

LSU BioGrads

CONSTITUTION and RULES

Last amended: May 2025

I. NAME

1. The name of this organization will be BioGrads (Biological Sciences Graduate Student Organization) of Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

II. PURPOSE

1. The purposes for which BioGrads is organized are exclusively religious, charitable, scientific, literary, or educational within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue law.
2. Notwithstanding any other provisions of these articles, this organization shall not carry on any activities not permitted to be carried on by an organization exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue law.
3. Upon dissolution of the organization, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or corresponding section of any future Federal tax code or shall be distributed to the Federal, state, or local government for a public purpose. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by a court of competent jurisdiction of the county where the organization's principal office is located exclusively for such purposes.

III. BASIC POLICIES

The following are the basic policies of this organization:

1. The organization shall be non-commercial.
2. The name of the organization or the names of any members in their official capacities shall not be used in connection with a commercial concern.
3. The organization shall cooperate with Louisiana State University to support the improvement of education in ways that will not interfere directly with administration of the University.
4. The organization may cooperate with other organizations and agencies, but persons representing the organization in such matters shall make no commitments that bind the organization. The organization agrees to abide by all University policies and local, state and federal laws.

IV. MEMBERSHIP

1. Any LSU student, faculty member or staff member who subscribes to the purpose and basic policies of the organization may become a member of this organization, subject only to compliance with the provisions of the constitution.
2. Active membership is restricted to LSU graduate students. Associate membership is restricted to LSU faculty and staff, and any undergraduate or visiting scholar in the Biological Sciences Department. Associate members are non-voting members.

3. Membership is open to all graduate students in the Department of Biological Sciences. All active voting members must be graduate students in the Department of Biological Sciences.
4. Persons who do not meet the criteria for membership listed in 1-3 may be denied membership. No person shall be denied membership based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, handicap, marital status, sexual preference, or veteran status.

V. OFFICERS

1. To be eligible to be elected to, appointed to, or to hold an office or be a standing committee chairperson, a student must:
 - a) Be a current graduate student enrolled as part-time (with at least 6 hours) or full-time students at LSU.
 - b) Students must have at least a 2.0 cumulative GPA and be in good academic standing with the University.
 - c) Students must not be on disciplinary probation or deferred suspension. This includes newly elected officers, as well as continuing officers. Students may continue organizational membership if on disciplinary probation.
 - d) Students must meet all other academic standards established by the student organization and included in the organization's constitution and/or bylaws.
 - e) Graduating seniors who are not registered full-time may still hold office in a student organization during the semester in which they are scheduled to graduate.
2. Officers and other Executive council members will be selected by a simple majority vote, of the members present, for one-year terms, which will begin August 1st and will end July 31st the next year. Candidates for office will be nominated by anonymous ballot or from the floor during the first general meeting of the Spring semester. Candidates for office will be elected by anonymous ballot during the second general meeting of the Spring semester.
3. This organization will elect eight officers: President, Vice President/Secretary, Treasurer, Social Coordinators (2), Fundraiser (1), Webmaster/Merchandiser.
4. Officer Duties and Responsibilities:
 - a) President: will be a voting member of the Executive council and act as Chairperson of executive and general meetings. The president will, unless otherwise determined, represent the views of BioGrads to the Graduate Committee and on other relevant committees and act as an ombudsman for graduate students.
 - b) Social Coordinators: will be voting members of the Executive council and organize social events such as the Jambalaya and Crawfish boil and tailgating.
 - c) Vice President/Secretary: will be a voting member of the Executive council, record, and store official minutes, and provide memoranda to members. The secretary will also organize the research symposium in the Spring semester. The secretary will also be responsible for all the organization's correspondence and keep track of attendance at general meetings, provide attendance records to the Webmaster/Merchandiser, and perform all the president's duties if the president is incapacitated.
 - d) Treasurer: will be a voting member of the Executive council, keep written financial accounts, manage the organization's finances, and chair the finance

committee. The treasurer will also be responsible for giving financial updates at committee and general meetings, providing information on fundraising participation to the webmaster/merchandiser, authorizing all organization expenditures, updating the award request form, and issuing award checks.

- e) Fundraiser: will be a voting member of the Executive council and will organize, manage, and carry-out fundraising activities such as Around the World, and Microdrawers.
- f) Webmaster/Merchandiser: will be a voting executive council member and maintain the organization's Webpages and is responsible for the design, promotion, and sale of BioGrads merchandise. They will make available online active membership status for students. This officer will also manage and update all online platforms related to merchandise sales and fundraising activities, including but not limited to the Square site and Venmo. They are also responsible for making flyers and other media-related announcements related to events, fundraising, and other group-related activities.

