

GYA Constitution

Preamble

In today's world, science must address increasingly complex problems on a global scale. Confronting challenges of this nature requires scientists with different backgrounds and areas of expertise, as well as the coordination of policies from diverse sectors across many regions and countries. We believe that early career scientists are among the best positioned to innovate solutions to such challenges, and that bringing together early career scientists from around the world creates new opportunities to tackle global issues. The exchange of ideas across disciplines, cultures, and nationalities can expand opportunities for scientists, increase scientific capacity and improve the state of the world. In recognition of this broad-based approach, we define science as any inquiry-based, knowledge-generating research, including natural, physical and social sciences, as well as the arts and humanities. Motivated by these aims, an organization is established that is guided by the following principles:

1. International

We are an Academy of early career scientists, whose membership draws from all disciplines. We aim to include scientists from every geographical region around the world and for inclusive representation by gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and scientific disciplines.

2. Independent

The overarching aim of this Academy is to foster early career independence for young scientists. To facilitate this, the Academy operates independently from governments, other academies, funding sources, and businesses. We exist as a not for profit organisation.

3. Evidence-based

As scientists, we expect solutions to society's problems to be evidence-based. We seek to contribute innovation and science-based policy ideas to the debates of concern to young scientists and to the wider community.

4. Excellent

Our members are selected based upon a proven track record for outstanding contributions to science and their commitment to public service. We strive for the highest quality in our activities.

5. Impactful

To be effective, we focus upon activities of concern to young scientists, specifically issues at the science-society interface, such as scientific communication, education and public policy. The Academy supports career development for young scientists and the formation of national young academies.

1. Foundation

Hereby is constituted the Global Young Academy (GYA).

2. Goals

The objectives of the GYA are:

- 2.1. To give a voice to young scientists by:
 - 2.1.1. Providing a channel for its members to actively participate in policy development;
 - 2.1.2. Encouraging interactions with media organizations through workshops, internships and job partnering;
 - 2.1.3. Developing statements on scientific issues of national and global importance;
 - 2.1.4. Promoting the development of National Young Academies;
- 2.2. To promote science as a career of choice for young people by:
 - 2.2.1. Recognizing exceptional young scientists from all countries as role models;
 - 2.2.2. Developing policies to remove obstacles to participation in science for women, racial, ethnic or sexual minorities, and other under-represented groups;
 - 2.2.3. Promoting mentoring relationships with internationally recognized senior scientists;
 - 2.2.4. Identifying the scientific leaders of the future;
- 2.3. To narrow the gap between countries at different levels of economic and social development by:
 - 2.3.1. Promoting science as an engine of sustainable development;
 - 2.3.2. Building capacity for scientific research;
 - 2.3.3. Supporting exchange visits for young scientists that lead to an increase in the scientific skill set;
- 2.4. To encourage the development of novel approaches to problems of international significance by:
 - 2.4.1. Fostering international and interdisciplinary collaborations between young scientists;
 - 2.4.2. Holding global, regional and topical workshops;
 - 2.4.3. Encouraging governments, research foundations and philanthropic organizations to engage with young researchers;
- 2.5. To support any other goals that concern young scientists, which the General Assembly decides to promote.

3. Membership

- 3.1. The GYA is composed of members who all have the right to vote and exercise all of the rights within the GYA.
 - 3.1.1 Members are expected to take an active role in the GYA, to support its aims, goals and operations.
- 3.2. Members of the GYA shall be selected for one term of approximately 5 years.

3.3. Membership begins with the induction of new members during the Annual General Meeting (AGM) following their selection, before the elections of Co-Chairs and further members of the Executive Committee. Although new members are strongly encouraged to be physically present for this purpose, in-person attendance is not necessary for induction. Newly selected members may receive internal GYA communications prior to their induction once they have accepted their membership invitation.

