



BRITISH POSTGRADUATE
PHILOSOPHY ASSOCIATION

The Constitution of the British Postgraduate Philosophy Association

Preamble

This document—written by the sitting President and Vice-President of the British and Irish Postgraduate Philosophy Association, Pablo Dopico Fernandez and Zoe Waters, and discussed with the rest of sitting members of the Executive Committee, Outreach and Democracy Officers David Chandler and Labeeba Miah, Transition Officer Luca Dondoni, Diversity and Inclusion Officers Anna Milioni and Jane Hannick, and Officer for the Republic of Ireland Danielle Porter—should be treated as the Constitution of the British Postgraduate Philosophy Association from the moment of its ratification by the Executive Committee on the 24th February 2023.

1. Name

1.1. The name of the Association shall be ‘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, broadly understood, at postgraduate level within higher education in the United Kingdom; as well as to represent the interests of postgraduate students enrolled in a Philosophy degree in this country and contribute to their academic and professional flourishing.

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

(v) Transition Officer

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, as described under article 4 of this Constitution.

3.3.4. The President shall serve as the ultimate contact point in the tiered democratic representation system, to be detailed below at clause 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, the Vice President shall replace them. If the Vice President is not available or unwilling to perform this duty, a replacement from amongst the Executive Committee shall be selected by a simple-majority 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 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 has the capacity to call and preside over a meeting should any of the following situations arise:

3.4.1.1. The President requests the Vice President to do so.

3.4.1.2. The President has not called any meetings for a period extending over 75 consecutive days. Should the Vice President call and preside over a meeting as a result of this circumstance, the Vice President will have the right to call a Special Election as delineated in 4.3.14. The Vice President

- need not invite the President to this meeting and, whether the invitation is extended or not, the President cannot claim any right to preside over the meeting.
- 3.4.1.3. A member of the Executive Committee presents the Vice President with a serious grievance against the President. The Vice President need not invite the President to this meeting and, whether the invitation is extended or not, the President cannot claim any right to preside over the meeting.
 - 3.4.2. 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.
 - 3.5.3. The Secretary / Communications Officer shall also manage the BPPA email and social media accounts, including the official BPPA Twitter (@BPPA_tweets).
 - 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.
 - 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 that have postgraduate philosophy programmes by first constructing and then maintain a tiered representative system whereby concerns raised concerns raised by individual students can be first brought to their university-level representative and then to the BPPA.
 - 3.6.2.1. 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 should be responsible for the general organisation of our events, which includes selecting and coordinating with host institutions, advertising etc. Examples of events previously held: annual conference, careers workshops,

masterclass, smaller regional conferences, writing retreats, Spring seminar series. However, it is not expected from the Events Coordinator to take on the whole organization of every event. Events typically require a collaborative effort from the Executive Committee.

- 3.8.1.** The Events 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.
- 3.9.** The Fundraising Coordinator shall seek to raise funds for the Association, as directed by the Executive Committee. This role includes seeking funding, applying, and handling budgets for events.
- 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.** The Transition Officer shall lead efforts to mentor students who are struggling to transition into postgraduate philosophy education.
- 3.10.1.** The Transition 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.
- 3.11.** 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.
- 3.12.** 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.
- 3.13.** A member of the Executive Committee that occupies a role other than the Presidency 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 for the foreseeable future;
 - (ii)** is absent from three or more consecutive meetings of the Executive Committee or from more than a half of the meetings called in any 90-day period—whatever happens first—, a member of the Executive Committee notices this absence in a meeting, and the Executive Committee resolves that the member’s office be vacated by a simple majority vote on a meeting occurring any time after the requisites apply;
 - (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 majority of two-thirds of all other members of the Executive Committee present in the decisive meeting 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.
- 3.14.** The President of the Association shall cease to hold office if they:
- (i)** meet the requirements in clause 3.14 (i) or in clause 3.14 (iii).

- (ii) the Vice-President calls an extraordinary meeting on the basis of the circumstances delineated in clauses 3.4.1.2-3.4.1.3, and the Executive Committee resolves that the president's office be vacated by a two-third majority vote of the members present in the meeting.

