



## **The Constitution of the British Postgraduate Philosophy Association**

### **Preamble**

This document – written by the outgoing President of the British Postgraduate Philosophy Association, Sean M. Costello, and discussed with the outgoing members of the Executive Committee, Vice President Leia Hopf, Outreach and Democracy Officer Tommy Zhang, and Communications & Development Officer Eri Mountbatten-O'Malley – should be treated as the Constitution for the 2020 – 2021, non-democratically elected Committee. However, for this Constitution to be fully and legitimately ratified, the members of the 2020 – 2021 Committee should ensure that both that (i) a majority of the sitting members of the British Philosophical Association Executive Committee and (ii) 2/3 of votes cast in the first democratically held BPPA election in 2021 approve this document and its wording.

### **1. Name**

**1.1** The name of the Association shall be 'The British Postgraduate Philosophy Association' and shall be abbreviated as 'BPPA'.

### **2. Mission**

**2.1** The Association's object is to promote and foster the teaching and study of and research in Philosophy at postgraduate level within higher education in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland

### **3. The Executive Committee Positions and Responsibilities**

**3.1** The Executive Committee shall comprise at least the following positions: (i) President, (ii) Vice President, and (iii) Secretary / Communications Officer.

**3.2** The Executive Committee may also comprise the following, as well as other proposed positions that are unanimously agreed upon by the members of the current Executive Committee:

- i) Outreach and Democracy Officer
- ii) Diversity and Inclusion Officer
- iii) Events Coordinator
- iv) Fundraising Coordinator

**3.3** The President shall be responsible for the day-to-day running and operations of the Association.

**3.3.1** The President shall serve a one-year term, beginning with their first Executive Committee meeting and ending on the date of a successful election of their replacement. They may not serve more than two consecutive terms in this role.

**3.3.1.1** Between the date of the successful election of the President-elect and the first Executive Committee meeting of the President-elect, the former President may continue to act in the capacity of the President but should discuss any decisions with the President-elect.

**3.3.1.2** There shall be a handover meeting as swiftly as is feasible – preferably within 60 days of the election.

**3.3.2** The President shall secure hosts for the annual conference and for the annual masterclass. Further, the President shall assist these hosts in securing sufficient external funding for these events, to the best of their ability.

**3.3.3** The sitting President shall ensure and oversee the democratic election of the Executive Committee members for the next Session of the Committee within one year of assuming the Office of President.

**3.3.4** The President shall serve as the ultimate contact point in the tiered democratic representation system, to be detailed below at **3.6.2**.

**3.3.5** The President shall sit on the Executive Committee of the British Philosophical Association as a representative of the interests of *all* postgraduate philosophy students. If the President is not available or unwilling to perform this duty, a replacement from amongst the Executive Committee shall be selected by unanimous vote of the Committee.

**3.3.6** The President shall have the right to preside at all meetings of the Association and at all meetings of the Executive Committee. Should the President be absent from a specific meeting, the Vice President shall preside over that meeting. In the event of the absence (or decision) of both the President and Vice President from a meeting, the remaining Executive Committee members shall choose – by a simple majority vote – another member of the Executive Committee to chair that meeting.

**3.3.7** The President shall call a meeting of the Executive Committee at least once every 60–70 days.

**3.4** The Vice President shall be responsible for assisting the President in the day-to-day running and operations of the Association. The Vice President shall also be able to perform additional duties explicitly proper to other roles on the Executive Committee, which shall be decided on unanimously by current Executive Committee members according to their priorities that year.

**3.4.1** The Vice President shall serve a one year beginning with their first Executive Committee meeting and ending on the date of a successful election of their replacement. They may not serve more than three consecutive terms in this role.

**3.5** The Secretary / Communications Officer shall oversee the BPPA's website and social media presence and shall coordinate with the hosts of our annual conference and master classes to successfully advertise these events.

**3.5.1** The Secretary / Communications Officer shall serve a one year beginning with their first Executive Committee meeting and ending on the date of a successful election of their replacement. They may not serve more than three consecutive terms in this role.

**3.5.2** The Secretary / Communications Officer shall take minutes at all Executive Committee meetings and General Meetings.

