

# **UNIVERSITY OF YORK GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION**

**(A Company Charity limited by guarantee)**

## **Annual Report & Financial Statements for the year ended**

**31st July 2020**

**(Registered Charity Number: 1142381)  
(Registered Company Number: 07477516)**

**UNIVERSITY OF YORK GRADUATE STUDENTS'  
ASSOCIATION**  
(A Company Charity limited by guarantee)

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## Director's Report (incorporating the Trustees' Annual Report)

For the year ended: 31st July 2020

The Trustees, who are also Directors of the charity for the purpose of the Companies Act, present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31st July 2020.

### Reference and Administration details

<b>Charity's full name</b>	University of York Graduate Students' Association (GSA)
<b>Other name(s) charity is known by</b>	GSA
<b>Status</b>	A charitable organisation established as a Company limited by guarantee.
<b>Registered as a Company on</b>	24 November 2010
<b>Registered as a Charity on</b>	13 June 2011
<b>Company number</b>	07477516
<b>Charity number</b>	1142381
<b>Registered office</b>	120 Vanbrugh College University of York Heslington York <b>Postcode</b> YO10 5DD
<b>Bank</b>	CAF Bank Ltd 25 Kings Hill Avenue, West Malling Kent <b>Postcode</b> ME19 4JQ

### Names of the Directors (trustees) who manage the charity

Directors Name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person entitled to appoint trustee
Agata Lambrechts	Chair		
Sally Hancock			
Louise Aiken		Until October 2019	
Charlotte Chamberlain		Until August 2019	
Amy Bullard		Until August 2019	
Sehrish Safi		Until August 2019	
Purnur Altay		From September 2019	
Clara Garcia		From September 2019	
Jane Baston		From September 2019	
Cathryn Auplish		From Oct 2019 to May 2020	
Francesca Killoran		From Oct 2019 to May 2020	
Kelly Richards D'Arcy		From September 2019	
Hannah Isobel Keith		From October 2019	
Ali Chahine		From January 2020	
Simon Sandison		From October 2019	
Paul Murtough		From October 2019	

**Names of the Directors (trustees) for the charity, if any**

Name	Dates acted if not for whole year
None	

**Structure, governance and management****Description of the charity's trusts**

**Governing Document:** Memorandum and Articles of Association

**How the charity is constituted** A Company limited by guarantee

**Trustee selection methods** Appointments are made either via member election (Principal Officers) or by Student Council (External/ Students)

The company obtained charitable status on 13 June 2011. The trustees of the association (University of York Graduates Students' Association) were in agreement to transfer the assets, liabilities and charitable objects to the company. The company commenced activities on 1 August 2011.

The charity is constituted as a company limited by guarantee and governed by its memorandum and articles of association.

The Trustees shall number not less than 9 or more than 15. The Board comprises all of the Principal Officers, a minimum of 3 Student Trustees and 4 External Trustees.

The GSA is a member-run organisation, with annual elections dependent on the timings of the University of York's intake of Postgraduate students (the GSA's membership). These elections will decide who the Principal Officers and Student Trustee's will be for the forthcoming year. No Principal Officer may hold office for longer than 2 Academic Years and all Principal Officer and Student Trustee's must be a member of the organisation. The Principal Officers shall be entitled to attend and speak at General Meetings of the Company at meetings of the Association Council and the Board of Trustees.

External Trustees serve for a term of three years from their date of appointment and may serve a maximum of two terms. External Trustees will be recruited and appointed by the trustee board based on desired skills.

As a member run organisation, the GSA council, which is run by the members forms the policy making body of the organisation. The Principal Officers of the organisation sit on council as well as the Board of Trustees.

**Objectives and activities****Summary of the objects of the charity set out in its governing document**

The objectives of the charity are:

To promote and defend the educational and general interest of the members and be the recognised representative channel between them, the University and other external bodies; further the social interests of the members to promote the integration and social cohesion of members and non-members.

Improve communication between graduates and undergraduates at the University by working in conjunction with representative bodies of undergraduate students.

Establish contact with other graduate student bodies and facilitate the exchange of students and best practice between institutions.

