

Purdue Postdoctoral Association Constitution

I. History

The Purdue Postdoctoral Association was established in 2009 with the primary aim of fostering a cohesive community among postdoctoral researchers at Purdue University. Later that year, a council of elected members was established to address pertinent issues encountered by current and prospective postdoctoral researchers at the university.

II. Name

The organization is officially recognized as the Purdue Postdoctoral Association, hereafter referred to as PPDA.

III. Mission

A. The mission of the PPDA is to support the professional growth, career development, and overall well-being of postdoctoral researchers affiliated with Purdue University.

B. The primary objectives of the PPDA Council (hereafter, the Council) are to:

- Facilitate the professional development and enrichment of postdoctoral researchers.
- Foster and maintain opportunities for social and professional engagement among current and former postdoctoral researchers and other members of the Purdue University community, including students, staff, and faculty.
- Promote institutional awareness, recognition, and appreciation of the role, contributions, and professional status of postdoctoral researchers, as well as their impact on the sciences, humanities, and other scholarly and professional fields.

C. Elected Council members shall advance the PPDA's mission by developing and coordinating initiatives, programs, and activities that support and represent the interests of the postdoctoral community.

IV. Membership

A. Membership Eligibility

All individuals who meet Purdue University's definition of a Postdoctoral Researcher are eligible for membership in the PPDA. The applicable definition shall be the current definition provided in Purdue University's Terms and Conditions of Employment of Postdoctoral Researchers, Clinical Residents and Clinical Interns (VI.F.13). As of July 2026, this definition states: "A postdoctoral resident, research assistant, or research associate who is engaged in a temporary period of mentored research and/or scholarly training for the purpose of acquiring advanced professional skills."

Position titles commonly associated with postdoctoral researchers include Postdoctoral Research Assistant, Postdoctoral Research Associate, Postdoctoral Fellow, and Visiting Scholar. Individuals in permanent research staff positions (i.e., positions not subject to a limited-term appointment) are not eligible for membership. This exclusion includes former postdoctoral researchers who transition into permanent research positions after reaching Purdue University's maximum allowable period of postdoctoral employment.

All members have the right to propose amendments to this Constitution and to vote at the Annual Meeting.

B. Number of Council Members

The Council shall consist of no more than twelve members.

C. Council Candidacy and Membership

All current PPDA members are eligible to serve on the Council. If a Council member no longer meets the membership criteria outlined in Section IV.A, they shall be removed from Council membership in accordance with the procedures established in Section VII.B.

To fill Council vacancies, an annual call for volunteers shall be conducted at the beginning of each academic year (September) under the oversight of the Council Secretary. Additional calls for volunteers may be issued at any time if the Council determines that its membership has fallen below the level necessary to effectively support the PPDA's mission. To ensure organizational stability and continuity, such calls shall not occur more than once every six months.

V. Organization

A. Council Members

- The Council shall strive to maintain diversity and equitable representation across a range of backgrounds and perspectives, including, but not limited to, academic discipline, experience level, race, gender, and nationality.
- Individuals who volunteer for Council service shall be considered candidates for Council membership.
- A call for volunteers shall be issued at the beginning of each academic year and, when deemed necessary by the Council, on a limited basis throughout the year.
- New Council members shall be selected through an open election by current PPDA members.
- Upon accepting Council membership, individuals are expected to serve actively for a term of up to three years. Candidates who anticipate challenges in fulfilling this commitment are encouraged to disclose them during the nomination and election process.

B. Officers of the Council

- The Council shall elect one President, one Secretary, and one Treasurer, up to two Vice Presidents, and up to two Public Relations Officers.
- The President and Vice President(s) shall be elected by a majority vote of the Council from among current Council members with prior Council service or relevant leadership experience; the Secretary, Treasurer, and Public Relations Officer(s) shall be elected by a majority vote of the Council from among current Council members.
- Each officer is expected to serve in their position for a term of up to two years.
- In the event of a resignation or vacancy, the Council shall elect a replacement from among its current members by majority vote.
- At least one of the following officers—the President or a Vice President—must be present to convene and conduct a Council meeting.

C. Institutional Advisors to the Council

- The Director of Postdoctoral Affairs in the Office of the Vice Provost for Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Scholars (OGSPS) shall serve as a standing Institutional Advisor to the Council.
- Additional Advisors may be invited and appointed by the Council on an ad hoc basis as needed.
- Advisor appointments shall not be subject to term limits.

- There shall be no limit on the number of Advisors appointed to the Council.
- Advisors shall serve in a non-voting capacity and shall not possess voting rights within the Council.

