

Constitution of the Peterhouse Graduate Society

Preamble

This document represents the constitution of the Peterhouse Graduate Society, subsequently referred to as the Constitution. It is to be read in conjunction with the Standing Orders of the Peterhouse Graduate Society, subsequently referred to as the Standing Orders. The Standing Orders provide additional details on certain areas of the Constitution. In case of contradictions between the documents the constitution shall always take precedence and overrule the standing orders. This constitution was drafted on the 21st of April 2015 and amended on 1st June 2016, and 16 May 2017.

1 Name

The Peterhouse Graduate Society shall be the name of the Society.

2 Objectives

The Society shall exist:

A: To represent the views of the graduate body to the College authorities on matters concerning the interests of the graduate community, and on other matters concerning the College.

B: To provide amenities and entertainment for graduates.

C: To promote the growth of a graduate community in the College.

3 Membership

A: Full members of the Peterhouse Graduate Society are:

. (i) registered graduate students who have B.A. status or higher and who are following a

- course of study at Peterhouse approved by the Senior Tutor.
- . (ii) ordinands following a course of study at the college.
 - . (iii) lectors assigned to the college.
 - . (iv) visiting research students, for the duration of their affiliation with the College. ^[1]_[SEP]

Other affiliated persons will be admitted at the discretion of the Peterhouse Graduate Society Executive Committee, subsequently referred to as the Committee.

B: Full membership of the Society shall cease at the end of the term in which an individual completes his or her course of studies; or, in the case of those who complete their studies outside of full term, membership shall end at the beginning of the following term.

C: Spouses or civil partners of full members, as defined in 3.A, shall be known as associate members. They shall enjoy all the privileges of the Society, save the right to hold any Committee positions or vote in any elections. Spouses or civil partners can be entitled to subsidised events on payment of a reasonable fee set per event at the discretion of the Committee. The same privileges shall be extended to those couples that live together by renting or owning an apartment or house jointly, provided that at least one person is a full member of the Society.

D: Any persons who would be full members as defined in Section 3.A, may in any academic year declare by written notice that they do not wish to be a member of the Society. Such written notice shall be served on the President of the Society. This person will not be a member of the Society for that academic year only, and shall not be entitled to stand for any Committee positions or vote in any elections. Nevertheless, any person who exercises the right not to be a member of the Society shall not be unfairly disadvantaged with regard to the provision of services by the Society.

4 Guests

Members may bring guests into the Common Room (subsequently referred to as the MCR) at all times, provided that no inconvenience is thereby caused to other members, and that the room is not used for unauthorised private functions. Members of the Society shall be held responsible for the actions of their guests. Events held in the Common Room that require a party permit from the Senior Tutor will also require approval by the President of the Society.

5 Officers and Executive Committee

A: The Executive Committee (subsequently referred to as the Committee) shall comprise, in descending order of executive responsibility: a President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, two Social Secretaries, two Welfare and Equal Opportunities Officers – one of which is a mandatory position, the other is optional (see Section 5.H), and a First Year Graduate Representative.

B: The Committee, excluding the First Year Representative, shall take up office at the Annual Dinner, as defined in Section 6.A. Their term of office shall end at the following years Annual Dinner. These committee members shall be eligible for re-election. From the Annual General Meeting onwards the incoming committee is to attend committee meetings jointly with the outgoing committee and be delegated tasks by the outgoing committee to smooth the transition.

C: The term of office of the First Year Representative shall run from the day of his or her election, as specified in Section 7.C, up until the election of his or her successor in the following November.

D: Committee meetings shall be held as decided by the existing Committee. Ordinary members are entitled to request an invitation to such meetings. Such requests are not to be unreasonably denied.

E: The quorum for executive committee meetings shall be four members of the Committee.

F: Any member of the Committee may be removed from office by a motion of no confidence being passed in a general meeting of the Society. In the event of such a motion being passed, vacancies shall be filled by the procedure outlined in Section 7.G.

G: No member of the Committee may hold more than one office simultaneously, save for the First-Year Representative.

H: The election of a second (optional) Welfare and Equal Opportunities Officer will be dependent upon the availability of a second elected candidate.

- (i) If the second Welfare Officer position is not filled with an elected candidate during the annual election of the Executive Committee, the Committee is not obliged to open nominations and call an election for the second position within their tenure, but may do so at the Committee's discretion.
- (ii) If a second Welfare Officer is elected, all responsibilities, obligations, and sections applying to the first Welfare Officer's position, such as the end-date of the position's tenure, shall apply to the second position.

6 Meetings

A: The Annual General Meeting of the Society shall be held each year between 15 and 31 May (inclusive) on a date decided by the outgoing executive committee.

B: General meetings of the Society may be requested at any time:

- . (i) by the Committee, or
- . (ii) by a requisition signed by twenty full members of the Society. Such a requisition is to be handed to the President ten days before the proposed general meeting. Any subject consistent with the objectives of the Society may come within the scope of a general meeting.

C: Members shall be given at least one week's notice of all general meetings, and two

weeks' notice of the Annual General Meeting.

D: Meetings shall be chaired by the President, and in his or her absence, by the next available committee member in the order provided by Section 5.A. Should this represent a conflict of interest, such as the chair presiding over a motion of no confidence against him or her, the next available committee member in the order provided by Section 5.A shall act as chair.

