



**Queen's Graduate Computing Society**

Constitution

Prepared: January 2009

Amended: April 2009  
August 2009  
August 2012  
July 2013  
September 2013  
November 2014  
January 2015  
July 2015  
September 2016  
March 2018  
March 2019  
March 2025

## Preamble

The Society shall be known as the Queen's Graduate Computing Society (GCS), referred to hereafter as the Society.

This Constitution shall be recognized to be the highest document on all matters of policy and conduct concerning the Society and its members. All other documents of the Society, such as policy statements and rules of order, shall be subject to interpretation in a manner which is consistent with this Constitution.

The Society and its representatives shall adhere to the Queen's University Student Code of Conduct.

The Society and its representatives shall act in a manner which is dignified and shall provide leadership in environmental sustainability, inclusiveness without regards to race, religion, sex, gender, social background or other criterion.

The Society and its representatives shall act in an accountable manner and be accessible to all of its membership.

## Objectives

1. The objectives of the Society shall be:
  - a. to represent the interests of the members to the School of Computing;
  - b. to enhance the social environment within the membership and the School of Computing;
  - c. to facilitate the means by which members of the Society could contribute to the School of Computing and its activities;
  - d. to recognize and respect equity.

## Membership

1. The membership consists of all those students who satisfy one or more of these criteria:
  - a. are taking one or more graduate level courses in the School of Computing;
  - b. are enrolled in a graduate or post graduate degree program in the School of Computing;
  - c. are engaged in a visiting student relationship with the School of Computing.
2. Membership in the Society brings with it the following rights and privileges:
  - a. the right to vote in all general elections and referenda of the Society;
  - b. the privilege to participate in all events run by the Society subject to any restrictions particular to that event;
  - c. the right to run as a candidate in all general elections of the Society.

## Executive and Officers of the Society

1. All members of the Executive and Officers shall be collectively referred to as GCS Council, or simply Council.

2. The Executive of the Society shall be as follows:
  - a. a President;
  - b. a Vice President Operations;
  - c. a Vice President University Affairs.
3. The Officers of the Society shall be as follows:
  - a. MSc Grad Committee Officer;
  - b. PhD Grad Committee Officer;
  - c. Appointments Officer;
  - d. School Life Officer;
  - e. COMPSA Liaison Officer;
  - f. Two (2) SGPS Liaison Officers (one (1) MSc and one (1) PhD, when possible);
  - g. Graduate Engineering Liaison Officer (a member of the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science, when possible, preferably ECE);
  - h. Two Information Officers (Technology, Marketing);
  - i. Up to two (2) Social Officers, who will oversee the Social Committee.

## Duties of Council

1. All members of Council:
  - a. attend, and report on their respective duties at meetings of the Executive and Officers, to be held a minimum once a month during the fall and winter terms following Robert's Rules of Order;
  - b. report any relevant information to members of the Society; and
  - c. be available to the members.
2. President
  - a. acting as the Speaker at GCS Council meetings;
  - b. sitting as a voting member of the School of Computing Council;
  - c. overseeing the operations of the GCS Council in its entirety;
  - d. meeting with the Director of the School as necessary to discuss the issues of graduate students.
3. Vice President Operations
  - a. acting as the Deputy Speaker at GCS Council meetings;
  - b. sitting as a voting member of the School of Computing Council;
  - c. acting as the Chief Electoral Officer in the election of Officers and the new executive following the guidelines and procedures outlined in the Society Election policy;
  - d. being responsible for the finances of the organization including budgeting for events;
  - e. chairing the organizing committee for the annual Queen's Graduate Computing Society Conference, or appointing a suitable delegate to do so.
4. Vice President University Affairs
  - a. sitting as a voting member of the School of Computing Council;
  - b. being responsible for the Incoming Graduate Student Orientation, working with the Graduate Program Assistant to ensure relevant information about Student Life is conveyed to new students, and that a social event is held to welcome the new students to the School of Computing;

