

University of Ottawa

School of Epidemiology & Public Health Graduate Students' Association

Constitution

Article I Name

The official name of this organization shall be: The School of Epidemiology & Public Health Graduate Students' Association of the University of Ottawa (SEPHGSA), hereinafter referred to as "the association" or "SEPHGSA."

Article II Objectives

1. To provide a medium for the exchange of ideas of an academic and social nature between graduate students and the greater University of Ottawa community;
2. To establish a basis for the organization of academic, social, and sporting activities;
3. To discuss problems common to graduate students in the School of Epidemiology & Public Health, and to assist in carrying these problems to the appropriate agency, when necessary, on or off campus;
4. To promote and defend the rights, welfare and interests of members of the association and provide a central body which may represent graduate students within the greater University of Ottawa community;
5. To act as a representative of the graduate students in the School of Epidemiology & Public Health at the University of Ottawa Graduate Students' Association (GSAED); and
6. To promote equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility within the School of Epidemiology & Public Health, and to foster a respectful, inclusive, and supportive environment for all members of the association.

Article III Definitions

Whenever used here and hereinafter, the following acronyms shall apply unless stated otherwise:

1. uOttawa shall mean the University of Ottawa;
2. Members shall mean active members of the SEPHGSA;
3. Council shall mean the Executive Council of the SEPHGSA;
4. SEPH shall mean the School of Epidemiology & Public Health;
5. GSAED shall mean the Graduate Students' Association of the University of Ottawa; and
6. FoM shall mean the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Ottawa.

Article IV Membership

Full Members shall consist of all students currently enrolled in degree programs offered by the School of Epidemiology & Public Health at the University of Ottawa.

Article V Council Members

The affairs of the association shall be carried out by members of the SEPHGSA council comprised of:

Executive Members

1. Presidents (x2, representing MPH and EAHR student bodies)
 - a. To oversee activities of council and act as main liaison contact with the SEPH and the FoM;
 - b. To organize and chair meetings of the General Assembly and Executive Council;
 - c. Coordinate activities and carry out policies as stipulated by the SEPHGSA Constitution;
 - d. With the Vice-President, Financial Affairs, conduct financial transactions as signing officer for the SEPHGSA; and
 - e. To represent the SEPHGSA at the SEPH assembly.
2. Vice-President
 - a. To act as a right hand to the presidents, fills in when the presidents are unavailable;
 - b. To act as a link between students and department for grievances;
 - c. To represent the SEPHGSA at the FoM Faculty Council;
 - d. To represent the SEPHGSA at the FoM Graduate Studies Council;
 - e. To ensure smooth communication between the SEPHGSA and other graduate student associations in the FoM; including attending meetings and coordination sessions; and

- f. To take minutes at executive meetings and distribute them to other members of council.
Maintain an archive of the previous minutes and other relevant documents.
3. Vice-President, EAHR Academic Affairs
 - a. To organize academic workshops for graduate students in the EAHR programs at SEPH;
 - b. To assist in the organization and planning of SEPH Student Research Day;
 - c. With the Vice-President, MPH Academic Affairs, oversee the organization of Career Day;
 - d. To represent the SEPHGSA on the SEPH EAHR Graduate Studies Committee; and
 - e. To represent the SEPHGSA on the SEPH Program Development Committee.
 4. Vice-President, MPH Academic Affairs
 - a. To organize academic workshops for graduate students in the MPH program at SEPH; including a Scholarship and Resume session;
 - b. With the Vice-President, EAHR Academic Affairs, oversee the organization of Career Day;
 - c. To represent the SEPHGSA on the SEPH MPH Graduate Studies Committee; and
 - d. To represent the SEPHGSA on the SEPH Program Development Committee.
 5. Vice-President, Wellness (x2)
 - a. To plan events, activities and workshops that promote student wellness, including the annual guidebook for incoming students;
 - b. To oversee welcoming activities in September in conjunction with Vice-President, Events; as well as spearhead the mentorship program; and
 - c. To advocate for equitable access to support services for graduate students.
 6. Vice-President, Events (x2)
 - a. To plan regular events and activities that promote student unity and socialization;
 - b. To oversee welcoming activities in September in conjunction with Vice-President, Wellness;
 - c. To assist in the promotion of student events and activities with SEPH and Vice-President, Communication; and
 - d. To plan and coordinate the annual SEPHGSA merchandise order.
 7. Vice-President, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
 - a. To advocate for improved equity, diversity, and inclusion within SEPH;
 - b. To represent the SEPHGSA on the SEPH Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee;
 - c. To act as a contact for student grievances relating to discriminatory behaviour or inequitable treatment; and
 - d. To promote activities, workshops, and/or training for members of the SEPH community to

unpack their own unconscious biases.

8. Vice-President, Financial Affairs

- a. To receive custody of all SEPHGSA funds (mainly cheques from GSAED and proceeds from social events) to deposit in the SEPHGSA bank account;
- b. To act as the chief signing officer for SEPHGSA transactions (e.g. bank deposits, reimbursement cheques);
- c. To manage the annual budget, allocate funds for academic/social events, monitor expenditures to ensure that the account is in good standing; and
- d. To assume responsibility of the cash box.

9. Vice-President, Communication

- a. To continuously update and maintain the SEPHGSA website.
- b. To provide any additional logistic support needed by members of the council (e.g. room bookings, organizing elections, etc.)
- c. To coordinate communication with students through whatever means deemed appropriate: communicate to SEPH students news and planned events from the graduate association, department, faculty, and university; and
- d. To manage SEPHGSA social media platforms.

