

KAUST Graduate Student Council Charter

The Graduate Student Council (GSC) was originally created by the Graduate Student Founding Class in 2009/2010 with the intention of representing the student body to various offices within KAUST. They sought to make this Charter a dynamic one, with the idea that every year elected members of the GSC would provide continuity and improvements in order to best reflect the changing needs and interests of the student body.

The present iteration of this charter was revised and rewritten in Spring 2021 with the intention of encouraging greater efficiency, and creating a platform that reflects the charter's changes. One major change to mention is the movement of the elections to the Spring semester.

I. Purpose

To represent KAUST graduate student interests to University administration, faculty, staff, and the general KAUST community.

II. Core Objectives

1. Provide an avenue for meaningful communication between the graduate students and the KAUST administration, faculty, staff, and community.
2. Promote quality of teaching and research at KAUST.
3. Nurture a free and active academic and cultural environment at KAUST.
4. Advocate for fair student benefits at KAUST.
5. Seek to expand options and opportunities for student employment after KAUST.
6. Develop the Graduate Student Council, including this Charter and the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), to better reflect its status and areas of influence with the student body.

III. Membership

Elected Members

1. Elected members are: President, Vice President, Secretary, Academic and Research Officer (ARO), University Relations Officer (URO), International Business Relations Officer (IBRO), Graduate Life Officer (GLO), Public Relations Officer (PRO), and GSC Members.
2. Any member of the graduate student body, if enrolled as a full-time student and in both good conduct and academic standing within the University, is eligible to be elected to serve on the GSC.
3. GSC members shall be elected by their peers as outlined in the KAUST GSC Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).
4. GSC President, Vice President, Secretary, Officers, and Members are elected to terms consisting of one year (June to May).

5. There are no term limits for elected GSC membership, pending election. However, officers (including President & Vice President) cannot serve the same role for more than 2 years.
6. All members, except the Campus and Student Outreach Officer (CSOO), are elected into the GSC by the student body. Once they are elected members, however, GSC positions are filled through an internal election by the sitting GSC together with the newly elected GSC members
7. The GSC strives to exhibit diversity. Within the top 20 vote-getters, membership preference will be given first to satisfy the criteria of having:
 - A maximum of 3 persons holding the same nationality
 - A minimum of 2 persons from each gender
 - A minimum of 1 person from each of the 3 KAUST academic divisions
 - A minimum of 2 persons that are Ph.D. students
 - A minimum of 2 persons that are MS or MS/Ph.D. students

If these criteria cannot be fulfilled in the general election, exceptions may be made as necessary, reverting back to the top vote-getters who were otherwise eliminated by the above criteria.

Appointed Members

1. The Campus and Student Outreach Officer (CSOO) is to be appointed by the newly elected GSC team and needs not be a member of the GSC.
2. Candidates for the CSOO role must submit an application specific for this role.
3. If more than one person applies for this position, the newly elected GSC team will meet with all candidates and appoint the one deemed best for the position through an internal election within the team.
4. The reason for the CSOO being appointed rather than elected is due to the specific skillsets required for this position, and the need for interest in this specific role.

IV. Officers and Organization

1. The GSC shall consist of twelve (12) elected members, and one (1) appointed member.
2. The list of GSC members is outlined along with their descriptions, duties, and responsibilities in the SOP.
3. General GSC elections are to be held by mid-April followed by the internal GSC elections to form the new GSC team.
4. The GSC President and/or Vice President are expected to stay as advisors for another three months after their term of election to aid the new council and provide continuity in the transition from the previous Council to the newly elected Council.
5. The GSC President may not hold the role as president/chairman/leader of other student-led academic organizations during his/her term in the GSC. He/she may hold this role in leisure groups such as the boardgame club, football, basketball, etc.

6. The GSC Graduate Life Officer (GLO) must declare any conflict of interest arising from being a member of another student-led group, and must recuse himself/herself when the budget of that group is being assessed for approval.

V. Advisor

The KAUST Graduate Student Council shall be advised by representatives of the management of Graduate Affairs. Meetings with GSC advisors will occur every two weeks during the academic semesters.

VI. Parliamentary Authority

Parliamentary authority lies primarily with the Council President, and secondarily with the Vice President.

VII. Amendments and Revisions

1. Amendments or revisions to this Charter shall be approved by a three-quarters (3/4) majority vote (or greater) of KAUST GSC members, with the additional approval of KAUST administration. Proxy votes are allowed, as long as simple documentation exists (hand-written or digital) that verifies the vote is coming from the absent Council member.
2. The GSC must consider amendments or revisions to this Charter in at least two consecutive meetings before they are put to a vote.
3. Additions or revisions to the KAUST GSC Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) may be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of GSC members.

VIII. Organization and Operation

1. The GSC shall hold at least five (5) general one-hour meetings per semester—spring and fall—and shall announce the times and places of these meetings at the beginning of each semester or before. Minutes of all meetings will be taken, posted on the GSC's Campus Connect group, and archived.
2. Special meetings for the GSC may be called, as deemed appropriate by any elected member of the GSC or by petition of any five (5) graduate students.
3. GSC officers are encouraged to ask for support from the graduate student community as necessary for major events.
4. The GSC shall maintain an SOP document to outline internal operations, rules, and procedures for elections, parliamentary debate, voting procedures, officer elections, meeting frequency, internal committee structure, officer election and removal, and member appointment and removal.