

CONSTITUTION OF THE
GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION
OF CONSTRUCTOR UNIVERSITY

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This constitution was approved by the Graduate Student Body of Constructor University after voting in April 2015, amendments to the Elections By-Laws were made in April 2016, in light of structural changes the constitution is adjusted in 2023 by the Executive Board.

CONSTITUTION OF THE
GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION
OF CONSTRUCTOR UNIVERSITY

PREAMBLE

“ We, the graduate students of Jacobs University, in due recognition of the responsibility shared by the administration, the faculty, and the student body, hereby constitute the Graduate Students Association in order to best accomplish the following purposes: to govern ourselves wisely while acting in accordance with local, state, and national laws, as well as university regulations; to promote high standards of conduct; to carry out activities which maintain the quality of campus life; and to promote and defend the general student welfare.”

ARTICLE I: NAME

1. This organization shall be known as the Graduate Students' Association of Jacobs University, henceforth abbreviated as GSA.

ARTICLE II: NATURE

1. The Graduate Students Association is the highest and the only organ that represents all the graduate students of Constructor University before other bodies within as well as outside the university.

ARTICLE III: PURPOSE

1. Represent the graduate student community of Constructor University before the respective bodies inside as well as outside the university.
2. Promote and support the initiatives of the graduate student body of Jacobs University.
3. Protect the interests of the graduate student body of Constructor University and guarantee their rights (as stated by local law and university policies) are respected by the different organs within the university.
4. Assist and help the graduate student body with GSA's resources to the extent of its obligations stated in this and other documents.

5. Enhance and improve the academic and social life of the graduate student body of Constructor University Bremen by providing academic, social, and cultural forums.
6. Serve as the link between the Undergraduate Student Government, university authorities, administration, and graduate student body.
7. Assist and provide help in the execution of relevant projects for the graduate student community. 8. Promote academic, cultural, and social exchange between graduate students at Constructor University and external student bodies.
9. Collaborate with external representative bodies for students outside Constructor University as and when deemed appropriate.

ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP

1. The Graduate Students Association is composed of all the graduate students at Constructor University Bremen.
2. Graduate students are all persons pursuing post-graduate studies at Jacobs University, i.e., *Masters Students and PhD candidates*.
3. Graduate students are automatically members of the GSA from the day of their matriculation and their membership ends the moment they cease to be enrolled as graduate students.
4. Each GSA member should:
 - a. Respect and make their rights (as defined by university policies and applicable local laws) within Constructor University Bremen, individually or collectively, be respected, and use the respective resources to ensure it.
 - b. Participate in the activities and projects carried out by and for the graduate student community.
 - c. Respect this constitution, resolutions and by-laws issued by the bodies of the GSA as well as other norms of Jacobs University.
 - d. Elect and be elected, in accordance with the present constitution and other relevant norms, for the positions vacant in the bodies of the GSA.
 - e. Contribute with voice and vote in the General Assembly and exercise their right to motion and request before the respective bodies of the GSA.
 - f. Attend the meetings of the GSA Executive Board, with right to voice.
 - g. Exercise the duties and tasks they have been delegated for by the respective bodies of the GSA and provide them with reports whenever requested. Have access, at all times, to the archives of the GSA.
 - h. Exercise all other duties and rights stated in this document and other valid norms.

ARTICLE V: ORGANS AND BODIES IN THE GSA

1. The organs and bodies of the GSA are:
 - a. The Graduate Student Body (GSB)
 - b. The Executive Board (EB)
 - c. The Elections Tribunal (ET)

