

Association of Postdoctoral Fellows (APF) – McGill University: Constitution

Preamble

This constitution stipulates the structure, rules, regulations and procedures directing operations of the Association of Postdoctoral Fellows. The goal of this constitution is to preserve:

- i. the means for democratic control of this association by its membership;
- ii. transparency for its financing and operations; and
- iii. the accountability of the association representatives to its Members.

Article I – Names

1. The name of the organization shall be “The Association of Postdoctoral Fellows” or “L’Association des stagiaires postdoctoraux” hereinafter referred to as the “APF”.
2. For the purposes of this document, internally, the APF shall be interchangeably referred to as the “Association”.
3. For the purpose of external qualification and recognition, documents naming the organization shall spell out the name in full the first time it appears, and thereafter it may be referred to as the “APF”.
4. For the purpose of this document, the “PGSS” refers to the Post-Graduate Students’ Society, and “GPSO” refers to the Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Office.

Article II – Purpose

1. The purpose of the Association shall be to:
 - i. defend the rights and privileges of postdoctoral fellows at McGill
 - ii. facilitate communication among postdoctoral fellows at McGill
 - iii. respond to the needs of postdoctoral fellows at McGill
 - iv. represent postdoctoral fellows at the PGSS, at the McGill Senate and AMURE (Association of McGill University Research Employees); as well as other appropriate university committees/bodies

Article III – The Membership

1. The Membership of the Association shall be composed of all people recognized as postdoctoral fellows and postdoctoral research trainees at McGill.

2. Aside from the stipulation above, the Association shall not discriminate against any individual, in any way that is deemed either unlawful, or inappropriate:

- i. according to the PGSS constitution; or,
- ii. according to the McGill University ethics guidelines; or,
- iii. according to the municipal, provincial, or federal law.

Article IV – The Executive

1. There shall be six executive officers of the Association as well as up to three Executive members without a portfolio, hereafter referred to as the “Executive”, and these officers and members are the:

- i. President (required);
- ii. Chair (optional);
- iii. Vice President Academic (required);
- iv. Vice President Social (optional);
- v. Vice President Finance and Operations (required);
- vi. Vice President Communications (required); and
- vii. Executive members (up to 3 positions), without a portfolio (optional).

2. The Executive shall be elected annually as per the election guidelines set out in this Constitution.

3. The Executive shall hold office from June 1st of each year until the following May 31st, inclusive.

4. The Executive shall be jointly charged with the responsibilities of:

- i. ensuring prudent fiscal management of the Association’s funds;
- ii. producing Council Meeting (i.e., Executive Council of the APF) and General Assembly agendas;
- iii. relaying to Council comments, questions, and concerns of relevance to the Association;
- iv. producing and maintaining guides detailing procedures of individual executive functions; and
- v. providing all documents generated by their respective offices to the President;

These responsibilities shall hereafter be referred to as the “joint responsibilities of the Executive”.

5. If one or more Executive positions are left unfilled, the remaining Executive will take care of the assigned tasks until the positions are filled.

6. One of the Executive must hold the McGill Senate seat that is reserved (year on, year off) for Postdoctoral Fellows.
7. At least one of the Executive must sit on the PGSS Council and the Executive is tasked with ensuring all Postdoctoral seats on PGSS Council are filled.
8. If possible, one of the Executive should sit on the Student Support Committee of the PGSS.
10. If possible, one of the Executive should act as McGill's representative to the Canadian Association of Postdoctoral Scholars.

President

5. Further to the joint responsibilities of the Executive, the President shall:
 - i. be the official representative of the Association to all external entities;
 - ii. sit on PGSS Council;
 - iv. ensure that there are regular meetings (group or individual) with the Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies;
 - v. be responsible for all official correspondence with all external entities;
 - vi. be familiar with the content of the University's Handbook of Student Rights and Responsibilities, and in particular the Charter of Students' Rights with respect to defending the rights of the Association;
 - vii. be one (1) of the two (2) required signing officers for the Association;
 - ix. conduct all of the Association's elections according to the procedures and regulations specified in this Constitution; and
 - x. chair APF Meetings.