**3.5.2** The Secretary / Communications Officer shall also manage the BPPA email account.

**3.6** The Outreach and Democracy Officer shall ensure that the BPPA is a democratic organization which represents the thoughts and concerns of all postgraduate students in philosophy in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland

**3.6.1** The Outreach and Democracy Officer shall serve a one year beginning with their first Executive Committee meeting and ending on the date of a successful election of their replacement. They may not serve more than three consecutive terms in this role.

**3.6.2** The Outreach and Democracy Officer shall facilitate working relationships between the BPPA and postgraduate student representatives in philosophy at all universities in the UK and Ireland that have postgraduate philosophy programmes by first constructing and then maintain a tiered representative system whereby concerns raised by individual students can be first brought to their university-level representative and then to the BPPA.

**3.6.2.i** The Outreach and Democracy Officer shall be the initial point of contact between postgraduate student representatives in philosophy and the BPPA.

**3.6.3** The Outreach and Democracy Officer shall, further, ensure – along with the President – that a democratic system for the election of members of the BPPA Executive Committee is first constructed and then maintained.

**3.7** The Diversity and Inclusion Officer shall work with philosophy departments and other organizations (such as Minorities and Philosophy) to improve diversity and inclusion in philosophy at the postgraduate level.

**3.7.1** The Diversity and Inclusion Officer shall serve a one year beginning with their first Executive Committee meeting and ending on the date of a successful election of their replacement. They may not serve more than three consecutive terms in this role.

**3.8** The Events Coordinator shall maintain good communications between the Executive Committee and those involved with BPPA-related events.

**3.8.1** The Secretary / Communications Officer shall serve a one year beginning with their first Executive Committee meeting and ending on the date of a successful election of their replacement. They may not serve more than three consecutive terms in this role.

**3.9** The Fundraising Coordinator shall seek to raise funds for the Association, as directed by the Executive Committee.

**3.9.1** The Fundraising Coordinator shall serve a one year beginning with their first Executive Committee meeting and ending on the date of a successful election of their replacement. They may not serve more than three consecutive terms in this role.

**3.10** All members of the Executive Committee should be willing to participate in the general administration of the Association, as directed by the President and the Executive Committee as a whole.

**3.11** No member of the Executive Committee shall acquire any interest in property, including funds in bank accounts, belonging to the Association (otherwise than as a trustee for the Association) or receive remuneration or be interested (otherwise than as a member of the Executive Committee) in any contract related to their position on the Executive Committee or to the BPPA in general.

**3.12** A member of the Executive Committee shall cease to hold office if the member:

- (i) becomes incapable by reason of mental disorder, illness, or injury of managing and administering his or her own affairs;
- (ii) is absent without the permission of the Executive Committee from three successive meetings of the Executive Committee and the Executive Committee resolves that the member's office be vacated by a simple majority vote on or after the third successive meeting;
- (iii) notifies to the Executive Committee a wish to resign and the remaining members of the Executive Committee, by a simple majority vote, accept their resignation;
- (iv) is relieved of office by a unanimous vote by all other members of the Executive Committee after having been given a hearing in the presence of the full Executive Committee wherein one other member of the Executive Committee, acting on behalf of the Committee, relates the Committee's grievances against the member and the member is permitted to give a reply to each of the Committee's grievances.

## **4 The Election of Executive Committee Members**

**4.1** Those who are actively enrolled in postgraduate courses related to philosophy in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland (i.e. full members) shall be eligible to run for all Executive Committee positions.

**4.1.1** The positions of (i) President, (ii) Vice President, and (iii) Outreach and Democracy Officer shall only be open to full members.

**4.2.2** The positions of (i) Secretary / Communications Officer, (ii) Diversity and Inclusion Officer, (iii) Events Coordinator, and (iv) Funding Coordinator, shall be open to full members.

**4.2** No Executive Committee position shall be held jointly by more than one individual.

**4.2.1** In particular, the Vice President – despite being able to perform additional duties as delineated at **3.4** – shall not assume the title of any other role.

**4.3** An Annual Election shall be held within one year of the President assuming their Office, i.e. one year after the President presides over their first Executive Committee meeting.

**4.4** The Annual Election shall be advertised by the President at least 21 days ahead of the election with nominations to be accepted for each position up to seven days ahead of the election. Five days before the Annual Election the President shall advertise all candidates for the positions to all full members of the Association.

**4.4.1** In order to be nominated for either the position of President or that of Vice President, a would-be candidate who is self-nominating shall contact the sitting President with evidence of support from at least two other full members. If the candidate is nominated by someone other than themselves, this condition will be waived.