VI. EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

1. The Executive council will comprise the President, Vice President/Secretary, Social Coordinators, Treasurer, Fundraiser, and Webmaster/Merchandiser.
2. The Executive council may submit official recommendations on behalf of the membership of BioGrads to the faculty, provided such recommendations have been approved by $\frac{3}{4}$ of the organization's voting members. Other activities of the council include:
 - a) conducting the internal business of the organization,
 - b) appointing Ad Hoc committees for addressing specific problem areas,
 - c) calling general meetings of the organization as deemed necessary, and
 - d) appointing members to officially represent organizational interests in faculty-student interactions to represent organizational interests in faculty-student interactions officially. Executive council decisions are based on a $\frac{3}{4}$ quorum.
3. Resignations from the office will become final upon acceptance by a simple majority vote of those present at the next following official general meeting. Vacated seats will be filled by new elections, which will be held no later than thirty days after a resignation has been accepted. Any voting member may propose a resolution to recall an official and conduct new elections, which must be held no later than thirty days after passage of the resolution thirty days after the resolution's passage. Upon passage of such resolutions, nominations to fill the position in question will be taken from the floor. An elected official can be recalled by $\frac{2}{3}$ vote of the membership. A $\frac{2}{3}$ vote of the membership can recall an elected official.

VII. COMMITTEES

1. The Executive council will establish the selection of members and determination of duties for Ad Hoc committees (further deemed “sub-committees”) at the inception of each sub-committee. Sub-committee members will be appointed by the Executive council and will serve terms that are to be at most one year without re-appointment. Regardless of the date of appointment, each term will end by July 31st of that year.

VIII. MEETINGS

1. At least two general meetings, called by the President, will be held near the beginning and end of each Fall and Spring semester. The first Spring semester meeting must be held before February 28th/29th to allow nominations for new officers to be made.
2. A quorum for the transaction of business at general meetings will consist of 10% of the organization's voting members.
3. With one-week written notice to all members, a general meeting may be called by petition of 20% of voting members or a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote of the Executive council, or if called by the president.

IX. DUES

1. There will be no membership dues as long as fundraising covers the costs for travel and research awards, as well as necessary social events throughout the year. However, if dues are ever required, members may choose not to contribute, but these members will not be eligible to receive travel or research awards within that fiscal year.

X. AWARDS

1. An award of \$400 or more, dependent on funds available for the BioGrads fiscal year (August 1st to July 31st) and determined by the officers, can be received by an active member of the organization for attendance (presentation not required) at a scientific meeting (travel award) or for research purposes (research grant) once per BioGrads fiscal year. Individual awards will be coded by the year issued and the order in which the award was given. For example, the 8th award for the year 2007 would be coded Award #07-08. The award must be acknowledged or referenced by its number in any publications or presentations to which the money from the award contributed. The executive officers will determine the recipients of an award according to the following criteria:
 - a) Timely submission of the award request form. Awards will not be granted for the previous fiscal year if the request form is submitted after July 31st of the current fiscal year. If an award is being used for a conference, it does not matter when the conference is being held. If a student appeals to get a travel or research award after the fiscal year has ended the newly elected Executive Council will vote in a $\frac{3}{4}$ majority to accept or deny the request for the award.
 - b) AND: At least 50% attendance at BioGrads meetings during the current fiscal year.
 - c) AND: Participation in four volunteer opportunities where active members of the group can earn a volunteer “point.” All volunteer opportunities will be worth one

point unless otherwise specified by an executive officer in an official communication (e.g. both setting up and cleaning up for a social event will grant the volunteer one point). Four points must be earned for eligibility for an award. Points expire at the end of the fiscal year (July 31st) no matter when they were earned. OR: Participation in a sub-committee officially called and voted on by the executive officers during the current fiscal year.

- d) AND: If granted an award from BioGrads to present a poster or paper at a meeting, the award recipient must give that poster or talk (or updated versions of them) at the next BioGrads symposium. Suppose an award recipient cannot present their results at the symposium due to extenuating circumstances. In that case, they must provide a 1-page follow-up report about the grant before the next BioGrads symposium.
- e) If granted an award for field research, research materials, or other expenses that do not involve attending a meeting to present research data, the recipient must provide a 1-page follow-up report before the next BioGrads symposium. The recipient may also present their results at the next BioGrads symposium instead of submitting a 1-page report.
- f) Failure to present at the next biograds symposium or 1-page follow up report after given a biograds award will exempt the student from receiving another biograds award within the next fiscal year.
- g) The recipient must meet the requirements outlined above to be allowed to receive an award for one fiscal year. If a member receives an award and cannot use it for the purpose specified on the award request form, then, in good faith, the award should be returned to BioGrads.

