

# **The Constitution of the UofT Genetics Club**

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We, the students of the University of Toronto Mississauga, hereby establish an organization to be known as the University of Toronto Genetic Engineering Club, hereinafter referred to as "the Club." Recognizing the importance of advancing scientific literacy, academic collaboration, and ethical engagement in the field of genetics, we adopt this constitution to provide a platform for students to explore, discuss, and contribute to the growing world of genetics and genomics. The Club shall serve as a space for learning, mentorship, and community-building for all students with an interest in genetics, regardless of their academic background.

The University of Toronto Genetic Engineering Club is committed to fostering a respectful, inclusive, and academically rigorous environment that values scientific integrity, open inquiry, and community collaboration. The Club recognizes and respects the diversity of thought, background, and perspectives among its members, and aims to promote a culture of mutual respect, academic humility, and ethical responsibility in all of its initiatives.

While members may hold differing views on scientific interpretations or applications, the Club affirms that respectful disagreement, evidence-based reasoning, and inclusive dialogue are central to the advancement of genetics and biomedical science. The Club maintains that no perspective should be dismissed outright without critical engagement, and that no member shall be excluded, discredited, or defamed on the basis of differing scientific or ethical viewpoints expressed in good faith. These values guide how the Genetics Club engages in discourse, collaborates with the broader UTM community, and upholds a spirit of intellectual honesty and professional respect.

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## **Article 1: Name**

The name of the organization shall be the *University of Toronto Genetic Engineering Club* (hereafter referred to as "the Club"). The acronym or abbreviation of this group is: UofTGEC

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## **Article 2: Purpose**

The purpose of the University of Toronto Genetic Engineering Club is to create a welcoming, academically enriching, and professionally engaging environment for all students interested in genetics and genomics. The Club aims to foster a deeper understanding of genetic principles, current research in molecular biology, and the ethical dimensions of genetic technologies through educational initiatives, hands-on workshops, speaker events, and collaborative research opportunities. The Club shall:

1. Promote interest in the field of genetics, molecular biology, biotechnology, and related disciplines.
  2. Provide opportunities for students to explore career paths in genetics through panels, networking, and mentorship.
  3. Facilitate access to genetic research through journal clubs, skill-building workshops (e.g., CRISPR, PCR, bioinformatics), and collaborative projects.
  4. Engage students in meaningful discussions around genetic ethics, public health policy, and emerging technologies such as gene editing and personalized medicine.
  5. Create a supportive space for students to prepare for graduate programs, medical school, and other professional pathways related to genetics.
  6. Collaborate with other science-based and interdisciplinary student groups to foster community and innovation across fields.
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## **Article 3: Membership**

Membership in the Club is open to all students at the University of Toronto – Mississauga (UTM), regardless of background or academic major, who have an interest in genetics and agree to support the aims and values of the Club. Membership is categorized as:

- **General Members:** Any UTM student who joins the Club, attends events, and wishes to be involved.
- **Executive Members:** Students elected to serve in leadership roles within the Club.
- **Volunteers/Associates:** Members who assist in organizing and running events but do not hold elected positions.

Student members are permitted to run, nominate, and vote in elections and constitutional amendments. External members do not hold the aforementioned rights. All members must register with a designated executive by submitting their full name and a valid email address.

The membership for this club is free, except that there are special events with associated costs.

Any member of the club may apply for a refund within one (1) month of becoming a member. No refunds are permitted 30 days after the election periods.

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#### **Article 4: Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee shall be composed of the following roles, to be elected annually:

**President:** Oversees club operations, represents the club at official functions, and ensures alignment with the Club's mission.

**Vice President:** Assists the President and coordinates internal club activities and communications.

**Treasurer:** Manages the Club's finances, budgets, and UTMSU funding applications.

**Academic and Research Director:** Leads journal clubs, facilitates student research engagement, and curates academic content.

**Marketing and Events Director:** Handles social media, promotional content, and visual materials.

The group may appoint Directors or Coordinators for various committees such as social committee, publicity committee, and so on; however, such positions do not hold executive decision making authority.

Note that only the president and the vice president will be the only people responsible for bookings of University space, rentals of University equipment, and use of other University services.