4. The Election of Executive Committee Members

- 4.1. The Executive Committee of the BPPA can at any time decide to implement a membership scheme for the association.
 - 4.1.1. By a *consistent* membership scheme, it is to be understood a membership scheme such that: (i) only a record of all members of the association is in possession of the association; (ii) all members of the association have given their explicit consent to join the association as members; and (iii) each member of the association has ratified their membership within 12 months of joining the association or of their previous membership ratification.
- 4.2. Should a consistent membership scheme for the association, as described in clause 1.1.1, be in place, the Election of Executive Committee members will follow a process known as Annual Election, and will be subject to clauses 4.3-4.3.15. Should the association lack a consistent membership scheme, the Election of Executive Committee members will follow a process known as Committee Appointment, and will be subject to clauses 4.4-4.4.13.
- 4.3. Should there be a consistent membership scheme for the association, only those who (i) are consistent members of the association, and (ii) are actively enrolled in a postgraduate course related to Philosophy in the United on the day of the Annual Election, shall be eligible to run for an Executive Committee position.
 - 4.3.1. All and only individuals who meet conditions (i) and (ii) as specified in clause 4.3 will be eligible to run for all positions of the Executive Committee.
 - 4.3.2. 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.
 - 4.3.3. The Annual Election shall be advertised by the President at least 28 days ahead of the election with nominations to be accepted for each position up to seven days ahead of the election.
 - 4.3.3.1. In advertising the Annual Election, the President must clearly specify which positions would-be candidates can nominate themselves to.
 - 4.3.3.1.1. For all positions of the Committee except those of President and Vice-President, President may advertise a shared office, i.e., allow for two or more individuals to be elected for the same role within the Committee. This must have been voted and approved in a meeting of the Executive Committee before the Annual Election is advertised.
 - 4.3.3.2. In advertising the Annual Election, the President must clearly specify the means by which would-be candidates shall contact the President in order to nominate themselves. The means must be free, accessible to all interested would-be candidates, and realistic.
 - 4.3.3.3. Six days before the Annual Election, the President shall call a meeting of the sitting Executive Committee to discuss nominations and either accept all nominations or justify the exclusion of nominated would-be candidates, which shall be ratified in the meeting as detailed in clause 1.3.5.
 - 4.3.3.4. Five days before the Annual Election, the President shall advertise all accepted candidates for the positions to all full members of the Association.

- 4.3.4.** In order to be nominated for any position within the Executive Committee, would-be candidates must nominate themselves by contacting the sitting President following the means discussed in clause 1.3.3.2.
- 4.3.5.** The Executive Committee may exclude nominated individuals as candidates for the election of any given position of the Executive Committee in the meeting that must take place six days before the Annual Election, as specified in clause 1.3.3.2.
- 4.3.5.1.** The exclusion of a nominated individual as candidate for the election requires a clear exposition of the reasons why the individual is excluded, that shall be passed on to the individual themselves after the meeting. These reasons shall never be discriminatory in nature, i.e., an individual cannot be excluded from running for a position on the basis of race, ethnicity, nationality, class, caste, religion, belief, sex, gender, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, sex characteristics, age, health or other status.
- 4.3.5.2.** The exclusion of an individual from the electoral process must be subject to a voting within the Executive Committee, and approved by at least 2/3 of the Executive Committee members, including members not present in the meeting in which the voting takes place.
- 4.3.6.** 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.
- 4.3.7.** 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).
- 4.3.8.** 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.
- 4.3.9.** The Annual Election shall be a democratic election with voting open to all full members of the consistent membership scheme of the Association.
- 4.3.10.** The Annual Election shall be conducted electronically in a secure manner in a way which ensures that each voter is only able to cast a single vote and that the identity of the voter remains anonymized. This electronic means of conducting the Annual Election must only record the voter's choices for all open positions of the committee.
- 4.3.10.1.** The eligible voter must be given the option of a blank vote for any position open to the election.
- 4.3.11.** The election of all Executive Committee Positions shall follow a simple majority system, where the candidate who wins the most individual votes shall be elected to office. If a shared office has been advertised as open in the election, as detailed in 1.3.3.1.1, the election of the individuals shall follow a simple majority system too, by which the n candidates that win the most votes should be appointed to the n shared positions.
- 4.3.12.** In the event of a tie between two or more members being nominated for an Executive Committee position such that both candidates could equally claim their election to the 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.

