**Organizational structure – Open Science Student Support Group**

**Summary**

Our group structure is based on a decentralized organizational structure. All members are invited and encouraged to participate in decision making in the group and to plan events and activities for this group based on their own interests and availability. A team of organizers fulfill support roles to help members realize their ideas, facilitate decision making, maintain the basic structure of the group, and keep everything running smoothly.

​​**Members**

Everyone who joins our Slack workspace or email list is considered to be a member of the group. As a member, you are invited to all general meetings and activities of the group, have access ​​to the resources and shared knowledge/experience of our group, and have the chance to participate in group projects and the shaping of our group. These are all just optional: apart from following our community guidelines, there are no expectations of members, so you are free to engage how much you want and are able to.

**Group activities**

As a group, we engage in multiple fixed, semi-fixed, and flexible ways. We hold general meetings every four weeks to reflect on how things are going in the group, discuss structural matters and anything else anyone thinks we should talk about as a group. These meetings are open to all members. We also organize events that are open to all students, research assistants, post-docs, and sometimes faculty, where we learn about open science topics through interactive, diverse formats (presentations, discussions, workshops, etc.). These events happen at semi-fixed intervals -every two weeks- but the exact time may vary and additional events might be held as well. Our Slack workspace is open for members to engage in discussions, sharing of resources, and social check-ins at any time. All members are also invited to propose projects and find collaborators through Slack (go to the #projects channel to see what others are working on and/or to propose your own ideas), and work on open science-related projects together.

**Organizational roles**

There are two types of organizing roles in this group: event planning roles and support roles. Event planning roles involve organizing an event for our group with 1 or more other people, and can be on any topic and in any format as long as it aligns with our goals and values. Depending on the type of event, this organizing role would likely amount to a commitment of a couple hours a week starting at about 1 month pre-event, and you can decide when and how many events you’d like to help organize. Support roles involve a smaller but more consistent time commitment of max 1-2 hours per week for a semester. These roles include administrative work, event coordination, community support, promotion, and tech support.

*Event planning roles*

As an event planner, you take on the organization of one event at a time, so it involves a short-term commitment. You have the freedom and responsibility to create the content and structure of your event according to your own ideas and preferences, as long as they fit within the [vision and values](https://osf.io/htpg2/) of our group. You don’t need to be an expert on the topic you organize around, just have an interest in learning more - we’re all still learning in this space so if you have some time to look into a topic and share what you’ve found with the rest of us that is a great place to start. You are also welcome to organize an event where you invite someone with more experience to come talk to us. We have [a separate document](https://osf.io/mbxu4/) with tips and guidance on how to get started with organizing your event, including ideas for formats you can use. Organizers in support roles can help you with the logistics, promotion and technical aspects of your event.

We recommend organizing an event with 2-4 people, so you have others to discuss with and divide tasks, however, you can organize an event on your own as well. If you’d like to find collaborators, you can post on Slack in the #events channel to invite others to join you. Once you have an idea for a session, you should go to [our schedule](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1lVpZ3pljEu9A6WsqLUFKDL--yv3yvycRhqrCxfswgdo/edit?usp=drivesdk) of planned and previous sessions and fill in some information about the event you’d like to organize at the time you’d like to have it. We recommend you pick one of the proposed times that are open in the schedule, as these are based on member availability polls and class schedules, but you are free to pick a time of your own as well. After that, the event coordinator will be in touch to share some resources and see if you need any help.

All events should have a main facilitator, who welcomes people into our space and guides everyone through the activities of the event. We recommend one of the event planners takes on this role, as they are already familiar with the session material, but you can invite someone outside of the event planning team as well. If your event includes a presentation, this can be given either by one of the event planners for that event or someone else. Inviting and confirming a main facilitator, zoom and breakout facilitators and presenter(s) if applicable is the responsibility of the event planning team. We’ve created [this template](https://osf.io/235ks/) including typical tasks and an approximate timeline for organizing an event that you can use to plan your event. As an event planner, you are not expected to, but welcome to join our general meetings.

