

September 22, 2025



EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

Graduate and Professional Student Association

Constitution

ETSU Student Organization

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We, the members of the ETSU Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA), at East Tennessee State University, united in our commitment to academic excellence, professional growth, and community engagement, do hereby establish this constitution to govern our organization's activities and promote the welfare of our fellow graduate and professional students.

Article I: Name & Purpose

Section 1. Name:

- (a) This organization shall be known as the Graduate and Professional Student Association (hereafter referred to as GPSA).

Section 2. Purpose: The purpose of this organization shall be:

- (a) To improve the quality of graduate and professional education and student experience at ETSU;
- (b) To provide representation of the governance structure of ETSU for all students seeking post-baccalaureate degrees at ETSU as an active non-governance organization at the University level;
- (c) To act as an orientation service agency for incoming ETSU post-baccalaureate students;
- (d) To serve as a source for information about research and graduate study;
- (e) To provide support for the student and professional activities of our members when possible, including:
 - a. Becoming involved in institutional governance and development;
 - b. Participating in student-sponsored activities;
 - c. Maximizing their potential as students, educators, and researchers;
 - d. Preparing students for professional/career advancement in the public, private, and academia sectors.
- (f) To serve all graduate and professional students enrolled in the Graduate School and Professional Programs, including the following colleges:
 - a. Arts and Sciences;
 - b. Business and Technology;
 - c. Health Sciences;
 - d. Clemmer College;
 - e. Nursing;
 - f. Public Health;

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- g. Medicine;
- h. Pharmacy.

Section 3. Mission, Vision, and Values:

- (a) Mission Statement: The GPSA is dedicated to fostering academic excellence, professional development, and community engagement for all graduate and professional students at ETSU;
- (b) Vision Statement: To create a supportive and inclusion environment where Graduate and Professional students at ETSU achieve their fullest potential;
- (c) Values: Aligning to the ETSU values, the GPSA purposefully focus on the importance of teamwork, respect, and fostering a growth mindset in all Graduate and Professional Students.

Article II: Membership

Section 1. Eligibility:

- (a) Membership in the GPSA shall be open to any person currently enrolled in a post-baccalaureate program at ETSU, having completed the GPSA Membership Application, and paid the required one-time dues. Membership extends to all on-ground, hybrid, and online student enrolled in a Graduate Program, Graduate Certificate, or Professional Program.

Section 2. Rights and Opportunities:

- (a) Members have full voting rights for all elections and in voting for organizational and documentation changes regarding procedures, processes, and any section within the Constitution. Members also have full access to all events, funding opportunities, and committees as outlined in the Constitution. Members have the capability to appeal any decision made about their membership through the Appeal Process (see Article VIII).

Section 3. Dues:

- (a) Membership dues are a one-time fee (not annual) and will cover a student's membership until completion of their Graduate and/or Professional Program. Dues shall be set and are subject to change by a majority vote of the Executive Committee. If changes to the dues is necessitated, the request must come from the Executive Committee prior to May 1 to take effect the following academic year;
 - a. Changes to dues will be passed by a simple majority of the Executive Officers in attendance at the meeting in which the change is proposed. An archive of the decision will be kept by the GPSA Treasurer;
 - b. Membership dues are tracked as the GPSA General Fund. The GPSA General Fund is not used to pay for academic presentation and conference travel. The GPSA General Fund is used for the benefit of all members, as a mechanism to host meetings and events, or represent the organization as deemed appropriate;
 - c. Use of funds will be approved based on a simple majority of the Executive Committee.

Section 4. Removal:

- (a) A member could be subject to removal through potential violations within the University and organization in ways such as academic dishonesty, harassment, and other violations stipulated through ETSU. A member may be removed from the GPSA by a majority vote of the Executive Committee.

- (b) Votes for member removal shall be called by any Executive Committee member upon violation of ETSU student conduct and/or academic integrity. Members are allowed to appeal the removal decision through the Appeal Process (see Article VIII). If a member is removed from the organization, the student cannot reapply during their current program and would only be eligible when starting a new program through ETSU.

Section 5. Graduation as GPSA Members:

- (a) GPSA members are eligible for Graduation regalia such as a GPSA stole or cord to wear at Graduation.

Section 6. Non-Discrimination:

- (a) The GPSA will not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, religion, sex/gender, national origin, ancestry, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, or political affiliation.

