken at the Chair's discretion and cannot bind the Association Council in decision.

#### 6.3.2. Closure of a Meeting

No meeting of Council shall continue past 21:30. Any remaining agenda items being discussed or yet to be debated by Council shall be moved to the next meeting.

### 6.4. Business Carried Forward to the Next Meeting

Any item of business on the agenda which is not discussed during the meeting shall be present on the agenda of the next scheduled meeting.

### 6.5. Minutes:

The Clerk to the Association Council is responsible for recording accurate minutes of a meeting, to be approved at the next ordinary meeting of the Association Council and subsequently published on the GSA website. Council (including all subcommittees) shall ensure proper minutes are made for the purpose of:

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- 6.5.1. all appointments, removal, and retirements of members of the Association Council; and
- 6.5.2. all meetings of the Association Council, including the names of all those present at the meeting.

### **7. Observers and Meeting Accessibility**

- 7.1. Meetings of the Association Council are open to all members of the GSA to attend.
- 7.2. All meetings shall be held in locations which are accessible to all members of the GSA and due regard shall be given to members with accessibility issues.
- 7.3. Members of the Association Council who request papers in a different format shall be assisted so that they can access the papers in a format which is most appropriate for them.
- 7.4. Any non-voting member may request permission to speak and participate in the discussion, this shall be granted at the discretion of the Chair.

### **8. Chair of Council**

- 8.1. Election of Chair  

The election of the Chair of Council shall be carried out in accordance with the GSA By-laws. The election of a temporary chair, where necessary, shall be elected by members of Council by a simple majority
- 8.2. Role and Responsibilities:  

The Chair of the Association Council is responsible for the orderly conduct of the meeting in accordance with the Articles and By-Laws and is responsible for

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ensuring the fair and effective transaction of business. The Chair's responsibilities include:

- 8.2.1. deciding the order in which members are called to speak;
- 8.2.2. advising and/or admonishing a member whose speaking is irrelevant to the subject under discussion or whose conduct impedes the fair and orderly process of discussion;
- 8.2.3. ruling on points of order;
- 8.2.4. deciding on whether or not to suspend, adjourn or conclude a meeting that is being disrupted; and
- 8.2.5. summarising and concluding the debate.
- 8.2.6. The Chair may have a casting vote only.

The ruling of the Chair shall be final and binding, subject to a successful challenge to the Chair.

### 8.3. Status:

The Chair shall not be entitled to a vote nor participate in any debate.

### 8.4. Challenge to the Chair

Any member of Council may challenge the ruling of the Chair by raising a point of order. If this is supported by 2 other voting members of Council, Council must elect a temporary Chair and request:

- 8.4.1. The Chair to state their reasons for the ruling
- 8.4.2. The challenger to state their case

The challenge must be put to a vote and will only be upheld if vote is carried by a two-thirds majority of those present and eligible to vote.

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### **9. Conduct of the Meeting**

#### 9.1. Reports:

Council must receive written reports from all Sabbatical Officers at each meeting. These reports will be taken as read by Council, however, Officers will be allowed 2 minutes to highlight anything not already mentioned in the report. Part-Time Officers will be given space to give verbal reports which shall be limited to 2 minutes in length.

##### 9.1.1. Questions

Questions on reports must only concern the content of the report and should be used to draw the Council's attention to a matter or to hold the elected Officers to account.

#### 9.2. Motions:

Motions must be submitted by the paper deadline in order to be included in the Council meeting papers. Any student may submit a motion to Council and should be written in accordance with Annex A. A motion should be presented by either the Proposer or their chosen nominee. Only one motion or amendment shall be considered by the Council at any one time. The Chair shall conduct the debate as follows:

##### 9.2.1. Order of Debate

Discussion of motions shall take the following form:

9.2.1.1. The Proposer (or their chosen nominee) will have 3 minutes to present the motion

9.2.1.2. Council will then have the opportunity to ask the Proposer any questions about the motion



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9.2.1.3. Council will then debate the motion

### 9.2.2. Amendments

Amendments may be proposed by any member present at the Council meeting and will be conducted as detailed below:

9.2.2.1. A member at the Council meeting will signal that they wish to propose an amendment to the motion being discussed. This must be supported by at least one other member at the Council meeting.

9.2.2.2. The Proposer of the motion (or their chosen nominee) must accept this amendment in order for it to be considered by Council.

9.2.2.3. The amendment will be debated as outlined in 16.2.1 (Order of Debate)

9.2.2.4. The amendment will be voted on by Council and will be carried if it gains a simple majority.

9.2.2.5. If the vote passes, the proposed amended motion becomes the proposed motion and the debate continues.

### 9.2.3. Length of speeches

Speeches shall not exceed 2 minutes in length unless, at the discretion of the Chair, a speaker's time is extended due to interruptions or not being able to deliver their speech in the normal manner.

9.3. At the start of each meeting, attendees and members of Council shall introduce themselves by name, pronouns and title.

## **10. Points of Order:**

10.1. Raising a Point of Order:

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A Point of Order is in relation to the conduct and procedure of the meeting or to propose a procedural motion (see below). A Point of Order can be made at any time apart from when a vote is taking place, unless the Point of Order is in relation to the vote itself.