E: Except in extraordinary circumstances, such as those detailed in Section 6.I, the quorum for meetings shall be twenty-five full members. This shall include at least one committee member. Inquorate meetings shall be brought to the attention of the Chair at such meetings. Any meeting rendered inquorate through the lack of a committee member shall be reported to the Senior Tutor.

F: All decisions at meetings shall be taken by a simple majority vote. The Chair is to have a casting vote, in addition to his or her ordinary vote, in the case of a tie.

G: Motions at general meetings must be proposed and seconded by full members of the Society.

H: An agenda for each general meeting and the Annual General Meeting must be displayed on the noticeboard in the MCR and emailed around the Society mailing list, a minimum of 24 hours in advance. After such meetings the minutes shall also be posted on said noticeboard and emailed around the Society mailing list.

I: In the event of a motion of no confidence in any committee member, the quorum for a meeting shall be thirty full members of the Society.

J: The Annual Dinner is to be held during, or within one week either side of, May Week.

7 Elections

A: The election of officers shall be under the control of a Returning Officer, who shall be

appointed by the Senior Tutor. Failing an appointment by the Senior Tutor, the Office of Returning Officer shall fall to the Secretary unless he or she requests that the committee appoint someone else due to him or her standing for office in the upcoming election.

B: At least one week's notice shall be given, publicly, before nominations open.

C: Elections shall be held by secret ballot. The elections of the President, Treasurer, Secretary, Social Secretary, and Welfare and Equal Opportunities Officer shall be held during the course of the day preceding the Annual General Meeting. The election of the First Year Graduate Representative shall take place on a given date between 1 and 14 November (inclusive). In each case, polls will remain open for at least 8 hours. Electronic voting shall be permitted as outlined in the Standing Orders.

D: Each full member of the Society is entitled to a single transferable vote for each office or position on the executive committee, as is specified in the Standing Orders.

E: Nominations shall be open for at least seven days. Nominations will close at noon, a full seven days before election days (see Section 7.C). Each candidate must be nominated and seconded by full members of the Society. Nominations must be handed, in writing, to the Returning Officer. The Returning Officer must confirm that the candidate accepts their candidacy before adding them to the ballot.

F: Full members may be nominated for any or all positions on the executive committee. Votes shall be counted according to the descending order provided in Section 5.A. Votes cast for a candidate who has already been elected to a higher office shall be disregarded in favour of a given voter's other stated preferences (see Standing Orders).

G: In the event of a position on the Committee becoming vacant, through a resignation or otherwise, a by-election for that post must be held no later than four weeks of full term after the position becomes vacant, with the exception of the second (optional) Welfare Officer position, as stipulated in section 5(H). Until such a time as a by-election can be held, the vacancy may be filled by co-option, by vote of the remaining members of the Committee. A candidate cannot be co-opted if he or she has been removed from office as a result of a vote of no confidence. Previously co-opted committee members shall be

eligible to stand in subsequent elections. The exception to this is that if the President resigns, co-option shall not be permitted, and the Secretary shall instead take over as Acting President until an election can be held, no later than four weeks of full term after the President resigns.

H: If there are no candidates for one or two elected positions at the annual elections, those members of the Committee who have been elected shall co-opt a member or members to the Committee. A fresh by-election shall be held in the term following, as in Section 7.G above. If there are no candidates for three or more elected positions at annual elections, the Returning Officer must arrange a new election for the vacant positions, immediately upon close of initial nominations. The original election shall proceed as planned for those positions with at least one candidate.

I: Any member of the Society may make a written complaint concerning the conduct of the election within 48 hours of the publication of results. The committee must pass on the complaint to the Returning Officer within 48 hours of its receipt.

J: If the Returning Officer sees reasonable grounds for suspecting malpractice in the elections, he or she is required to inform the Committee and the Senior Tutor immediately. The Senior Tutor shall have the power to annul the election results in such a case, in total or in part. The Committee shall also have the power to petition the Senior Tutor to annul the election results, in total or in part, in such a case. If the election results have been annulled, in total or in part, the elections must be rerun, accordingly, within one week of the annulment being decided.

8 Finance

A: The Committee must make the accounts of the Society available for annual auditing by the college authorities.

B: The Treasurer shall submit a financial report to each Annual General Meeting, and shall produce reports in the last week of each term, which shall be available to full members of the Society upon request.

C: The Society's financial year shall commence on 1 July annually.

9 Referenda

At the discretion of the executive committee, referenda may be held for the purposes of gathering information, or making decisions. Such a referendum shall be organised by an officer appointed by the executive committee.

10 Constitution

A: This Constitution may be amended only by an affirmative vote by a two thirds majority of the votes cast. Such a vote requires 60 full members of the society to cast a vote. Electronic voting shall be permitted. Following such a vote, the Governing Body of the College must approve the revised text.

B: Suggested amendments must be proposed and seconded by full members; a copy including suggested amendments must be submitted to the Secretary at least four days before any General or Annual General Meeting. This copy must be posted in the MCR and emailed around the MCR mailing list at least three days before any General or Annual General Meeting.

C: A copy of the Society's constitution must be available electronically in a clear and easily accessible place at all times.

D: The Committee of the Society will be final arbiters in the interpretation of the constitution.

E: The Committee shall have the power to petition Governing Body to enact constitutional changes if a vote on a constitutional change was affirmative but not quorate.

F: The Standing Orders may be amended only by an affirmative vote by a two thirds majority of the votes cast. Such a vote requires 42 full members of the society to cast a vote. Electronic voting shall be permitted.