Chair

6. Further to the joint responsibilities of the Executive, the Chair shall:
 - i. act as Recording Secretary for APF Meetings and General Assemblies; this can also be carried out by the VP Communications
 - ii. maintain and organize up to date electronic (where appropriate) and paper (where appropriate) records of all of the Association's documents including; this role will be carried out with the assistance of the President:
 - a. the Association's Constitution;

- b. financial records as provided by the VP Finance and Operations;
 - c. meeting records (agendas, minutes, etc.);
 - d. documentation arising from the activities of the Executive;
 - e. template and filled forms (e.g. Nomination Forms); and
 - f. the Association's operations manuals.
- iii. maintain electronic communications by periodically ensuring that the Executive, committee members, PGSS Councilors are reachable. This includes scheduling APF Executive meetings.
- iv. compile meeting agendas (with the assistance of the President) with associated duties including:
- a. receiving and compiling reports from all other executives and committees;
 - b. detailing previous meeting records; and
 - c. including agenda items as approved by the Executive.
- v. in the case that the President is absent, the Chair will act as President. If no Chair is elected, this responsibility will be carried out by the Vice President Academic.
- vi. liaison with other student bodies external to McGill University (carried out with the VP Academic)

Vice President Communications

7. Further to the joint responsibilities of the Executive, the Vice President Communications shall:

- i. act as Webmaster with duties including:
 - a. maintaining up to date website content including the:
 - i. Association's Constitution;
 - ii. names and contact information of the:
 - a. Executive;
 - b. committee members; and
 - c. PGSS Councilors
 - iii. up to date orientation page for new McGill postdocs
 - b. archiving (meeting minutes, council reports, etc.);
 - c. uploading materials provided by the Executive (lists, statements, reports, records, etc.);
 - d. maintaining the functional and aesthetic qualities of the website; and

- e. ensuring that the Association's website is in compliance with all applicable rules, regulations, policies, laws, etc.
- f. maintaining the APF's social media presence on LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter.
- ii. communicating with postdocs regarding APF activities, as well as university policies regarding PDF matters. This will include sending out emails and maintaining communication with the PDF community via social media.
- iii. taking minutes during APF Executive meetings (can also be carried out by the Chair)

Vice President Academic

8. Further to the joint responsibilities of the Executive, the VP Academic shall:

- i. establish and coordinate links with McGill affiliated research institutions where postdoctoral fellows are located (carried out with the Chair)
- ii. plan and execute academic events including at least:
 - a. one (1) poster session; or
 - b. one (1) research seminar of broad interest.
- iii. plan and execute career events, including at least:
 - a. one academic, and
 - b. one non-academic
- iv. work with the VP Communications to produce and maintain list of facilities and procedures for aiding Members in obtaining information and solutions on issues relating to academic activities.

Vice President Social

9. Further to the joint responsibilities of the Executive, the VP Social shall:

- i. plan and execute social events including at least:
 - a. one (1) annual postdoctoral general assembly; and
 - b. regular postdoctoral social gatherings of a minimum of 4 a year.
- ii. ensure that social events follow all applicable rules and laws; and
- iii. ensure all events are advertised to the Membership via:
 - a. email notification (at least a week before, and the day prior); and

- b. social media notification (LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter)
- iv. ensure advertisements are removed within one week of the end of the event

Vice President Finance and Operations

10. Further to the joint responsibilities of the Executive, the VP Finance and Operations shall:
- i. be one (1) of two (2) required signing officers for the Association;
 - ii. be responsible for ensuring all financial transactions adhere to the approved Association budget;
 - iii. maintain official financial records for auditing purposes including:
 - a. keeping all receipts and cheque stubs for at least seven (7) years;
 - b. keeping the Association's budget for at least seven (7) years; and
 - c. destroying all financial records older than seven (7) years.
 - iv. be responsible for preparing the Association's yearly budget and final annual financial statement;
 - v. solicit funds for the Association by performing duties including:
 - a. compiling and maintaining a list of companies and organizations (both internal and external to the University) that have or may contributed to the Association; and
 - b. presenting viable funding opportunities at least once (1) per year at an APF Meeting.
 - vi. maintain and transmit the records and documentation of the Association's activities required by the PGSS to the appropriate PGSS representative within the deadlines stipulated by the PGSS for a Post-Graduate Student Association (PGSA);
 - vii. verify adherence by the Association to all required regulations concerning the activities of a PGSA as specified by the PGSS.

Article V – Officers of the Committee

- 1. Up to ten (10) Officer Positions will be filled based on need. The roles of the Officers will be to assist in the duties performed by the Executive, and specific definitions of the roles will be created by the Executive members as they see fit.

Article VI – The Committee

- 1. The role of the Committee shall be to:

- i. bring forth, discuss, and develop resolutions to issues of concerns to the Association or its Members;
 - ii. promote the improvement of the Association's activities and structure; and
 - iii. direct the Executive in implementing the decisions of the Committee.
2. The Committee shall be comprised of:
 - i. the Executive;
 - ii. up to ten (10) Officers; and
 - iii. the representatives of the Association to the PGSS Council
4. Regular Committee Meetings shall take place at least once (1) per month.
5. The agenda of Committee Meetings shall include at least the following activities:
 - i. recording of attendance;
 - ii. approval of the agenda, submitted at least one week before the Committee Meeting; and
 - iii. discussion of business of the Association including items brought forward by;
 - a. the Executive;
 - b. PGSS Councilors or Officers; and/or
 - c. Members of the Association.
6. Quorum for a Committee Meeting shall be one third (1/3) of voting members of the Committee, including three quarters (3/4) of the Executive.
7. Committee Meetings are open to the entire Membership.

