

# Standard Operation Procedures for the KAUST Graduate Council

## Contents

### I. Purpose

These Standard Operating Procedures are adopted by the KAUST Graduate Student Council to provide rules and guidelines for conducting its business effectively, efficiently, and fairly. This Standard Operating Procedures document is a flexible document, and may be changed by a 2/3 majority vote of the Council to add, change, or remove rules and guidelines that will best suit its future needs.

### II. Definitions

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) – This document  
Graduate Student Council (GSC) – KAUST’s governing student group, also referred to as “the Council”

General Meeting – A regular meeting of the entire GSC

President – The leader of a meeting (usually the President for the general meeting)

Point of Order – A tool for maintaining rules and order in the general meeting by drawing attention to rule violations in the meeting. Point of Order means a member can question the infraction of a procedure, in order to correct it.

Minutes – The written record of a general meeting

Ad hoc – Latin phrase meaning “for this purpose,” can be taken to mean “unplanned” or “impromptu”

Student body – All enrolled Masters and Ph.D. students at KAUST, taken collectively.

Second – When voting, any member may request a vote, but a second member must say “second” before the President calls for a vote. Without a second, the vote request is automatically denied.

### III. Membership

#### A. *Election and Eligibility*

1. Members of the Graduate Student Council (GSC) shall be elected by full-time KAUST students.
2. There are 13 members of the GSC, including President and Vice President.

#### B. *Duties*

1. Members have certain duties, such as attending general meetings, fulfilling duties as an officer, or contributing to the business of the council.

#### C. *Removal*

1. If a member is not re-elected after his/her term ends, he/she is no longer a member.
2. If a member graduates, he/she is no longer a member.

3. If a member is expelled from KAUST, or is put on academic or conduct probation for any reason, he/she is no longer a member.
4. If a member is attending meetings, but not otherwise fulfilling his/her duties to the GSC, his/her membership of the GSC may be revoked by the President or by a 3/4 majority of votes by the GSC members.
5. If a member fails to attend two general meetings without a valid reason, he/she may be removed by the Council President.
6. Absences which are automatically "excused" include traveling for academic conferences and research cruises or expeditions, attending regularly scheduled KAUST classes or mandatory seminars, and suffering from debilitating or contagious illness which requires a doctor's visit. (Member must have a doctor's note to be excused).

#### *D. Replacement*

1. If members leave or are removed from the GSC before the end of their term, the GSC President and/or the GSC VP will recommend a candidate to be voted in as a replacement by a majority vote of all remaining members. This replacement candidate must be from within the remaining GSC members if the position to be replaced is the VP or a GSC Officer role. If the position to be replaced is the Secretary, or a GSC Member position, the replacement candidate may be from outside the council. If the GSC President leaves, the VP becomes the president unless both are leaving, in which case the replacements for both are determined by voting from within the remaining GSC members. If a replacement from within the remaining GSC members is not possible for any of the above positions, an exception may be made upon recommendation by the GSC President and a majority vote of all remaining members.

#### *E. Incentive*

1. Each member of the GSC will be eligible to participate in specially designed professional or leadership development opportunities for the Council by the Professional Development Office. Recommendation for participation of the Council members will be made by the President and VP and submitted to the Council Advisor for approval.

### **IV. Duties of the President, Vice President, and Officers**

In addition to the below outlined duties for each role, to ensure continuity, each new council member shall meet with his/her counterpart from the old council to discuss unfinished projects, then bring those projects for discussion during the GSC general meeting to determine what is best for students.

#### *A. President*

1. The President is the primary GSC administrator, and the President for general meetings.
2. The President is also responsible for maintaining communication between the GSC and KAUST administration, the executive board, faculty, students, and staff.
3. The President should always act in a way which promotes unity, fairness, and efficiency within the GSC.
4. The President should always enforce the rules of the Charter and SOP.

5. The President is responsible for leading the council and making sure its members work as a team towards common goals.
6. The President and/or Vice President is expected to stay for 3 months with the new council after the end of his/her term to help the newly elected GSC transition into their positions.
7. The President is responsible for increasing student representation in various KAUST departments.
8. The President must work with the Public Relations Officer (PRO) to promote his/her achievements within the GSC.