3.4. The terms of members completing their 5th year in the GYA shall end before the induction of the new members.

3.5. The number of members to be selected each year shall be decided annually.

3.6. The GYA shall consist of no more than 200 members.

3.7. Criteria for selection include all of the following:

3.7.1. A Ph.D. or an equivalent degree in natural sciences, applied sciences, formal sciences, social sciences, or arts and humanities, or equivalent experience in a research environment;

3.7.2. Scientific excellence, ascertained by a proven track record and expected future achievements;

3.7.3. Demonstrated commitment to making a difference in the world or in society;

3.7.4. Broadly matching the median age of 35 and median career-point profile of 7 years from Ph.D. of the GYA general membership. The median age and median career-point profile from PhD will be calculated based on the age and stage of the candidates at the date of inauguration. Candidates deviating significantly from the expected profile shall need to demonstrate a reasonable case for consideration.¹

3.8. Selection of candidates

3.8.1. Short-listing and final selection of candidates shall be conducted by a Selection Committee formed by the Executive Committee.

3.8.2. The overriding criteria for selection shall be scientific excellence and commitment to service according to points 3.7.2 and 3.7.3 above.

3.8.3. Within the bounds established by point 3.8.2, the Selection Committee shall seek to maximize breadth of regional, disciplinary, gender, racial, and ethnic representation.

3.9. Once during the membership term, a member can take a one-year leave from active membership lasting from one AGM to the next if s/he is unable to contribute to GYA activities due to significant life events [e.g., illness, family illness, maternity/paternity commitments] by notifying the Co-Chairs in writing in advance of the leave. During the leave, the rights to participate in GYA activities are the same as those of GYA alumni. If members can foresee their leave, they should submit their request by the end of the year preceding the beginning of the leave. The leave will commence immediately before the induction of new members and end with the beginning of the subsequent induction of new members. On the resumption of membership, the duration of leave will be added to the membership period.

3.10. A member can resign from membership of the Global Young Academy at any time in writing to the Co-Chairs.

4. General Assembly

4.1. The General Assembly is the highest decision-making body of the GYA; the General Assembly shall be empowered, subject to the provisions of this constitution, to make decisions on all matters affecting the GYA.

4.2. The General Assembly is composed of all the GYA members.

4.3. Only members of the GYA participating in an Annual Meeting shall be able to cast a vote.

4.4. The General Assembly is entitled:

4.4.1. to amend the constitution of the GYA if the amendment is approved by at least 2/3 of the participants in a vote;

4.4.2. to set up rules and regulations for the different bodies and officers of the GYA;

4.4.3. to elect the Executive Committee and Co-Chairs;

4.4.4. to terminate membership of individual members if the decision is approved by at least 2/3 of the participants in a vote if the member seriously damages the interests of the GYA and provided the member has been granted a reasonable opportunity to be heard before any decision is taken;

4.4.5. to take any other decision required to promote the goals of the GYA, according to its constitution;

4.4.6. to exercise any other right arising from the law or the Constitution;

4.5. The General Assembly shall normally convene at least once every calendar year for an Annual General Meeting or AGM at a location and time set by the Executive Committee. Subject to Section 4.7., the notice shall be sent at least three months before the meeting.

4.6. The Executive Committee may call for a Special General Meeting of the General Assembly at its discretion or shall do so at the request of one- third of the members. The notice shall be sent at least 4 weeks before the meeting.

4.7. The Executive Committee may decide that the Annual or Special General Meeting shall convene virtually, or in any way that will assure the integrity of the voting process. The Annual General Meeting shall convene virtually only in exceptional circumstances, such as political upheaval or natural disaster, that may affect the ability of GYA members to participate physically in the meeting. In this case, the length of the AGM may be extended to allow for the voting procedures to conclude before the end of the AGM. The notice that the Annual General Meeting shall convene virtually instead of physically may be required to be sent on short notice

4.8. For an Annual Meeting not convening virtually, members may remotely participate.

4.9. Any proposal to be discussed in a General Meeting that is submitted by a member, and forwarded in writing to the Co-Chairs at least four weeks before the meeting, must be placed on the meeting's agenda. The Executive Committee may place additional proposals on the agenda, subject to section 4.9.