VI. Responsibilities

A. Council Members

1. Attend more than half of all regularly scheduled Council meetings each year, calculated from the date of appointment to the Council. Failure to meet this attendance requirement may result in removal from the Council in accordance with Section VII.B.
2. Notify the President, Vice President(s), and Secretary at least 24 hours in advance when they are unable to attend a regularly scheduled Council meeting. Failure to provide advance notice shall result in the absence being considered unexcused. Failure to provide advance notice for two consecutive meetings may result in removal from the Council in accordance with Section VII.B.
3. Ensure the timely dissemination of relevant information to the postdoctoral community.
4. Communicate the concerns, needs, and perspectives of the postdoctoral researchers they represent to the Council.
5. Organize activities that advance the PPDA's mission, including, but not limited to, networking events, social gatherings, and professional development workshops.
6. Promote special institutional events relevant to the postdoctoral community and assist with their planning and execution as needed.
7. Meet informally with postdoctoral researchers to gather feedback and foster engagement.
8. Assist in maintaining the PPDA website and oversee associated social media and professional networking accounts.

B. President

The President shall:

1. Serve as the primary liaison between the PPDA and Purdue University administration.
2. Notify the Council of any vacancies in Council membership.
3. Oversee the timely election of new Council members and officers.
4. Prepare and coordinate monthly Council meetings in collaboration with the Secretary and Vice President(s).
5. Organize the PPDA Annual Meeting, including the review of and voting on proposed constitutional amendments, preferably at the beginning of each academic year.
6. Lead the annual call for Council volunteers, when necessary, in coordination with the Secretary and Vice President(s).
7. Co-organize an annual leadership retreat for Council members with the Institutional Advisor(s), ideally shortly after the election of new Council members.
8. Coordinate PPDA-sponsored meetings, programs, and events for the postdoctoral community as appropriate.
9. Serve as a liaison to postdoctoral associations and organizations at other institutions.
10. Review and approve Council meeting minutes.
11. If funding is available through OGSPS, represent the PPDA at the annual meeting of the National Postdoctoral Association (NPA). Preference should be given to a Vice President if the President attended the previous year's conference.

C. Vice President(s)

The Vice President(s) shall:

1. Assist Council members and officers in carrying out their responsibilities as needed.
2. Preside over Council meetings in the absence of the President.
3. Temporarily assume the responsibilities of the President or other officers in the event of an absence, vacancy, or other need.
4. Assist the President and Secretary in coordinating the annual call for PPDA Council volunteers and the election of new Council members.
5. Manage the official PPDA email and calendar (ppda@purdue.edu) in collaboration with the Secretary.

D. Secretary

The Secretary shall:

1. Record and maintain the minutes of all Council meetings.
2. Save meeting minutes in a shared location accessible to Council members in a timely manner, and no later than the next scheduled Council meeting.
3. Collaborate with the President and Vice President(s) to develop Council meeting agendas.
4. Distribute meeting agendas to Council members in advance of scheduled meetings.
5. Communicate relevant information and updates from Council meetings to the postdoctoral community in collaboration with OGSPS.
6. Schedule Council meetings in coordination with the President.
7. Maintain records of active Council members, officer positions, and Council meeting attendance, and notify the President and Vice President(s) of vacancies to support the recruitment and election of new Council members.
8. Manage the PPDA email account and calendar (ppda@purdue.edu) in collaboration with the Vice President(s).

E. Treasurer

The Treasurer shall:

1. Co-manage the PPDA budget in collaboration with the Institutional Advisor.
2. Communicate the annual budget allocated by OGSPS to the Council and, with input from the Council, oversee the allocation of funds to PPDA initiatives and activities.
3. Provide budget updates and financial reports at Council meetings upon request.
4. Present an annual financial report summarizing the PPDA budget, expenditures, and remaining funds at the Annual Meeting.

VII. Appointment

A. Duration

Council members who do not intend to seek reappointment or continue their service shall notify the President at least two months before the end of their term or service. This notice period is intended to provide adequate time for the solicitation, nomination, and election of new Council members.

B. Continued Appointment and Removal from Council

1. As described in Section VI.A.1, Council members must attend more than half of all regularly scheduled Council meetings each year, calculated from the date of their appointment, to remain in good standing.
2. Absences may be excused when approved in advance by the President or Vice President(s) and communicated to the Secretary. Excused absences shall not be counted as missed meetings.
3. A Council member who misses three consecutive Council meetings without approved excused absences shall be removed from the Council. The President shall provide written notification of the removal and shall copy the Vice President(s) and Secretary on the notification.
4. Council members must continue to meet the membership eligibility criteria described in Section IV.A. A Council member who no longer meets these criteria shall be removed from Council membership upon written notification from the President, with the Vice President(s) and Secretary copied.

C. Resignation of Officer Appointment

If an elected Council officer is unable or unwilling to complete their term of service, they may resign by notifying the remaining officers of their intent. Following the resignation, nominations for a replacement shall be solicited from current Council members. A replacement officer shall be elected by a majority vote of the Council at the next regularly scheduled Council meeting.

