



**Graduate Students' Association Council Meeting Agenda and Papers - Wednesday 15th
December 2021**

Date: Wednesday 15th December 2021

Time: 5:30pm

Location: Zoom:

<https://york-ac-uk.zoom.us/j/97544979217?pwd=Mi9XR2lEbk1waDF3SWhhcG9RVllldz09>

Meeting ID: 975 4497 9217

Passcode: 018604

Agenda

- 1. Welcome & Apologies**
- 2. [Minutes from the Previous Meeting- 16th August 2021](#)**
- 3. Matters Arising**
- 4. Sabbatical Officer Scrutiny & Support**
 - a. [Presidents Report](#)
 - b. [VP Academic Report](#)
 - c. [VP Wellbeing Report](#)
- 5. New General Business**
 - a. UCU Strikes- VERBAL
 - b. [Should the GSA create a Governance and Policy Working Group?](#)
 - c. [Should the GSA create an Online Learning Students' Forum?](#)
- 6. Any Other Business (AOB)**
 - a. Timings of Council Meetings and Activity
 - b. [Council Meeting Schedule 2021/22](#)



Motions

Title of motion: Should the GSA create a Governance and Policy Working Group?

Proposed by: Barry Mcguire

Seconded by:

What do you want to change?

The GSA's Articles of Association (i.e. constitution) sometimes conflict with the Bylaws and do not always follow current best practice. In places they are overly legalistic and may be difficult for members to understand. A GSA Council motion passed last academic year recommended the GSA Board of Trustees review the articles. This motion would put in place a working group to allow Council and the Board to work together on this issue.

Why do you want to change it?

In the GSA Council Meeting held on Monday 16th August 2021 a motion was passed to amend the GSA's Articles of Association. This came about due to discrepancies being identified between the Articles and the Bylaws. The motion also recommended the Trustee Board review the Articles to ensure they are fit for purpose.

Such a review should take into consideration the views of students and it is a perfect opportunity for the Board and Council to work together. This would ensure that not only would the Articles be updated, but also that they work effectively with the Bylaws, and the Articles and Bylaws both reflect the current or desired governance and policy structures and procedures.

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

Create a Governance and Policy Working Group (GPWG) comprised of a minimum of four people, which shall include the following:

- * At least one Principal Officer
- * At least one Trustee Board member who is not a Principal Officer
- * At least one Council member who is not a Principal Officer

The objective of the GPWG is to review and update the Articles and Bylaws with a view to bringing forward a package of amendments or a new set of articles and bylaws for approval by GSA Council and the Trustee Board. The resulting proposed articles and bylaws should:

- * be consistent,
- * be easily understood by members,
- * be updated to current best practices from legal, ethical and financial points of view, and
- * reflect the current or desired governance and policy structures and procedures.

Mandate the GSA President to:

- * coordinate the GPWG, which may include designating another Principal Officer to be a member of the GPWG, and
- * ensure a report is made to every GSA Council meeting and Trustee Board meeting on the status of the work of the GPWG until it is disbanded.

GSA staff should support the GPWG and may attend and act in an advisory capacity, but will not be considered to be members of the GPWG. The GSA may appoint external consultants where appropriate.

It is envisaged the task should be completed in early 2022 and certainly no later than the end of the 2021/22 academic year. The GPWG will be disbanded when a package of amendments or new articles and bylaws are approved by the GSA council and the Trustee Board.



Title of motion: Should the GSA create an Online Learning Students' Forum?

Proposed by: Barry McGuire

Seconded by:

What do you want to change?

The GSA should create an Online Learning Students' Forum to create a direct link between them and the VP Academic, which should increase the level of representation currently provided.

Why do you want to change it?

Online Students currently make up approximately 25% of the Postgraduate Students at York. Online Student Reps do not have a duty to attend a faculty forum so there is no representation structure linking them to the VP Academic. This means online student issues may be under-represented in high-level meetings with the University. Online students usually have more in common with each other than they do with other students in their faculties (Science and Social Science). The only thing they need to attend the faculty forums for is the co-option of representatives, and this is a slightly unnatural place for this decision to be made.

The obvious solution would be to create a forum, similar to the faculty forums, for online students.

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

Amend bylaw 7 (Academic Representation) as follows:

5.1 Should vacancies arise throughout the year, there is the option to wait until the next election to fill the position or to co-opt a representative at a Faculty Forum or Online Learning Students' Forum.

6.1 Faculty Forums

Remove "The Terms of Reference for the Faculty Forums can be found in Appendix B."

Insert: "6.2 Online Learning Students' Forum

The purpose of Online Learning Students' Forum is to provide a space for Academic Representatives to meet with their Online Learning Students' Officer and VP Academic, as well as being a forum for discussion. The Forum may consider any matter affecting the education, welfare and interests of students of the University of York. The Forum should hear reports from the VP Academic and the Online Learning Students' Officer."

Online Masters Programme Representatives - Role Description

Add a duty to attend the Online Learning Students' Forum.

Online Masters Department Representatives - Role Description

Add a duty to attend the Online Learning Students' Forum.

Amend bylaw 3 (Principal Officer Team) as follows:

4.2.9 coordinate and support the academic representation system including convening regular faculty forums, online learning students' forums and academic representative training,

Amend the Code of Practice for Online Students Representation as follows:

5.c Should vacancies arise throughout the year, there is the option to wait until the next election to fill the position or to co-opt a representative at the Online Learning Students' Forum.

Amend bylaw 6 (Part-Time Officers)

Insert "3.19.4 Attend the Online Learning Students' Forum"