

HERTFORD COLLEGE

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

MIDDLE COMMON ROOM CONSTITUTION

Last Amended Michaelmas Term 2021

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A. DEFINITIONS

Unless otherwise indicated, in this Constitution the following terms have the following meanings:

- a) "Academic Course" refers to a course of study conducted at the University of Oxford unless otherwise specified;
- b) "Associate Member" means an individual who is a member of the MCR by virtue of Section D-II below, and "Associate Membership" shall be interpreted accordingly;
- c) "College" means Hertford College in the University of Oxford
- d) "Committee" means the MCR Committee, unless otherwise specified;
- e) "Committee Officer" means an individual acting as an officer of the MCR Committee, other than an Interim Officer, unless otherwise specified;
- f) "Constitution" refers to the contents of this document;
- g) "Fixture" means any item other than consumable goods;
- h) "Full Member" means an individual who is a member of the MCR by virtue of Section D-I below, and "Full Membership" shall be interpreted accordingly;
- i) "Full Term" means the period of time starting on Sunday of First Week and ending on Saturday of Eighth Week;
- j) "General Meeting" means a general meeting of the MCR;
- k) "Honorary Member" means an individual who is a member of the MCR by virtue of Article 7 below;
- l) "Interim Officer" means an individual elected as a replacement for a Committee Officer under Articles 20 and 21 below;
- m) "JCR" means Junior Common Room;
- n) "Junior Member" means an individual deemed to be a junior member of the College by the Governing Body of the College;
- o) "Mature Undergraduate" means an undergraduate member of college who is aged 21 or over at matriculation.
- p) "MCR" means the Middle Common Room;
- q) "Member" means an Associate Member, Full Member or Honorary Member;
- r) "Returning Officer" (RO) means an individual designated by Article 30 below, responsible for receiving postal votes, organising online voting, nominations, and any other correspondence pertaining to an election
- s) "Standing Orders" refers to the contents of the supplementary document that provides additional information and/or clarification of Constitutional provisions stated herewith.

B. MISSION STATEMENT

Hertford College Middle Common Room is the body of graduate students within Hertford College. It exists to better the living, working, and social conditions of graduate students of the College, providing a community in which all members shall feel welcome. It acknowledges and appreciates the wide range of creeds and backgrounds contained within it, aiming to be sensitive to the needs of all.

A democratically elected committee of Members are tasked with running the MCR. It is the responsibility of the committee to ensure that the MCR acts in accordance with this constitution, as well as to represent the MCR in wider College and University bodies.

C. DOCUMENT OVERVIEW

All operations carried out within the MCR must be done so in line with this Constitution, in line with the Standing Orders, and in line with the Mission Statement given above. These documents provide the framework within which the MCR must operate. The structure of these documents are as follows:

- This document is the Constitution, the central core of the MCR governance. The Constitution may only be modified by Special Motion in a General Meeting.
- The Standing Orders are a set of additional articles and forms referenced in the main text. The Standing Orders may only be modified by a Special Motion in a General Meeting.

This document, in its entirety, must be available to MCR members at all times, both electronically and through a printed copy stored in a public place in the MCR. In accordance with the Education act 1968, the Governing Body of College should be made aware of any changes to this document.