Raise the profile of postgraduate study at the University thereby supporting the advancement of education.

Provide academic and welfare related services to members and non-members.

Provide opportunities for all postgraduate students of the University to participate in sporting or social activities.

Further such policies of the company as are from time to time determined by the members in accordance with the articles, and to provide any other services as considered necessary in pursuit of these objects.

The trustees confirm that they have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charity's aims and objectives, and in planning future activities.

## Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects

The University of York Graduate Students Association aims to provide public benefit by promoting and defending the educational and general interest of the members and be the recognised representative channel between them, the University and other external bodies; further the social interests of the members to promote the integration and social cohesion of the members and non-members.

Our Trustees and staff work together to develop our strategic plan, from which priorities are set and specific work plans devised. Throughout this process the Trustees have regards to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and ensure that our services meet these criteria

The trustees consider that they have complied with their duties to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission.

## Achievements and performance

### Summary

2019/20 has of course seen the world change dramatically with the Covid 19 epidemic having a huge impact on everyone since the first UK case was discovered in York. Creating the best possible student experience in those circumstances and crucially supporting the wellbeing of all our postgraduate members has been more important than ever and the primary focus of the GSA as the principal representative body for postgraduates at the University of York..

Amongst many new initiatives to support students at this time, the GSA were proud to bring everyone together quickly in establishing the 'Keep Home & Carry On' student welfare campaign; a health and wellbeing focused series of online community activity and events covering a wide range of interests from physical activity, cooking, leisure activities, mindfulness, cinema, role play, family. Designed to build student communities at a time of isolation the campaign directly contributed to helping main students morale and adapt to a new 'normal' at a critical time.

## MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE CHARITY

The GSA's purpose is to advance the Education of our members, namely postgraduate students at the University of York for the public benefit. We have done this in the following ways during this reporting year;

### Representation

#### Democracy

GSA ran successful elections at the height of the then first lockdown, with the team quickly moving to have an online only election at the University of York, in a secure system. We were able to quickly adapt the technology, whilst also establishing learning for future years and enjoyed high candidate participation, especially in our Principal Officer elections, with Fifteen Candidates nominated overall for four positions .

This year we strengthened our student voice with Increased our academic representation and social justice representatives, with new positions for Course Rep and Part Time Officers. This included a new Events Part Time role to help expand a core offer of activities and support a more diverse student population in community building opportunities. .

#### Campaigns and successful lobbies in our members interest

Our officers were able to lobby the University to Simplify its PhD extension process, bringing great relief to our members who especially struggled being at a distance and cut off from their research and materials. We also were able to gain a cancellation of continuation fees for PGRs, especially important at a time when our students' income streams were hit and were unable to access the university. For Postgraduate Taught students, we helped advise and pass a safety net policy so that students would not be unfairly penalised through lack of access to resources and quality teaching.

We extensively lobbied the University to tackle sexual harassment, Mental Health and Structural Racism. We worked collaboratively with the YUSU advice service to develop a report on Sexual harassment at York, as well as defining a new students' vision statement, informed by a student consultation.

On mental Health we launched a Mental Health survey , working with York Time to Change Charity to inform our work with the University, on reviewing the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Finally we made sure to improve the experience of students from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic backgrounds (BAME), lobbying the University to introduce training and creating a GSA BAME Network.

### **Communication**

Our PG dedicated welcome week in October 2019 was a real success enjoying attendance by 82.4% of our postgraduate student membership. This consisted of 40+ events during Welcome week and the following Network Week. 96% of our members said that PG welcome week was useful with Overseas and EU students statistically found significantly to find it helpful.

Throughout the pandemic, the GSA acted as a vital link and day to day connection between the University and our members. We did this in a range of ways, making sure that our Officers acted as an accessible and inclusive point of contact on a wide range of rapidly changing academic and more broadly covid related issues. One of the most effective examples was the launch of FaQ Sessions with Senior Leaders.

### **Working with other Graduate Student Bodies**

The GSA once again hosted the annual National Postgraduate Conference for the third year running in November 2020 with a large number of PG dedicated representatives in attendance from a wide range of Universities. Featuring a number of digital events to help for change on a national level and to exchange best practice, the GSA is increasingly becoming not just a provider or representation locally, but driving it nationally.

