

Constitution of the Middle Common Room¹
St. Anne's College, University of Oxford

1. Objects

The *beneficiaries* of the MCR are the MCR, those members of College who have opted out of MCR membership, and associate members of the MCR.

The objects of the MCR are:

- (a) to encourage, promote and develop the corporate life of the beneficiaries of the MCR in cultural, educational and athletic matters
- (b) to participate in College administration, to maintain and foster the academic and social welfare of its members, and to promote their interest both inside and outside the College

2. Membership

- (a) Any beneficiary who does not wish to become a member of the MCR must indicate this by notifying the MCR President prior to the second Saturday of Michaelmas full term. College services (welfare, recreational, and social) are available to all beneficiaries
- (b) Only MCR members may attend MCR meetings, or stand for office of the MCR or affiliated bodies

The following shall be eligible for full membership of the MCR:

- (c) All members of the college reading for a higher Degree, Diploma or Certificate who already hold, or are entitled to supplicate for (e.g., some fourth year students), a Degree from Oxford University, and who are not by virtue of appointment a member of another Common Room
- (d) All members of college reading either for a first or further Degree or Diploma who already hold a degree from any other University
- (e) All members of the college eligible for senior status; and mature students
- (f) Any student not covered by any of the above and who is recommended by the MCR Committee and whom Governing Body shall deem to be of suitable standing for membership

The following shall be eligible for associate membership of the MCR:

- (g) all 4th year classicists and modern linguists who are members of St. Anne's College
- (h) such other persons as the MCR committee may recommend and whom Governing Body shall deem to be of suitable standing for associate membership

Number of associate members:

¹ Version proposed by the MCR Committee in February 2005; takes effect from Michaelmas Term 2005

- (i) The number of associate members may not exceed the total number of full members. The MCR committee shall have the power to reject applications for associate membership if it considers that facilities are or may become over-stretched
- (j) Associate members may be elected for one year by vote of full members; and may be re-elected up to twice thereafter for a total term of associate membership not exceeding three years. The name of the proposer and seconder (both of whom shall be full members of the MCR) should be submitted to the President of the MCR, thereby expressing the Committee's approval for the application

Benefits of associate membership:

- (k) Associate members may be liable to pay a fee. The size of the fee is to be reviewed annually at the AGM, and must have College approval
 - (l) Associate members have the same voting rights as full members
 - (m) Associate members are eligible for election to the MCR committee provided that they occupy no more than half the posts minus one and that they cannot occupy the Presidency
 - (n) Associate members are not eligible for:
 - i. Graduate accommodation
 - ii. Meal tickets at a graduate rate
3. Relation to Governing Body
- (a) Governing Body elects a representative, the Tutor for Graduates, one of whose duties is to liaise with the MCR
 - (b) The MCR constitution shall be submitted to the Governing Body for approval in Hilary term 2005 and thereafter reviewed by Governing Body in Trinity Term every five years. A copy shall be included in the schedules of Governing Body.
 - (c) Members of the MCR Committee shall attend meetings of Governing Body and certain of its committees as set out in para. 5

4. Meetings of the MCR

Annual General Meeting:

- (a) The Annual General Meeting (AGM) shall be held during the 6th week of Michaelmas Term.
- (b) Notice of the AGM shall be given one week in advance.
- (c) The quorum for the AGM shall be ten per cent of the current membership rounded up to the nearest full member. Should the AGM be inquorate, the MCR President shall, in consultation with the MCR Committee, call for a second meeting for the purposes of making decisions concerning MCR finances or the MCR committee. Quorum for this second meeting shall be at least five members of the MCR Committee, or at least ten full MCR members.
- (d) Each officer of the MCR committee shall submit a report on his/her official responsibilities at the AGM. The MCR Treasurer shall also propose a budget.
- (e) Elections:
 - i. The last order of business at the AGM shall be the hustings and elections of the officers of the new MCR committee
 - ii. Elections of the new MCR committee shall be by secret ballot
 - iii. The returning officer for the elections shall be the MCR President. In the event that the President is him/herself a candidate for election, another member of the MCR Committee who is not a candidate for election shall be appointed returning officer. This appointment will be made by the MCR committee and posted on the notice-board at the close of nominations
 - iv. The returning officer shall: ensure that the hustings are carried out in an orderly and timely fashion; collect and count the votes; and communicate the results to the MCR secretary within two hours of the close of voting
 - v. All MCR members and associate members are eligible to stand for any MCR post, except that:
 - 1. only female members of the MCR may stand for the post of Women's Officer.
 - vi. Nominations for posts shall open one week prior to the AGM and close one day prior for the AGM. Candidates for posts should submit their nomination to the Returning Officer. Nominations must be seconded by another member or associate member of the MCR. After the close of nominations, the Returning Officer shall display a list of all candidates in the Common Room and in Robert Saunders House.
 - vii. A candidate who is nominated and seconded to a position unopposed shall be deemed to have been elected unanimously. S/he need not participate in hustings and his/her name shall not be included on the ballot

- viii. The Returning Officer will provide space for the manifestos of all candidates properly nominated and seconded according to article 4.e.(vi) and who have not been elected unanimously according to article 4.e.(vii). Manifestos should be no more than one A4 side in length and may contain photographs or illustrations
- ix. In the event that no candidate presents him/herself for a particular post, nominations shall be taken verbally at the AGM. If more than one candidate presents him/herself at this time, then elections will proceed for said post as usual. If no candidate comes forward at this time for the posts of President or Treasurer, election for those two posts shall be re-run. If no candidate comes forward at this time for any other posts, the incoming MCR committee shall, at its discretion, either co-opt another official to hold the post jointly or fill the vacancy with a volunteer at a later time. The latter decision is to be ratified at a general meeting.
- x. Hustings for all contested positions will take place at the AGM only. Any candidate who cannot be present at the AGM must notify the returning officer in writing before the AGM stating the reason for his/her absence. This reason shall be communicated to those attending the AGM. Each candidate shall be allowed 5 minutes to speak. Questions, which must be directed to both candidates, shall then be asked.
- xi. MCR members may vote by postal vote, by e-mail or in person. Voting shall be conducted using the Alternative Vote (AV) system as detailed in the Appendix to this Constitution.
- xii. Postal votes shall be accepted from the close of nominations until the day of the election at a time of the returning officer's discretion, provided that this has been publicised in advance. The ballot should be enclosed in a sealed envelope signed across the flap and sent to the Returning Officer. If, in the opinion of the returning officer, the postal voter's name is not identifiable, the ballot shall be placed in a separate sealed envelope signed across the flap by the Returning Officer. The returning officer shall keep this envelope until one week after the results have been officially posted. The returning officer shall annotate the college list of eligible voters by signing his/her signature by the postal voter's name. No one voting by post shall be eligible to vote in person.
- xiii. E-mail votes shall be accepted from the close of nominations until the day of the election at a time of the returning officer's discretion, provided this has been publicised in advance. The e-mail voter may only send his/her vote from his/her Herald account. The returning officer shall keep a copy of all such e-mails until one week after the results have been officially posted. The returning officer shall annotate the college list of eligible voters by signing his/her signature by the postal voter's name. No one voting by e-mail shall be eligible to vote in person.
- xiv. Ballots cast in person shall be accepted from the end of hustings for a period of one hour