ARTICLE VI: THE GRADUATE STUDENT BODY

1. The GSB is the highest organ of the GSA. It is composed of all the members of the GSA. It can sit ordinarily and extraordinarily in a General Meeting (GA) according to Article VI.2.
2. A GA will occur once every semester at the beginning of the term called by the EB according to Article VI.6 (procedure and publication)
3. Extraordinarily the GSB can sit as many times as needed. The call for such a GA can be made by:
 - a. The EB
 - b. Graduate Student initiative via written and signed request of at least 5% of the members of the GSA.
4. The call or convocation for a GA will be published at least 5 days in advance if it is ordinary and at least 2 days in advance if it is extraordinary.
5. The call will have to be published using the resources available in order to reach all the graduate student community and it should state:
 - a. Who is calling for the GA
 - b. Whether it is an ordinary or an extraordinary GA
 - c. Precise date and place in which it will take place
 - d. The agenda
 - e. The signature of the Secretary or who acts as such form the EB. If the call is an initiative of the graduate student community as stated in Article VI.3, then the EB must legitimize the call or convocation by making the appropriate public announcement and publish it according to the terms hereby established.
6. At the start of the GA, a secretary for the assembly has to be announced by the EB. S/he will be in charge of writing the minutes of the GA as well as publishing them within 48 hours after of the meeting. Failure to publish the minutes within this time will not make the decisions made by the GA invalid. The President will have to publish them in case of delay within the next 48 hours after the first deadline. In case of no publication of minutes after this deadline, the decision taken by the GA, if any, shall become invalid.
7. The Secretary or whoever is acting as such for the GA will declare the GA agenda in session. Additionally, any member of the GSB is entitled to bring up issues related to or beyond the stated agenda.
8. The decisions of the GA will be made by simple majority, except in the cases stated in this constitution.
9. If any of the requirements and conditions established in this title were not met, the decision of the GA, had it taken place, will not be valid.
10. The GA conducts, at the written request of 5% of all Members, a vote of no confidence against single members of the Board. An intended vote of no confidence, including the basis for such a request, must appear in the agenda at least 5 days before the GA. It must be supported by a rigorous majority of 2/3 of all votes cast. After a successful vote of no confidence, the affected office is immediately refilled by an election.
11. The GSB shall:
 - a. Respect and make the present constitution and other valid regulations be respected.
 - b. Interpret as binding the present constitution and the regulations that can assist on its application
 - c. Discuss and resolve issues regarding the temporary or definitive separation, of a member of the EB, ET or other members of the GSA, in accordance with the present Constitution.

- d. Receive the semester report of the activities of the EB.
- e. Discuss upon the dissolution of the EB in accordance with this constitution.
- f. Vote upon reforming the present constitution in accordance with the present constitution as per Article XIII.
- g. Comply with the duties and responsibilities established in this constitution and other valid regulations.

ARTICLE VII: THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

1. The EB is the executive body of the GSA and is composed of the following board members:
 - a. President
 - b. Vice President
 - c. One Representative of the School of Science
 - d. One Representative of the School of Computer Science & Engineering
 - e. One Representative of the School of Business, Social & Decision Sciences
 - f. Two Activities Coordinators
 - g. Two Treasurers
 - h. One Secretary
 - i. One Communication Officer
2. The number of representatives from each School may change in the event of a significant change in the number of GSA members affiliated to it.
3. Each School recognized by Constructor University with at least 50 enrolled graduate students shall have at least one representative in the EB.
4. In order to be eligible to be a representative of a School, candidates must be affiliated in the school they represent.
5. The President shall
 - a. Preside over meetings of the GA and EB. In the event that the President is absent or unable to preside for any reason, including joining actively in debate, the other board members shall preside as Acting Chair in the order in which the offices are listed above.
 - b. Direct the policies of the in accordance with the present constitution.
 - c. Endeavor to fulfil the purposes of the GSA.
 - d. Respect and make the present constitution and other valid regulations be respected.
 - e. Call for elections for the EB, in accordance with what is stated in this constitution.
 - f. Convoke the first meeting of the ET.
 - g. Schedule and Call the GSB General Assembly.
 - h. Participate with voice and vote in the EB meetings.
 - i. Oversee the GSA's public relations externally and coordinate the GSA's presentation in the media, both electronically and printed.
 - j. Inform the GSB and the EB about matters falling within their competence when requested by these bodies.
 - k. Attend the sessions or meetings in other bodies of which GSA is a member or delegate another EB member to attend.
 - l. Exercise other rights and comply with all other duties and responsibilities prescribed in this constitution and other valid regulations.