D. Termination of Officer Duties

If an elected Council officer fails to fulfill the responsibilities of their office or engages in conduct that is inconsistent with, or detrimental to, the mission and objectives of the PPDA, the remaining officers shall convene to review the matter and determine an appropriate course of action. The officer may be asked to resign from their position.

If the officer declines to resign and the remaining officers determine that removal is warranted, a majority vote of the officers shall be required to terminate the appointment. The officer under review shall not participate in the vote concerning their removal.

Following the termination of an officer's appointment, nominations shall be solicited from the remaining Council members to fill the vacant position. A replacement officer shall be elected by majority vote at the next regularly scheduled Council meeting, or at a special meeting called for that purpose.

VIII. Conduct of Meetings

A. Time and Place

The Secretary shall schedule monthly Council meetings through the PPDA calendar and invite all Council members and Institutional Advisor(s) to attend. Meeting invitations shall include both a physical meeting location and a virtual participation option to maximize attendance, while encouraging in-person participation whenever possible.

Regular Council meetings shall not exceed ninety minutes unless extended by a majority vote of the Council members present. Any unfinished business shall be deferred to a subsequent meeting.

Members of the postdoctoral community may be invited by Council members to attend meetings; however, they shall not possess voting rights on Council matters.

B. Quorum

A quorum shall consist of a majority of the active Council members. For purposes of quorum, “active Council members” refers to current Council members in good standing who continue to meet PPDA membership criteria. A quorum must be present for the Council to conduct official business or vote on proposed motions. Unless otherwise specified in this Constitution, motions shall be approved by a majority vote of the Council members present and voting, provided a quorum has been established.

C. Order of Business

1. Meeting agendas shall be distributed to Council members in advance of all scheduled meetings.
2. The first order of business shall be the review and approval of the minutes from the previous meeting.
3. The second order of business shall be reports from special representatives, committees, and other designated groups.
4. The third order of business shall be general orders and unfinished business.
 - Any Council member may introduce a motion during a meeting. All motions shall be recorded by the Secretary.
 - A motion must be seconded by another Council member before it may proceed to discussion and a vote.
 - Voting shall be conducted by the President or Vice President(s), and the results shall be recorded by the Secretary.
5. The final order of business shall be the identification of topics for future meetings. Council members may propose agenda items up to one day before the next scheduled meeting by submitting them to the President or Vice President(s).

IX. Subcommittees

A. Creation

Subcommittees may be established by a majority vote of the Council at a regular or special meeting to address matters relevant to the PPDA’s mission and the interests of the postdoctoral community.

B. Leadership and Membership

Each Subcommittee shall designate a Council member to serve as its Chair. Subcommittee membership may include Council members and other PPDA members who volunteer to contribute to the Subcommittee’s work.

C. Duties

The purpose, responsibilities, and authority of each Subcommittee shall be defined at the time of its creation and approved by a majority vote of the Council.

D. Types

The Council may establish the following types of Subcommittees:

1. Standing Subcommittees shall be created to address ongoing matters requiring sustained attention and support. Each Standing Subcommittee shall be reviewed annually by the Council to determine whether it remains necessary.
2. Ad Hoc Subcommittees may be created as needed to address specific projects, initiatives, or tasks (e.g., surveys, events, or special programs).

- Each Ad Hoc Subcommittee shall be assigned a specific charge and expected timeline for completion upon its creation.
- An Ad Hoc Subcommittee shall be dissolved upon completion of its assigned responsibilities and submission of a final report to the Council.
- If an Ad Hoc Subcommittee is unable to complete its assignment within the designated timeframe, the Council may extend its appointment or dissolve the Subcommittee by majority vote.

E. Reporting

All Subcommittees shall provide regular status updates to the Council during monthly meetings. The Council may request additional reports from any Subcommittee as needed.

X. Review and Amendment of the Constitution

1. The Constitution shall be reviewed annually at the PPDA Annual Meeting to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness. All PPDA members shall have the right to propose amendments to the Constitution and to vote on proposed changes.
2. The President and Vice President(s) shall announce the annual review period and solicit feedback and proposed amendments from the PPDA membership.
3. Proposed amendments shall be submitted in writing to the President and presented for discussion at the Annual Meeting.
4. The PPDA Council may initiate constitutional amendments at any time when necessary to address operational, governance, or compliance matters. Any such proposed amendments shall be communicated to the membership prior to a vote.
5. Amendments to the Constitution shall require approval by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of votes cast. Votes may be submitted during the Annual Meeting or through approved electronic voting methods.
6. The PPDA Council shall be responsible for organizing, administering, and tallying all votes on proposed constitutional amendments, whether conducted during the Annual Meeting or through electronic means.