*B. Vice President*

1. The Vice President is the secondary administrator, and the President for general meetings in the President's absence.
2. The Vice President should work closely with officers to ensure that each officer has the information and resources to accomplish his/her goals.
3. The Vice President is responsible for delegating tasks to the officers and managing the workflow between the officers so that the GSC works towards common goals.
4. The Vice President is responsible for developing the GSC in terms of suggesting updates of the present GSC Charter and SOP.
5. The Vice President is responsible for making sure that the achievements of the GSC are in line with the concerns of the student body.
6. The Vice President and/or the President is expected to stay for 3 months with the new GSC after the end of the annual election period to help the newly elected GSC transition into their positions.
7. The Vice President is responsible for assisting the President in leading the council and making sure its members work as a team towards common goals.
8. The Vice President is responsible for assisting the President in increasing student representation in various KAUST departments.
9. The Vice President must work with the Public Relations Officer (PRO) to promote his/her achievements within the GSC.

*C. Academic and Research Officer (ARO)*

1. The Academic and Research Officer (ARO) exists as a link between KAUST students, faculty, staff, post-doctoral fellows, research scientists, and divisional councils/senates/student-committees to provide constructive feedback and suggestions regarding academic and research issues affecting students.
2. The ARO should promote awareness of scientific research opportunities at KAUST through organized events.
3. The ARO is responsible for reaching out to the student body about academic and research concerns, and asking for volunteers if needed.
4. The ARO should prepare and present a short progress report at each general meeting.
5. The ARO is responsible for following the directions of the GSC President and Vice President so that all of the members of the GSC will work together towards common goals.
6. The ARO is responsible of making the other council members aware of the opportunities and challenges within his/her given responsibilities.

7. The ARO is responsible for increasing student representation in KAUST departments related to his/her work in the GSC, including students' academic and research fields.
8. The ARO must work with the Public Relations Officer (PRO) to promote his/her achievements within the GSC.

*D. Graduate Life Officer (GLO)*

1. The Graduate Life Officer (GLO) exists as a communication link between the Graduate Student Council and the KAUST student body
2. The GLO is responsible for setting up activities, assisting group startups, enhancing communication with students (i.e. through the use of a website, bulletin boards, Campus Connect, organizing competitions, and serving the students' needs and requests regarding their non-academic life.
3. The GLO is responsible for reaching out to the student body about Graduate Life activities and asking for volunteers if needed.
4. The GLO should prepare and present a short progress report at each general meeting.
5. The GLO is responsible for following the directions of the GSC President and Vice President so that all members of the GSC work together towards common goals.
6. The GLO is responsible for making the other council members aware of the opportunities and challenges within his/her given responsibilities.
7. The GLO is responsible for increasing student representation in KAUST departments related to his/her work in the GSC, including students' social lives on campus.
8. The GLO must work with the Public Relations Officer (PRO) to promote his/her achievements within the GSC.

*E. University Relations Officer (URO)*

1. The University Relations Officer (URO) exists as a link to the President's Office, the department of Graduate Affairs, and community service providers.
2. The URO works with the aforementioned parties to find solutions for problems affecting students including housing, IT, transportation, library services, health and safety, dining services, and more.
3. The URO is responsible for reaching out to the student body about their concerns and asking for volunteers if needed.
4. The URO should prepare and present a short progress report at each general meeting.
5. The URO is responsible for following the directions of the GSC President and Vice President so that all members of the GSC work together towards common goals.
6. The URO is responsible for making the other council members aware of the opportunities and challenges within his/her given responsibilities.
7. The URO is responsible for increasing student representation in KAUST departments related to his/her work in the GSC, including students' personal lives on campus.
8. The URO must work with the Public Relations Officer (PRO) to promote his/her achievements within the GSC.