- m. Nominate or delegate representatives for university committees or task forces as necessary.
 - n. Realize all the projects, functions, and tasks in which s/he participates.
6. The Vice-President shall
- a. Act as the President in their absence.
 - b. Endeavor to fulfil the purposes of the GSA.
 - c. Respect and make the present constitution and other valid regulations be respected.
 - d. Participate with voice and vote in the EB meetings.
 - e. Attend the sessions or meeting in other bodies of which it is a member or delegate another EB member to attend.
 - f. Exercise other rights and comply with all other duties and responsibilities prescribed in this constitution and other valid regulations.
 - g. Realize all the projects, functions, and tasks in which s/he participates.
7. The Representatives from each School (Science, Computer Science & Engineering, Business, Social & Decision Sciences) shall
- a. Represent the will of the students at their respective School.
 - b. Facilitate the flow of information between the EB and the student community of their specific Schools.
 - c. Endeavor to fulfil the purposes of the GSA.
 - d. Respect and make the present constitution and other valid regulations be respected.
 - e. Participate with voice and vote in the EB meetings.
 - f. Attend the sessions or meeting in other bodies of which GSA is a member or delegate another EB member to attend.
 - g. Exercise other rights and comply with all other duties and responsibilities prescribed in this constitution and other valid regulations.
 - h. Realize all the projects, functions, and tasks in which they participate.
8. The Activities Coordinator shall
- a. Be responsible for the improvement of graduate student life on campus.
 - b. Oversee programs, services, events in which the GSA participates.
 - c. Lead the organization of social, academic, and cultural activities for the graduate community.
 - d. Endeavor to fulfil the purposes of the GSA.
 - e. Respect and make the present constitution and other valid regulations be respected.
 - f. Participate with voice and vote in the EB meetings.
 - g. Attend the sessions or meeting in other bodies of which it is a member or delegate another EB member to attend.
 - h. Exercise other rights and comply with all other duties and responsibilities prescribed in this constitution and other valid regulations.
 - i. Realize all the projects, functions, and tasks in which s/he participate.
9. The Treasurer shall
- a. Manage the funds of the GSA.
 - b. Keep record of all financial transactions and communicate with the administration about financial matters.
 - c. Publish an audit of functions and tasks of the GSA at the end of each semester.

- d. Disburse funds for activities provided for in the budget and approved by the EB.
- e. Collect event fees and all other monies that are transferred into the possession of the GSA.
- f. Submit an annual budget proposal for the fiscal calendar year to the EB by January 31st, which is then subject to vote.
- g. Inform the GSB of the financial situation of the GSA.
- h. Endeavor to fulfil the purposes of the GSA.
- i. Respect and make the present constitution and other valid regulations be respected.
- j. Participate with voice and vote in the EB meetings.
- k. Attend the sessions or meeting in other bodies of which it is a member or delegate another EB member to attend.
- l. Exercise other rights and comply with all other duties and responsibilities prescribed in this constitution and other valid regulations.
- m. Realize all the projects, functions, and tasks in which s/he participates.

10. The Secretary shall

- a. Coordinate internal meetings of the Executive Board.
- b. Coordinate external meetings of the Executive Board with the President and Vice-President.
- c. Report in the GA all actions of the Executive Board since the previous Assembly meeting.
- d. Set the agenda for GA meetings.
- e. Oversee the GSA's internal relations and coordinate the EB's presentation in the GSA, both electronically and printed.
- f. Attend the sessions or meeting in other bodies of which it is a member or delegate another EB member to attend.
- g. Endeavor to fulfil the purposes of the GSA.
- h. Publish the minutes of any official meeting of the GSA to the entire community.
- i. Ensure that all the projects, functions, and tasks in which acting board members of the EB participate are realized by them.

11. The Communications Officer shall:

- a. Be responsible for the communication of the EB to the GSB electronically and in print. b. Manage the GSA website.
- c. Monitor incoming communication through the website and inform the EB of communications received from the GSB.
- d. Be responsible for maintaining the GSA archive.
- e. Endeavor to fulfil the purposes of the GSA.
- f. Respect and make the present constitution and other valid regulations be respected.
- g. Participate with voice and vote in the EB meetings.
- h. Attend the sessions or meeting in other bodies of which it is a member or delegate another EB member to attend.
- i. Exercise other rights and comply with all other duties and responsibilities prescribed in this constitution and other valid regulations.
- j. Realize all the projects, functions, and tasks in which s/he participates.

