

Swinburne University Postgraduate Association

Constitution

1. Name

The name of the Association shall be the 'Swinburne University Postgraduate Association' herein known as SUPA

2. Definitions in this constitution:

1. "Association" means SUPA;
2. "University" means Swinburne University of Technology;
3. "SSU" means Swinburne Student Union Inc.;
4. "Council" means Swinburne Student Union Council;
5. "Executive" means the Executive of SUPA;
6. "AGM" means Annual General Meeting of the Association;
7. "CAPA" means The Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations;
8. "staff supporting SUPA" means SSU staff members counted as direct wage costs in the postgraduate budget;
9. "advocacy", as distinct from lobbying, means representation of a student or group of students in a formal or informal grievance with the University ;
10. "research student" means a student enrolled in a higher degree by research as defined by DEST;
11. "coursework student" means a student enrolled in a postgraduate course by coursework where any research component is less than the DEST threshold for a research degree;
12. "indigenous student" means a student currently enrolled who is an Indigenous Australian;
13. "international student" is a currently enrolled student who is not a citizen or resident of Australia and holds an Australian student Visa.
14. "SUPA/SSU Agreement" means the current regulation on the relations between SSU and the SUPA.

3. Membership

1. Any postgraduate student, including part time, international and off-campus students, enrolled at Swinburne University of Technology shall be deemed to be a full member of SUPA and enjoy all of the rights and benefits of membership.
2. All members of SUPA shall retain the right to resign their membership at any time.
3. The President of SUPA will be deemed an enrolled student, if subsequent to election s/he defers his/her studies for the term of his/her Presidency.
4. A general meeting of SUPA, or a meeting of the Executive, may appoint any person who has made a contribution to SUPA or to postgraduate students at Swinburne, to be an honorary member of SUPA. Honorary members must share and observe the aims and objectives of SUPA. Honorary members have all the privileges of full members except they cannot nominate members for Executive, nor can they vote or be elected to Executive.

4. Purposes

1. SUPA is the body that speaks for and represents postgraduates on all matters within the University and Swinburne Student Union pertaining to postgraduates. It will:
 - I.** provide representation, advocacy and activities that advance and defend the interests of postgraduate students of the University;
 - II.** provide a recognised means of representation both within and outside the University, and a recognised means of communication between postgraduates and the University authorities; and
 - III.** promote principles of equity and recognition of diversity in decision making and other processes in SUPA and throughout the University.

5. Goals

SUPA will:

1. provide advocacy for any postgraduate or groups of postgraduates;
2. participate with persons or organizations within or external to the University in activities designed to advance or defend the interests of postgraduates;
3. provide activities and orientation for the community of postgraduates; and
4. disseminate information amongst students through a periodic newsletter and other appropriate publications.

6. Affiliation

1. SUPA is an autonomous standing committee of the Swinburne Student Union. SUPA has all the rights and responsibilities of a standing committee affiliated to

the Swinburne Student Union. Details of the relations are elaborated in the SUPA/SSU Agreement.

2. SUPA is an affiliate of the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations (CAPA) and only recognizes this Council as the national postgraduate representative organization.

7. General Meetings

1. SUPA will hold general meetings of its members at least twice a year.
 - I.** SUPA general meetings will be open to all ordinary and honorary members of SUPA.
 - II.** General Meetings will be called by the Executive or upon receipt of a written request signed by at least thirty (30) members.
 - III.** General meetings shall be held on a University campus at a date and time to maximize attendance of members.
 - IV.** Notwithstanding sub-section (ii) and (iii), general meetings will only be held during the Swinburne University of Technology academic year.
 - V.** SUPA members will be informed of the date, place and agenda of general meetings not less than seven (7) days prior to the meeting through a notice in the appropriate SSU publication.
2. A quorum for a general meeting of SUPA will be 5% of the membership or 30 members, whichever is the lesser.
 - I.** If a quorum is not achieved within thirty (30) minutes of the advertised commencement time or becomes inquorate during the course of the meeting, the meeting may be reconvened with a quorum of ten (10) members providing that 7 days notice of the reconvened meeting be given by advertisement in the appropriate SSU publication and University notice boards. Such a meeting will be designated a reconvened general meeting. All items and only those items on the original agenda shall constitute the agenda of the reconvened meeting.
3. Items for inclusion on the agenda of a GM may be submitted by any member and must be given to the Secretary of SUPA or the staff supporting SUPA at least ten (10) days prior to a meeting. Items of general business may be brought up at a general meeting if leave of the meeting is granted.
4. The President of SUPA shall chair general meetings, or in his/her absence, the Vice President shall be the chair, or in his/her absence, a member of the Executive appointed by the Executive.
5. Resolutions passed by a general meeting of SUPA will be binding upon the Executive of SUPA.
6. Decisions at a GM or a re-convened GM shall be by a majority vote of members present. At the request of a majority of members present at the meeting, a secret ballot shall be held. Proxies will not be allowed at general meetings of SUPA.

