

Owens Park Students' Association Constitution

Section A. Definitions

A1 NAME:

The society will be called "Owens Park Students' Association", but will hereinafter be referred to as OPSA.

A2 OBJECTIVES:

To enhance the experience of residential life for **all** Owens Park residents. To promote and represent residents' interests in all matters relating to Owens Park by engaging with the wider local community and the University of Manchester. OPSA may also collaborate with other organisations but should not become involved in party political matters.

SECTION B. MEMBERSHIP

B1 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP

All residents of Owens Park automatically become General Members of OPSA. All General Members are invited to the Annual General Meeting as well as any other General Meetings called throughout the year.

B2 EXECUTIVE MEMBERSHIP

- (a) Executive Membership is bestowed on Elected Officers of the OPSA Executive. Nominations for Elected Officers must be supported by the signatures of 15 Ordinary Members and must be lodged with the General Secretary at least 7 days before the Annual General Meeting.
- (b) The Warden (henceforth, this term is taken to include the Warden, Deputy Warden, Senior Warden and General Manager of Pastoral Care) and Tutors are automatically entitled to Executive Membership.

B3 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

- (a) Committee Membership is bestowed on the House Representatives. House Representatives shall be the sole spokesperson for their House at Committee Meetings.
- (b) Committee Membership is bestowed on Elected Officers of the OPSA Executive.
- (c) The Warden (henceforth, this term is taken to include the Warden, Deputy Warden, Senior Warden and General Manager of Pastoral Care) and Tutors are automatically entitled to Committee Membership.

B4 AUTOMATIC TERMINATION OR SUSPENSION OF MEMBERSHIP

Any General Member who has been expelled or suspended from Owens Park will contemporaneously cease to be a General Member of OPSA, either absolutely or during the terms of such suspension, as the case may be. Should an Executive Member be expelled or suspended from Owens Park then they will cease to be an Executive Member and their position will be re-opened for nominations.

SECTION C. OFFICERS, HOUSE REPRESENTATIVES, OPSA COMMITTEES

C1 ELECTED OFFICERS

The Elected Officers of OPSA (The OPSA Executive) will be :-

(a) Executive Officers:

President

General Secretary

Junior Treasurer

(b) Representational Officers:

Communication Secretary

Publication Secretary

Socials Secretary (2 positions)

Sports Secretary (2 positions)

Arts and Charities Secretary

Environment and Community Secretary

House Representative Liaison Secretary

C2 DUTIES OF OFFICERS

The duties of these officers will be as follows:-

(a) PRESIDENT

- (i) The President is responsible for ensuring that the OPSA Executive is run to the highest possible standards, and is responsible for organizing and delegating tasks within the OPSA Executive team.
- (ii) The President, or in his/her absence, the General Secretary, will be the sole official spokesperson for OPSA.
- (iii) The President will normally chair all General Meetings and Committee Meetings.
- (iv) The President may call a General Meeting or a Committee Meeting at any time he/she may think it desirable.
- (v) The President will represent OPSA at the annual Campus Forum and compile a report to be circulated to General Members.
- (vi) The President shall act as Project Manager when the OPSA Executive organises large scale events such as Fresher's Week.

(b) GENERAL SECRETARY

- (i) The General Secretary will be responsible for: notifying relevant OPSA Members about General Meetings, Executive Meetings and Committee Meetings; preparing and circulating the agenda beforehand; and writing and circulating Minutes after every meeting.
- (ii) The General Secretary will also be responsible for the maintenance of an attendance register of all meetings. Executive Members should provide the General Secretary with at least 48 hours' notice if they are unable to attend a Meeting, or the absence will be marked as 'unauthorised'. If attendance and engagement with OPSA becomes unacceptable the Warden reserves the right to reopen elections for that position.

(c) JUNIOR TREASURER

- (i) The Junior Treasurer will be responsible for the supervision of all OPSA income and expenditure and will ensure the maintenance of accurate records and accounts.
- (ii) The Junior Treasurer will liaise closely with the Senior Treasurer. The Senior Treasurer is a nominated member of the Tutorial team. The Senior Treasurer will call monthly finance meetings to go through monthly accounting business.
- (iii) All OPSA funds will be paid into one bank account opened in the name of Owens Park Residents Association. All cheques drawn will be signed by both the Junior Treasurer and the Senior Treasurer.
- (iv) Quarterly accounts will be electronically presented by the Junior Treasurer to the committee and the Warden. The Junior Treasurer will publish an annual budget of income and expenditure for the previous session no later than the 1st August. Final annual accounts will be presented in hardcopy to the Warden and members of the Committee still in post.

