

What **PSYPAG** is and why it's good to get involved

What is PsyPAG?

PsyPAG (**Psychology Postgraduate Affairs Group**) is a national organisation for all UK psychology postgraduates and trainees (working towards Chartership). Membership is free and automatic. PsyPAG is run voluntarily by an elected committee, which any member can be voted on to.

The aims of PsyPAG include: providing support to members, representing postgraduate interests, and acting as a vehicle for communication between postgraduates. PsyPAG achieves these aims by organising an annual conference, hosting workshops on topics such as statistics, teaching etc, and publishing our journal 'PsyPAG Quarterly', which is distributed free to all psychology postgraduates in the UK (if you don't receive it, email quarterly@psypag.co.uk to arrange delivery). The committee is made up of representatives for most of the British Psychological Society (BPS) subsystems (Divisions/Sections/Branches) as well as the core committee members such as Chair, Treasurer etc.

2008 is PsyPAG's 23rd year. In that time, we have grown from a small group into an important resource for the psychology community. There are currently 35 members on the committee, many holding more than one position. We are pleased to publish that a number of reps have completed their time in office, meaning there are several committee positions now available.

Committee positions are available for 1 year, with the option of continuing for a second year without standing for re-election. This year there are a number of vacant positions (though some have co-opted representatives), and we invite you to join us. This leaflet is designed to provide all the information you need prior to joining the committee, but if you need any more details, please contact Laura McGrath at vicechair@psypag.co.uk.

Why become a representative?

Becoming a PsyPAG rep is a great opportunity to make connections with renowned professionals in your research area. Sitting on boards and committees can give you 'insider' information and is a great learning opportunity. You attend the three PsyPAG committee meetings each year, which is a great opportunity to network with other postgraduates, and find out about different psychology departments across the UK. Being a representative also looks good on your CV and may be the bit of experience that makes you stand out from other candidates at interviews.

What does a representative do?

Subsection (Division/Section/Branch) & Board Representatives

Subsection & Board reps attend all committee meetings (or as many as possible) of the relevant subsection/board and represent postgraduate interests at these. There are usually 3 to 6 meetings a year. You will mainly be asked to provide input on events, postgraduate prizes and bursaries, and may also be asked to help with workshops, conferences etc. run by the subsection. Reps then feed back any relevant information to the PsyPAG committee at our meetings.

Quarterly Editors

The Quarterly is PsyPAG's main method of communicating with the wider psychology postgraduate community. Editors take responsibility for one issue each year, plus proofread & edit a couple of articles each quarter, depending on the submission rates. You need to have a broad interest in psychology and be quite well organised. Although most of the time you read articles as they come in by email, the month before an issue is due can be quite pressured. The format of the Quarterly has changed recently, with a new glossy cover, but there is lots of scope for change, if you fancy a challenge.

How do you become a rep?

The best way is to stand at the annual AGM, held each year during the summer. The AGM is very relaxed, however if there are multiple applicants you will be asked to give a brief statement on who you are, why you are interested in the position, and what you will contribute if elected. It is a good idea to have something prepared, just in case. You and the other applicants will then be asked to leave, and a vote will be taken. You may hold up to 3 positions on the committee.

Throughout the year, members can be co-opted onto the committee into a vacant position, though they will have to be elected at the following AGM. If you would like to join the committee later in the year, contact John Hyland, Information Officer on **info@psypag.co.uk**.

What happens next?

A meeting will be held the day after the AGM to introduce new members to each other, and explain what you need to do next. Before the next meeting you will be expected to have contacted the committee you represent (aided by your predecessor, or the Information Officer if there isn't one), and maybe have attended one of their meetings. You will be added onto the PsyPAG mailing list (a Yahoo Group) and Message Board which enables us to keep in touch. The Yahoo Group site contains the Handbook and Constitution, which you should also read before the next meeting.

Email applications

If you would like to find out more about vacant positions, express your interest in a position, or if you can't attend the AGM but would like to get involved with PsyPAG, you can apply by email. Please email the Vice Chair, Laura McGrath, on **vicechair@psypag.co.uk**, with the following information: your name; which positions you're interested in (up to three) and why. Please put 'PsyPAG vacant position' in the subject line.

Vacant positions

Any interested postgraduates can still be co-opted until the next AGM for the following vacant positions:

Division of Clinical Psychology
Division of Counselling Psychology
Psychology of Women Section
Psychotherapy Section
Qualitative Methods Section
Coaching Psychology
Wessex and Wight Branch