### **Raising the profile of postgraduate study**

GSA Council decided to support the UCU Industrial Action for tackling the casualisation of the Postgraduate Students who Teach. These students have been provided with contracts from January 2021, which set out their rights and access to training and support. Our campaigns helped achieve this objective, ensuring not just equity, but an environment where our students can succeed.

### **Providing academic and welfare related services.**

We launched the 'Keep Calm and Carry On' campaign, encouraging conscientious behaviour and awareness around Covid-19 - signposting to government webpages and university guidance. We also set up a Quarantine Community group for students to talk, share stories and discuss how they were feeling. We had close to a thousand members engage. We also ran frequent online events to build up a sense of online community. During the March period alone we organised over fifty events and activities.

We were able to get the University to adopt the Your Guarantor service. This helps students, especially international students (who are the most vulnerable group in this area) to be able to access private accommodation. We contributed to the Mental Health university day with events like 'Look after each other' and 'Look after yourself. As well as organise de-stress spaces during assessment period. And further to this, we lobbied the local health authority (Unity Health) to promote their Patients Participation Group.

During the academic year, over 5% of our members accessed our GSA independent advice service directly, on top of which 279 cases were open during the academic year. This high increase in demand was close to double from the previous year, a trend seen more widely across both YUSU and the University.. Throughout the pandemic, the GSA has been able to maintain it's 1-2-1 student case work, with in office 'client meetings, complemented by a move to online appointments with the arrival of the pandemic since.

### **Provide opportunities for postgraduates**

We ran a number of day trips, these trips help those graduates who in future look to work with or in the UK with an introduction to the country. Before Covid-19 hit we hosted 80+ events, including events for specific and often overlooked demographics such as international focused events, events for mature students, and for families. We also empowered around a thousand members in PhD and Masters Networks each, with frequent student led events also run through our other networks.

GSA continued to provide free weekly sports sessions delivered to Postgraduate Students. There is an emphasis on delivering sessions that are completely casual and based around supporting the wellbeing of students.

## **Governance**

During this year we began a review of our by-laws, and with a view to update them.. The Board also undertook an external review of its HR and Trustee Policies, and has started to implement recommendations in this current year.

We also recruited three external trustees, with a range of Students' Union experiences, especially with Postgraduates. Paul Murtough was elected as Chair of the Board part way through the year, replacing Agata Lambrechts, who had stepped down to study at the University of York as a Postgraduate. Dr Simon Sandison was elected as Deputy Chair, a new position to support the Chair, and to split the workload.

### **Looking forward**

The GSA continues to grow its engagement with postgraduate students, in a way which is at the same time unique, but also admired externally. Looking forward the GSA will look to create a new strategy to support a successful transition for the post pandemic university. Many of the norms or barriers (such as lecture capture) have changed, so we need to make the best opportunities for these, whilst also recognising the space for fundraising has changed. We also continue to review our governance and operation, and will look to grow our structures in a sustainable way.

## **Financial Review**

GSA this year delivered a slight surplus due mostly to not being able to hold on campus events due to lockdown. These funds were internally redirected towards a renewed focus on online provision to support the well-being of students especially those most isolated and vulnerable during lockdown. With a view to being financially prudent, the GSA signposted any surplus funds generated to being directed at business critical costs for the following financial year.

GSA currently holds reserves with a view to eventually realising a long time ambition for creating a dedicated postgraduate social space. This is in keep with ongoing student feedback on their respective University experience. Complementing this the GSA maintains protected reserves of six months staff funding costs.

## **Trustee Responsibilities in relation to Financial Statements**

Company law requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company and of the income and expenditure of the company for the year. In preparing those financial statements, the directors are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue on that basis.

The directors are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose, with reasonable accuracy at any time, the financial position of the company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. The directors also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities, as well as exercising proper financial controls.

Members of the Board of Trustees, who are Directors for the purpose of company law, and Trustees for the purpose of charity law, who served during the year and up to the date of this report are set out on page 2.