D. MEMBERSHIP OF THE MCR

D-I FULL MEMBERSHIP

1. The following Junior Members of Hertford College are entitled to Full Membership of the MCR:
 - a. Those who are graduates of any university;
 - b. Those who are engaged in any advanced academic course;
 - c. Those selected in accordance with Article 2 below;
 - d. Those whom the Governing Body of the College and the MCR consider should be entitled to Full Membership;
 - e. All JCR members who have completed 9 terms of study at Hertford College;
 - f. The President of the JCR.
2. Subject to Articles 3 - 5 below, Junior Members entitled to Full Membership are deemed to be Full Members.
3. Full Members have the following rights:
 - a. To exercise unrestricted access to all social, computing and other facilities of the MCR;
 - b. To vote in elections and at General Meetings;
 - c. To attend, speak, and submit motions at General Meetings;
 - d. To access the MCR Taxi Service as outlined in Standing Orders Section E;
 - e. To bring guests into the communal areas of the MCR. Guests must be accompanied at all times by that Full Member.
4. Full Members have the following responsibilities:
 - a. To not wilfully cause damage to the MCR facilities;
 - b. To not wilfully bring the MCR into disrepute;
 - c. To always accompany guests brought into the MCR;
 - d. To pay any monies owed to the MCR through battels in a timely fashion;
5. Any Full Member may withdraw their Membership for the current academic year by informing the MCR Secretary by Friday of Second Week in Michaelmas Term. Withdrawal from Full Membership removes the rights bestowed upon a Junior Member by Section 3 above, but does not deprive a Junior Member of any other service provided by the College to Junior Members.
6. Full Membership of the MCR expires when the member ceases to be a Junior Member of College.
7. Any individual may become an Honorary Member if elected as such by a General Meeting.
 - a. To be eligible for consideration for Honorary Membership, a person must have, through their actions, consistently and significantly benefitted Hertford MCR over a period of time
 - b. Honorary Members have the right to exercise full and unrestricted access to all social, computing and other facilities of the MCR
 - c. Other than Section 7(b) above, Honorary Members do not enjoy the further rights of Full or Associate members
 - d. Honorary Membership persists for life or until resigned by the Honorary Member, or until revoked as per Article 7(e) below
 - e. Honorary Membership may be suspended for a period of up to eight weeks by motion at a Committee Meeting, and permanently revoked by vote on a motion at a General Meeting.

D-II ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

8. The MCR may consider for Associate Membership, unless in conflict with Article 9, the following:
 - a. Any former Full Member;
 - b. The spouse or partner of a Full Member;
 - c. Any postdoctoral research student;
 - d. Members of the SCR who would benefit from MCR membership;
 - e. Any applicant who demonstrates a desire for a connection with the MCR, who would benefit from a connection with Hertford College, and who can demonstrate sponsorship from two or more members of the MCR; and
 - f. Any Mature Undergraduate junior member of the College.
9. The MCR may not consider for Associate Membership any person who is a Member, Full or otherwise, of any other Middle Common Room and who does not come under article D8(a) above.
10. Once received, Associate Membership applications shall be individually voted upon by a secret ballot at the next General Meeting.
 - a. If the appointment of an Associate Member would pose safety or welfare concerns to an existing member of the MCR, these concerns can be relayed to a Senior Member of the College Welfare Team, who may decide to veto this application.
11. Associate Membership applications must be made in accordance with Standing Orders, Supplementary Document G:
 - a. Any person eligible for Associate Membership who wishes to become an Associate Member must pay an annual fee, or pro rata, for using MCR facilities;
 - b. The level of the annual fee must match the per student capitation paid by the College to the MCR for Full (graduate) Members;
 - c. In unique circumstances where an Associate Member or prospective Associate Member is unable to take full advantage of the MCR due to circumstances outside their control, or in case of financial hardship, the Committee may discount or waive the obligation for an individual Associate Member or prospective Associate Member to pay the annual fee; The exercise of discretion under this provision shall be reported at the General Meeting following approval by the Committee. The identity of the applicant shall remain confidential;
 - d. In cases where an individual has significantly and consistently benefitted the MCR in an ongoing manner, a motion at a General Meeting may vote to waive the obligation for an Associate Member to pay the annual fee. Any such instances of this fee waiving must be reported at the next General Meeting;
12. Associate Members have the following rights:
 - a. To exercise unrestricted access to all communal spaces of the MCR;
 - b. To attend and speak at General Meetings;
 - c. To propose and vote on motions at General Meetings, excluding the right to vote on the Special Motions referred to in Articles 71(b) and 71(c) of this Constitution;
 - d. To bring up to two guests into the communal areas of the MCR. Guests must be accompanied at all times by that Associate Member;
 - e. To use the MCR Taxi service subject to the same terms and conditions as outlined in Standing Orders Section E.
13. Associate Members have the following responsibilities:
 - a. To not wilfully cause damage to the MCR facilities;
 - b. To not wilfully bring the MCR into disrepute;
 - c. To not bring more than two guests into the MCR without express written permission of a Group One Officer;