Article III: Executive Committee

Section 1. Executive Committee Positions:

- (a) President;
- (b) Vice President;
- (c) Secretary;
- (d) Treasurer;
- (e) Social Media Coordinator;
- (f) Two At-Large Directors.

Section 2. Elections:

- (a) Executive Committee positions are elected positions and will follow the rules laid out in Article V.

Section 3: Terms of Office:

- (a) Each position will hold a term of one year with allowance for re-election once, or election to a new position after the term is up. A member is only able to hold one position at a time and is allowed to sit on various Ad Hoc committees. A member is allowed to hold an Executive Committee position for a total of two years. These term limits are eligible to be temporarily adjusted through a vote of simple majority when there are vacancies in Executive Committee positions;
- (b) If necessary, officers are subject to removal for violations within GPSA or the University. A call for removal can be made by anyone within the Executive Committee or the GPSA Advisor. Removal is by a simple majority of the Executive Committee.

Section 4. Executive Committee Duties:

- (a) President:
 - a. Ensure the smooth functioning of the organization;
 - b. Preside over meetings of the general membership;
 - c. Represent the organization in an official capacity with ETSU, alumni, and outside organizations;

- d. Preside over meetings of the Executive Committee;
- e. In coordination with the GPSA Vice President, monitor and action emails in the GPSA email account.

(b) Vice President:

- a. Substitute for the President if they are unavailable;
- b. Maintain and oversee the scheduling and communication of GPSA workshops to the general membership;
- c. Maintain and oversee GPSA membership applications and tracking processes;
- d. Represent the organization in an official capacity;
- e. In coordination with the GPSA President, monitor and action emails in the GPSA email account.

(c) Secretary:

- a. Create, distribute, and archive meeting agendas and meeting minutes of all General, Executive Committee, and other Committee meetings;
- b. Maintain the official GPSA calendar through the GPSA email account and website;
- c. Notify membership of all General Meetings;
- d. In coordination with the Vice President, assist with scheduling and communicating all workshops and events to the GPSA Membership;
- e. In coordination with the Social Media Coordinator, assist with the promotion of all workshops and events to the GPSA Membership through Monthly Newsletters;
- f. Represent the organization in an official capacity.

(d) Treasurer:

- a. Keep and make available the official budget of the GPSA General Fund;
- b. Interact with ETSU officials in managing the GPSA General Fund;

- c. Maintain and track all funding avenues for GPSA;
 - d. Monitor the GPSA spending, fundraising activities, and networking with alumni;
 - e. Represent the organization in an official capacity.
- (e) Social Media Coordinator:
- a. Manage and promote the GPSA Instagram, LinkedIn, and official website;
 - b. Take the lead in scheduling and promoting social events for the GPSA Membership;
 - c. Advertise/market/publicize GPSA sponsored events;
 - d. In coordination with the Secretary and Vice President, assist with notifying and distributing the Monthly Newsletter and all upcoming meetings, workshops, and events;
 - e. Represent the organization in an official capacity.
- (f) At-Large Directors:
- a. Executive Committee members not holding a titled position are responsible for actively participating in Executive Committee activities and helping with titled member activities;
 - b. Such responsibilities will be defined in various Standard Operating Procedure documents.

Section 5. GPSA Advisor:

- (a) The Dean of the Graduate School and/or their designee shall serve as advisor to the GPSA and sit in on the Executive Committee Meeting and the General Membership Meetings in a non-voting, advisory capacity. Each year, the Dean shall inform the GPSA Executive Committee of their selected designee to act as the Faculty or Staff Advisor.

Section 6: Executive Committee Guidelines:

- (a) The Executive Committee shall work together to support all other members and duties as needed;
- (b) The Executive Committee is responsible for heading the creation of any Ad Hoc Committee;

- (c) The Executive Committee is responsible for summer coverage of the membership operations and continuation of any summer programs and workshops;
- (d) Overall engagement and guidelines for the Executive Committee will be metric based; such indicators are to be defined in the corresponding Standard Operating Procedure document.

