

# UC PGSA

University of Canterbury Postgraduate Students' Association

## Constitution

*Revised 2016*

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## **1. Name**

- a. The name of the organisation governed by this constitution shall be “The University of Canterbury Postgraduate Students’ Association”; hereinafter referred to as “UC PGSA”.

## **2. Objectives**

- a. The purpose of UC PGSA is to see that the following objectives are carried out by supervising and coordinating the execution and financing of activities, by affecting measures with respect to its rules, and by acting as a representative body for postgraduate students to present their views to The University of Canterbury (UC) College and Department staff and committees:
  - i. improve the postgraduate study experience;
  - ii. represent the views of postgraduates throughout the University;
  - iii. foster a better sense of postgraduate community;
  - iv. provide networking opportunities for postgraduate students across disciplines within the University, and with University staff, industry professionals and community groups;
  - v. increase UC PGSA exposure to students;
  - vi. work towards establishing a common space for all postgraduate students at the University.
- b. The objectives of UC PGSA shall derive, and not be at conflict with, the aims, objectives and policies of the University of Canterbury Students’ Association Inc. (UCSA).
- c. No person shall be discriminated against in any matters concerning UC PGSA on the grounds of age, race, colour, religion, sex (including gender identity, sexual orientation, and pregnancy), family, national origin or disability.

## **3. Membership**

- a. The following persons shall be eligible for membership:
  - i. Any student enrolled at UC.
  - ii. Any Associate Member, admitted to UC PGSA under special circumstances (for instance, if a committee position were to be vacant otherwise, alumni may be nominated and voted in as members of the Committee).
- b. Membership is granted upon sign-up to UC PGSA. Membership fee is set at the discretion of the Committee. It is recommended there is no associated cost.
- c. An Associate Member may be admitted to UC PGSA if a committee position remains otherwise vacant. In this case, an alumnus may become a member of the Committee and in doing so become an Associate Member. An Associate Member has the same rights as a full Member.

#### **4. Committee Members**

- a. The Officers of UC PGSA shall be the President, Treasurer, Secretary, and Advocacy Officer.
- b. The Committee may also include the following positions: Social Events Manager, Academic Events Manager, Communications Manager, Sponsorship Manager, International Students Coordinator and General Committee Members.
- c. The President, Treasurer, Secretary, Advocacy Officer, and, where elected, the Social Events Manager, Academic Events Manager, Communications Manager, Sponsorship Manager and General Committee Members, shall form the Committee of UC PGSA. All Committee Members shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting.
- d. In event of a Committee Member position being unfilled, the responsibilities of the unfilled portfolios shall be divided between the Committee.
- e. Committee members shall hold office until the next Annual General Meeting, unless they:
  - i. resign;
  - ii. lose a vote of no confidence at a General Meeting during their term of office;
  - iii. lose a unanimous vote of no confidence by the remaining Committee Members, after failing to attend at least two consecutive Committee meetings (where at least 24 hours' notice was given) without apologies, or refuse to carry out the position responsibilities outlined in the Constitution.
- f. In the event of a position vacancy before the AGM, the following steps shall be followed by the remaining Committee:
  - i. The position shall be advertised to all Members.
  - ii. The majority of Committee members must vote to decide upon a candidate; absent Committee members may vote by communicating with the Committee meeting Chair.
  - iii. The candidate will be elected with support from at least two-thirds of the total Committee.
  - iv. All applicants have the right to be present at the time of voting.

#### **5. Management**

- a. The Committee outlined in this constitution shall administer UC PGSA.
- b. General management of UC PGSA will be carried out at Committee Meetings.
- c. Committee Meetings must be held at least once per University term.
- d. The Committee shall be responsible for carrying out decisions agreed upon at Committee Meetings.
- e. Any Committee Member has the power, at all times, to call a Committee meeting. At least 24 hours' notice should be given.
- f. Any Committee Member has the power to suggest a motion, at any time.