- c. coordinating with Committee-focused officers, regarding attending meetings, and collecting input from students, as well as disseminating information;
  - d. taking minutes during GCS Council meetings.
- 5. MSc Grad Committee Officer
  - a. shall attend meetings of the School of Computing Graduate Committee;
  - b. shall represent the opinions of Masters students in the school, and actively aim to improve the MSc program for the students.
- 6. PhD Grad Committee Officer
  - a. shall attend meetings of the School of Computing Graduate Committee;
  - b. shall represent the opinions of Doctoral students in the school, and actively aim to improve the PhD program for the students.
- 7. Appointments Officer
  - a. shall attend meetings of the School of Computing Renewal, Tenure, and Promotion Committee;
  - b. shall attend meetings of the School of Computing Appointments Committee.
- 8. School Life Officer
  - a. shall attend meetings of the School of Computing Resources and Space Committee;
  - b. shall attend meetings of the School of Computing Beautification and Environment Committee.
- 9. COMPSA Liaison Officer
  - a. shall attend meetings of the Computing Students' Association (COMPSA);
  - b. shall coordinate with members of COMPSA Council to advertise applicable events hosted by COMPSA or GCS to the other society/association.
- 10. SGPS Liaison Officers
  - a. shall attend meetings of the Society of Graduate and Professional Students (SGPS) Council;
  - b. shall pass along pertinent information sent to them through the SGPS Council Mailing List.
- 11. Graduate Engineering Liaison Officer
  - a. shall attend relevant meetings of the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Science as the official representative of the Queen's Graduate Computing Society (GCS);
  - b. shall maintain ongoing communication between graduate computing and graduate engineering students to promote mutual awareness and facilitate collaboration;
  - c. shall coordinate joint social, academic, or professional development events with engineering societies or committees when beneficial to graduate computing students;
  - d. shall actively identify and communicate opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration and resource sharing between graduate computing and graduate engineering students;
  - e. shall regularly report to the GCS Council about relevant activities, developments, and opportunities within the Faculty of Engineering that could benefit graduate computing students.
- 12. Information Officer (Technology)
  - a. shall attend meetings of the School of Computing Privacy and Ethics Committee;
  - b. shall be responsible for the technical operations of the Society.

13. Information Officer (Marketing)
  - a. shall attend meetings of the School of Computing Marketing Committee;
  - b. shall be responsible for marketing events, and the online presence of the Society.
14. Social Officers
  - a. shall plan and run regular social events;
  - b. the frequency and type of activities planned are to follow the requests of the members and are to be at the times deemed most appropriate to the schedules of the majority;
  - c. the Social Officers shall aim to expand the portfolio of regular events to include new events based on student feedback;
  - d. when possible, and appropriate, joint events with the Computing Students' Association (COMPSA) shall be held;
  - e. The Social Officers shall oversee the Social Committee:
    - i. Any student wishing to volunteer their time to host events, regularly or as a one-time event, may join the GCS Social Committee, and be allowed to request funding or assistance in planning events, as well as provided resources of the GCS website and other advertising mediums.

## **Fees**

1. The Society shall charge an annual membership fee to its members to provide services and events to the students.
2. Increases, changes, or removal of this fee are subject to approval by a referendum of the membership of the society, to be conducted in accordance with society rules on referenda.

## **Constitution**

1. Changes to the Constitution shall be proposed by the Executive to the membership by emailing the new version of the constitution to all Society members.
  - a. If any member objects to the proposed changes, they must contact the executive within 3 working days with their concerns.
  - b. If after 3 working days, no objections are voiced, the changes will be deemed official.
  - c. If a concern is raised, the proposed changes will be brought to a vote at a general meeting of the membership.
2. Should any member of the Society wish to propose changes to the constitution, they may submit them to the Executive for distribution, and the above process will be followed.

## **Elections**

1. Elections for all positions shall take place at the beginning of the fall term.
2. On the Tuesday of the first full week of classes in the Fall term, the Chief Electoral Officer, shall send a call for nominations to all students, identifying open positions.
3. Nominations will be submitted to the Chief Electoral Officer by noon on the following Monday, with final nominations being presented to the members of the Society by 4pm the same day. Candidates may be self-nominated, or nominated by a peer.