- 4.3.13.** 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.
 - 4.3.14.** 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.
 - 4.3.15.** 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.
- 4.4.** Should there be no consistent membership scheme for the association, as described in clause 4.1.1, every individual that is actively enrolled in a postgraduate course related to Philosophy in the United Kingdom on the day of the Committee Appointment, shall be eligible to run for an Executive Committee position.
- 4.4.1.** All and only individuals who meet the condition specified in 4.1 shall be eligible to run for an Executive Committee position.
 - 4.4.2.** The Committee Appointment shall be advertised by the President at least 28 days ahead of the election with nominations to be accepted for each position up to seven days ahead of the election.
 - 4.4.2.1.** In advertising the Committee Appointment, the President must clearly specify which positions would-be candidates can nominate themselves to.
 - 4.4.2.1.1.** For all positions of the Committee except those of President and Vice-President, President may advertise a shared office, i.e., allow for two or more individuals to be appointed to the same role within the Committee. This must have been voted and approved by simple majority in a meeting of the Executive Committee before the Committee Appointment is advertised.
 - 4.4.2.2.** In advertising the Committee Appointment, the President must clearly specify the means by which would-be candidates shall contact the President in order to nominate themselves. The means must be free, accessible to all interested would-be candidates, and realistic.
 - 4.4.2.3.** Five days before the Committee Appointment, the President shall call a meeting of the sitting Executive Committee to discuss nominations and either accept all nominations or justify the exclusion of nominated would-be candidates, which shall be ratified in the meeting as detailed in clauses 1.4.4-1.4.4.2.
 - 4.4.3.** In order to be nominated for any position within the Executive Committee, would-be candidates must nominate themselves by contacting the sitting President following the means discussed in clause 1.4.2.2.
 - 4.4.4.** The Executive Committee may exclude nominated individuals as candidates for the appointment of any given position of the Executive Committee in the

meeting that must take place six days before the Committee Appointment, as specified in clause 1.4.2.3.

- 4.4.4.1.** The exclusion of a nominated individual as candidate for the election requires a clear exposition of the reasons why the individual is excluded, that shall be passed on to the individual themselves after the meeting. These reasons shall never be discriminatory in nature, i.e., an individual cannot be excluded from running for a position on the basis of race, ethnicity, nationality, class, caste, religion, belief, sex, gender, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, sex characteristics, age, health or other status.
- 4.4.4.2.** The exclusion of an individual from the electoral process must be subject to a voting within the Executive Committee, and approved by at least 2/3 of the Executive Committee members, including members not present in the meeting in which the voting takes place.
- 4.4.5.** 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.
- 4.4.6.** For an Committee Appointment 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).
- 4.4.7.** The Committee Appointment shall be a democratic election with voting open to all members of the Executive Committee.
- 4.4.8.** The Committee Appointment election shall be conducted electronically in a secure manner in a way which ensures that each eligible voter is only able to cast a single vote and that the identity of the voter remains anonymized. This electronic means of conducting the Committee Appointment must only record the voter's choices for all open positions of the committee.
 - 4.4.8.1.** The eligible voter must be given the option of a blank vote for any position open to the election.
- 4.4.9.** The election of all Executive Committee Positions shall follow a simple majority system, where the candidate who wins the most individual votes shall be elected to office. If a shared office has been advertised as open in the election, as detailed in 1.4.2.1.1, the election of the individuals shall follow a simple majority system too, by which the n candidates that win the most votes should be appointed to the n shared positions.
- 4.4.10.** In the event of a tie between two or more members being nominated for an Executive Committee position such that both candidates could equally claim their election to the 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 Executive Committee at least five days before the new election.
- 4.4.11.** In the event of a tie in the run-off election, the vote of the President of the Association will decide the election.
- 4.4.12.** Where an Executive Committee post becomes vacant for any reason – as delineated at 3.12 above – before the Committee Appointment, the Executive Committee may, at their discretion, either call for a Special Committee Appointment for that one post, to be conducted exactly according to the rules

and regulations of the Committee Appointment, or leave the post vacant until the next Committee Appointment. This procedure will remain in place insofar as the sitting Executive Committee has been elected through a Committee Appointment procedure, even if a consistent membership scheme is in place.

- 4.4.13.** 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 a majority of the sitting members of the British Postgraduate Philosophy Association Executive Committee.
- 5.2.** Should a consistent membership scheme for the association, as described in clause 1.1.1, be in place, any changes to the Constitution must be ratified by a 2/3 majority of all voting members of the BPPA. Should the association lack a consistent membership scheme, any changes to the Constitution must be ratified by a 2/3 majority of the members of the sitting Executive Committee.
- 5.2.1.** Whether there is or is not a consistent membership scheme for the association, the proposed changes to the Constitution must be made public to the individuals with the right to ratify the Constitution.
- 5.2.2.** In particular, the President must advertise the proposed changes to the Constitution alongside the original text (if relevant) at least five days before the voting of the ratification.
- 5.3.** All successfully ratified changes to this Constitution, which occur according to the regulations laid out in **5.1 – 5.2.2** above, shall take place immediately upon being ratified.