- g. All Committee meetings will be conducted according to the agenda that the Committee will decide, via the Secretary.
- h. The President shall Chair all UC PGSA meetings. If the President is absent, the Treasurer, Secretary or Advocacy Officer shall be Chair, at the discretion of the President.
- i. The Chair, at any Meeting, shall in all cases have a deliberate vote, and also a casting vote should equal voting occur subject to any other clause of this Constitution.
- j. At all Committee Meetings, two-thirds of the total Committee (two of whom must be Officers) shall form a quorum. On important, time-sensitive motions, as determined at discretion of the Committee, quorum can be formed in absentia, by communicating with the Chair.
- k. Decisions shall be taken at Committee Meetings by a majority vote. Absent Committee members may vote by communicating with the Chair.
- l. The motion will pass with support from more than half of the total Committee.
- m. The Committee will delate a Members to attend the Postgraduate Committee, Research Committee, Library Committee, Postgraduate Welcomes and/or any other meeting deemed appropriate by the Committee.

## 6. Officer Roles

- a. The President shall:
  - i. Ensure UC PGSA remains affiliated to UCSA.
  - ii. Chair Committee meetings.
  - iii. Advise and oversee activities of the Committee, and may delegate tasks as required.
  - iv. Keep UC PGSA possessions or organise storage space for those possessions.
  - v. Hold administrative privileges online.
- b. The Treasurer shall:
  - i. Administer the funds of UC PGSA, subject to such controls as the Committee will impose.
  - ii. Raise cheques, deal with direct purchase orders, reimbursements and ensure money is available before events proceed.
  - iii. Manage the collection and credit of funds from events.
  - iv. Organise direct payment of, or reimbursement for UC PGSA costs incurred by the Committee.
  - v. Keep records of income, expenditure, committed costs, forecast costs and physical assets of the Committee.
  - vi. Report finances to the Committee at Committee Meetings.
  - vii. Prepare the Financial Report, and Statement of Assets and Liabilities, for the Annual General Meeting.
  - viii. Chair UC PGSA meetings in the absence of the President, at the discretion of the

President.

c. The Secretary shall:

- i. Keep the membership list updated and available to the Committee.
- ii. Issue notices of meetings.
- iii. Prepare an agenda before Committee meetings and General Meetings and make available to the Committee.
- iv. Attend all meetings (wherever possible) and keep accurate minutes of the proceedings.
- v. Make a copy of the minutes available to all committee members after the meeting.
- vi. Delegate the task of minute-taking to a Committee Member if absent from, or Chair of, a meeting.
- vii. Read and file all communications and, where appropriate, distribute it to relevant committee members.
- viii. Hold the current year's mail and secretarial records (to be passed onto the President at the end of the Secretary's term).
- ix. Hold administrative privileges online.
- x. Attend generally to all clerical duties in connection with UC PGSA.
- xi. Chair UC PGSA meetings in the absence of the President, at the discretion of the President.

d. The Advocacy Officer shall:

- i. Liaise with students regarding postgraduate ideas and issues.
- ii. Liaise with UCSA and UC regarding postgraduate ideas and issues.
- iii. Report advocacy activities to the Committee at Committee Meetings.
- iv. Respond directly to communications regarding postgraduate ideas and issues concerning student wellbeing.
- v. Chair UC PGSA meetings in the absence of the President, at the discretion of the President.

## 7. Committee Portfolios

a. Social Events Manager

- i. Organise and conduct social events, which might include quiz nights, catch-ups, sports and outdoor excursions.
- ii. Organise and oversee UCSA events.
- iii. Ensure social events are appropriately advertised to postgraduate students.
- iv. Create formal proposals for the Committee to form and manage a subcommittee for any large events (to be composed of existing Committee members and/or new General Executive members voted in).

- b. Academic Events Manager:
  - i. Organise and conduct academic events, which might include research showcases, postgraduate seminars, writing retreats and key skills development activities.
  - ii. Organise and oversee UCSA events.
  - iii. Ensure academic events are appropriately advertised to postgraduate students.
  - iv. Create formal proposals for the Committee to form and manage a subcommittee for any large events (to be composed of existing Committee members and/or new General Committee members voted in).
- c. Communications Manager:
  - i. Hold administrative privileges online.
  - ii. Manage and maintain the UC PGSA website and email system.
  - iii. Manage and maintain UC PGSA social media platforms.
  - iv. Manage the branding of UC PGSA and provide the Committee with logos and related material as required.
  - v. Assist the Committee with computing issues throughout the year.
- d. Sponsorship Manager:
  - i. Apply for grants and sponsorship to assist with UC PGSA finances and support events.
  - ii. Maintain contact with current sponsors.
  - iii. Ensure responsibilities to grant providers and sponsors are met.
- e. International Students Coordinator:
  - i. Liaise with international students regarding their ideas and issues.
  - ii. Liaise with UCSA and UC regarding international ideas and issues.