(d) SOCIAL SECRETARIES

- (i) The Social Secretaries will be responsible for the planning, organisation and administration of all social events under the auspices of OPSA. The Social Secretaries will collaborate closely with the Arts and Charities Secretary and Sports Secretaries to ensure that a diverse, inclusive range of social activities are delivered on a regular basis to students at appropriate times of the academic year.
- (ii) The Social Secretaries shall arrange non-alcohol related activities, events and trips for General Members.
- (iii) The Social Secretaries will keep an up-to-date inventory of Socials equipment.

(e) ARTS AND CHARITIES SECRETARY

- (i) The Arts and Charities Secretary shall be responsible for ensuring that Owens Park participates actively in local, regional and national charity campaigns.
- (ii) The Arts and Charities Secretary shall collaborate with the Social Secretaries and the Culture Secretary in organising several art-themed events (music, literature, visual art, dance, theatre etc.) at Owens Park and/or trips to artistic events elsewhere per term.

(f) ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY SECRETARY

- (i) The Environment Secretary will liaise closely with the University's Environmental Officer as well as the Tutorial Environment and Community sub-team.
- (ii) The Environment Secretary shall engage with campus-wide environmental initiatives such as the Carbon Control Campaign, promote sustainable living at Owens Park, and champion environmental issues within the Hall community.

(g) HOUSE REPRESENTATIVE LIAISON SECRETARY

- (i) Each House at OP elects a House Representative at the beginning of each academic year who automatically becomes a Committee member.

- (ii) The House Representative Liaison Secretary is responsible for ensuring that OPSA initiatives and events are promoted to all Owens Park residents within their House via House Representatives.
- (iii) The House Representative Liaison Secretary shall ensure that ideas, feedback and views from individuals, groups or the majority of residents from different areas of Owens Park are sought by House Representatives and communicated to the OPSA Executive. The House Representative Liaison Officer shall be responsible for ensuring that the OPSA Executive is aware of the views of Owens Park residents and represents them as required so they can play an active part in formulating policy with relevant decision makers.
- (iv) The House Representative Liaison Officer shall receive small grants applications from House Representatives and forward these onto the OPSA Executive.
- (v) The House Representative Liaison Secretary shall usually hold the position of House Representative within their respective House, although any General Member of OPSA may apply.

(h) THE COMMUNICATIONS SECRETARY

- (i) The Communications Secretary will be responsible for securing effective communication of OPSA business, affairs and policy to the members.
- (ii) This shall be achieved via (but not limited to) the distribution of posters around Owens Park, the sending of a regular electronic newsletter to all OPSA members, and the creation and maintenance of an OPSA presence on social networking sites such as (but not limited to) Facebook and Twitter.
- (vi) The Communications Secretary will assist the House Representative Liaison Secretary in ensuring that House Representatives maintain effective communication between the OPSA Executive and General Members.
- (vii) The Communications Secretary will support the Publications Secretary in producing an electronic newsletter to be published not less than once per four weeks of each term.

(i) THE SPORTS SECRETARIES

- (i) The Sports Secretary will ensure that all internal sports competitions in Owens Park are being run equitably and smoothly.
- (ii) The Sports Secretary will keep an up-to-date inventory of Owens Park sports equipment and will be responsible for its upkeep and insurance.
- (iii) The Sports Secretaries will organise and oversee the running of a coherent year-long sports competition in which Owens Park Residents will compete in a range of different sports. Some sport such as pool, darts and chess will be organised on-site, while other sports will be organised in association with the Armitage Centre.

(j) THE PUBLICATIONS SECRETARY

- (i) The Publications Secretary will be responsible for editing and organising the production and distribution of the Owens' Park Handbook to incoming General Members in September and January.
- (ii) The Publications Secretary is responsible for editing and publishing an electronic newsletter not less than once per four weeks of each term, supported by the Communications Secretary as required.

C2 COMMITTEE EXPENSES

- (a) All persons acting on behalf of OPSA may defray expenses reasonably incurred in the performance of OPSA business, providing that receipts for all such expenditure are submitted to the Junior Treasurer. Expenditure must be approved by the Junior Treasurer and the Senior Treasurer in advance. If receipts are not produced, the expenditure will not be refunded, nor will any unauthorised expenditure.
- (b) The Junior Treasurer will present at least once a term an itemised account of all these expenses which will be submitted to the OPSA Executive and the Warden.
- (c) The terms of this section must be made known to anyone who receives monies from OPSA.
- (d) The Association will indemnify members of the executive in respect of debts incurred wholly on behalf of the Association.