*Support roles*

As an organizer in a support role, you take on a small task to keep the group running smoothly for the duration of a semester. Ideally, there are at least two people working together to fulfill each support role, together forming an organizing unit, so they can discuss and make decisions together outside of general meetings and divide tasks. There is no maximum number of people that can work together to fulfill each support role, since organizing units can simply expand their function and take on more tasks when more people join. Units can do so on their own initiative, as long as the expansions fit within our group vision and values. If an organizing unit becomes larger than 4, they can consider splitting the function of the unit and form two separate units to maintain the agility of our organizing structure (e.g. it’s easier to plan a meeting with 2 vs 5 people). If a support role organizer is unable to fulfill their basic responsibilities, they should find someone to take over their tasks for that semester. Ideally, at least one person from each organizing unit would be present at each general meeting. All organizers in support role functions should read our group vision, values, and accountability statements before stepping into a support role, as well as reflect on how their actions in certain roles support the objectives of our group.

Below are the role descriptions for the minimum support roles we need to keep the group going. These descriptions include only the base function for each unit which can always be expanded based on the capacity and interest of the organizers within each organizing unit.

**Promotion.** The base function of the promotions unit is to disseminate materials that members of the group (e.g. event planners) want to share with their target audience through the available channels, such as email lists, Slack workspaces, Facebook groups, and other select groups on campus (e.g. Honours students). In terms of EDI, this unit should at a minimum reflect on who our promotion materials are/are not reaching, and implement ways to address any gaps.

**Event coordination.** First point of contact for members who want to organize an event for the group. The base function of the event coordination unit is to facilitate the creation of event planning teams aprovide event planners with the necessary materials and support to organize their event. This unit is NOT responsible for finding event planners and facilitators or organizing content themselves. In terms of EDI, this unit should at a minimum provide event planners with resources aimed at making events inclusive (e.g. materials on accessibility considerations and land acknowledgements).

**Tech support.** First point of contact for members who have trouble with any of the platforms we use (Slack, OSF, GitHub). The base function of the tech support unit is to help members use our platforms effectively and keep our platforms up to date. In terms of EDI, this unit should at a minimum reflect on who is/isn’t using different platforms and provide opportunities to learn how to effectively use platforms to members of all backgrounds.

**Community.** First point of contact for members who have concerns/complaints about anything that happened in our group. The base function of the community unit is to foster a welcoming atmosphere in our group, moderate our online spaces, uphold our values, and keep us accountable. In addition to welcoming and processing feedback, this unit should also actively seek feedback from all members. In all these functions, this unit should use an EDI lens and take into account the intersecting identities of the members it interacts with.

**Admin.** First point of contact for anyone within or outside the group who has general questions or concerns, or does not know who to contact. The base function of the admin unit is to facilitate the central streams of communication in the group (i.e. make sure organizers are aware of and have access to important documents), schedule general meetings, facilitate the taking and distribution of notes at general meetings through maintenance of a roster, and facilitate transitions from one semester to the next. This unit is NOT responsible for facilitating or taking notes themselves. In terms of EDI, this unit should at a minimum reflect on the accessibility and inclusivity of general organizing practices (e.g. general meetings, decision making) and address any issues that come up.

*Decision making*

Our decentralized organizational structure means that many decisions can be made by members and organizers independently, as long as they don’t violate our vision and values. You can walk through this decision tree to determine who, if anyone, you need to involve in any specific decision you’re facing as a member/organizer of this group. For decisions that involve all organizers and/or the larger OSSSG community, there are several channels that can be used. For decisions that are fairly straightforward/have limited options or that are time sensitive, you can create a Cloverpop poll on Slack to invite input from others. Decisions that are not time sensitive and/or require deeper discussion can be brought to the monthly general meetings for discussion. For decisions that only involve your team (e.g. an event planning team or support organizer unit) you can use the format of decision making your team prefers.

**The process of filling organizer roles**

At the end of each semester, organizers in the admin position will reach out to the organizers in support roles and ask if they would like to continue in their current roles. Everyone is welcome to stay in the role they were in, switch to another role or step out of support roles completely. At the start of each semester, a call for new organizers will be posted on Slack and sent out through the email list. Ideally, at least one person from both the admin and event coordination continues into the new semester, in which case the admin person will send out the call for new support role organizers, while the event coordinator person will send out the call for new event planners. If such a person is not available, this task will be delegated to someone else by admin before they step out of their role in the previous semester. Everyone who applies to be an organizer will be accepted into the role of their choice, though admin might request new organizers to fill the roles that are most needed.