- d. To pay any monies owed to the MCR through battels in a timely fashion.
14. Associate Membership expires at the end of the Summer Vacation or at the moment that the Full Member who sponsored the application to become an Associate Member under Standing Orders Supplementary Document G ceases to be a Full Member, whichever comes first.

E. MCR GOVERNANCE

E-I THE COMMITTEE

15. The Committee consists of the following Committee Officers:
 - a. President, Secretary, Treasurer (“Group One Officers”);
 - b. Academic Affairs Officer, IT Officer, Food and Housing Officer, Social Secretary, Steward, Welfare Officer, Queer and Women's Officer, up to two Bar Managers (“Group Two Officers”);
 - c. Sports Representative, Arts Representative, CCE (Charities, Community, and the Environment) Representative, Outreach Officer, a number of Equalities Representatives, a number of Sommeliers (“Group Three Officers”)
16. Committee Officer’s duties and reparations are listed in Standing Orders B
17. Group One Officers are expected to ensure that their academic course does not involve any significant absence from Oxford during Full Term throughout their period of office.
18. Group One and Group Two Committee Officers elected in annual elections shall take office at noon on Sunday of the 10th week of the Trinity Term in which they are elected. Officers elected in a by-election shall take office immediately following the election.
19. A Full Member who is elected to a position in a by-election in Trinity Term may continue in that position for the next academic year without re-election.
20. If the President resigns:
 - a. The Secretary shall act as an Interim Officer in the President's place; or
 - b. Where the Secretary is unable for any reason to act as the Interim Officer, the Committee shall elect another Committee Officer as Interim Officer.
21. If any Group One Officer other than the President resigns, the Committee will elect an Interim Officer in their place to ensure their duties are fulfilled.
22. If a Group Two Officer resigns, the Committee may elect an Interim Officer.
 - a. An Interim Officer will carry out the duties of the vacant office for the period between the resignation and the election of a replacement Officer by the MCR in a by-election held in accordance with Article 32 below;
 - b. Except where otherwise indicated, all provisions of this Constitution relating to a Committee Officer apply equally to an Interim Officer elected to replace that Officer.
23. Unless confirmed in office by the MCR in a by-election held under Article 32 below, an Interim Officer must leave office immediately following the election of a replacement Committee Officer in such a by-election.
24. No-one is eligible for election as a Committee Officer or Interim Officer unless they are either:
 - a. A Full Member whose Full Membership is not due to expire under Article 7 above during the full period of office; or who has agreed to apply for Associate Membership upon expiration of full membership; or
 - b. An Associate Member whose Associate Membership is not due to expire under Article 12 above during the full period of office or an Associate Member who plans to return in the

following academic year (pending application approval), in which case the Associate Member shall be eligible only to be elected to a Group Three office or the following Group Two positions: Welfare Officer, Queer and Women's Officer, Bar Manager or Steward.

25. If a Committee Officer or Interim Officer:
 - a. Ceases to be a Junior Member, a Full Member, or an Associate Member during their period of office;
 - b. is the subject of a motion of no-confidence passed at a General Meeting under Article 71(e) below; or
 - c. is expelled from the Committee under Article 81 below,the Committee or Interim Officer shall be deemed to have resigned forthwith.
26. Except when serving as an Interim Officer, no person can hold more than one Committee office at one time.
27. A person who is a Committee Officer otherwise than by virtue of being an Interim Officer may not stand for a by-election.