4. In order to be eligible to be nominated for the position of President, during the nomination period, a student must have completed one full year of graduate education in the School of Computing at Queen's University.
5. If at the close of nominations, any position has only one nominee, that nominee will be acclaimed to that position, and a vote will not need to be held.
6. If at the close of nominations, any position has no nominees, a candidate found at a later time may be appointed by a majority vote of Council as outlined in *Vacancy of Office*.
7. For any positions for which there is a contested election after the close of nominations, a three (3) day period (Tuesday - Thursday) will be held during which the candidates may campaign to the Society.
  - a. The Chief Electoral Officer is responsible for overseeing the campaign period, and ensuring that candidates maintain appropriate decorum in their campaigns.
8. Voting will be conducted in the manner determined by the Chief Electoral Officer. They shall decide to either hold an online vote, or a paper ballot vote. Implementation details shall be determined prior to the actual election by the Chief Electoral Officer. Voting must take place on the day following the campaign period.
9. Following the close of voting, the Chief Electoral Officer shall tabulate the votes, and report the results to the Society, no later than 4pm on the day of voting.
10. Candidates shall assume Office the Monday following the elections.

## Removal of an Executive or Officer

1. In the event that any student feels that an Officer or Executive member is not performing their duty in a satisfactory manner, and wishes they be removed from their position, they must formally request this via email to the Society President.
  - a. If the issue is with the President, the request shall be sent to another member of the Executive.
2. When a request for removal is received, the person shall be notified immediately, along with the remaining members of Council.
3. A meeting will be called, no less than 72 hours after notice has been given, to deal with the issue, allowing the Council member in question to state their case.
4. Following discussion, a vote of non-confidence will be taken by secret ballot.
5. A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote is required for a vote of non-confidence.
  - a. All members of Council must vote for or against removal, or abstain from voting, aside from the Chair of the Council Meeting, whose shall only vote in the event of a tie.
  - b. A two-thirds (2/3) majority shall constitute two-thirds (2/3) of the non-abstention votes being cast in favour of removal.

## Vacancy of Office

1. The policies specified in this section are the standard course of action when a vacancy of office exists, however these processes may not always be in the best interest of the Society.
  - a. The Executive may choose an alternative action, and provide justification to Council, who shall ratify the decisions of the executive with a two-thirds (2/3) approval.

2. In the absence or unavailability of any members of the Executive, or in the event that any of the three Executive offices becomes vacant, any Society member may be nominated by Council for the vacant position, subject to the approval of two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the Council present and voting at a Council meeting where notice of at least 72 hours of the motion has been given.
  - a. Should the nominee of the remaining Council members be rejected, the membership may make a nomination, or it may require Council members to propose alternative nominees.
3. In the absence or unavailability of any one non-Executive member of the Council, or in the event that any one of the non-Executive Council positions becomes vacant, the duties of that position will be covered by the remaining Council members until such a time that a replacement is appointed.
4. The Executive may choose to appoint a suitable individual to fill any vacancy in an elected representative position. This appointment must be ratified by a two-thirds (2/3) approval vote at any Council meeting.

## Referendums

1. If at any time a referendum is required within the Society, whether it is fee related or otherwise, it will follow the procedure outlined in this section of the Constitution.
2. The question to be posed to the Society shall be distributed by the Chief Electoral Officer one (1) week prior to the date of the referendum.
3. Members of the Society may choose to campaign for one side or the other of a referendum question.
  - a. The Chief Electoral Officer is responsible for overseeing the campaign period, and ensuring that members maintain appropriate decorum in their campaigns.
  - b. Members of the Elections team may choose to assist in campaigning for one side or the other of a referendum question, but must maintain the same level of decorum expected of all members of the Society.
4. Voting will be conducted in the manner determined by the Chief Electoral Officer. They shall decide to either hold an online vote, or a paper ballot vote. Implementation details shall be determined prior to the referendum by the Chief Electoral Officer.
5. Following the close of voting, the Chief Electoral Officer shall tabulate the votes, and report the results to the Society.