*F. International Business Relations Officer (IBRO)*

1. The International Business Relations Officer (IBRO) exists as a networking bridge between students, KAUST administrators, and industries that are potential student employers and research collaborators.
2. The IBRO is responsible for cooperating with the Office of Professional Development to organize and facilitate business and entrepreneurship workshops, professional training, and career fairs each semester.
3. The IBRO is responsible for reaching out to the student body about their concerns and asking for volunteers if needed.
4. The IBRO should prepare and present a short progress report at each general meeting.
5. The IBRO is responsible for following the directions of the GSC President and Vice President so that all the members of the GSC work together towards common goals.
6. The IBRO is responsible for making the other council members aware of the opportunities and challenges within his/her given responsibilities.
7. The IBRO is responsible for increasing student representation in KAUST departments related to his/her work in the GSC, including students' careers.
8. The IBRO must work with the Public Relations Officer (PRO) to promote his/her achievements within the GSC.

*G. Public Relations Officer (PRO)*

1. The PRO promotes the significant events and engagements by the GSC.
2. The PRO is responsible for reaching out to students and creating a platform for them to reach the GSC.
3. The PRO handles the social media needs of the GSC.
4. The PRO markets the GSC to the KAUST community.
5. The PRO develops new means of marketing for the GSC.
6. The PRO updates the student body at least once per month about the achievements of the council, e.g. through a GSC Campus Connect group and social media accounts.
7. The PRO is responsible for following the directions of the GSC President and Vice President so that all of members of the GSC work together towards common goals.
8. The PRO is responsible for increasing student representation in KAUST departments related to his/her work in the GSC.
9. The PRO must work with all other members of the GSC to promote their achievements within the GSC.

*H. Campus & Students Outreach Officer (CSOO)*

1. The Campus & Students Outreach Officer (CSOO) exists as a link between KAUST students, the Graduate Student Council (GSC), the Enrichment Office, and KAUST administration to provide constructive feedback, raise concerns, and communicate suggestions from the students.
2. The CSOO partners with the Enrichment Office to deliver the annual TEDx KAUST event, and chairs the TEDx KAUST committee. Key responsibilities:

- i. The CSOO is responsible for forming the TEDx KAUST committee by reaching out to the students, interviewing interested candidates, and assigning to the committee the ones he/she deems fit.
  - ii. The CSOO is responsible for requesting volunteers (non-committee members), to help with holding TEDx KAUST, when necessary.
  - iii. The CSOO liaises with the Enrichment Office to determine TEDx funding and expenditures and where appropriate and necessary make determinations related to University guidelines/standards, and when necessary/appropriate help in operational execution of the TEDx event.
3. The CSOO act as the students' lead representative at the Winter Enrichment Program (WEP).
4. The CSOO is the main reporting officer on student involvement and engagement in TEDx and WEP events.
5. The CSOO should present a short progress report at each GSC general meeting and is responsible for both following the directions of the GSC President and Vice President so that all members of the GSC work together towards common goals, and making the other council members aware of the opportunities and challenges within his/her given responsibilities.
6. The CSOO is responsible for increasing student representation in KAUST departments related to his/her work in the GSC.
7. The CSOO must work with the Public Relations Officer (PRO) to promote his/her achievements within the GSC.
8. Other responsibilities may also be added to the role of the CSOO as deemed fit by the GSC President.

#### **V. Duties of Non-Officer Positions (GSC Members and Secretary)**

In addition to the below outlined duties for each role, to ensure continuity, each new council member shall meet with his/her counterpart from the old council to discuss unfinished projects, then bring those projects for discussion during the GSC general meeting to determine what is best for students.

1. Each GSC member can choose which of the following GSC officers to be attached to: ARO, URO, IBRO, or GLO. If more than one member wants to be attached to the same officer, the officer will choose the member to work with him/her.
2. GSC members are to assist and help the officer to whom they are attached in his/her role.
3. GSC members have the liberty to initiate and participate in all the GSC activities.
4. GSC members have the same power as the other members to participate in the GSC voting procedures.
5. GSC members are responsible for following the directions of the GSC President and Vice President so that all members of the GSC work together towards common goals.
6. GSC members are responsible for increasing student representation in KAUST departments related to their work in the GSC.
7. GSC members must work with the Public Relations Officer (PRO) to promote their achievements within the GSC.
8. In addition to the above, the Secretary's duties also include:

- a. Documenting meetings by recording and later disseminating its minutes; announcing future meetings; booking rooms for meetings and events, etc.
- b. Making sure the meeting minutes are open to the student body and that the meeting times are properly announced to the student body prior to the meetings.
- c. Handling the e-mails sent to the GSC in correspondence with the rest of the council.
- d. Participating, if required, in irregular meetings, e.g. between the President and Vice President
- e. Tracking and documenting the GSC's achievements.

