



## Hi, I'm John Wootton.

I started here at Keele in 2009 and since then I have completed a bachelor's degree, a part-time taught master's degree and now I'm a 1<sup>st</sup> year PhD candidate and a graduate teaching assistant for Philosophy. Having experienced both taught and research postgraduate courses, I have a rich perspective to draw from when representing your interests on behalf of the KPA (should I be successful).

I firmly believe in living my values and will bring this belief to the position of KPA Secretary and allow it to fuel everything that I do. The KPA is an incredibly important part of Keele because it provides an essential platform for the distinctive voice of postgraduates to be heard. I have personally benefitted from the KPA from the policy changes that it influences within the University, the support that it provides (be that financial or personal) and through the wonderful postgraduate community that it has shaped. For these reasons and more, I would relish the chance to be a part of this institution and further its goals to make your time at Keele a fairer, successful and more enjoyable experience.

## What are my main focuses?

**Continuation Fee Reduction** – Currently this year the KPA has succeeded in changing the way fees are charged for students who need extra time to complete their work beyond the usual course length. Now you will only be charged pro-rata for the time you use rather than paying upfront for a whole year. Talks are taking place to get the continuation fees reduced and this is something I will whole-heartedly take on if successful. Studying does not happen in a bubble and sometimes life can get in the way, when this happens you should not have to pay overly expensive fees to continue; education is for everyone.

**Community** – It is not uncommon for postgraduates to feel the stings of isolation given the likelihood of a sharp shift in lifestyle. This may have occurred due to recently moving to Keele or it may be that everyone you knew has left if you have continued on from an undergraduate degree. This can leave students feeling disconnected and deflated. Whilst this effect is not limited to research students, medical students, part-time students or mature students within the PGR community, these groups have specific challenges that can prevent them from integrating into the community as seamlessly as it might be hoped. I aim to coordinate with student representatives and activity officers from both the SU and KPA in order to find new ways to help facilitate opportunities for everyone to engage with the vibrant community of Keele.

**Green Thinking** – One of the many benefits of Keele is its green surrounding and progressive outlook towards climate change and sustainable living. As a result, I believe that it everyone’s responsibility to act in accordance with this ethos and to help maintain the beautiful grounds. In line with this, I aim to take on some of the responsibilities from the recently dissolved position of ‘Environmental Officer’ with a view to getting like-minded people from appropriate societies more involved with the KPA.

**Communication** – As Secretary, it is a key responsibility to keep postgraduates in the loop and communication channels flowing smoothly. I will look to improve the initial communication to students to help orientate them upon starting their course so that they can hit the ground running both academically and personally. I will also address the communication issues across departments regarding KPA bursary funding for which there are confusions. This is important so that everyone knows what funding is available to them and when.

Throughout my time at Keele I have used my voice at Keele as an ambassador, an e-mentor, as a post-graduate and as a Philosopher, now give me a chance to use my voice to represent you and your Keele experience.

Thanks for reading and no matter how you vote I wish you all good luck with your studies and your time at Keele.

John Wootton

