



CONSTITUTION OF PHYSICS GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION (PhysGSA)

Date of Ratification: August 19th, 2026

ARTICLE 1: NAME

The name of this organization shall be: Physics Graduate Student Association of the University of Waterloo (hereafter, “the PhysGSA”).

ARTICLE 2: OBJECTIVES

It is the primary objective of the PhysGSA to improve the social and academic experience of graduate students in the Department of Physics and Astronomy at the University of Waterloo (UW) including, but not limited to, Physics and Astronomy students at the Institute for Quantum Computing (IQC) and Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics (PI). More specifically, by:

- Fostering a collegial environment for Physics and Astronomy graduate students to learn and collaborate with other members of the University of Waterloo community.
- Collaborating with the University of Waterloo Graduate Student Association (GSA). Therefore, this club agrees to adhere to the stated regulations of the UW GSA and will operate in accordance with University Policy 33.

ARTICLE 3: AFFILIATION

The Association is affiliated with the GSA and compliant with GSA bylaws and policies. It is recommended that the PhysGSA maintains a working relationship with the following affiliations:

- Department of Physics & Astronomy and its affiliates
- Science Graduate Student Association and its associated departmental GSAs (dGSAs)
- Science Society and its associated undergraduate clubs

ARTICLE 4: MEMBERSHIP

4.1 General Requirements

All students enrolled in a graduate program in the Department of Physics and Astronomy are general members.

4.2 Membership Fee

- A student membership fee of \$0 will be collected by the GSA on behalf of the PhysGSA and billed per term as part of the GSA-administered incidental fees.
- The initial level of the fee will be decided in the online ratification referendum of all Physics and Astronomy graduate students. It must be approved by a vote of **two-thirds** of the membership before being sent to the UW Board of Governors for final approval.
- Subsequent changes to the fee must follow the requirements for amending the constitution in Article 8.1.

ARTICLE 5: OFFICERS

5.1 General Requirements (GSA)

As stipulated by the GSA, only members of the University of Waterloo community may serve as Executive officers, and Executive officers shall be graduate students enrolled in a physics graduate program. Members may only hold one (1) Officer position in the PhysGSA. The exception to this rule is when an executive officer must perform the roles of a different position on an interim basis, until the position is filled.

5.2 Executive Committee

The Executive Committee of the Association will comprise of at least the following four (4) positions:

1. President

It is the President's responsibility to secure or delegate the acquisition of funding from various funding sources, including the UW GSA and the Department of Physics and Astronomy, as well as exploring additional resources, such as the IQC and PI.

- The President inherits any duties and responsibilities that are left unattended due to vacant positions until said positions are filled.
- The President is responsible for maintaining a working relationship with the affiliations outlined in Article 3 either directly or by delegation.
- The President is responsible for the delegation of maintaining the PhysGSA e-mail account and website, as well as ensuring that this information is passed to a succeeding president. As such, they are allowed the password for the PhysGSA e-mail account and may distribute it to other executives.
- The President has signing authority for any PhysGSA account. They must report any use of this authority to the executive members at the next general meeting with quorum.
- Should the President leave office prematurely, their position will be taken according to the order of Executive, excluding the Treasurer, listed in Chain of Succession.

2. Vice President

- The Vice President is responsible for organizing (or delegating organization of) the PhysGSA meetings.
- The Vice President is responsible for taking minutes during every PhysGSA executive meeting.
- The Vice President is responsible for sharing meeting minutes with members of the PhysGSA committees and making them publicly available for all members.
- The Vice President is responsible for maintaining all PhysGSA standard operating procedures.

3. GSA Councillor

- The GSA Councillor sits on the UW GSA Council as a representative for the graduate students in the Department of Physics and Astronomy. The GSA councillor will attend all GSA council meetings, express the PhysGSA's position on extra-departmental graduate student interests, and report back to PhysGSA after every meeting.
- The GSA Councillor has the responsibility to represent Physics Graduate Students at University events and meetings or delegate this task to another executive or affiliation committee member, giving special consideration to the PhysGSA President.
- In addition to the president, the GSA Council Representative shall act as a liaison between the PhysGSA and external parties, including the Department of Physics & Astronomy Graduate Advising Team and any other affiliations listed in Article 3.
- Should the GSA Council Representative leave office prematurely, their position will be taken according to UW GSA policy.

4. Treasurer

- The Treasurer is responsible for securing or delegating the acquisition of funding from various funding sources, including the UW GSA and any other affiliations listed in Article 3.
- The Treasurer is responsible for submitting termly expense reports to the UW GSA.
- The Treasurer is responsible for keeping balance information on the PhysGSA account. This information should be presented during every PhysGSA meeting.
- The Treasurer is responsible for planning fundraising events for the PhysGSA. They may seek help from other PhysGSA members for ideas and help on fundraising.
- The Treasurer is responsible for making sure all reimbursements for purchases approved by the executive committee are filed by appropriate claimants within a timely manner.
- The Treasurer is responsible for informing the Department of Physics and Astronomy of approved purchasers.

