

commonwealth students' association



Constitution

1. Name

- a. The name of the organisation shall be The Commonwealth Students' Association. Henceforth, it shall be referred to as the CSA.

2. Vision

The CSA will strive to ensure that:

- a. Students across the Commonwealth are empowered to effect change in education and contribute to their societies
- b. Students are engaged as valuable partners in effecting the change that they seek in education
- c. Students have a credible and representative voice in developing education systems

3. Mission

- a. The CSA will unite students, represent them, build their capacities and provide them with opportunities across the Commonwealth to address issues within the fields of education and global development.
- b. The CSA will advocate for and to contribute to a world where students have the opportunities to address issues within education and fields of development.

4. Values

The values of the CSA shall be:

- i. Unity
- ii. Respect
- iii. Equality
- iv. Democracy
- v. Freedom of expression
- vi. Transparency

5. Aims and Objects

The aims and objects of the CSA shall be:

- i. To promote, protect and defend the rights of Commonwealth students
- ii. To promote the values of the Commonwealth to students
- iii. To promote empowerment amongst Commonwealth students
- iv. To extend the reach of collective representative organisations to students across the Commonwealth
- v. To promote equitable access and opportunity to succeed in education
- vi. To promote high quality student experiences and learning environments around the Commonwealth
- vii. To promote unity among student organisations in all Commonwealth member states
- viii. To promote decision-making and policy implementation by students on all issues in the Commonwealth
- ix. To create an environment for student bodies and student movements to build their respective and collective capacities, to freely express and advocate
- x. To promote equality amongst students across the Commonwealth
- xi. To promote the spirit of consensus amongst students, en route to contribute actively in the development of the world youth and students movement
- xii. To promote sustainable development through pro-active and inclusive participation in nation building
- xiii. To advocate, for University autonomy and respect for academic freedoms, and for a true reform and continued development of education
- xiv. To foster the development of students by promoting inter-Commonwealth state institutional and cultural exchange programmes, and extra-curricular activities
- xv. To promote technological innovation for education
- xvi. To promote democratic opportunities in the education sector, giving opportunities to everyone to voice their opinion

6. Amending the Constitution

- a. In order to amend the Constitution, there shall be a two-thirds majority vote at any Congress of all full members in favour of that amendment.

7. Enactment

- a. Any schedules to the Constitution, passed by the Congress of the CSA, shall have the same authority as the Constitution itself.

8. Membership

- a. The CSA shall be an international confederation of national student organisations
- b. Membership of the CSA shall be voluntary and open to all Commonwealth student organisations
- c. The CSA has the following categories of membership:
 - i. Full Membership; and,
 - ii. Associate Membership
- d. A full member shall be a national student organisation that:
 - i. is governed by students;
 - ii. represents the majority of students in a Commonwealth member state;
 - iii. has a democratically elected leadership;
 - iv. formally commits with the Constitution of the CSA; and,
 - v. is formally approved for membership by the CSA.
- e. An associate member shall be any student organisation or an organisation working in the interests of students that:
 - i. represents the views of students;
 - ii. has a democratically elected leadership;
 - iii. formally commits to the Constitution of the CSA; and,
 - iv. is formally approved for membership by the CSA the Congress of the CSA formally approves their membership.
- f. Full members shall have the right to:
 - i. receive official delegate status at the CSA Congress;
 - ii. nominate candidates for election at the CSA Congress;
 - iii. have full speaking rights at the CSA Congress; and,
 - iv. have voting rights in the CSA Congress.
- g. Full members shall be obliged to:
 - i. accept and abide by the Constitution of the CSA;
 - ii. contribute to the achievement of the aims and objectives of the CSA
- h. Associate members shall have the right to:
 - i. attend and observe CSA Congress, and, in line with standing orders; speak;
 - ii. contribute to the achievement of the aims and objectives of the CSA
- i. Members may be obliged to:
 - i. pay a subsidy

9. Congress

- a. There shall be a Congress of all full members of the CSA.
- b. This meeting shall be convened at least once every two years at such a time and place as determined by the CSA Student Executive Committee.
- c. The powers of the Congress shall be:
 - i. To elect a Chairperson
 - ii. To elect the CSA Executive Committee
 - iii. To approve policies of the CSA
 - iv. To approve the strategic report of the CSA
 - v. To approve the strategic plan of the CSA
 - vi. To approve the audited financial statements of the CSA
 - vii. To approve the budget of the CSA
 - viii. To approve amendments to the Constitution
 - ix. To approve requests for Full and Associate memberships
 - x. To consider any other business as referred to it by the full members
- d. There shall be an online meeting of full members in any given year in which a Congress is not held.
- e. The powers of an online meeting shall be limited by a schedule attached to the Constitution.
- f. There shall be provision for an Extraordinary Congress which can be convened when:
 - i. Two thirds of the Executive Committee determine to hold one; or,
 - ii. One third of the full members sign a written request to the Chairperson to hold an Extraordinary Congress.
 - 1. Such a written request must state the reason for convening an Extraordinary Congress.
 - 2. An Extraordinary Congress may only be convened to deliberate the sole matter which it was convened to debate.
 - 3. Not more than one Extraordinary Congress may be convened within a twelve month period to deliberate the same matter.
- g. The powers of the Extraordinary Congress shall be those identified for Congress under section 9 (C).
- h. Notice of Congress shall be not less than sixty days prior to the date set out by the Student Executive Committee and such notice must specify the date, time, place and duration of the Congress.
- i. Notice shall be communicated directly to full and associate members.
- j. The quorum for Congress is fifty per cent (50%) plus one (1) of full members of the CSA.
- k. The CSA Chairperson shall appoint the Chairperson of Congress.
- l. Further guidance on the process of policy submission shall be outlined as a schedule to this Constitution.