Article VII – Membership Representation

1. The Association shall be the only body able to elect (or nominate, where appropriate) any of its Members to any entity internal or external to the University.
2. All representatives of the Association, elected or otherwise, are liable, both legally and financially, for their actions on behalf of the Association.
3. The Committee may elect new officers and external representatives other than those already specified in this Constitution, as required.
4. The Officers will be elected by the Membership using the PGSS's online voting system, following submission of a nomination form for each individual.

Article VIII – Finances and Fees

1. The fiscal term for the Association shall begin on June 1st, and end on the May 31st of the following year, inclusively.
2. The Association shall operate a bank account with two (2) signing officers. All receivables must be deposited into this account.
3. The Association's final annual financial statement must be produced after the end of the fiscal year for which the statement reports.

Article IX – Nominations, Elections and Impeachment

1. Notice of open positions shall be given at least two weeks in advance of the nomination submission deadline; call for nominations can be done on-line.
2. Nomination names are to be submitted (verbally or in writing/e-mail) to the Association's President (or Acting Equivalent), which includes, at least the:
 - i. Nominee's name;
 - ii. Nominated position;
 - iii. Nominee's contact information;
 - iv. Nominee's acknowledgment of understanding of all the regulations, terms, conditions and responsibilities of the nominated position; and
3. Each nominee for an open position must:
 - i. be a current Member of the Association;
 - ii. be prepared to undertake the responsibilities of the position; and
 - iii. plan to serve a full term in the position as specified for the position sought.
4. Candidates for election shall:
 - i. be given an opportunity to present a two minute campaign speech, if requested; and
 - ii. be subject to an open question period with a duration subject to the discretion of the Meeting chair, if requested.
5. Voting shall be carried out on-line, using the PGSS on-line voting system:
 - i) PGSS should be contacted a minimum of 3 weeks prior to desired voting date; the PGSS Student Life Coordinator should be contacted to inform him/her of the election

ii) An announcement of the on-line election should be circulated a minimum of one week prior to the on-line vote

iii) On-line voting shall be open for 5 weekdays (from 9AM on the first day to 5PM on the last day)

iv) Candidates with the most “yes” votes win

5. Vacancies during the course of the year shall be filled through by-elections following an announcement and nomination name submission to the Committee defined on Article VII.

6. Any person holding a position within the Association may be removed from that position due to non-performance of duties, or abuse of office, by the following procedures:

i. a motion of the Committee passed by a two thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Members present; or

ii. a motion of a General Assembly passed by a two thirds (2/3) majority vote of the attendees present.

7. Regular Executive elections are subject to the following terms:

i. a candidate may seek nomination for only one open Executive position;

ii. elections (either via paper or on-line ballots) shall be held once per year prior to May 1st, for the term starting June 1st and ending May 31st of the following year; and

iii. Executives must be elected prior to May 1st, for the term starting June 1st and ending May 31st of the following year.

Article X – General Assemblies

1. All the individual members of the Association present at a General Assembly, hereafter referred to as the “Assembly” or “GA”, have a voice and vote at a GA.

2. If online voting is not possible, there shall be one GA, as required, for the election of the Executive and Officers. A GA may also be used for the purposes of communicating APF’s goals for the year to the membership and for approving changes to the constitution.

3. Notice of a GA shall be given by e-mail at least one week before the GA.

4. Quorum for the GA shall be 2.5 % of the Membership of the Association.

5. GAs are open to the entire Membership.

6. A GA may be called by any Member of the Association by bringing forth a petition of at least 10 Members’ signatures to the President.

Article XI – Constitution

1. Amendments to this Constitution may only be made at a GA or via PGSS on-line voting system.
2. All amendments shall be ratified by a minimum of a two thirds (2/3) majority vote at a GA or 2/3 majority of on-line voters, if the PGSS on-line voting system is used.
3. Proposed amendments to this Constitution may be considered if raised as a motion passed at a Committee Meeting or APF Executive Meetings at least two weeks before the GA at which the amendment is to be considered.
4. Proposed amendments shall be briefly outlined at the GA, and e-mailed out prior to the GA. In the case of on-line voting, the amendments shall be outlined in a document or a “tack-changes” version of the constitution will be sent out one (1) week prior to on-line voting regarding the Constitutional amendments.
5. Any changes to the organization’s Constitution shall be forwarded to the PGSS within one month of their implementation.
6. The dates of any amendments to the Constitution shall be reflected in the footnotes of the Constitution.