### 10.2. Procedural Motions:

Procedural motions are detailed below and may be proposed by any member of Council as a Point of Order. These motions require another member of Council to second the motion before it can be voted on by Council. Procedural motions must be debated as detailed in 16.2.1. And require a two-thirds majority in order to pass.

- 10.2.1. To challenge the ruling of the Chair
- 10.2.2. To temporarily suspend the order of business
- 10.2.3. To move immediately to a vote
- 10.2.4. To vote on a motion or amendment in parts
- 10.2.5. To vote via a secret ballot
- 10.2.6. To vote on a motion as a public roll-call vote
- 10.2.7. To move the Council into committee
- 10.2.8. To move Council out of committee
- 10.2.9. To adjourn or postpone the matter to a later date
- 10.2.10. To move the matter to a Select Committee
- 10.2.11. To refer the meeting back to a Select Committee
- 10.2.12. To adjourn Council and complete the current item of business
- 10.2.13. To consider an item out of its scheduled order of business
- 10.2.14. To recess the meeting
- 10.2.15. To allow the discussion of a matter beyond the end time of Council
- 10.2.16. To put the motion to referendum

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### **11. Voting**

#### 11.1. General:

Members of the Association Council have the right to vote for, against or abstain from voting in any vote. Council voting records will be recorded in the minutes of the Association Council meetings.

Each Part-Time Officer position, Sabbatical Officer position and Faculty Representative position shall each hold one vote per position. In the circumstances where a student holds more than one position, they shall have a vote for each individual position and shall cast each vote in accordance with their representative duties.

#### 11.2. Method of Voting:

Voting shall be by either a show of cards for face-to-face meetings or online polls or emails if an online meeting. Council Members may raise a Point of Order to request a vote by secret ballot, this will require a two-third majority to pass. However, Council voting records will still be maintained and published as detailed in 11.1.

If a voting member of Council cannot attend a meeting they may vote by proxy. They must email the Representation and Democracy Coordinator by midday on the day of the meeting their apology and designated proxy, this must be another voting member. If a motion is amended, the proxy-vote will be considered an abstention.

#### 11.3. Voting Procedure:

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Voting may be by a simple majority or a two-thirds majority as detailed below.

### 11.3.1. Simple Majority

Unless otherwise stated, all motions presented to Council will be carried by a simple majority of those present and eligible to vote.

### 11.3.2. Two-Thirds Majority

If a procedural motion, motion of no-confidence or a motion proposing a change to the By-Laws or Articles is presented, it shall only be carried by a two-thirds majority of those present and eligible to vote.

### 11.3.3. Appointments

Appointments to a Select Committee shall be by ballot with each voting member of Council having a number of votes equal to the number of appointments to be filled. Candidates will give a 1 minutes speech outlining why they would be suitable to be on the committee before the Council casts its vote. The three candidates with the highest number of votes shall be appointed to the committee.

## **12. Removal from Office - Motions of No Confidence**

12.1. A proposal to remove any member of Association Council from office shall be treated as a motion.

12.2. The Association Councillor against whom the motion is proposed has the right to make the first speech against the motion and a summation speech.

12.3. The meeting should then vote on the proposal to remove an Association Council member from office.

12.4. The vote needs a two-thirds majority to pass.

12.5. A removal from office shall immediately remove the Association Council member from their role.

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- 12.6. If an Association Council member has already been the subject of a GSA disciplinary process or democratic political complaint, they cannot be subject to a Motion to Remove from Office for the same offence.

### **13. Select Committee**

If a Point of Order is made to proposal a procedural motion to refer a matter to a select committee, it must follow the process outlined below:

- 13.1. A Select Committee must comprise 4 voting members chosen from Council members and the Clerk of Council. These will be elected in accordance with 18.3.3.
- 13.2. In the first meeting of the committee, members must decide on a chairperson.
- 13.3. The Chairperson of the Select Committee must report back to the next Council meeting.
- 13.4. Council must vote to approve the report, if the report (or parts of the report) are not approved, Council may refer the matter (or sections) back for further consideration. This committee must then produce a further report at the next Council meeting.

Annex A: York GSA Association Council Motion



York Graduate Students' Association Motion

**Title of motion:**

**Proposed by:** .....

**Seconded by:** .....

**What do you want to change?**

**Why do you want to change it?**

**What do you want York Graduate Students' Association to do?**

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**Annex B: Association Council Agenda**



**York Graduate Students' Association Meeting Agenda**

**Date:**

**Time:**

**Location:**

- 1. Adoption of the agenda**
- 2. Apologies**
- 3. Co-opting of new Part-Time Officers (if applicable)**
- 4. Approval of minutes from the previous meeting**
- 5. Matters Arising**
- 6. Reports**
  - a. Written Reports from Sabbatical Officers
    - i. President
    - ii. VP Wellbeing and Community
    - iii. VP Academic
  - b. Verbal Reports from Council Members
- 7. New General Business**
- 8. Any Other Business**