10. Commonwealth Student's Association Executive Committee

- a. The governing body of The CSA shall be the CSA Executive Committee, whose members shall be:
 - i. the CSA Chairperson to be elected for a term of two years; (at the CSA's congress); and,
 - ii. two representatives from the Pacific Region of the Commonwealth;
 - iii. two representatives of the Asian Region of the Commonwealth;
 - iv. two representatives of the African Region of the Commonwealth; and,
 - v. two representatives of the Caribbean Region of the Commonwealth.
 - vi. the head of the CSA Secretariat or CSA Coordinator at The Commonwealth Secretariat who will sit *ex officio*.
- b. These representatives, with the exception of the head of the CSA Secretariat or CSA Coordinator at the Commonwealth Secretariat, shall also be elected for one two (2) year term;
- c. No representative shall be elected for more than four years.
- d. In addition to the persons set out at Article 10 (a), other individuals and organisations may be invited to attend and participate in meetings of the CSA Executive Committee as required.
- e. At the request of the Chairperson, a representative from the Commonwealth Secretariat Youth Affairs Division shall be in attendance at all CSA Executive Committee meetings.
- f. The Chairperson and other members of the CSA Committee shall be elected in accordance with the rules established herein.
- g. The CSA Executive Committee shall meet at least six times a year, at such time and place and by such means as the Executive Committee from time to time determines, physically or virtually.
- h. The quorum for a meeting of the CSA Executive Committee shall be one (1) representative from each region of the Commonwealth as well as the Chairperson.
- i. No business shall be transacted unless a quorum is present.
- j. The powers of the CSA Executive Committee shall be:
 - i. To make recommendations to the Congress, including recommendations on CSA policy and strategy constitutional changes and the CSA annual budget
 - ii. To appoint CSA Executive Committee members or such other persons as it deems necessary to form a working group for such purpose as the CSA Executive Committee in its discretion shall determine

11. Elections

- a. The election of the CSA Chairperson and CSA Executive Committee shall be held every two years at Congress.
- b. There shall be a secret ballot to determine the Chairperson and Executive Committee of the CSA.
- c. Prior to the notification of Congress as specified in article 9 (h), the CSA Executive Committee shall appoint a Returning Officer who will be responsible for the conduct of the election. They:
 - i. May not be a candidate, nor express any opinions about candidates, in the elections.
 - ii. May generally do all things he or she considers necessary, expedient or advisable, for the proper conduct of the election (including as to the application process), consistent with these rules and any schedules.
 - iii. Shall give at least sixty days notice of an election to each full member and each associate member, and call for nominations. The Returning Officer shall advise the time, date, means and place for close of nominations, which shall always close before Congress begins.
- d. Any representative of any full member may stand for election as Chairperson, or Executive Committee Member.
- e. The Returning Officer shall inform all full members of the names of all the candidates after the close of nominations.
- f. The voting process will be the alternative voting (AV) system where the voter has the chance to rank the candidates in order of preference. If any dispute arises regarding the election such a dispute shall be settled in accordance with the ruling of the appointed Returning Officer.
- g. The Commonwealth Secretariat Youth Affairs Division shall act as final appellate body in respect of election complaints.
- h. Any full member may complain in writing to the Commonwealth Secretariat Youth Affairs Division about any of the decisions of the Returning Officer.
- i. On receipt of a complaint, the Commonwealth Secretariat Youth Affairs Division shall be required to investigate the complaint and issue a final ruling. The ruling of the Commonwealth Youth Programme shall be final.

12. Administration of the CSA

- a. The CSA shall acquire/receive administrative support in the carrying out of its functions and duties as and when necessary.

13. CSA Head Quarters

- a. The Head Quarters of the CSA shall be at the Commonwealth Secretariat, Marlborough House, London, United Kingdom.



This constitution was written and deliberated upon by delegates of the 18th CCEM Youth Forum who appointed a Steering Committee to complete its drafting. This was completed on the 18th of April 2013 and recommended for presentation to the inaugural Biannual General Meeting of the CSA.

Constitution drafted by:

The CSA Steering Committee;
Ayswaryya Ganapathiraman
Danielle Grufferty
Pete Hodgkinson
Thompson Kamuhuza
Zainab Khan
Kevin Ramsewak
Stanley Njoroge
Jama'l Talagi
Daniel Wilson

And from NUS UK;
Lewis Coakley
Dan Francis
Emma Powell

csa
commonwealth
students
association