E-II COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

28. Annual elections for all Committee offices must take place in Trinity Term each year.
29. If a Committee Officer resigns, a by-election must be held to elect a replacement. A by-election may take place at any time during Full Term.
30. The two Returning Officers are responsible for the conduct of an election.
 - a. A candidate in an election cannot act as a Returning Officer for that election;
 - b. The first Returning Officer is the first individual on the following list who is eligible and able to act as Returning Officer: the President; the Secretary; the Treasurer; any Group II Committee Officer;
 - c. The second Returning Officer is the first individual on the following list who is eligible and able to act as Returning Officer: the President; the Secretary; the Treasurer; any other Committee Officer; any Full Member elected for this purpose by the Committee.
31. Annual elections for Group One and Group Two Officers shall be conducted sequentially, such any individual unsuccessful in gaining Group One Office may then seek to gain Group Two Office.
32. Each election (both annual and by-election) shall comprise, in order:
 - a. An announcement of the election and opening of nominations;
 - b. One week of open nominations, followed by announcement of nominees;
 - c. Hustings, to be held in the MCR;
 - d. One week of voting followed by announcement of results.
33. The announcement of the election and opening of nominations shall include a full description of each position to be filled, as described in Standing Orders Section B.
34. Nominations must include:
 - a. The name of the candidate;
 - b. The office for which they wish to stand;
 - c. The names and signatures of two Full Members who will act as nominators, as well as the date of nomination. Candidates may not nominate themselves.
35. The list of candidates for each position, as well as the date and time of Hustings, shall be announced at the end of the nomination period.

36. Hustings shall be chaired by at least one of the ROs, and be held at a time that does not clash with Chapel, Hall, or any other event. Each candidate shall speak for a time period deemed appropriate by the ROs, and all questions brought by Members for the candidates must be addressed to all candidates.

37. Following the Hustings, voting shall be opened:
 - a. No candidate may stand for election to more than one office within any one Group in the annual elections or in a by-election;
 - b. Voting must be conducted by a preferential voting system (i.e through a single, transferable vote) using a secure online voting system;
 - c. “Re-open Nominations” (RoN) must be a ballot option. A vote cannot be transferred to or from RoN;
 - d. Votes by proxy are not permitted;
 - e. The candidate winning a majority of votes is elected.

38. If:
 - a. There is a tied vote; or
 - b. RoN obtains a majority of the votes;

then a new election must be commenced on the Sunday following the close of balloting in the original election, following the protocols detailed above

39. After balloting closes, the Returning Officers must confirm the results with a senior member of the College. The Returning Officers must notify the MCR of the results of the count within 24 hours of the close of balloting.

E-III COMMITTEE MEETINGS

40. A Committee meeting may only be called by a Group One Officer.

41. If three or more Group Two Officers request, in writing, that a meeting be called, the President, or, in the event of the President's absence, another Group One Officer, shall call the requested meeting.

42. Excepting Article 43 below, at least 72 hours' notice must be given of an upcoming Committee meeting, and the agenda for the meeting shall be circulated at least 48 hours in advance of the time of the meeting.

43. An emergency meeting may be called by Group 1 Officers on 24 hours' notice, as an exception to Section 42 above, only for matters that require immediate resolution in less than 72 hours, in which case the agenda must be circulated at the same time as the notice is given.

44. The quorum for voting at a Committee meeting is 50% of all standing Committee Officers.

45. A Committee meeting must be chaired by the President or, in the President's absence, by the Secretary or, in their joint absence, by the Treasurer.

46. Committee decisions are taken by vote, whereby:
 - a. Each Committee Officer has one vote at Committee meetings. An Interim Officer does not have a vote at Committee meetings in their capacity as Interim Officer;
 - b. Excepting Article 81 below, voting is by simple majority. If there is a tied vote then the Chair shall have the casting vote.

47. The minutes of the Committee meeting must be taken by the Secretary, or by a Committee Officer designated by the Committee. The Secretary or Committee Officer taking the minutes must circulate them to the Committee within 72 hours of the meeting.