## 8. Finance

- a. The funds of UC PGSA, from whatever source derived, shall be applied only towards the promotion of the aims and objectives of UC PGSA or towards legitimate, actual, and legal expenditure on behalf of UC PGSA which the Committee authorises.
- b. No portion of any funds shall be paid or transferred directly or indirectly, by way of dividend, bonus, salary, or otherwise to any person whatsoever, except:
  - i. No more than 5% of funding may be spent on the Committee.
- c. All monies shall be received by the Treasurer, who shall deposit them in a UC PGSA bank account.
- d. Only the Treasurer, President and Secretary shall have signatory rights over the two UC PGSA bank accounts.
- e. The main account will be the Club Account, which will contain the majority of the funds.
  - i. Payments from this account will require approval from two Officers.

- ii. The Club Account will have no EFTPOS card.
- f. The second account will be the Business account.
  - i. This account should hold a limited amount of money.
  - ii. The Treasurer, President and Secretary will be able to hold EFTPOS cards (and Debit cards if desired) for this account.
- g. UC PGSA is solely responsible for all debts incurred in its name. No responsibility or financial liability will be taken by UCSA.
- h. UC PGSA shall not incur a debt, and no person shall incur a debt acting on behalf of UC PGSA.
- i. UC PGSA may choose to offer scholarships. Scholarships must be proposed and approved by the Committee. Such funding must be applied for via application and made public, if approved.

**9. Annual General Meeting (AGM) & Special General Meetings**

- a. The Annual General Meeting of UC PGSA shall be held each year, at a date determined by the Committee (normally around September/October). The regular business of the meeting shall be:
  - i. To receive the President's Report on the state of UC PGSA.
  - ii. To receive the Financial Report, and the Statement of Assets and Liabilities, for the preceding year.
  - iii. To elect Committee Members for the forthcoming year.
  - iv. To maintain continuity between years.
  - v. To transact any other general business of UC PGSA.
- b. A Special General Meeting of UC PGSA shall be called by the Secretary on receiving a written request by:
  - i. The President;
  - ii. The Committee on its motion;
  - iii. At least ten (10) Members.
- c. Not less than seven (7) days prior to the Meeting taking place, notice of the General Meeting shall be:
  - i. Communicated to all members via email;
  - ii. Posted on the UC PGSA Noticeboard;
  - iii. Communicated to UCSA.
- d. At each General Meeting, the President shall elect an impartial Returning Officer, who shall not express an opinion in favour of any candidate.
- e. The Returning Officer shall be responsible for all votes that take place at the meeting, including vote counting.

- f. Votes may be cast through a proxy by use of a signed statement to this effect, or through communication verified by the Returning Officer.
- g. The Returning Officer shall not cast a vote.
- h. Counting of the votes shall take place immediately after the closing of balloting, and the results of the vote shall be made available to Members.
- i. At all General Meetings of UC PGSA, all Members shall be entitled to vote.
- j. Quorum for an Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting of UC PGSA shall be ten (10) Members.

## **10. Elections**

- a. Any student due to be enrolled as a postgraduate student at UC at the beginning of the next academic year may stand for election.
- b. Nominations require a nominator and a seconder.
- c. Any applicant may withdraw from nomination.
- d. Candidates for election shall be permitted to speak at the AGM at the end of the nomination process.
- e. All Members of UC PGSA present at the AGM shall have the right to question candidates prior to elections.
- f. Positions shall be elected in the following order: President, Treasurer, Secretary, Advocacy Officer, Social Events Manager, Academic Events Manager, Communications Manager, Sponsorship Manager, General Committee Members.
- g. In the event that a position is uncontested, the candidate shall be deemed to require at least three quarters of votes in favour from voting Members to be elected.
- h. In the event of a tie, a second vote will be held for that position. Re-voting shall occur, with questions in between, until the tie has been broken, or a candidate drops out of the running.

