

Department of Humanities Graduate Students Association

Constitution & Guidelines

The Purpose of this Constitution is:

1. To provide a general philosophy and rationale for the Graduate Student Association.
2. To provide a general orientation for the membership.
3. To lend stability and continuity to the Graduate Student Association.
4. To provide an understanding of the operations, practices and procedures carried on within the various parts of the Graduate Student Association.

ARTICLE 1: Name and Compliance

1.1 Name: This organization shall be known as Humanities Graduate Students Association, the name under which it is officially registered with York University Graduate Students Association (YUGSA). It will hereinafter be referred to as HuGSA.

1.2 Compliance: HuGSA operates at York University, subject to York University and York University Graduate Students Association (YUGSA) policies and procedures.

Article 2: Preamble

The Graduate Student Association—hereafter referred to as the GSA—represents and advocates for the collective interests of Humanities graduate students in all matters of departmental policy and action at York University. The GSA seeks to build community among the graduate students, faculty, and larger university, with consideration for diverse experiences and interests. Above all, the GSA works to optimize the environment within which graduate students develop, both professionally and personally.

Article 3: Membership

The members of the GSA are Humanities graduate students. Current enrollment in the graduate program is sufficient for membership. No general membership dues will be collected from members, although members may be expected to pay nominal fees for specific events.

Article 4: Meetings

HuGSA meetings will be moderated by the President/Co-Presidents and held a minimum of two times per semester during the academic year (four times per year). All members are invited and encouraged to attend. Normally, any voting will take place in the meeting, and members who are not in attendance at the meeting forfeit their right to vote, unless a proxy vote has been arranged in advance. HuGSA does reserve the right to decide, by a majority vote or the decision of the President/Co-Presidents, to put any vote to the entire membership. In these cases, the issue will be presented via written or electronic memo to all members, and members will be given a pre-specified period of time in which to cast their ballots. Before any official action is taken by HuGSA, a

majority vote must be obtained for those votes taken outside of meetings (as per the stipulations outlined above). In all cases, the votes of all members will be weighed equally.

Section 4.1: Group Agreement

A Group Agreement will be read at the beginning of each HuGSA meeting by a member of the executive team. The executive team and members attending meetings are expected to comply with the Group Agreement. Copies of the Group Agreement will be made available at each meeting.

Article 5: Elections and Eligibility

Elections for HuGSA offices will be held during the third week of September of every year so that a newly appointed executive will be ready for October. Only HuGSA members may hold official positions. All nominations for elected office will be sent to the election officer/graduate program assistant. No individual may hold, or run, for more than one HuGSA office at the same time. In the case of an unclaimed position, any position required in meetings can be adopted by an executive on *a temporary basis* until the position has been filled, with the exception of the YUGSA councilors, who will be appointed permanently by the executive in the event that they have not been elected. After the nomination period, ballots will be distributed electronically to all Humanities graduate students, and persons will have a pre-specified period in which to cast their ballots. For each position, the person receiving the largest number of votes will be elected. Ballots will be submitted to and tabulated by the current HuGSA Presidents/Election Officer/Graduate Program Assistant.

Section 5.1: Contestations

It is common in most electoral practices that when the legitimacy of a candidate is disputed, the appointed executive (those who have won their seats in the election) will meet to determine whether a re-election period should occur. In discussing a re-election period, the current appointed executives discuss the pros and cons of a re-election, including the nature of the contestations that were voiced to the CRO.

Section 5.2: Community Relations Officers (CRO)

In the event that the Graduate Program Assistant is unable to help tabulate votes, an election Town Hall meeting will be held during which a Community Relations Officer (CRO) will be appointed by the members present. The CRO does not have the authority to decide whether a disputed candidate or candidates are legitimate contestations; the CRO is only responsible for relaying information, such as disputes of candidates, to the appointed executive team.

Article 6: Elected Positions

The GSA has 12 elected officers: two Co-Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer, Communications officer, Social officer, CUPE 3903 steward, FGS Council rep, Graduate Executive rep (MA and PhD), and two YUGSA councilors. The office of President may be held by two Co-Presidents of equal authority who run for the office jointly.