Representatives

- Up to four (4) representatives from each of the degree programs offered in the School of Epidemiology & Public Health (including MPH, EAHR, and PhD programs) may be appointed by their members to represent the interests of students in their respective programs.
- One (1) representative for PhD students may also be appointed to specifically represent the interests and needs of PhD students within SEPH.
- One (1) representative for international students shall be appointed to represent the interests and needs of international students at SEPH.
- A GSAED representative will also be appointed to attend GSAED meetings.

Non-Voting Representatives

In addition, there shall be room for non-voting representatives from various interest groups to attend and participate in council meetings. The main role of these representatives would be to communicate any regional or group-specific activities and/or problems to the council.

Article VI Finance

1. Assets of the SEPHGSA are comprised of account balances, purchases made under the SEPHGSA name, and donations given to the SEPHGSA.

2. The total annual SEPHGSA budget, and all proposed amendments to such shall be approved by a simple majority vote at a council meeting. The budget, and proposed amendment(s) to such, are to be distributed to council at least one week prior to the council meeting at which the budget or proposed amendment(s) is (are) to be voted on. Should there be no quorum at the council meeting, the presidents may reschedule the council meeting as appropriate.
3. The total budget of the SEPHGSA shall be composed of the annual fees collected from the membership and distributed to the SEPHGSA by the GSAED during that year, the remaining account balance of the previous fiscal year, and any donations or fundraising made during that year over which the SEPHGSA has complete control.
4. All monies of the SEPHGSA shall be deposited in the bank account of the SEPHGSA except for no more than \$100.00 which may be kept by the Vice-President, Financial Affairs for petty cash.
5. The Vice-President, Financial Affairs and Presidents shall be the signing officers of the SEPHGSA. The signatures of the Vice-President, Financial Affairs or Presidents are necessary for the issuance of all cheques by the SEPHGSA.
6. The financial year beginning shall coincide with the beginning of the new term of office of council.

Article VII Meetings

1. The council shall meet once monthly throughout the entire calendar year. Active members not part of the council are welcome to attend council meetings. Attendance by non-students (for example faculty members and staff) should be discussed by council in advance.
2. Council may call general meetings of the SEPHGSA active membership by means of a motion passed by a simple majority vote. If there is a tie, there shall be a meeting.
3. General meetings of the SEPHGSA may be called by a petition of 10% of the active membership. The council will be bound by motions passed in a general meeting.
4. Notice
 - a. Council meetings shall be decided upon by a majority of council members. Meetings will happen on the third week of every month at a pre-scheduled time and only rescheduled if the majority of the council is unable to attend. Meetings will happen in-person with a virtual option if needed.
 - b. Council members must give a 48-hour notice if unable to attend meetings unless there are unforeseen circumstances, which must be reported directly after the event. After three (3) unreported absences, the council will meet to discuss potential dismissal of said council member.
 - c. There shall be at least 14 days' notice for any general meeting of the SEPHGSA.
 - d. There shall be at least 21 days' notice for a referendum of the SEPHGSA.

5. Quorum

- a. The quorum for council meetings shall be a minimum of three people. If there are fewer than three people, quorum shall be 100% of filled council seats.
- b. The quorum of general meetings shall be 20 members.
- c. Unless stated otherwise, there is no quorum for a referendum.

Article VIII Annual General Meeting

During the fall, the council shall call for an annual general meeting (AGM) of active members in the School of Epidemiology & Public Health Graduate Students' Association for the purpose of electing council members. This notice shall be publicized by e-mail notification to all students as well as by normal means of department communication. Members interested in a position on Council must submit their candidacy at least one week prior to the AGM.

1. Quorum for the AGM to elect council shall be 20 active members of the association. If quorum is not achieved then the existing council, in conjunction with those present, shall appoint a new council.

Article IX Vacancy and Tenure of Position

1. The standard term of office for a council member shall normally be one year starting in January. Once elected, new council members shall assume duties immediately.
2. If at any time a position on council is vacated, the council should first determine if interested members within the council wish to fill the position. The position would be filled with a simple majority vote of council. If no existing member of council wishes to fill the position, the council may advertise the position to all active members. Interested parties would be invited to present themselves at council and voted by a simple majority vote of council.
3. The council shall have the power to remove any council member deemed by the council to not be fulfilling their duties or acting in such a manner that does not reflect the collective council. In such a case the council may vote to impeach the member. 2/3 majority vote is required by the entire council of filled seats minus one member to impeach a council member.

Article X Voting

1. Roles

- a. Only executive members and officers may vote at council meetings.
- b. All active members may vote in general meetings.
- c. All active members may vote in referendums.

2. Unless otherwise stated, a simple majority is required to pass motions and make decisions.

3. The results of referendums are final.

Article XI Amendments and Revisions

As the University of Ottawa, Faculty of Medicine, and the School of Epidemiology & Public Health are constantly changing and developing with time, such occasions where this document is no longer up to date should be remedied by amendment or revision.

1. Amendments

Minor changes to this document may be proposed and voted on at the Annual General Meeting each year. These types of changes include:

1. Modifying stated definitions to reflect changes in names of schools, departments, etc.;
2. Updating the names and existence of committees assigned to the executive; and
3. Adjusting the assignment of duties amongst members of the executive.

2. Revisions

Where larger revisions of this document are required, the executive shall update the constitution as necessary and circulate all changes to SEPHGSA members for comment. A referendum shall be held on these changes no fewer than 21 days after the finalized draft is circulated.

Adopted in referendum 1 March 2019

Revised by Referendum 04 February 2026