C3 LIABILITY

No Executive Member shall be personally liable for loss or injury to any person using OPSA facilities or attending OPSA events subject to the Unfair Contract Terms Act and the Association will indemnify a member of the Executive in cases where such limitations are not possible.

C4 HOUSE REPRESENTATIVES

- (a) Each House in Owens Park will elect one House Representative.
- (b) All House Representatives will be Committee Members. They will be sole spokesperson for their Houses on all matters discussed at Committee Meetings.
- (c) House Representatives will assist the Communications Secretary in ensuring the OPSA Executive communicates effectively with General Members by putting up posters provided by the Communications Secretary and organising regular House Meetings.
- (d) Each House may apply to the OPSA Executive for small grants of up to £150 to support sporting or community events or activities. Small grants will not be used for social purposes. Small grant applications are presented by the relevant House Representative to the House Representative Liaison Officer and will be approved or declined by the OPSA Executive. Payment will only be issued once the relevant receipt(s) have been received by the OPSA Executive.

C5 THE EXECUTIVE

- (a) The Executive will consist of all the Officers of OPSA as listed under C1, plus the Warden and Tutors. The Executive is empowered to conduct OPSA affairs by carrying out the policies approved at General Meetings.
- (b) The Executive will meet not less than once per week during each term. Executive meetings will normally be attended by at least two members of the Tutorial team.

C6 COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- (a) General Committee will consist of the following:
 - The Executive
 - The House Representatives
- (b) The Warden will be invited to attend General Committee meetings.
 - (i) Committee Meetings will be held not less than once every four weeks and at any other time that the President may think desirable. In addition, the General Secretary will call a Committee Meeting at the request of any three members thereof.
 - (ii) Members will receive notice of General Committee Meetings at least 3 clear days before such meetings.
 - (iii) The Committee Meetings present House Representatives with the opportunity to present feedback and suggestions from General Members to The Executive.
 - (iv) The Committee Meetings present the Executive with the opportunity to distribute posters and disseminate information to be shared with General Members via the House Representatives.
 - (v) General Members of OPSA may attend a General Committee Meeting. Speaking rights may be given to them at the discretion of the Chairman.

C7 NON-ATTENDANCE

Executive Members should provide the General Secretary with at least 48 hours' notice if they are unable to attend a Meeting, or the absence will be marked as 'unauthorised'. If attendance and engagement with OPSA becomes unacceptable the Warden reserves the right to reopen elections for that position.

C8 SUB-COMMITTEES

- (a) Sub-committees may be set up at any time to look into any aspect of student affairs in Owens Park or affecting Owens Park.
- (b) Sub-committees are set up by the OPSA Executive in consultation with the Tutors.
- (c) At least one Tutor must sit on every sub-committee.
- (d) In all joint sub-committees the student members are directly accountable to and must report back to the OPSA Executive.

SECTION D ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

D1 ELIGIBILITY

- (a) OPSA Executive: Executive Officers
 - (i) Current and former General Members of OPSA who are currently students at the University of Manchester and will remain so for the following academic year are eligible for office (subject to the Warden's approval) for the following positions:
 - President
 - General Secretary
 - Junior Treasurer

- (ii) Successful candidates will be allocated a room at Owens Park for the following academic year to facilitate the execution of their office.
 - (iii) All Executive Officers must be resident in Owens Park for the duration of their post.
- (b) OPSA Executive: Representational Officers.
- (i) The election of Representational Officers will take place in the Michaelmas Term, before the end of October, to take office on the 1st November.
 - (ii) To be eligible for nomination for office as a Representational Officer of the OPSA Executive or a House Representative, candidates must be General Members of OPSA and resident in Owens Park.
- (c) House Representatives: To be eligible for nomination for office as a House Representative candidates must be a General Member of OPSA and resident in the House which they apply to represent.

D2 THE RETURNING OFFICERS

The Returning Officers for all elections shall be Tutors appointed by the Warden for this role. The Returning Officers and the OPSA Executive shall be seen to be completely impartial, and shall not lend their names to publicity and canvassing on behalf of candidates.