## **VI. Elections**

### *A. Election Commission*

1. The purpose of creating the Election Commission is to ensure the integrity, fairness, and transparency of the election process of the Graduate Student Council members.
2. The Chair of the Election Commission is a member of the current GSC who is appointed by the current President and Vice President of the GSC.
3. The two other members of the Election Commission are chosen from the student body or the GSC. However, there must be at least one member from the student body.
4. All members of the Election Commission, including its Chair, shall not run in the upcoming Graduate Council elections.
5. The names of the Election Commission members must be disclosed to the student body throughout the election stages.

### *B. Voting Process for Election Commission*

1. The Graduate Student Council President sends a call for nominations of the Chair of the Election Commission to the Graduate Council members at least 9 weeks before the last day of classes of the spring semester.
2. The GSC President and Vice President appoint the Election Commission Chair. If no members of the GSC apply for the Chair position, then the application should be opened to the entire student body.
3. The Chair of the Election Commission shall search for the other two election commission members either from the sitting GSC or from the student body. However, there must be at least one member from the student body in the Election Commission.

### *C. Tasks of the Election Commission*

1. The Chair shall be responsible for calling meetings and setting its agenda.
2. The Commission shall supervise the Graduate Student Council elections.
3. The Commission shall search and collect applications for GSC membership, which should include at least a statement of intent.
4. The Commission shall ensure that the student body is properly informed about the election, seeking as many candidates as possible.
5. The Commission shall follow the election rules as specified in the election section below.
6. The Commission shall define and enforce penalties for any election violations by the candidates.

7. The Commission shall define the timeline for the general election process, the officer elections process, and the official transition from the old to the new GSC.
8. The Commission shall communicate the rules and timeline to the GSC at least 6 weeks before the last day of classes of the Spring semester.
9. The Commission shall communicate the election rules and timeline to the student body and send a call for applications at least three times. The first attempt to solicit candidates should be announced on the first Sunday of March. Two reminders should be sent within two weeks of the first announcement.
10. The Commission shall communicate to the candidates all the application items they should submit.
11. The Commission shall be responsible for collecting all the application items from the candidates and then presenting these candidates to the student body.
12. The Commission shall be responsible for organizing general campaign forums for the candidates to reach the student body, as well as encouraging all candidates equally in their personal campaigns.
13. The Commission shall be responsible for administering the elections and counting votes.
14. The Commission shall announce the results to the student body.

*D. General Rules and Procedures for the Graduate Student Council Elections*

1. The call for applications shall be sent to the student body by the Election Commission.
  - i. The application shall ask for the candidate's name, gender, nationality, degree, division, and agenda/statement of intent.
2. Each candidate must submit a statement of intent explaining the reasons he/she wishes to run for elections and/or his/her goals if elected to the GSC. This statement is to be shared with the student body by the candidate and/or by the election commission.
3. Each candidate must attend a GSC orientation as a condition of being put forth as a candidate.
4. The candidates' meeting, where the Election Commission explains the rules of the elections, shall be organized by the Election Commission.
5. The candidates' meeting is followed by the pre-election week, during which the student body should be provided with the list of candidates and the relevant information from the candidates' applications. During this week, the Election Commission shall organize an event for the student body to meet the candidates.
6. The candidates nominate themselves for GSC general membership.
7. Each graduate student has up to 12 votes for the nominated candidates. However, candidates cannot get more than one vote from each graduate student.
8. The election commission must ensure that out of the 13 Graduate Student Council members, they are from the top 20 candidates in the election in terms of votes, there is at least 1 member from each KAUST division, 2 members from each gender, and 2 members from both MS and PhD programs, as well as a maximum of 3 from any single nationality. If any of the aforementioned criteria has not been satisfied in the majority voting, the remaining top candidates with the next most votes shall be enrolled in the council to satisfy the necessary rules.