### **Disclosure of information**

In accordance with company law, as the company's Directors, each of the Board of Trustees certify that so far as they are aware:

- There is no relevant information of which the Charity's Independent Examiner is unaware;

- As Directors of the company, they have taken the necessary steps to be aware of the information, which would be relevant for independent examination purposes and have communicated them to the Independent Examiner.

**Exemptions**

The trustees have taken advantage of the exemption available to small companies, including the audit exemption (as detailed on the balance sheet)

**Declaration**

**The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above**

**Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees**

**Signature** 

**Full Name** Paul Murtough

**Position** External Trustee, Chair of the Trustee Board

**Date** 6th April 2021



**Independent examiner's report to the trustees of University of York Graduate Students' Association**

I report on the accounts of: **UNIVERSITY OF YORK GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION**  
for the year ended: **31st July 2020** which are set out on pages 8 to 12.

**Responsibilities and basis of report**

As the charity's trustees of the Company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

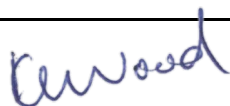
Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the Company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5) (b) of the 2011 Act.

**Independent examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- 1 accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by section 386 of the Act; or
- 2 the accounts do not accord with those records
- 3 the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- 4 the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



**Karen Wood (ACMA)**

Outsource independent examination  
service  
The Hiscox Building  
Peasholme Green  
York YO1 7PR

07/04/2021

**Date:**

## UNIVERSITY OF YORK GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended:

31st July 2020

		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2020	Total 2019
	Note	£	£	£	£
<b>Income from:</b>					
Donations and grants	3.1	273,000	-	273,000	266,000
Charitable activities	3.2	14,975	-	14,975	11,351
Other trading activities	3.3	3,933	-	3,933	6,669
Investments	3.4	268	-	268	384
<b>Total income</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>292,176</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>292,176</b>	<b>284,404</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>					
Charitable activities	4	252,825	-	252,825	250,718
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>252,825</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>252,825</b>	<b>250,718</b>
<b>Net income/(expenditure)</b>		<b>39,351</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>39,351</b>	<b>33,686</b>
<b>Gross transfers between funds</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		<b>39,351</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>39,351</b>	<b>33,686</b>
<b>Total funds brought forward</b>		<b>231,710</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>231,710</b>	<b>198,024</b>
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>271,061</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>271,061</b>	<b>231,710</b>

## UNIVERSITY OF YORK GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

**Balance Sheet as at:**

**31st July 2020**

	Note	2020	2019
<b>Current assets</b>			
Cash at bank and in hand		280,131	244,956
Debtors & prepayments	9	1,216	1,808
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>281,347</b>	<b>246,764</b>
<b>Current liabilities: amounts falling due within one year</b>			
Creditors and accruals	10	(10,286)	(15,054 )
<b>Net current assets</b>		<b>271,061</b>	<b>231,710</b>
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>271,061</b>	<b>231,710</b>
 <b>Funds of the Charity</b>			
Unrestricted Funds		271,061	231,710
<b>Total Funds carried forward</b>		<b>271,061</b>	<b>231,710</b>

The trustees are satisfied that the company is entitled to exemption from the provisions of the Companies Act 2006 (the Act) relating to the audit of the financial statements for the year by virtue of section 477, and that no member or members have requested an audit pursuant to section 476 of the Act.

The directors (trustees) acknowledge their responsibilities for:

- i) ensuring the company keeps accounting records which comply with Sections 386 and 387 of the Companies Act 2006; and
- ii) preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company at the end of each financial year and of its profit and loss for each financial year in accordance with the requirements of Sections 394 and 395 and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the company.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies and with the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (Charities SORP (FRS 102)).

The financial statements were approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf by:

Paul Murtough
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**Trustee**

Date 6th April 2021
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# UNIVERSITY OF YORK GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Notes to the accounts for the year ended:

31st July 2020

## 1 Basis of preparation

### 1.1 Basis of accounting

The financial statements are prepared under the historical cost convention and the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (Charities SORP (FRS 102)).