5.3 Chain of Succession

The chain of succession will follow the order in which the executives are listed in Article 5.2.

5.4 Amendments to Executive Committee Positions

Creating additional elected Executive positions or making fundamental changes to one of the Executive positions may only be done by amending the constitution as per Article 8.1. Only very significant changes to the roles require a constitutional amendment; however, updating or adjusting the duties of the Executive in the normal course of Association operations does not require an amendment to the constitution.

5.3 Representatives

All Representatives will be self-nominated and will be elected by the voting body. If a position becomes vacant prior to the end of the position's term, the Executive Committee members will perform the duties of that Representative role if it is possible. Alternatively, a member may be elected to fulfil the duties until the end of the position's term. On a regular year, these positions are expected to include, but are not limited to:

- **IQC Representative**
The IQC Representative's duties are to:
 - Act as a liaison between PhysGSA and the Physics graduate students at the Institute for Quantum Computing (IQC).
 - Host a town hall meeting for IQC graduate students once per term.
- **Physics Representative**
The Physics Representative's duties are to:
 - Act as a liaison between PhysGSA and the Physics graduate students at the physics building (PHY) who are not primarily affiliated with the Perimeter Institute or Institute for Quantum Computing.
 - Host a town hall meeting for physics building (PHY) graduate students once per term with the WCA Representative.
 - Maintain or coordinate maintenance of the student lounge, PHY 211.
- **PI Representative**
The PI Representative's duties are to:
 - Act as a liaison between PhysGSA and the Physics graduate students at the Perimeter Institute (PI).
 - Host a town hall meeting for PI graduate students once per term.
- **WCA Representative**
The Physics Representative's duties are to:
 - Act as a liaison between PhysGSA and the Physics graduate students at the Waterloo Center for Astrophysics (WCA).
 - Host a town hall meeting for WCA graduate students once per term with the Physics Representative.

Note: This position will first be offered to the WCA Graduate Student Representative (WCA Grad Rep), chosen by the Department of Physics and Astronomy. If the WCA Grad Rep is not interested, the position will be made publicly attainable to members of the PhysGSA who are students in the WCA.

Should the any Representative leave office prematurely, their position will be taken according to the order of Executive listed in Chain of Succession.

There are no limits to how many times a person may hold a Representative role. The Executive Committee may elect or select any other Representatives or Directors (e.g. Social Convener, Web & Social Media Manager, Events Coordinator) on an ad hoc basis as deemed necessary by a normal vote of the membership (see Article 7.5).

ARTICLE 6: ELECTIONS

6.1 Timing & Terms

Elections shall take place in September each year, normally mid-month. The term of office for all positions shall be for one academic “year” (September to August). No one person may hold the President position more than twice; this does not include selections resulting from a vacancy (see Article 6.3).

6.2 Nomination & Voting

All nominations will be by self-nomination and open to all members. To hold a position, the member must be regularly present on-campus in Waterloo. The candidate who receives the most votes (a plurality) will win the position. The election will be conducted by online ballot to allow for all members of the PhyGSA to participate independent of geographical location. If there is one (1) candidate for a position, that candidate will still require a majority vote in favour to be elected to the position.

Elections will be conducted by a Chief Returning Office (CRO), which is typically the outgoing President or other Executive Committee member. The CRO is the person responsible for the administration of elections and does not have a conflict of interest with the current election, which includes running in the election.

The election period will consist of the following sections:

- Nomination period
 - Duration: Minimum of seven (7) calendar days
 - Candidates will submit their self-nominations and autobiographies to the CRO
- Campaigning period
 - Duration: Minimum of two (2) calendar days
 - Candidates will be able to promote their campaign and engage with students of the PhysGSA. CRO will ensure to introduce all candidates to the constituents.
- Voting period
 - Duration: Minimum of two (2) calendar days
 - Members of the PhysGSA will cast their votes to elect the Executive Committee members

6.3 Special Situations – Ties, Vacancies, etc.

Executive Committee

In the event of a tie, or if no one steps forward for an Executive position, and no one eligible to run has nominated themselves, then a PhysGSA Meeting must be called to find a solution. If required, a constitutional amendment will be permitted (see Article 8).

In the case that an Executive position becomes vacant after the election or is made available for any reason during the year in progress, the remaining Executive Committee members must reopen the position for election.

Representatives

In the case of a tie in a Representative election (see Article 5.6), the winning candidates shall share duties. If only one person steps forward for a role, they may be acclaimed, or if no one does, then an Executive Committee member should fill that role if possible.

If a Representative position becomes vacant after the election or is made available for any reason during the year in progress, the normal selection process as per Article 5.3 would apply.