E-IV GENERAL MEETINGS

48. A General Meeting cannot be held on a date falling outside Full Term.
49. The President shall call at least two General Meetings in each term.
50. If the MCR has received outstanding unconfirmed applications for Associate Membership then, where reasonably possible, the President shall call at least one General Meeting before the end of 2nd week of any given term, so as to give applicants for Associate Membership a time early on in term at which their application may be voted on.
51. Applicants for Associate Membership shall be invited to participate in the General Meeting at which their application shall be reviewed and voted on, so as they may meet other MCR Members and give an account of their reasons for wishing to join the MCR. Applicants are not required to attend this General Meeting in order to be considered or their application voted upon; if they are unable to attend they may submit a written statement in lieu of a verbal account.
52. The President shall call a General meeting if petitioned in writing to do so by at least 20% of Full Members of the MCR on or before Friday of Sixth Week of any given term. This meeting will be called on a date falling within 16 days of submission of the request.
53. The President must notify the MCR of a General Meeting at least seven days before the date on which the meeting is to be held. The notice must invite members to put forward motions for discussion at the meeting, and include any received applications for Associate Membership to be voted on at that General Meeting.
54. Motions for discussion at a General Meeting must be submitted in writing or by electronic mail to the President at least 72 hours before the scheduled meeting. Each motion must bear the names and signatures of two Full Members (as proposer and seconder, respectively, of the motion).
55. The President must notify the MCR of the agenda for the General Meeting at least 48 hours before the meeting is scheduled to take place.
56. The General meeting must be chaired by the President or, in the President's absence, by the Secretary or, in their joint absence, by the Treasurer.
57. The Chair may move a motion that they relinquish the chairing of the General Meeting to another Full Member.
58. The business of the General Meeting shall include the following:
 - Approval of previous GM minutes
 - Matters arising
 - Announcement of any new Group 3 Officers (if any)
 - Applications for Associate Membership (if any)
 - Reports from Officers
 - Questions to Officers
 - Motions submitted
 - Any other business
 - Date and time of next meeting

59. The minutes of the last General Meeting shall be approved by motion at the General Meeting and signed by the Chair.
60. Members must respect the right of other Members to listen and to take part in discussion at a General Meeting. At the discretion of the Chair, a Special Motion may be put forward to eject from a General Meeting any Member disruptive to the proceedings of the meeting.
61. All comments and questions must be made through the Chair.
62. Points of order to draw the attention of the Chair to violations of this Constitution may be made at any time.
63. If a motion is proposed:
 - a. Members may question the proposer of any motion on the purpose and scope of the motion. The answers must be minuted to aid the understanding of the motion if passed;
 - b. Speeches for and against the motion must be allowed;
 - c. The proposer of any motion may sum up before a motion is put to the vote.
64. The minutes of the General Meeting must be taken by the Secretary, or by another Full Member otherwise designated by the Chair. The Secretary or Full Member taking the minutes must circulate them within 72 hours of the meeting.
65. Amendments may be proposed to any motion or amended motion or to any proposed amendment:
 - a. An amendment must be substantive and not merely formal;
 - b. If the initial proposer of a motion accepts a proposed amendment, it is automatically incorporated into the motion, and the amended motion must be referred to as a motion proposed jointly by the initial proposer and by the Members who proposed the amendment;
 - c. Amendments which are not accepted by the initial proposer of the motion must be discussed and voted on immediately after the substantive amendment is proposed. Where the amendment is accepted by the General Meeting, the proposer of the amendment becomes the proposer of the amended motion.
66. For the purpose of voting on motions, quorum at a General Meeting is fifteen Full Members in attendance and present.
67. Excepting Article 70, voting is by a show of hands. The Chair shall declare whether the motion is carried or defeated.
68. The Chair only has a casting vote.
69. A simple majority is sufficient to pass any motion other than a Special Motion.
70. At the discretion of the Chair, a motion may be put forward that a secret vote be held on any motion.
71. The following motions can only be passed as Special Motions, in accordance with Article 72 below
 - a. A motion under Article 60 above to eject any Member from a General Meeting who is disruptive to the proceedings of the meeting;
 - b. A motion amending the Constitution;
 - c. A motion amending the Standing Orders;
 - d. A motion proposing the use of funds under the General Budget, where those funds are greater than £500;
 - e. A motion of no-confidence in any Committee or Interim Officer.
72. In order to pass, a Special Motion requires a two-thirds majority of those Members who are eligible to vote, in accordance with Article 12(c).