XI. PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

- 1. Parliamentary procedures will automatically be waved for all meetings; however, all meetings will follow Roberts Rules of Order (latest edition) if any general member requests.

XII. AMENDMENTS

- 1. This constitution may be amended at any regular meeting of the organization by two thirds vote of the members present and voting, provided that notice of the proposed amendment shall have been given at the previous meeting and that the proposed amendment shall be subject to approval of Campus Life or Greek Life, depending on which entity has responsibility for registering the student organization.
 - a) Members will be supplied with a written copy of the amendment at least one week before the vote.
 - b) The amendment must be read and discussed at an official meeting.
 - c) A 2/3 vote of the membership present is required for amending this constitution.
 - d) Members will be given at least one week before notice of the voting date.

XIII. APPEALS AND DUE PROCESS

- 1. Removal Process an Executive Board Member

A. The President has the authority to terminate any officer position upon repeated dereliction of duty using the process as follows:

- a) The negligent exec board member must be put on notice of their dereliction of duty.
- b) The President must give expectations for correction of the problem as well as a reasonable date for expected improvement.
- c) If said expected improvement is not met, the President may terminate the Executive Board member and appoint another in their place.
- d) In cases of severe neglect of duty, the President must terminate the guilty party immediately and appoint a replacement if deemed necessary.
- e) This termination process may or may not include the executive board member being put on notice of their dereliction of duty.

B. The term of office of an elected official may be terminated by impeachment during the fall or spring semesters for failure to maintain their responsibilities and qualifications as specified in this constitution.

- a) The President will oversee all impeachment proceedings unless the President is being impeached, in which case the proceedings will be chaired by gavel order, so long as that executive board member is also not under review for being removed from their position.
- b) Formal charges must be filed to the General Assembly at a regularly scheduled meeting. Charges must be formal, specific, and in written form, including a petition of support from an absolute majority of the voting members of the General Assembly.
- c) The vote to impeach will be held at a special meeting immediately following the subsequent regularly scheduled General Assembly meeting. Only voting members and other allowable personnel per the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order will attend the special meeting. If the impeachment is ratified by an absolute two-thirds vote of the voting members of the General Assembly, the official will be dismissed.

C. If the President or Vice President critically violates the terms set forth by the constitution in such a manner that is detrimental to the organization when the General Assembly is not in session, the following process will occur.

- a) The individual's behavior may then be brought to and reviewed by a committee consisting of the following members:
 - i. The organization's advisor
 - ii. Any exec board members who are not under review, if applicable.
- b) The committee will interview the President or Vice President that is in violation of the terms set forth by the constitution.
 - i. The alleged board member will have the chance to present any additional documentation.
 - ii. The alleged board member retains the right to an advisor during the meeting.
- c) Upon conclusion of the meeting, the committee will deliberate and vote on whether the board member should be removed or not.
 - i. The vote must deliver an absolute majority in order to proceed with termination.
 - ii. The final decision must be delivered in writing to the alleged board member within 10 business days of the initial meeting.
- d) If an executive board member is removed from office during their current term due to termination, impeachment, or removal due to non-GPA related issues, they will no longer be eligible for any following academic term.

- i. The terminated executive board member has the right to appeal to the decision following the appeals process in Section 2 of this Article. Appeal Process for an Executive Board Member Removal
2. Appeal process for an Executive Board member Removal
 - a) If an executive board member who was removed from their position would like to appeal that decision, they must follow this outlined process:
 - i. The appeal request must be submitted in writing to the organization advisor within 5 business days of the decision being delivered.
 1. Said appeal must include an identification of who the appealing student is and what decision they are appealing.
 - ii. Upon receiving the request for appeal, the advisor will determine if they are able to serve as the chairperson for this appeal.
 1. If necessary, the advisor may recuse themselves from the meeting and appoint a replacement chairperson for the appeal.
 - iii. Once the chairperson is determined, the chairperson will select two additional members within the organization to form an appeal committee.
 - iv. The appeal chairperson will schedule an appeal meeting with the removed executive board member within 15 business days of the request for appeal.
 - v. The appeal committee will request and receive from the organization any and all documentation regarding the decision for removal.
 1. If the appeal committee feel it is pertinent, they may interview organization members who may provide additional insight to the circumstances for removal.
 - vi. During the appeal meeting, the removed executive board member will present their case for appeal, including any documentation they may have for the situation.
 1. The removed executive board member retains the right to an advisor during the meeting.
 - vii. The appeal committee will deliberate and deliver a final decision within 10 business days. Said decision will be delivered in writing to the removed executive board member.