12. In case of vacancy in the office of the President, the Vice-President of the EB shall assume the role of President and elections would be conducted for the position of Vice-President as prescribed by this Constitution and its bylaws.

13. All members of the EB shall have equal vote in all matters of deliberation.
14. The EB may form sub-committees for purpose it may deem relevant. These positions or Offices must then be filled by open selection by the EB from all GSA members.
15. Rules and Proceedings of the EB shall be governed by the EB By-Laws.

ARTICLE VIII: PROGRAM COUNCIL

1. The PC is composed of:
 - a. The members of the EB.
 - b. At least one representatives of each graduate program. They will be elected by their peers in the way and time of their choosing.
2. The PC shall function as in accordance with the PC By-Laws.

ARTICLE IX: THE ELECTIONS TRIBUNAL

1. The ET is the body in charge of the GSA's electoral process.
2. The ET is composed by 3 officials who are designated by the EB in accordance with Article VII.14 They cannot occupy any student representation for the offices within the EB or otherwise under election at the moment of their designation.
3. The ET will be designated at least 2 weeks before the date of the elections.
4. In the first meeting of the ET, the President of the EB, or whomever acting as such, will inaugurate the members of the ET and provide them with the pertinent information and necessary tools for them to perform their duties.
5. The ET shall.
 - a. Organize, direct, control the electoral process as well as guarantee its transparency.
 - b. Receive the nominations, acceptances, and declinations of nominees, announce candidatures, oversee elections, count the votes, and declare the winners.
 - c. Respect and make the present constitution and other valid regulations be respected, in what falls into its competence.
 - d. Exercise other rights and comply with all other duties and responsibilities and other valid election regulations as prescribed in this constitution.

ARTICLE X: ELECTIONS

1. Elections shall be secret, universal, individual, equal, and free.
2. Elections will be called by the ET.
3. Elections will take place according to the vacancies and in accordance with what is established in the Election By-Laws.
4. In case of any dispute, the ET shall make the final decision by internal voting.
5. All GSA members who accept nominations for any office of student representation will have to abide by the rules and regulations specified in the Election By-Laws.
6. The terms of all Offices shall be twelve months or until the election of new Board members. The Assembly may, by By-Law, enact term limits on such Offices as they consider appropriate.
7. There shall be a transition phase of at least 2 weeks whereby the old representatives leaving office serve as acting mentors to the newly elected representatives.

8. Board members shall be elected annually, as directed by By-Law.
9. Board members shall be members of the Graduate Students Association.
10. Board member candidates shall not hold any other position of elected student representation in Constructor University at the moment of accepting their nomination.

ARTICLE XI: THE BUDGET

1. The funds of the GSA shall come from:
 - a. The per semester obligatory contributions of all graduate students.
 - b. The voluntary contributions of graduate students.
 - c. The voluntary contributions of legal as well as natural persons.
 - d. Profits from events and other projects organized by the GSA.
2. All expenditures above 150 € (Euros) must be approved by the EB. All expenditure below 150 € (Euros) may be approved by the Treasurer, as per the University Funding Guidelines.
3. The EB shall approve an Annual Budget.
4. The Annual Budget must be balanced such that the anticipated expenditures shall not exceed the anticipated income. The expenditures shall ensure that in case of money being accumulated, additional funds are granted for activities or projects beneficial to the graduate community.
5. A record of expenditures shall be made available for inspection upon request by any member of the GSB.
6. Handling of funds by the EB shall be in accordance with the Funding By-Laws as stipulated by the EB.
7. The GSB may demand an external Audit up to once per semester through a simple majority.

ARTICLE XII: STATUTORY SUPREMACY

1. The present constitution is the fundamental norm ruling the GSA. The regulations and resolutions of the organs and bodies of the GSA shall be created and maintained in accordance with it, becoming completely invalid should they oppose it.
2. The EB shall have the power to create amendments of compulsory character should legal loopholes be found in this constitution. These amendments will be temporarily valid until a new permanent constitution is approved by the GSB.
3. The EB can draft By-Laws that supplement this Constitution in all matters. These By-Laws would be valid temporarily until the end of the current term but would require a referendum for approval and if successful would be valid permanently.