ARTICLE 7: MEETINGS

7.1 Meetings of the General Membership

Only the President may call General Meetings, though Executive members or a significant group of the members (33% of total membership) may request the President call a General Meeting at any time. There is a minimum of one (1) meeting per year. General Meetings are open to members only, though, at the discretion of the Executive Committee, non-members may be invited to give a special presentation or participate in relevant discussions. All decisions made through voting will be documented.

7.2 Executive Committee Meetings

Meetings of the Executive Committee will take place at the discretion of the Executive Committee, with a minimum of one (1) meeting per term. Executive Meetings usually are closed, though the Executive Committee may choose to invite Representatives or others as they see fit. All decisions made through voting will be documented. Quorum for executive committee meetings shall consist of three (3) members or 75% of the executive committee. "Present" will be defined as participation: in person or virtually (see Article 7.3).

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7.3 Attendance & Participation

Meetings may be attended in person or by virtual methods. For decisions requiring a vote, a member may submit a vote by online ballot. All members are encouraged to participate at meetings and may propose agenda items be added.

7.4 Notice of Meetings

The Vice President will book all times and rooms for General Meetings and inform all members at least one week (7 calendar days) before meetings. The Vice President will strive to schedule meetings so that they do not conflict with other department obligations (e.g. Graduate courses, teaching, special events) and at a time of day that allows any members in different time zones to participate.

7.5 Meeting Rules & Quorum

The President will chair all meetings, and the Vice President will record the minutes (see Article 5.2). The President will send out the agenda at least three (3) days before General Meetings so that members may propose additions and have time to consider any decisions that must be made. Additions may also be added on the floor, time permitting.

All motions (e.g. to add to the agenda, accept the minutes, close the meeting, vote on a decision) must be seconded, and a simple majority must approve votes of those present.

Quorum for General Meetings shall consist of ten (10) members being present, or 10% of the total membership, whichever is lower. "Present" will be defined as participation: in person or virtually (see Article 7.3).

All members shall act with respect towards other members, as stipulated in UW's Policy 33 – Ethical Behaviour.

7.6 Sub-Committees

Sub-committees (e.g., organizing events) will be formed on an ad hoc basis for a maximum of one (1) year. Any interested member may sit on a sub-committee.

ARTICLE 8: AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION (AND BYLAWS IF ANY EXIST)

The constitution shall be reviewed once per year. No bylaws exist at this time but may be created at any time and approved by a normal vote (see Article 7.5).

Failure to obtain either a constitutional quorum or the required majority, as outlined below, shall result in the failure of a proposed constitutional amendment.

8.1 Amendments – Articles 4.1-4.3 & Creating/Amending Elected Executives

To add or otherwise substantially change the elected Executive roles (i.e. to make fundamental changes) or amend Articles 4.1-4.3, which pertain to membership eligibility and the fee, an amendment must be voted on at a General Meeting. It will require a **majority** of those present to pass, with a normal quorum as per Article 7.5.

8.2 Amendments – All other Articles

All other amendments shall be approved by a normal vote at a General Meeting to pass, with the normal quorum and majority (see Article 7.5).

ARTICLE 9: RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

All concerns and/or issues not addressed herein shall be managed within and at the discretion of the Association's Executive Committee. Where the Executive Committee cannot be impartial or cannot reach a solution internally, assistance from the GSA shall be sought.

ARTICLE 10: EQUITY AND INCLUSION

We strive to be an equitable and inclusive community, rich with diversity, protecting the human rights of all graduate students of the Department of Physics and Astronomy and based upon understanding and mutual respect for the dignity and worth of every person. We seek to ensure to the greatest extent possible that all students and graduate students of Department of Physics and Astronomy enjoy the opportunity to participate as they see fit in the full range of activities that the Department of Physics and Astronomy offers and to achieve their full potential as graduate students of Department of Physics and Astronomy. We acknowledge that the UW GSA is a partner in advocacy, and we will work with them when issues and concerns relate to equity, diversity and inclusion.

The Department of Physics and Astronomy is actively committed to achieving a learning environment free of discrimination and harassment as defined in the Ontario Human Rights Code. In striving to become an equitable community, we will also work to eliminate, reduce, or mitigate the adverse effects of any barriers to full participation in the Department of Physics and Astronomy that we find, including physical, environmental, attitudinal, communication or technological.

ARTICLE 11: DISSOLUTION

In the event of dissolution or windup of the PhysGSA and following the payment of all outstanding debts, liabilities, costs, charges and expenses properly incurred in winding up, the PhysGSA shall transfer all of its property and assets to organization(s) having similar objectives or purposes. This can include, but not limited to, the UW GSA, the Department of Physics and Astronomy or other dGSAs within the same Faculty. The recipient(s) of the transfer will be decided by the Members at the final General Meeting.

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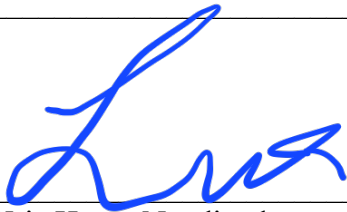
Approved by the Members of the PhysGSA

on August 19th, 2026

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