*E. General Rules for Officer Elections*

1. The election of all positions will occur in a committee that consists of the sitting Graduate Student Council members who are present at the meeting and the newly elected GSC. A majority of votes must exist to elect positions. If a majority does not exist, a run-off election will occur between the top two candidates. If a candidate still has not won a majority, the President of the sitting GSC decides on the candidate who takes the position.
2. The election for positions runs in this order: President, Vice President, followed by the positions with candidates gathering the next most votes, until all positions are filled.
3. If one of the positions has no candidates, the newly elected President decides from the unappointed members.
4. Members can apply for multiple positions but can only be assigned to one position.
5. Before the internal election, candidates must present their plans and goals to the sitting and new council members.
6. Council members vote on each position in a secret ballot administered by the Election Commission

**VII. General Meetings**

1. The agenda for the general meeting must be sent to all GSC members at least two days before the general meeting.
2. The time of the meeting is recommended to be divided into three parts:
  - a. Update time, where each officer gives a brief progress report
  - b. Discussion time, where the GSC covers each discussion point mentioned in the agenda
  - c. Open time, which is suitable for discussing any ad hoc (impromptu) issues
3. Every general meeting is open to student observers. To be allotted speaking time during the general meeting open time, a non-member must register with the secretary at least one week prior to the meeting. Note: If a student observer becomes disruptive to the completion of business, he or she may be asked to leave.
4. A meeting with the student body must be held at the beginning of each academic year (start of fall semester)
5. Meeting minutes are taken by the Secretary and sent to all members.
6. Either the President or Vice President may call for an additional council meeting outside of those outlined in the charter.

*A. Fairness*

1. Members should not be treated differently because of their nationality, race, religion, sexual orientation or gender.
2. It is the President's duty to maintain order; no member should speak unless recognized by the President.
3. No member should interrupt another while speaking, except to make a point of order.
4. Speaking time should be monitored by the President, and generally kept to less than two minutes per person.
5. The President will informally give speaking preference to members who have not contributed in the meeting, rather than to those who have already voiced an opinion.

### B. *Voting*

1. Before voting, dissenting members will be given a chance to argue against the proposal being voted on.
2. Proposed votes on major issues (such as rule changes, new members, etc.), are to be sent to the GSC President at least one week in advance and included in the council meeting agenda.
3. Ad hoc (impromptu) votes may be taken to resolve minor issues during a general meeting.
4. The President must open a vote after one member raises an issue and a second requests a vote.
5. When voting on an open issue, raising hands is acceptable. For a vote on people, (such as new member approval or officer election) confidential voting is required.
6. Decisions which require a simple one-half majority include: *ad hoc* votes which only affect the on-going general meeting, organizing activities under the name of the GSC, creating a temporary subcommittee, electing officers, and replacing members.
7. Decisions which require a 3/4 majority include: passing a document of the GSC; adding, changing, or removing rules and guidelines of an effective document; and other decisions that directly influence the permanent structure of the GSC.

### C. *Point of Order*

1. "Point of Order" is a statement addressed to the President during the general meeting when any member feels that the Council Charter or SOP has not been followed. "Point of Order" takes immediate precedence over all other business and must be recognized by the President.
2. "Point of Order" may be used to:
  - a. Correct or remind the President of the GSC rules for discussion
  - b. Clarify proper voting procedures or the decision-making process
  - c. Remind the President when a Council meeting is behind schedule
  - d. Address any rule in the Charter or SOP which a member feels is being violated

## VIII. **Subcommittees**

### A. *Creating Subcommittees*

1. Subcommittees are committees formed outside of the GSC charter and SOP (e.g. for a big event).
2. Any member of the GSC can suggest creating a temporary subcommittee, which must be confirmed by the GSC President or Vice President.
3. The new subcommittee can be led by any enrolled Masters or PhD student, however it is typically lead by GSC members.

### B. *Dissolving Subcommittees*

1. A temporary subcommittee should be dissolved when its duties are completed.
2. The creator of a subcommittee or the GSC President or Vice President will decide when to dissolve the subcommittee.

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