**4.4.2** Both self-nominations and nominations by others will be accepted for all positions other than the position of President and that of the Vice President.

**4.4.3** In the event of unusually low nominations for a particular position, it shall be the role of the sitting President and the sitting Executive Committee at large to ensure that at least one person (and preferably several), who is eligible according to the regulations of this Constitution, is nominated for each open Executive Committee position.

**4.4.3.i** For an Annual Election to take place, there **must** be at least one candidate nominated for the three required positions of the Association as delineated at **3.1**, namely, (i) President, (ii) Vice President, and (iii) Secretary / Communications Officer. This requirement is waived in the event of a Special Election (as delineated at **4.10**).

**4.4.4** In the event that only one person is successfully nominated for a position, the role will still be advertised by the President and the candidate will still be required to be voted in democratically according to the regulations of this Constitution.

**4.5** The Annual Election shall be a democratic election with voting open to all full members of the Association.

**4.6** The Annual Election shall be conducted electronically in a secure manner in a way which ensures that each voter is only able to vote a single time and that the identity of the voter remains anonymized. This electronic means of conducting the Annual Election must record the following data:

- (i) The university at which the voter is currently enrolled as a postgraduate student; and
- (ii) The voter's choices for all open positions on the Executive Committee.

**4.7** The election of the President and Vice President shall follow a 'one university, one vote' system, whereby the candidate running for each position who wins the majority of votes among voting full

members of a particular university shall win that university's vote and the candidate who wins the simple majority of universities' votes in this manner shall be elected to office.

**4.8** The election of all Executive Committee Positions besides that of the President and Vice President shall follow a simple majority system, where the candidate who wins the most individual votes shall be elected to office.

**4.9** In the event of a tie between two or more members being nominated for an Executive Committee position, the sitting Executive Committee will hold one run-off election, within seven days of the results being declared from the original election. The sitting President shall advertise this run-off election to all full members of the Association at least five days before the new election.

**4.9.1** In the event of a tie in the run-off election, the full sitting Executive Committee shall select the winning candidate for the position via a simple majority vote.

**4.10** Where an Executive Committee post becomes vacant for any reason – as delineated at **3.12** above – before the Annual Election, the Executive Committee may, at their discretion, either call for a Special Election for that one post, to be conducted exactly according to the rules and regulations of the Annual Election, or leave the post vacant until the next Annual Election.

**4.11** Each Executive Committee member must, on relinquishing their appointment, promptly hand to their successor in office (or to another member of the Association nominated by the Executive Committee) all official documents and records belonging to the Association, together with (on request from the Executive Committee) any other property of the Association which may be in his or her possession; and must promptly complete any requirements to transfer authority relating to control of the Association's bank accounts and other financial affairs.

## **5 Changes to this Constitution**

**5.1** This Constitution shall be fully and legitimately ratified upon being approved by the both (i) a majority of the sitting members of the British Philosophical Association Executive Committee and, then, (ii) 2/3 of the votes cast in the first democratically held BPPA Annual Election, to be held in autumn 2021.

**5.1.1** Before either step of this ratification process begins, the members of the 2020 – 2021 BPPA Executive Committee shall be able to freely make minor (i.e. grammatical) changes to this Constitution and shall, by unanimous vote, be able to make substantive changes.

**5.1.1.i** However, no changes at all shall to this document between it having been approved by a majority of the sitting members of the British Philosophical Executive Committee and it being presented to the voting members of the BPPA in the first democratically held BPPA Annual Election.

**5.2** After this Constitution has been fully and legitimately ratified, *all* changes to this Constitution (i) *should* be approved by a member of the British Philosophical Association if possible and (ii) *must* be ratified by a 2/3 majority of all full voting members of the BPPA during the Annual Election as outlined in sections **4.4 – 4.10** above.

**5.1.1** In particular, the President must advertise the proposed change to the Constitution alongside the original text (if relevant) at least five days before the Annual Election

**5.1.2** Further, if a Constitutional change is deemed especially pressing by a unanimous vote of the current members of the Executive Committee, a Special Election may be called in accordance with **4.10** for all full members of the BPPA to vote on this proposed change.

**5.3** All successfully ratified changes to this Constitution, which occur according to the regulations laid out in **5.1 – 5.2** above, shall take place immediately upon being ratified.

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**British Postgraduate Philosophy Association 2020**