ARTICLE XIII: REFERENDUM AND AMENDMENT

1. The referendum is the mechanism by which the GA or the EB can submit to the consideration of the whole graduate student body, norms, resolutions, and amendments to this constitution.
2. The referendum shall take place according to the norms and regulations established in the present constitution regarding elections.
3. The referendum can be called to address the following issues.
 - a. Dissolution of the EB
 - b. Amend the present constitution

- c. Add By-Laws to supplement the present Constitution 4. The referendum can be called and conducted by:
 - a. The Executive Board
 - b. A written petition signed by at least 15% of the members of the GSA
5. Any submitted amendment must be presented in writing at a meeting of the EB and must be publicized by the EB to the Graduate Student Body at least one week prior to a vote on it.
6. The amendment shall pass if a simple majority of all students who vote is obtained in favor for the referendum.

ARTICLE XIV: RATIFICATION AND TRANSITION

1. Ratification of this Constitution shall require:
 - a. Approval by a referendum of the Graduate Students Association, in which a 2/3 majority of all voting graduates shall approve this Constitution, and that majority shall be equal to or greater than one-third of the entire Graduate Students Association.
 - b. Voting participation of at least 1/3 of all eligible voters in each School.
 - c. An Extraordinary GA for the purpose of discussing the ratification, as defined in this constitution.
2. Ratification of a Constitution to replace this Constitution shall require similar approval to that described in Article XIV.1.
3. The Ratified Constitution shall be valid immediately after validating the ratification.
4. The current members of the EB shall remain in office but would assume a transitional structure in compliance with structure of the EB as presented in the ratified constitution until their existing terms expire.
5. The current Board members shall remain in office until new elections are held and the old EB is released by the GA.
6. This Constitution shall remain in effect until repealed or replaced.
7. Such By-Laws as the GSB shall approve, to come into effect upon the approval of this Constitution, shall come into effect at the time of the ratification of this Constitution.

BY-LAWS OF THE GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

By-Law: FUNCTIONING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

1. **Quorum:** The EB shall be able to make decisions only if an absolute majority of its members are present at the meeting. In urgent cases, the EB may make decisions by Online Vote in which an absolute majority needs to be reached.
2. Meetings have to take place regularly and are open to the general public unless the EB decides with a simple majority to close the meeting. Closed meetings can be attended by members of the EB and ET only. The EB may choose to include any other person if such is considered appropriate.
3. **Vote:** Each member in the EB shall have one vote only.
4. **Veto:** The President and the Vice President shall have a suspension veto on any resolution passed by the GSA.
5. **Suspension Veto:** A veto exercised by the President or the Vice-President that can be overridden by an absolute majority of all EB members after a minimum 7-day consideration period. In urgent cases, the suspension veto may not be exercised past the decision deadline. In case of such a majority, there is no possibility of another veto and the decision taken by the EB shall be final.
6. **Secret vote:** If one Member of EB requests a secret vote before a voting procedure takes place, the vote shall be conducted in confidence.
7. **Proposals:** The EB shall discuss all proposals supported by any of its members and by any member of GSA.
8. **Decisions:** To pass a proposal, a simple majority of the votes is required. In case of online votes, an absolute majority is required. All decisions taken during open meetings need to be made public. Abstentions are not considered in such a simple majority.
9. Conflicts of interest must be declared, and the involved parties must abstain from voting. In case of violations, the decision taken shall become invalid and a revote shall be required.
10. **Announcement and Agenda:** An announcement of and a general agenda for each meeting shall be publicly posted at least two days before the meeting.
11. **Votes between Meetings:** The EB may call for a vote between regular meetings to decide matters it deems to be time sensitive.
12. **Honor Code:** The EB shall adhere to the Honor Code for Student Board members.