4.10. A notice of the agenda of the Annual or Special General Meeting must be sent to the GYA membership at least fifteen days before the meeting. Any proposal not on the agenda or sent less than fifteen days before the meeting may be discussed but not voted upon unless at least 2/3 of the participants agree otherwise and provided that at least one-third of the GYA members participate in the General Meeting as stipulated in section 4.10.

4.11. The General Assembly may only take formal decisions if at least one-third of its members participate in the General Meeting. Unless explicitly provided for otherwise in the constitution, decisions by the General Assembly must be supported by more than half of the participants in a vote, and abstentions shall not be considered a vote.

4.12. The resolutions of the General Assembly shall be recorded in minutes, which shall be distributed to the members soon after the meeting.

4.13. The EC may invite alumni, GYA staff, members of the Advisory Board and other people as it sees fit to attend and participate in the running of the General Meetings. Invited attendees may not participate in voting and shall not count towards quorum.

5. Co-Chairs

5.1. The General Assembly shall elect two members as Co-Chairs following the procedure described in section 8.

5.2. The Co-Chairs shall preside over the meetings of the General Assembly and the Executive Committee with a partition of tasks to be agreed by them.

5.3. The Co-Chairs represent the GYA on a day-to-day basis and supervise the functions of the administrative staff.

5.4. In case of unresolved disagreement between the Co-Chairs, the Co-Chairs shall refer the matter to the Executive Committee.

5.5. If a Co-Chair resigns before the end of their term or is otherwise unable to continue as Co-Chair, the Executive Committee shall appoint one of its members to be Acting Co-Chair until the original Co-Chair is able to resume his/her function or otherwise at most for the remainder of the term of the original Co-Chair.

6. Executive Committee

6.1. Subject to the provisions of the constitution and the decisions of the General Assembly, the Executive Committee shall take such initiatives and actions as are necessary for the achievement of the objectives of the GYA.

6.2. The Executive Committee shall be composed of the two Co-Chairs and nine additional members elected by the General Assembly.

- 6.3. The Executive Committee is in charge of developing the strategic direction of the GYA and shall hold overall responsibility for the programs and activities of the GYA.
- 6.4. The Executive Committee may exercise full powers with regard to the management and administration of the GYA, except with regard to the powers specifically vested in the General Assembly.
- 6.5. The Executive Committee shall, in particular, be responsible for:
- 6.5.1. Setting the time and venue for the meetings of the General Assembly;
 - 6.5.2. Preparing the agenda of the meetings of the General Assembly;
 - 6.5.3. Implementing the decisions taken by the General Assembly;
 - 6.5.4. Securing funding for the programs and activities of the GYA;
 - 6.5.5. Approving programs and activities, as well as their budgets;
 - 6.5.6. Ensuring that actual spending is in accordance with the budget;
 - 6.5.7. Approving publications and statements to be issued in the name of the GYA.
 - 6.5.8. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for fundraising, managing accounts and budgets, and providing annual fiscal reports to the General Assembly.
- 6.6. The Executive Committee may set up such standing or ad hoc committees and may nominate a secretary, a treasurer and other officers as it deems necessary for the discharge of its tasks and responsibilities.
- 6.7. The Executive Committee may nominate an Advisory Board and may consult the board as it sees fit.
- 6.8. Decisions by the Executive Committee must be supported by more than half of the participants in the vote with abstentions not being considered a vote, and provided that at least half of the Executive Committee members participate in the vote. In the interval between in-person meetings, a vote may be taken by email, conference call or other virtual means. In a vote by email, a non-reply shall be considered an abstention.
- 6.9. The Executive Committee can, by a unanimous decision, suspend a member who seriously damages the interests of the GYA, until a termination of the member's membership is voted on in the following General Meeting. The member in question shall be given a reasonable opportunity to be heard before any decision is taken but no member has right to vote on decisions of their suspension of membership. A suspended member is regarded as a non-GYA member for all intents and purposes until more than half of the EC members support ending the suspension or the General Assembly decides whether to terminate their membership.
- 6.10. The resolutions of the Executive Committee shall be recorded in minutes and made available for the inspection by the members of the GYA. The motivations which guided the EC decisions shall be included whenever possible.
- 6.11. A member of the Executive Committee can resign from office in writing to the Co-Chairs.
- 6.12. If a member of the Executive Committee resigns with the remaining term of office exceeding 4 months, a replacement member shall be elected promptly by receiving the largest number of votes in a Special General Meeting. If the resigning member of the Executive Committee holds the office of Co-Chair, a further ordinary member of the Executive Committee shall be elected in the Special General Meeting.