## **11. Cessation of Membership**

- a. Any member may resign by giving written notice through a UC PGSA communication channel.
- b. Membership may be permanently terminated in the following way:
  - i. If, for any reason whatsoever, the Committee is of the view that a Member is acting in a manner inconsistent with the purposes of UC PGSA, the Committee may give written notice of this to the Member ("Committee's Notice"). The Committee's Notice must:
    - l. Explain how the Member is acting in a manner inconsistent with the purposes of UC PGSA;

- II. State what the Member must do in order to remedy the situation; or state that the Member must write to the Committee giving reasons why the Committee should not terminate the Member's Membership.
  - III. State that if, within 14 days of the Member receiving the Committee's Notice, the Committee is not satisfied, the Committee may in its absolute discretion immediately terminate the Member's Membership.
  - IV. State that if the Committee terminates the Member's Membership, the Member may appeal.
- ii. 14 days after the Member received the Committee's Notice, the Committee may in its absolute discretion by majority vote terminate the Member's Membership by giving the Member written notice ("Termination Notice"), which takes immediate effect. The Termination Notice must state that the Member may appeal by giving written notice to the Secretary ("Member's Notice") within 14 days of the Member's receipt of the Termination Notice.
  - iii. If the Member gives the Member's Notice to the Secretary, the Member will have the right to be fairly heard at a General Meeting, held within the following 28 days. If the Member chooses, the Member may provide the Secretary with a written explanation of the events as the Member sees them ("Member's Explanation"), and the Member may require the Secretary to disseminate the Member's Explanation to every other Member within seven (7) days of the Secretary receiving the Member's Explanation. If the member is not satisfied that the other Members have had sufficient time to consider the Member's explanation, the Member may defer the right to be heard until the next General Meeting.
  - iv. When the Member is heard at the General Meeting, the Committee may question the Member, and Members may question the Member and the Committee. The Member may request the presence of a neutral party from UCSA.
  - v. A majority vote at the General Meeting will decide whether to let the termination stand, or whether to reinstate the Member. This decision will be final.

## 12. Handover Procedures

Upon election of a new Committee, the outgoing Committee shall be responsible for ensuring the newly appointed President receives, as soon as practical, but no later than the 30<sup>th</sup> November of the year the new Committee was elected:

- a. All financial accounts of UC PGSA.
- b. A list of all UC PGSA Members (including contact details).
- c. All usernames, passwords and documentation relating to online administration.
- d. All UC PGSA assets.
- e. Any other details that would be helpful for the governance of UC PGSA.

### **13. Constitution**

- a. The Secretary and Treasurer shall keep copies of this Constitution which shall be available on application.
- b. This Constitution shall be available on the UC PGSA and UCSA websites.
- c. At any General Meeting the Secretary is responsible for bringing a paper copy of this Constitution for perusal.
- d. No part of this Constitution shall be altered, rescinded or added to except at a General Meeting of UC PGSA called for that purpose and every proposed alteration must be handed to the Secretary at least 72 hours before the date of such a meeting. All proposed constitutional amendments shall be advertised via email and on the UC PGSA Noticeboard at least 48 hours before the date of such a meeting.
- e. No motion to alter or rescind or add to this constitution shall be deemed to be carried at a General Meeting unless two-thirds majority vote in favour of the changes to be received from the members present.
- f. UCSA must be notified in writing of any alterations made.
- g. No motion to alter or rescind or add to this Constitution shall be deemed to be carried if the UCSA Executive deems the change to be contrary to the interests, aims or objectives of UCSA.

### **14. Affiliation**

UC PGSA shall apply for affiliation to UCSA on an annual basis, and will abide by the decisions and rulings of the UCSA Executive. The conduct of the affairs of UC PGSA shall be in accordance with the Constitution of UCSA.

### **15. Winding Up**

- a. UC PGSA shall be wound up if:
  - i. a motion to that effect is passed by a two-thirds majority at a General Meeting;
  - ii. the UCSA Executive passes a motion winding up UC PGSA, at the request of the outgoing President of UC PGSA, having failed on three consecutive attempts to form a new Committee.
- b. In the event of UC PGSA winding up, all property and assets (including any monies held in the UC PGSA bank account), shall be held in trust by UCSA for not less than four (4) years, and shall be given to a UCSA Club with the same objectives when such a Club is formed.
  - i. If, after four (4) years, no similar UCSA Club is formed, UCSA shall have the power to dispose of assets and properties as it sees fit.
  - ii. All profits from such disposal shall go towards the UCSA Club Funds.