### 1.2 Change of basis of accounting

There has been no change to the accounting policies (valuation rules and methods of accounting) since last year.

### 1.3 Change to previous accounts

No changes have been made to accounts for previous years.

## 2 Accounting policies

### Income

#### Recognition of incoming resources

These are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when:

- the charity becomes entitled to the resources;
- receipt of the resources is probable; and
- the monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.

### Expenditure and liabilities

#### Liability recognition

Liabilities are recognised as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to pay out resources.

#### Charitable expenditure

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs on an indirect nature necessary to support them.

### Assets

#### Tangible fixed assets for use by the charity

These are capitalised if they can be used for more than one year and cost at least **£500**. They are valued at cost or, if gifted, at the value to the charity on receipt.

Depreciation is provided at rates to write off the costs less estimated residual value of each asset on a straight line basis over its expected useful life as follows:

Office equipment	20%
Computer equipment	50%

#### Fund accounting

All of the charity's funds are unrestricted

Unrestricted funds are funds which are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity.

### 3 Analysis of income

	2020		2019	
	Unrestricted funds	Total 2020	Unrestricted funds	Total 2019
	£	£	£	£
<b>3.1 Donations &amp; grants</b>				
Grants	273,000	273,000	266,000	266,000
	<b>273,000</b>	<b>273,000</b>	<b>266,000</b>	<b>266,000</b>
<b>3.2 Charitable activities</b>				
Events & trips	14,975	14,975	11,351	11,351
	<b>14,975</b>	<b>14,975</b>	<b>11,351</b>	<b>11,351</b>
<b>3.2 Other trading activities</b>				
Activities for generating funds	3,933	3,933	6,669	6,669
	<b>3,933</b>	<b>3,933</b>	<b>6,669</b>	<b>6,669</b>
<b>3.3 Investments</b>				
Bank interest	268	268	384	384
	<b>268</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>384</b>
<b>Total income</b>	<b>292,176</b>	<b>292,176</b>	<b>284,404</b>	<b>284,404</b>

### 4 Analysis of expendediture

	2020		2019	
	Unrestricted funds	Total 2020	Unrestricted funds	Total 2019
	£	£	£	£
<b>Charitable activities</b>				
Staff costs	207,078	207,078	184,560	184,560
Staff training & courses	4,122	4,122	4,413	4,413
Communications	3,063	3,063	7,632	7,632
Projects & campaigns	3,557	3,557	5,374	5,374
Graduate community	3,394	3,394	4,055	4,055
Welcome week costs	4,437	4,437	3,139	3,139
Trips & events	11,753	11,753	10,372	10,372
Sports sessions	4,767	4,767	9,093	9,093
Representation	1,840	1,840	1,639	1,639
Audit, accountancy & legal	1,613	1,613	7,298	7,298
Administration costs	-	-	3,572	3,572
Insurance	1,439	1,439	1,365	1,365
Office costs & equipment	2,136	2,136	3,648	3,648
Website & hosting	1,218	1,218	2,305	2,305
Depreciation	-	-	337	337
Telephone	848	848	1,750	1,750
Trustee training	1,151	1,151	-	-
Bank charges	409	409	166	166
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>252,825</b>	<b>252,825</b>	<b>250,718</b>	<b>250,718</b>

## 5 Trustee expenses

### 5.1 Trustee remuneration

During the year no trustees of the charity received remuneration or expenses.

## 6 Expenses

	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>
Independent Examiner's fees for reporting on the accounts	<b>£ 840</b>	<b>£ 840</b>

## 7 Paid employees

	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>
Gross salaries	188,821	166,366
Employers National Insurance	14,233	13,997
Pension contributions	4,024	4,197
	<b>207,078</b>	<b>184,560</b>
Average number of employees (full time equivalent)	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>

## 8 Debtors & prepayments

	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Debtors	-	612
Prepayments	1,216	1,196
	<b>1,216</b>	<b>1,808</b>

## 9 Creditors and accruals

<b>Analysis of creditors</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>
<b>Amounts falling due within one year</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Trade creditors	8,686	13,454
Accruals and deferred income	1,600	1,600
	<b>10,286</b>	<b>15,054</b>