7. SUPA will hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) not earlier than the first week of April and not later than the last week of May every year.
 - I.** The President's annual report, the Treasurer's annual report, the draft budget and such other reports from Executive will be presented to the AGM.
 - II.** The AGM will consider and approve remuneration of the President and other office bearers.
 - III.** The AGM will be conducted in accordance with the procedures outlined for General Meetings in sub-section (1) - (6).

8. Executive

1. SUPA members will elect office bearers from the ordinary members of SUPA, who shall hold the following positions: President, four General Representatives, International Students' Representative, Indigenous Students' Representative, Women's Representative, Research Students' Representative, Coursework Students' Representative and Part-Time Students' Representative. The office bearers will make up the Executive of SUPA.
 - I.** All members, except honorary members, are eligible to nominate for any of these positions, except Women's Representative, International Students' Representative, Indigenous Students' Representative, Research Students' Representative, Coursework Students' Representative and Part-Time Students' Representative. Candidates for these six portfolio positions must come from the relevant specified group of students.
 - II.** Nomination of a candidate for election shall be made in writing in a form approved by the Returning Officer. A nominee may nominate her/himself for election.
 - III.** The elections for the SUPA Executive shall occur at the same time as those conducted by the SSU Council in accordance with SSU Election Regulations.
 - IV.** SUPA will ensure that postgraduate students are able to vote via post on request.
2. The General Representatives will fulfil the roles of the Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary and Activities/Media Officer as detailed in sections 5 through 8. How the general representatives fulfil these roles is decided at the first Executive meeting by all Executive members.
3. Funding available for the remuneration of Executive members will be limited to the equivalent of 1.5 Australian Postgraduate Award (Industry) plus tax. No single Executive member may receive more than the equivalent of one APA (I) plus tax.
4. The President, subject to the constitution and direction from general meetings (including the AGM), will have the following responsibilities:
 - I.** Chair general meetings (including the AGM);
 - II.** Act as SUPA's chief spokesperson;
 - III.** Make a report to the AGM;

- IV.** Attend or nominate a SUPA Executive member to attend in their place, the CAPA Regional meetings, the CAPA Annual Council Meeting, CAPA AGM and other CAPA functions. S/he shall be responsible for reporting on all CAPA activities to Executive and representing the views of SUPA to CAPA.
5. The Vice President shall provide support for the President and undertake the role of President in the President's absence.
 6. The Treasurer shall liaise with the SSU Financial Officer, through the staff supporting SUPA, to ensure that the SUPA budget is in accordance with the SUPA/SSU Agreement. S/he shall:
 - I.** Ensure that all receipts and disbursements are properly allocated in the SUPA budget.
 - II.** Ensure that full and complete accounts of the financial affairs of SUPA are kept. These must be provided to the AGM.
 7. The Secretary shall ensure that a record is made and kept of all general meetings of SUPA and meetings of the Executive, and ensure that all members are informed of the details of upcoming general meetings.
 8. The Activities/Media Officer shall liaise with staff supporting SUPA to ensure the relevance, diversity and success of SUPA's activities and publications.
 9. The portfolio representatives shall liaise with members of their portfolio and ensure their concerns are addressed by SUPA.
 10. Any position on the Executive will be declared vacant if an office holder resigns, ceases to be a postgraduate student as defined in section 3. (1), if a general meeting passes a no confidence motion with a two thirds majority in an incumbent or fails to attend three consecutive Executive meetings without adequate explanation.
 11. If any position on Executive is not filled at the election or becomes vacant at any time, the Executive may co-opt any member for that position who would be eligible to stand as a candidate for that position.
 12. Any person co-opted to a vacant position will fill that position for the remainder of the term of office or until the next by-election which ever is sooner.
 13. Those persons elected to the Executive of SUPA at the 2004 annual elections held under the previous constitution are deemed to have been properly elected.