Section 7. Executive Committee Meetings:

- (a) The Executive Committee will meet a minimum of twice per month. Regular meetings will be scheduled for the semester at the start of the semester, initiated by the President. Meetings will be in-person. Meetings should only be conducted virtually when necessary;
- (b) A quorum for all voting shall be achieved by simple majority of total Executive Committee Members, then confirmed by a simple majority vote of present members at the time of voting;
- (c) Meeting agendas are to be distributed by the Secretary at least 24 hours before the meeting start time and archived to the corresponding Microsoft Teams folder;
- (d) Meeting minutes should be approved by the Executive Committee by simple majority vote at the next Executive Committee Meeting, then archived to the corresponding Microsoft Teams folder. Meeting minutes are available to GPSA members and ETSU officials upon request.

Article IV: Committees

Section 1. Standing Committees:

(a) Elections Committee;

- a. The Elections Committee shall be led by a member from the general body of the GPSA membership. A minimum of four members pulled from the General Membership plus one Executive Officer not eligible or participating in running in the election;
- b. The GPSA Advisor may be in attendance with each meeting or if unable to attend, must be informed of committee activities through the meeting minutes and communication with the presiding Committee member.

(b) Recruitment Committee;

- a. The Recruitment Committee shall be led by a member from the general body of the GPSA membership. A minimum of four members pulled from the General Membership plus the Vice President Executive Officer as the fifth member of the committee;
- b. The GPSA Advisor may be in attendance with each meeting or if unable to attend, must be informed of committee activities through the meeting minutes and communication with the presiding Committee Member.

(c) Fundraising Committee;

- a. The Fundraising Committee shall be led by a member from the general body of the GPSA membership. A minimum of four members pulled from the General Membership plus the Treasurer Executive Officer as the fifth member of the committee;
- b. The GPSA Advisor may be in attendance with each meeting or if unable to attend, must be informed of committee activities through the meeting minutes and communication with the presiding Committee Member.

(d) Appeals Committee;

- a. The Appeals Committee shall be led by the President Executive Committee with a minimum of three to five members of the general membership. Members should

be pulled from Colleges different from the member or officer seeking the appeal. The appeal process should follow a similar procedure to ETSU's Academic Misconduct procedure;

- b. The GPSA Advisor may be in attendance with each meeting or if unable to attend, must be informed of committee activities through the meeting minutes and communication with the presiding Committee Member.
- (e) Standing Committee members will be selected and gathered by the end of September for the current academic year. General members may participate in more than one standing committee. If unable to pull the minimum number of standing committee members, the decision to disband the committee for the remainder of the academic year fall to the discretion of the GPSA Advisor.

Section 2. Ad Hoc Committees:

- (a) An ad hoc committee may be created by a simple majority vote of the Executive Committee when a need arises. These committees shall be composed of general membership plus one Executive Officer;
- (b) An ad hoc committee should last no longer than one academic year.

Article V: Elections

Section 1. Annual Elections:

- (a) Elections will be run by the Elections Committee, made up of members and officers independent from anyone running to ensure no conflicts of interest;
- (b) Elections will be conducted annually for each position.

Section 2. Nominations:

- (a) A nomination period will open up prior to the designated election timeframe;
- (b) All nominations are to be received either as a self-nomination or a member nominating someone else. If someone nominates someone else for a position, someone on the Elections Committee should confirm their acceptance of the nomination. A person may be nominated for more than one position, but can only win one position;
- (c) A member from the Election's Committee will distribute the list of positions and nominees to the general membership a week before the election is to take place.

Section 3. Nomination Failure:

- (a) Should no person be nominated for a position, the Election Committee in combination with the GPSA Advisor, will appoint a member to fill that position. The Executive Committee will vote on the appointment, which will be accepted by simple majority vote.
- (b) A person will be eligible for appointment if they meet the following criteria:
 - a. Must be a GPSA member;
 - b. Must have a minimum of a 3.0 GPA;
 - c. Must be in good academic standing with their program.

Section 4. Voting:

- (a) Should an election take place during a General Membership meeting, those in attendance at the General Meeting, at the time of the vote, are the only ones eligible to vote. The procedure for voting that occurs during the General Meeting can be found in the corresponding Standard Operating Procedure document;
- (b) Should an election take place via email, all members who meet the voting criteria are eligible to vote. The procedure for voting that occurs via email can be found in the corresponding Standard Operating Procedure document;

(c) The criteria for a member to be eligible for voting is as follows:

- a. An application for membership that has been received and on file with the GPSA;
 - b. Membership dues are paid;
 - c. Have attended at least one workshop or event, with the current general meeting counting as an event.
- (d) Each eligible member shall vote only once. Votes will be counted by the Election Committee and verified with the GPSA Advisor. The person receiving the greatest number of votes is elected to that position. In the case of a tie, another vote will be held to include only those candidates who tied on the first vote.