D2 ELECTION OF OFFICERS

All Officers listed under C1 will be elected according to the following arrangements:-

- (a) (i) The election of Executive Officers will take place in the first week after the Easter vacation. Executive Officers officially take office on the 1st November, but will attend OPSA Executive Meetings from the beginning of the new academic year and may be asked to assist the existing OPSA Executive in any manner that it sees fit beforehand.
 - (ii) The election of Representational Officers will take place in the Michaelmas Term, before the end of October, to take office on the 1st November.
- (b) Limitations on publicity at elections will be:-
- (i) Thirty A4-sized which shall be submitted to the Returning Officer before display.
 - (ii) One copy of their manifesto which shall be submitted to the Returning Officer and shall be published online as well as in the electronic newsletter.
 - (iii) Appearance at Hustings.
 - (iv) Personal contact (knocking on doors) is strictly prohibited.
 - (v) Each candidate will be given a copy of these publicity regulations by the Returning Officers on receipt of their nomination papers.
 - (vi) If the Returning Officers finds that a candidate has broken these regulations, they can, in consultation with the Warden, declare the candidate to have forfeited his/her right to stand in that election.
 - (vii) No person shall remove or tamper with a poster set up with the permission of the Publications Secretary, without the consent of the candidate. This regulation shall not apply to a person removing a poster placed upon

his/her property without his/her consent, or to a society removing a poster placed without consent on its notice-board.

- (c) Nominations for all Executive and Representational Officers will be circulated via the electronic newsletter no less than 7 days prior to the election, together with the candidates' Manifestos.
- (d) In the event of only one candidate standing, a space for re-open nominations (RON) will be included on all ballot papers. If more votes are cast for RON the election shall be declared null and void, and the election shall be re-opened.
- (e) Candidates may stand for two or more offices simultaneously, but may hold only one office if elected.
- (f) Voting will take place online for not less than 7 days before the conclusion of the poll. Students shall fill in an online voting slip and email it to a nominated email account accessible only to the Returning Officers. Only slips sent from a General Member's University of Manchester email account will be accepted. If a General Member sends more than one voting slip from their University of Manchester email account then all slips from this General Member will be discounted.
- (g) If there are two candidates then voting will take place by placing a simple X against the name of the preferred candidate(s). If there are more than two candidates then voting will take place by means of a single transferable vote (STV), which in cases where no candidate obtains an overall majority, the second and third preference of voters is taken into account.
 - (i) Voting Slip: The Voting papers will be set out as shown below and voters will mark the candidates 1, 2, 3 etc. in order of their preference:
CANDIDATE A
CANDIDATE B
CANDIDATE C
CANDIDATE D
MARK 1, 2, 3, 4, in order of preference.
 - (ii) The Count: The total number of papers will be counted, rejecting those which are invalid under the provisions of D2 (g) (iii). At the FIRST COUNT, if one candidate has more first preferences than all other candidates combined, he/she is said to have a majority, and is declared elected. If no candidate obtains a majority at the first count, the slips of the candidate with the least number of votes are transferred in the following manner: those slips without a second preference marked shall be discarded and will be counted. Those with a second preference marked will be transferred to the candidate marked in that second preference. After this, the number of votes for each of the remaining candidates' are counted. If one candidate obtains a majority of the slips remaining in the count, at the SECOND COUNT then he/she is declared elected. If no candidate obtains a majority then the slips of the candidate with the least number of votes at that count will be transferred, according to their SECOND PREFERENCE, except for those transferred to that candidate during previous counts which will be transferred at this count according to their NEXT PREFERENCE. NEXT PREFERENCE refers to the next preference for a remaining candidate. If one candidate obtains a majority

of the slips remaining at the THIRD COUNT, then he/she is declared elected. If no candidate obtains a majority at the third count, then a further transfer takes place in the same manner as above, and a FOURTH COUNT takes place, and so the count proceeds until one candidate obtains a majority of the slips remaining in the count at that count, at which point he/she is declared elected. After each count the total number of slips including those discarded is ascertained to make sure that no slips have been lost.

- (iii) Invalid and Spoilt Papers:
 - (a) In a S.T.V. count, papers will be regarded as invalid if:-
 - (i) They bear no first preference
 - (ii) They bear more than one first preference
 - (iii) They are marked in such a way as to make it unclear which candidate has the first preference.
 - (b) Papers involved in a redistribution after an inconclusive Count will be placed on the discard pile if:-
 - (i) They are not marked with the NEXT PREFERENCE sequentially. Thus a paper marked as shown below is discarded when candidate A's papers are transferred:
CANDIDATE A 1
CANDIDATE B
CANDIDATE C
CANDIDATE D 4
 - (ii) If the NEXT PREFERENCE is shared between two or more candidates.
 - (iii) In an S.T.V. count, papers marked X are normally valid, and are not transferred.
- (h) Within 24 hours of the conclusion of the poll, the votes will be counted by the Returning Officers.
- (i) At the completion of the counting of votes in each election, the Returning Officer will announce the result, declare the successful candidate elected, and sign a statement to that effect. Should the OPSA Executive organise an Election Night event, the results will be declared at this event in the first instance; they will also be emailed to the entire General Membership in no less than three working days.
- (j) No candidates may claim expenses from OPSA.
- (k) Any contravention of these regulations shall be dealt with by the Returning Officers as they see fit, and their decision will be binding and will take immediate effect.