9. Operations of Executive

1. The Executive shall have the power to direct the President and other officer bearers of the Association in the conduct of any part of SUPA's business subject to this constitution.

2. The Executive shall meet at least eight (8) times per annum. Each meeting shall be held on a University campus.
3. The first meeting of the Executive shall be held within the first six (6) weeks of the Executive's term in office.
4. All Executive members shall be given seven (7) days notice of the time, place and agenda of the next Executive meeting, except that the President or, in their absence, the Vice- President may call an emergency Executive meeting with one (1) day notice to discuss any extraordinary item(s). Emergency Executive meetings do not satisfy section 9.2.
 - I. Any decision taken at an emergency meeting must be ratified at the ensuing normal Executive meeting.
 - II. Matters decided by e-mail circulation will be deemed equivalent to a decision made by an emergency Executive meeting and likewise must be ratified at the ensuing normal Executive meeting.
5. Any member of the Association may place an item on the agenda.
6. Any member of the Association may attend an Executive meeting and have the right to speak to any motion or item of business.
7. A quorum of the Executive shall be one half of currently filled positions.
8. Decisions of the Executive shall be by simple majority.
9. The minutes of all Executive meetings, GMs and the AGM, excluding those parts recorded 'in camera', shall be made available to any member on the SUPA web page and other means as determined by Executive or at the request of members.

10. Finance

1. No member of SUPA shall benefit from funds held by SUPA, except as remuneration for any expenses incurred on behalf of SUPA.
2. No member shall be personally liable to contribute towards the payment of debts and liabilities of SUPA, or the costs, charges or any expenses involved with the winding up of SUPA.
3. The Executive must no later than 30 November set the SUPA budget for the following year.
4. The budget may only subsequently be altered by the Executive by resolution passed by an absolute majority.
5. The SUPA Executive may authorize the seeking of additional funds or sponsorship from the University, funding agencies, companies and philanthropic trusts to pursue the Association's purposes and goals.

11. Employment of Staff

1. The Executive may advise the SSU Council to appoint staff to provide support for the Executive to carry out the functions and objectives of the Association.
2. Staff employed to support SUPA who are also students enrolled at the University may not stand for any representative position on a University board or committee or SUPA Executive.
3. Staff employed to support SUPA may, however, fill one or more representative positions on University boards or committees at the request of the Executive.
4. The role of such staff and their conditions of employment are subject to enterprise agreements and other terms and conditions of employment with the SSU. The SUPA President, at the direction of the Executive, shall negotiate with the SSU President and relevant officers of the SSU on the role and conditions of employment of staff supporting SUPA.
5. The incoming Executive members shall familiarize themselves with the terms of conditions under which staff supporting SUPA are employed by the SSU. To assist in this process a union representative may be invited to address an Executive meeting.

12. Constitution

1. The Executive shall be empowered to interpret this constitution in the first instance, but this interpretation may be overridden in a general meeting.
2. This constitution may be amended using the following process:
 - I.** By a resolution of a general meeting which must have a two-thirds majority. Any motion to amend this constitution must be moved at least seven (7) days prior to any general meeting at which it is considered.
 - II.** Notices informing students of the details of a general meeting must contain details of any constitutional amendments.
3. SSU Council will be informed of any amendments.
4. Any matters on which the SUPA Constitution is silent will be dealt with in accordance with the SSU Constitution.

13. Dissolution

1. A motion to dissolve or wind up SUPA may be considered by a General Meeting of SUPA. Notice of this motion must be given at least seven (7) days prior to the GM. This motion shall require a two-thirds majority of the meeting.