A quick reference guide for the Terms of Reference (ToR)
Key points of the 2021 ToR in FAQ format
Full version accessible at https://groups.oist.jp/sac/terms-reference

What are the Terms of Reference (ToR)?

The Terms of Reference is a defining document for the Student Assembly (SA), which is colloquially termed the student body. It is not part of the Policies, Rules, and Procedures (PRP) but acts as a constitution detailing what all members should do and, more specifically, what the responsibilities of the officer positions are. This 12-page document also contains election procedures, complaint procedures, and the right to opt out of the Student Assembly.

What is the Student Assembly (SA)?

The Student Assembly is all PhD students, research interns, special research students (SRS), visiting research students (VRS), junior research fellows (JRF), and communication fellows. All of these groups are connected to the OIST Graduate School but lack the full rights and privileges of employees. Student Assembly membership is automatic and has no requirements, but an opt-out option exists. All members are allowed to attend Student Assembly Meetings and consult with the officers of the Student Assembly, but only students and SRS may hold or vote for officer positions. JRFs may also vote in elections but may not run for any position.

Who are the officers of the Student Assembly and what should they be doing?

The officers are 18 elected Student Assembly members that have responsibilities specified within the Terms of Reference (Article 3) as well as briefly, and non-exhaustively, written here. They can be divided into three categories as seen below. The Council Officers collectively form the Student Council.

- Council Officers:
    - **Chair** - Runs the Student Council and Student Assembly Meetings. Updates the Student Assembly and gives a speech at the Welcome Ceremony.
    - **Secretary** - Arranges above meetings and records their minutes. Handles the Student Assembly treasury.
    - **Communications Officer** - Promotes communication between officers and the wider Student Assembly. Manages the website and social media presence.
    - **Academic Officer** - Assists in academic affairs and interacts with the Graduate School. Organizes panel sessions.
    - **Welfare Officer** - Assists in welfare issues and interacts with Ganjuu and the Graduate School. Involved with Peer Supporters and Student Buddy System.
    - **Diversity Officer** - Promotes diversity and inclusion as well as advocates for under-represented groups. Attends OIST GEDI Committee and reports back.
    - **Health and Safety Officer** - Increases safety awareness and supports related initiatives. Attends Health and Safety Committee meetings and reports back.

- ○ **Faculty Assembly Representative** - Acts as a non-voting representative in the Faculty Assembly and reports back. Relays motions between Faculty and Student Assemblies.
  - ○ **Events Officer** - Coordinates OIST events and interacts with the Admission and Registrar Section. Joins committees and appoints a Graduation Ball Committee.

- ● Associate Officers:
  - ○ **IT Representative** - Acts as a representative in the IT Committee and Scientific Computing Committee and reports back.
  - ○ **Gender Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (GEDI) Representatives**[1,2] - Act as representatives in the OIST GEDI Committee and report back.
  - ○ **Culture and External Relations Representative** - Acts as a representative in the Culture Committee and relations with other universities and student organizations. Interacts with the Communication and Public Relations Division.
  - ○ **CDC Representative**[1,3] - Acts as a representative in the Child Development Center (CDC) Board of Governors and reports back.
  - ○ **Sustainability Representative** - Gathers Student Assembly opinions and interacts with sections involved in sustainability initiatives. Reports back on meetings.
  - ○ **Academic Deputies** - Assist the Academic Officer in matters related to research assistantships before (**Junior**) and after (**Senior**) proposal examination.

- ● Neither council nor associate:
  - ○ **Constitutional Officer** - Interprets the Terms of Reference (ToR) and oversees officer elections. Holds a Constitutional Survey and Retreat prior to amendments. Holds voting for the removal of officers from position.

1. This is a two-year position. 2. There are two GEDI Representatives with one elected each year. 3. The CDC Representative is elected by Student Assembly members that are parents.

How are the officers of the Student Assembly decided?

The officers are nominated and elected by the Student Assembly. The Council Officers and Constitutional Officer are elected at the beginning of the calendar year while the Associate Officers are elected in the following month in a process overseen by the incoming Constitutional Officer. Most positions are occupied for one year, but officers may be removed from the position early in a process overseen by the Constitutional Officer, or by the Chair if there is a conflict of interest or breach of duty (Article 3, Section 24). A person may only hold one Council or Constitutional Officer position in any given year and must have sufficient time remaining at OIST to fill the position. Responsibilities for vacant positions may be assumed by the incumbent officer or distributed amongst other officers by the Chair until another election is held.

Can the Terms of Reference (ToR) be changed?

Yes. There is an amendments procedure held once per year for proposed amendments. Any Student Assembly member may propose amendments. These proposed amendments are then subject to ratification by a two-thirds majority in votes from at least half of the Student Assembly. Examples of previous amendments are the removal and addition of officer positions as well as the inclusion of JRFs and communication fellows in the Student Assembly.