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## **Article 5 : Elections**

The Executive Committee shall establish an Elections Committee and appoint one (1) Senior Election Officer (SEO) from the general student membership to oversee and administer the annual elections, which shall be held in March. All members of the Elections Committee must remain impartial and are required to disclose any and all potential conflicts of interest.

The SEO shall accept nominations exclusively from student members of the group. All nominees for executive positions must be student members in good standing and must have held membership for at least one (1) month prior to the start of the nomination period, which begins before March.

The SEO shall determine and announce three (3) voting dates, to occur before March 30th. These dates must be on weekdays and must be communicated to the membership at least two (2) weeks in advance.

On voting days, the SEO shall provide each eligible student member with a paper ballot and instruct them to place their completed ballot into a secure, enclosed ballot box.

To prepare for a potential tie, the SEO shall designate one (1) member of the Executive Committee to cast a sealed tiebreaker ballot prior to the vote. In the event of a tie for any executive position, one of the two appointed Scrutinizers shall break the seal and count the tiebreaker ballot to determine the outcome.

Once voting concludes, the SEO shall count the ballots. The candidate receiving the highest number of votes for each position shall be declared elected. The SEO shall then prepare and submit a written report of the election results to both the Executive Committee and the general membership.

Voting by proxy is not permitted. External (non-student) members are not eligible to nominate candidates or vote in the election.

Only student members who have paid all applicable membership fees and have been in good standing for a minimum of thirty (30) days prior to the election dates are eligible to vote.

Executive terms shall commence on May 1st and conclude on April 30th of the following year.

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## **Article 6 : Finances**

The Treasurer shall maintain accurate and up-to-date records of all income and expenditures. A financial report outlining the group's financial status shall be presented by the Treasurer at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Any expenditure exceeding one hundred dollars (\$100.00) must be approved by a majority vote of the Executive Committee during an executive meeting.

The group's executives and members shall not engage in activities that are primarily commercial in nature. This does not prohibit the collection of membership fees to cover operational expenses, charging fees for specific activities, programs, or events, or conducting legitimate fundraising efforts. However, the group shall not engage in activities that would make it function as a commercial entity on campus, shall not sell goods or services for profit when such profit is used for purposes outside of the organization's mandate, and shall not pay salaries to any of its officers.

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## **Article 7 : Meetings**

### **A) Annual General Meetings (AGMs):**

The group shall hold at least two (2) general meetings per academic year—once in each term.

The Executive Committee shall announce the meeting dates at least two (2) weeks in advance. AGMs will serve to review the group's annual activity plan, present the financial report, and discuss or vote on any proposed constitutional amendments.

All motions presented at an AGM require a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote from the student members in attendance to pass. If multiple motions are proposed on the same issue, the one receiving the most votes shall be considered passed.

B) Executive Committee Meetings:

The Executive Committee shall meet at least once per month. Meeting dates and times will be scheduled by a member of the Executive Committee.

Quorum for Executive Committee meetings shall be defined as 50% plus one (1) of the current executive members.

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**Article 8: Termination of Executives or General Members**

Any club member, including executives, who engages in conduct that significantly harms the interests of the club or its members—such as failing to disclose a significant or ongoing conflict of interest—may be considered for removal.

The member in question shall be notified and given the opportunity to present a defense before a vote is held.

A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the student members present at a general meeting is required to approve the removal. If removed, the member shall have the right to appeal the decision before the general membership. The outcome of the appeal, determined by a simple majority vote of the general student membership, shall be final.

If removal is upheld, the individual will forfeit all club membership privileges. In the case of executive members, this includes termination from both their executive role and general membership in the club.

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## **Article 9: Amendments**

Any student member of the club may propose an amendment to this constitution. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for facilitating the amendment process, including placing proposed amendments on the agenda for discussion at a General Meeting.

All proposed constitutional amendments must be voted on at an Annual General Meeting (AGM). A two-thirds ( $2/3$ ) majority vote of the student members in attendance is required for the amendment to pass.

Upon approval, the Executive Committee shall formally adopt the revised constitution and submit the updated document to the appropriate University offices (e.g., the Centre for Student Engagement) within two (2) weeks.