Section 6.1: Requirements of Officers

The Officers of GSA must attend >75% of regularly scheduled meetings.

- **Co-Presidents:**
Requirements: The Presidents are responsible for organizing and overseeing meetings, elections, communicating with other officers, calling special meetings, coordinating officers in special tasks, sending out notice to the executive team, and creating an agenda. One of the Co-Presidents will be the signing authority for finances (the other being the Treasurer), and is responsible for making sure that financial information is up to date.
- **Secretary:**
Requirements: The Secretary is responsible for recording the minutes of the meetings and distributing them to the membership, keeping all records and lists updated, and moderating the departmental listserv by sending out monthly executive meeting notices including agenda created by the Co-Presidents.
- **Treasurer:**
Requirements: The Treasurer is responsible for drafting HuGSA's budget and presenting it to the executive, membership and YUGSA, keeping the membership informed of HuGSA's current budget, and reporting the amount of expenditures by the GSA at each meeting.
- **Communications Officer:**
Requirements: The Communications Officer is responsible for maintaining the website and social media outlets (Facebook and Twitter), keeping track of the needs of physical posters and campaigns, and listserv maintenance (can be shared with a Co-President).
- **Social Officer:**
Requirements: The Social Chair is responsible for planning and coordinating the social activities of HuGSA, including organizing the events, coordinating with the treasurer for a budget and coordinating with communications officer for announcements.
- **CUPE 3903 Steward:**
Requirements: Information to come from CUPE 3903
- **FGS Council Rep:**
Requirements: The FGS Council Rep is responsible for attending FGS council meetings, reporting to HuGSA notices from the Dean, discussion in changes to funding policies, academic plans, new courses, and new MA/PhD quotas. Meetings are held at 3:00pm on the first Thursday of every month from October to June.
- **Graduate Executive Rep:**
Requirements: The MA Rep and PhD Rep are responsible for attending the Department of Humanities meetings with faculty to discuss next year's curriculum, adjudicate faculty applications for cross-appointments to the department, advise the department director on current issues in HuGSA, and put forward student applications for the FGS Student Initiative Fund (a funding source for HuGSA's annual conference).
- **YUGSA councilors:**
Requirements: The YUGSA Councilors are responsible for attending YUGSA Council meetings and act as a liaison between YUGSA and HuGSA by presenting notices from YUGSA to the membership and HuGSA executive committee.

Article 7: Replacing Officers and Representatives

If a member serving in an elected position other than the Co-President, resigns or is otherwise unable to fill his or her position, the HuGSA executive, will appoint a replacement to fill the remainder of the term. If a Co-President resigns or is otherwise unable to fill her or his term, an election will be held following all the guidelines and stipulations for a regular election. Replacement members for any position, including those elected, will serve only until the end of the original term of that position.

Article 8: Finances

HuGSA's money will be primarily acquired through funds allocated to HuGSA by YUGSA and the Humanities department. Any expenditures of HuGSA must be in accordance to HuGSA's annual budget, and approved by the membership. Only if HuGSA exceeds its budget or needs money for a special event may dues be collected. This must be approved by a majority (50% +1) of the membership. All monies belonging to HuGSA shall be deposited and disbursed through a bank account established for HuGSA. All funds must be deposited within one week of collection.

Section 8.1: Trustees of Funds

- There are always two signing authorities for the funds: 1) the Treasurer and 2) one of the Co-Presidents.

Article 9: Ad Hoc Committees

Ad hoc committees may be created at any time by the decision of the Presidents or a majority vote at a HuGSA meeting. Appointments to the ad hoc committee will be the responsibility of the executive committee. Each ad hoc committee must select a contact person so HuGSA members and others can communicate efficiently with that committee. All ad hoc committees are responsible for maintaining records of their activities and for reporting pertinent information to members at the GSA meetings.

Article 10: Amendments and Revisions

An amendment can be added to this constitution with a 2/3 vote of all members present at the meeting when the issue arises. The amended constitution must be presented to the YUGSA office in the beginning of every academic year.