F FINANCIAL GOVERNANCE

73. All financial activities shall be conducted in accordance with the Financial Policy, Standing Orders A.
74. In Trinity Term the Treasurer shall draw up provisional accounts for the year, encompassing spending on the account and the status of MCR facilities, to be included at the final General Meeting of Trinity Term.
 - a. The Spending Account to show all charges to the account itemized, with signatures as to their satisfaction from the College Bursar and the Group One Officers;
 - b. The Asset Account to show the position at the start of the year, any purchases or disposals, and the status of the balance (stored, on loan, lost). To be signed by the Group One Officers.
75. In Michaelmas Term the Treasurer shall update the provisional accounts to include the rest of the financial year, these final accounts to be endorsed by the College Bursar and the Group One Officers
76. If the sale or disposal of any working Fixture of the MCR is proposed, the item must first be offered for sale to Members by auction. The auction must take place in the Octagon during Full Term, and must be conducted by a Committee Officer, who may not bid for any item to be sold.
77. The Treasurer must notify the MCR of the proposed auction at least seven days before the date of the auction. The notice must:
 - a. Announce the level of the minimum acceptable bid (the reserve price), as agreed previously by the Committee; and
 - b. be displayed until the auction takes place.
78. If the Fixture is not sold at the auction, it may be sold or disposed of in any manner the Committee may deem appropriate.
79. Dues paid to the MCR by the College are set by the College by negotiation with the JCR and MCR Presidents.

G DISCIPLINE

80. If the Committee considers that a Member has behaved or is behaving in a manner that is detrimental to the well-being of the MCR, the Committee may vote to exclude that Member from any facility or facilities of the MCR for a period not longer than eight weeks. The Member concerned may appeal to the Tutor for Graduates, who may overturn or modify the decision if, in the view of the Tutor for Graduates, the effect of the decision would result in undue hardship to the Member concerned.
81. The MCR Committee may expel a Committee Officer from office if, at a Committee meeting at which all Group One and Group Two Officers are present, all Officers other than the Committee Officer in question vote in favour of such expulsion. For the purposes of this provision, only those

Committee Officers who hold a Group One or Group Two office otherwise than as Interim Officers must be present.

82. Any exclusions or expulsions in line with Articles 80 and 81 shall be reported by a Group One Officer at the subsequent General Meeting.

H MISCELLANEOUS

83. It is the joint responsibility of the President and Food and Housing Officer to engage College in annual rent negotiations, or in the event of any proposed changes to the terms and conditions on which MCR members take up College accommodation.
84. Housing allocated by College to returning members of the MCR shall be assigned to individuals by ballot in line with Standing Orders Section C.
85. If 5% of Full Members so request, affiliation to any external organisation (including the Oxford Student Union) must be reviewed; but only one such request may be made in relation to any one such organisation in any academic year.
86. The current list of affiliations will be submitted for approval by members annually and that the question of continued affiliation to any particular organisation be decided upon by a secret ballot in which all members are entitled to vote.
87. The list of external affiliations, including charities donated to by the MCR, will be reported to the Governing Body of College.
88. Any Member may raise complaints about the management of the MCR with the President. A Member who is dissatisfied with the handling of such a complaint may take the complaint to the Tutor for Graduates.