D3 ELECTION OF HOUSE REPRESENTATIVES

- (a) House Representatives will be elected before the end of the second week of the Session and the tenure of the position is at the pleasure of the House.
- (b) House Meetings for the election of House Representatives will be quorate if half of the total number of residents in the House are present.

- (c) The quorum is half of the total number of residents in the House for a meeting which seeks to change the House Representative. A two-thirds majority of those present is required to carry such a motion.
- (d) A member of the Executive must chair either of the above types of House meetings. A Tutor should also be present.
- (e) A member of the Executive is not eligible to stand for House Representative.

D5 CASUAL VACANCIES

Casual vacancies in all Offices, Committees, and Sub-committees will be filled in the prescribed manner under D1-D3, as they arise.

D6 UNSATISFACTORY DISCHARGE OF DUTIES

If at any time the President or General Secretary feels that a Committee Member or Elected Officer of the OPSA Executive is not discharging his/her duties satisfactorily, then the following disciplinary procedures are available:-

- (a) (i) In the case of an elected Executive Officer the President call a General Meeting, according to E1(b) and E1(c) of the Constitution, at which the offender will be answerable to General Members. Only a two-thirds majority of a General Meeting with at least 100 Members can pass a vote of 'No Confidence' on an elected Officer, whence he/she is deemed to have forfeited his/her office. Should an Executive Officer of the OPSA Executive lose their position in this way they are still entitled to remain a resident at Owens Park, subject to the approval of the Warden.
- (ii) In the case of the Sports Secretaries, Captains of recognised OPSA sports teams, can call for him/her to be replaced.
- (iii) In the case of a House Representative, any member of the OPSA Executive or the Tutors can authorise the General Secretary to call a House Meeting in that House Representative's House, at which details of his/her misdemeanours will be presented to the House. The House shall vote on whether to retain the House Representative or re-open nominations, subject to the regulations laid out in D3 (b) and (c).
- (b) In every case, the alleged offender must be given a chance to defend themselves.

SECTION E GENERAL MEETING

E1 ARRANGEMENTS FOR GENERAL MEETINGS

The arrangements for General Meetings will be as follows:

- (a) The Committee or the President can call a General Meeting of OPSA at their discretion, in consultation with the Warden. The Annual General Meeting will usually be held in the Summer Term.
- (b) General Meetings will be called by the General Secretary if so requested in writing by any 15 Members of OPSA.
- (c) Notice of General Meetings will be posted on the OPSA notice-boards for at least 7 clear days in term-time, and shall be published online.

- (d) Motions for General Meetings will be submitted to the General Secretary 5 clear days before the General Meeting and posted on the main OPSA notice-boards 3 clear days before the General Meeting, and shall be published online.
- (e) All decisions taken constitutionally at any General Meeting will be binding for all General Members of OPSA, and may be reversed only at a subsequent General Meeting.
- (f) A holding motion that does not specify exactly the nature of business to be discussed shall not be allowed.
- (g) General Meetings shall be held during term-time.

SECTION F CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

- (a) Arrangements for Constitutional Amendments will be as follows:-
 - (i) Proposed Constitutional Amendments shall be presented at Committee Meetings. The proposed amendments in full will be circulated to Committee Members at least 7 clear days before the Meeting.
 - (ii) Any amendments to the Constitution which are not sponsored by the OPSA Executive will bear the signature of not less than 15 General Members of OPSA, and will be submitted to the OPSA Executive at least 10 clear days before the Committee Meeting.
 - (iv) Amendments to the Constitution may only be made by a two-thirds majority of the members present voting at a Committee Meeting.
- (b) All amendments to this Constitution are subject to the approval of the Warden, who reserves the right to veto constitutional changes. The Warden reserves the extraordinary right to change the constitution in line with the law in order to protect students and officers.
- (c)
 - (i) The quorum at a Committee Meeting will be 30 Members personally present.
 - (ii) If a duly convened Committee Meeting fails to become quorate within 30 minutes of advertised starting times, the President will reconvene the meeting within 7 weekdays (but not again after that).
 - (iii) In the event of a General Meeting falling inquorate whilst in progress, all business not under discussion at the time at which the meeting becomes inquorate, and due to be discussed, will be carried over to the following General Meeting where it shall take preference over all other business.

SECTION G MISCELLANEOUS

G1 Copies of the Constitution and appendices will be available, on application to the General Secretary.