7. Managing Director and Administrative Staff

- 7.1. The Executive Committee may appoint administrative staff headed by a Managing Director.

7.2. The Managing Director supports the activities of the GYA and reports directly to the Co-Chairs. The Co-Chairs may authorize the Managing Director to represent the GYA and take decisions on their behalf, in accordance with roles and responsibilities approved by the Executive Committee.

8. Procedures for Electing the Co-Chairs and the Executive Committee

8.1. Election to the positions of Co-Chairs and Executive Committee shall take place during each regular Annual General Meeting by a secret ballot. In the event that the required quorum is not attained, the election will take place in a Special General Meeting.

8.2. Co-Chairs and the other members of the Executive Committee are elected from among the GYA members for a term of office that begins with the conclusion of their election and expires with the conclusion of the subsequent election for Co-Chairs and further members of the Executive Committee. They keep their function until the expiration of their term of office, even if their GYA membership term expires earlier. They may be reelected multiple times, as long as they are active GYA members.

8.3. The General Assembly may set up more detailed election regulations.

Current election regulations are these: [GYA Election regulations 2025](#)

8.4. Before the General Assembly convenes, the Executive Committee shall appoint the head of a Nominations and Election Committee and two other members for that committee selected from among GYA alumni or members that do not seek election or re-election to the position of Co-Chair or to the Executive Committee. The head of the Nominations and Election Committee shall administer the election process and the counting of the votes with the assistance of the other members of the committee and GYA staff. The Nominations and Election Committee shall decide upon procedural and other disagreements, which are raised by GYA members regarding the election process and its results.

9. Constitutional and Legal Committee

9.1. The Constitutional and Legal Committee (hereinafter: CLC) shall be the authoritative interpreter of the Constitution.

9.2. The CLC shall offer advice on any constitutional or legal issue submitted to its leader by any GYA member, flag potential conflicts between any new proposal and existing rules and regulations, and propose constitutional amendments. Each GYA member is entitled to raise any constitutional or legal query before the CLC.

9.2.1. Decisions by the CLC must be supported by more than half of the participants in a vote, and abstentions shall not be considered a vote. Voting may be conducted via email, conference call or other virtual means. A non-reply to an email-based vote shall be treated as an abstention.

9.2.2. If the procedure described in 9.2.1 results in a tied vote, the CLC leader's vote shall be binding and decisive.

9.3. Any CLC decisions pertaining to the interpretation of the Constitution are final and binding to all members and institutions of the GYA.

9.3.1. The General Assembly is entitled to overrule any CLC constitutional interpretation if more than 2/3 of the participants in a vote decide so and provided that at least one-third of its members participate in the General Meeting as stipulated in section 4.10.

9.3.2. CLC interpretations may guide, but not limit, the independent discretion of subsequent CLCs, which may deviate from existing interpretations provided they are accompanied by clear and convincing reasons expressed in writing.

9.4. CLC resolutions pertaining to the interpretation of the Constitution's text shall be recorded in the minutes of CLC meetings and made available on the GYA website for inspection by other members.

10. Alumni

10.1. Former members of the GYA are alumni.

10.2. The General Assembly shall determine the roles and privileges of the Alumni.

11. Language

11.1. The operational language of the GYA is English.

Footnotes

¹ The flexible terms of this clause are aimed to allow the selection committee to adapt the membership criteria to different countries and regions where the Ph.D. or equivalent degree is obtained at a different age. Specifically, in several developing countries, restricting the age too much might result in too few potential applicants.

² We consider the ordinary residence of a member as normally being the country where the member has lived and worked for most of the last two years and will work in the coming year. As the country of residence for some GYA members is not easily defined, we encourage members to consult with the Nominations and Election Committee in cases where residency is unclear.