Section 5. Term Limits:

- (a) An Executive Committee member may only serve in their position for one year. Members are eligible to re-run for their current position or choose to run for another position during the next election;
- (b) A member may serve a maximum of two years on the Executive Committee;
- (c) Term limits can be temporarily adjusted in necessary circumstances, such as vacancies.

Section 6. Mid-Term Vacation of Office:

- (a) If an Officer vacates their position/office, the Executive Committee may temporarily appoint someone to that position by simple majority vote until an election is held.
- (b) Anyone who is appointed to a vacant position does not start a full term until they go through the formal election process.

Article VI: Meetings & Events

Section 1. General Membership Meetings:

- (a) A minimum of four General Membership Meetings must be held during an academic year using the following timeframe:
 - a. Twice in the fall: September & December;
 - b. Twice in the spring: One in mid-Spring for election prep & one at the end of the semester or start of summer.

Section 2. Workshops:

- (a) At least three workshops will be created and provided exclusively for the GPSA general membership;
- (b) Workshops are able to be either in-person or virtual;
- (c) Workshops will be either academic, skills focused, networking, or other topics created based on request;
- (d) GPSA will also work to promote other University-wide Graduate workshops.

Section 3. Alumni Events:

- (a) At least one major alumni event will be provided during the academic year for members to network and connect with alumni in their field.

Section 4. Social Events:

- (a) At least one social event will be provided per semester for the general membership.

Section 5. Community Service Events:

- (a) At least one community service event will be provided per semester for the general membership. GPSA is encouraged to host at least one community service event outside of ETSU will be provided per year.

Article VII: GPSA Funding

Section 1. Process for Finding Funding:

- (a) Funding generated outside of Membership dues will be designated as funded money for the organization;
- (b) Funding can come from fundraising events sponsored through the Fundraising Committee or through other funding sources like grants;
- (c) It must be clearly indicated where funding is coming from and whether there are guidelines for how the funding must be used;
- (d) The Executive Committee is responsible for keeping, maintaining, and tracking funding documentation for organizational and institutional reporting;
- (e) All fundraising activities must be in compliance with University guidelines.

Section 2. Process for Spending Funds:

- (a) Use of GPSA General Funds is at the discretion of the Executive Committee, approved by simple majority vote by the quorum;
- (b) Further spending criteria will be addressed in the corresponding Standard Operating Procedure document.

Article VIII: Appeals

Section 1. Eligible Criteria for Appeal:

- (a) The following are events that can be appealed:
 - a. Membership termination
 - b. Election results

Section 2. Process & Timeline:

- (a) The process and timeline for handling appeals is based on the ETSU Academic Misconduct policy and specifics can be found in the Standard Operating Procedure document;
- (b) The appeals process will be guide by the Appeals Committee;
- (c) Any violation of the stipulated process of appeals by a member will impact their membership status.

Section 3. Appeals Panel:

- (a) The Appeals Panel will consist of various individuals of different ranking within the University from Colleges separate to the College of the member seeking the appeal;
- (b) The Panel will consist of the following:
 - a. The GPSA Advisor;
 - b. A minimum of three GPSA members;
 - c. A minimum of one outside representative from somewhere within ETSU to act as a third party.

Article IX: Amendments to the Constitution

All amendments must be distributed to the general membership at least two weeks before the meeting in which they will be voted on. Amendments must be ratified by a simple majority vote of all members in attendance at the meeting where the vote takes place.

Article X: Legalese

In the event of dissolution, all Graduate and Professional Student Association funds shall be managed by the Dean of the Graduate School or their designee. These funds will be applied to any initiatives deemed worthy by the Dean or designee to benefit the graduate students most effectively at ETSU. The GPSA is subject to all policies and procedures of East Tennessee State University and the Tennessee Board of Regents. Dissolution in this context means a period of inactivity, failure to have the minimum number of officers, or any other reason deemed by the GPSA Advisor and agreed to by the Dean of the Graduate School.