By-Law: ELECTIONS

1. Elections shall be anonymous, universal, individual, equal, and free.
2. Each member of the GSA is allowed to cast their vote for only one candidate per office.
3. **Guiding Principles for Election.**
 - a. **Nominations.** Any member of the Graduate Students Association may nominate any member of the Graduate Students Association for any Office up for election. No seconds are required. Self-nominations are also allowed.
 - b. **Qualifications for Candidacy.**
 - i. Only members of the Graduate Students Association are eligible to be nominated for or to be a candidate for an Office. No person shall be eligible to be nominated for or to be a candidate for an Office if they would not be qualified to hold said Office for any other reason specified in the GSA By-Laws or this Constitution
 - ii. In the case of Balloting by the Graduate Students Association, the Election Committee shall determine whether or not a nominee/candidate is qualified on these grounds.
 - c. **Prohibition on Multiple Candidacies.** If more than one Executive Office is to appear on the same ballot, no one may be simultaneously a candidate for more than one such Office. d. **Accession to Office.**
 - i. Except in the case of vacancies, newly elected Board members shall take office upon adjournment of the meeting at which their election was held or certified, for a term of office of one year. Should an Office not be filled, the incumbent Officer, if there is one, and while qualified and willing, shall hold Office for the beginning of the new term, that is, until a newly elected Officer takes Office, or the EB decides to vacate the Office.
 - ii. The transition phase for the new candidates elected in the Spring semester vote shall be the summer months. Between the end of the old academic year and the beginning of the new academic year, the old board shall assist in knowledge transfer and provide organizational help to ensure the new board is well equipped for their service in the new semester.
4. **Annual Officer Elections.** All Executive Offices will be filled anew by a popular election by the Graduate Students Association, using the Election Procedures as specified in the Constitution and this by-law.
 - i. All offices except the three School Representatives shall be filled at the end of the Spring semester every year. The School Representatives will be voted upon at the beginning of the Fall semester in the new academic year.
 - ii. In the case that one or more offices from the Spring semester vote were not filled, these remaining vacant positions shall also be included in the elections process at the beginning of the Fall semester of the new academic year.
 - iii. In the case that a previous School Representative takes on a different role in the Executive Board via the Spring semester vote, they shall continue to act as the School Representative alongside their new role until a new School Representative is voted in to replace them in the beginning of the new academic year.
5. The President and Vice-President may be elected in a joint election for the two offices if they are both vacant. The winning candidate of such an election (as determined by the ET) shall become the

President of the EB and the runners-up candidate shall become the Vice-President of the EB. The ET may also opt for separate elections of President and Vice-President.

6. The Elections tribunal for the Spring semester vote shall be formed in April. The Elections Tribunal for the Fall semester vote should be formed no later than two weeks after the start of the Academic Year.
7. Elections should take place no later than 2 weeks after the ET is formed.
8. Candidates running in an election shall be bound to the rules announced and published by the ET before the elections. These rules must be approved by the acting EB prior to their publication.
9. In case of breach of election regulations, the ET has the right to remove the candidate from the elections.
10. In case of a vacancy within any Office of the GSA, regular election rules apply except for term declaration. An elected Officer who fills a vacancy shall stay in office until the annual term of the office expires.
11. The elections procedure shall be as follows:
 - a. Ask for nominations and give at least 5 working days for their reception.
 - b. Request nominees to accept or decline their nominations and give them 3 days to do so.
 - c. Announce officially the candidatures of those who have accepted their nominations. Nominees can only campaign from the moment of the announcement and until 24 hours before to the elections.
 - d. The acting EB shall organize an open meeting in which candidates may present themselves to the electorate.
 - e. Elections shall occur and have a minimum duration of 48 hours and a maximum duration of 72 hours; the Elections Tribunal shall count the votes and declare the winners within 24 hours of the close of election polls.
 - f. In the case of a dispute of any form regarding the elections process including allegations of conduct contrary to the Articles and By-Laws of this Constitution, concerns can be brought to the Elections Tribunal by any member of the GSB. The Elections Tribunal shall investigate the allegation and come to a binding decision, which may include sanctions, up until four weeks after the close of the elections. If the Elections Tribunal fails to produce a full investigation and decision within four weeks after the close of the elections, or its decision falls short of the responsibilities outlined in Article IX 5.c, the investigation and final decision shall become the responsibility of the newly elected Executive Board.
 - g. Allegations which arise later than four weeks after the close of elections shall be submitted directly to the Executive Board who shall investigate the allegation and come to a binding decision, which may include sanctions.