- xv. Ballots shall be cast in a closed box guarded by the Returning Officer. S/he shall check the eligibility of voters. The MCR secretary shall provide at the AGM a college list of eligible voters as well as numbered ballots. The Returning Officer shall obtain a signature from each voter on the college list and shall sign each ballot paper that he/she issues
- xvi. Votes shall be counted by the Returning Officer together with a second member of the MCR committee selected at the AGM. They shall within two hours of the close of voting give the results to the MCR secretary with a break-down of the ballots cast.
- xvii. If, after the votes have been counted, section 2(k) of the Constitution has been violated (that is, there are too many associate members elected to Committee posts), the returning officer shall seek guidance from the Tutor for Graduates. In the meantime, the returning officer shall declare the results of the elections to be 'in holding' and the old MCR committee shall continue in office
- xviii. The Dean shall satisfy him/herself that there has been compliance with the above rules
- xix. The outgoing MCR secretary shall post on the MCR notice-board the detailed results of the elections within three hours of the close of voting.
- xx. The MCR secretary shall include the results of the election in the minutes of the AGM, which shall be completed, posted and distributed amongst the members of the new MCR committee not more than 72 hours following the close of the AGM.
- xxi. The outgoing MCR secretary shall inform College officers and staff, including members of the JCR, of the composition of the new MCR committee.
- xxii. The new MCR committee shall take office immediately after the last Governing Body of Michaelmas Term, until which time the outgoing Committee members shall continue to perform their appointed duties
- xxiii. A member of the MCR wishing to raise a complaint about the conduct of an election shall submit his/her complaint in writing to the returning officer within 24 hours of the results being officially posted. The returning officer shall examine the validity of the claim and, if necessary, declare the election void. In this case, an emergency ballot shall take place one week after the AGM, following the same procedure as outlined above

Ordinary General Meetings:

- (f) There shall be at least one Ordinary General Meeting per term. Other meetings may be held as and when required on the initiative of the President. Notice of an Ordinary General Meeting shall be given at least one week in advance. The quorum for ordinary general meetings shall be ten per cent of the current membership rounded up to the nearest full member. The MCR committee will not be required to reschedule an inquorate Ordinary General Meeting unless it has received written

requests from ten per cent of the MCR's members to do so within 24 hours of the originally scheduled meeting

Motions and Attendance:

- (g) Any member or associate member of the MCR may attend and vote at Ordinary or Annual General Meetings
- (h) Members of the JCR committee as well as members of Governing Body may attend and participate at general meetings of the MCR, including the Annual General Meeting. They may not, however, vote in any decisions taken at these meetings
- (i) Any member or associate member of the MCR may propose a motion to be discussed at an Ordinary or Annual General Meeting.
- (j) Any expenditure not accounted for in the budget proposed at the AGM as per 4(d) of this constitution, or which would require the MCR to use money from its reserves, must be approved by a motion at an Ordinary or Annual General Meeting
- (k) Motions must be seconded by a member or associate member of the MCR, and submitted to the Secretary not less than twenty-four hours before the meeting. Affiliations and donations to external bodies must be reviewed (with details given) annually or more frequently in this way

5. Officers of the MCR Committee

Whilst always bearing in mind the objects of the MCR as a whole (set out in para. 1), the following duties and regulations are common to all MCR officers. MCR officers shall:

- (a) Maintain separate and detailed records of all transactions and all the college Committee and/or sub-Committee meetings relative to their particular duties as outlined in the particular sections of this paragraph
- (b) Brief their successors on their duties following their election to the post
- (c) Inform the committee and the MCR of the outcome of any official meeting they attend and, where necessary, to formulate policy in accordance with decisions reached at these.
- (d) Fill in for any committee member who is unable to attend one of the meetings s/he is obliged to attend
- (e) Attend the meetings of the MCR Committee. If unable to attend they should inform the President in good time.

Expulsion from the committee:

- (f) Committee members shall not act contrary to decisions taken at MCR Committee meetings, Annual General Meetings, or Ordinary General Meetings. Where a committee member has acted contrary to such decisions, the other members of the MCR committee may bring a motion to a general meeting to expel this member from the committee according to paragraph 4, section (i) above.
- (g) Any member of the Committee who, without prior notice to and consent of the Committee, is out of residence for a whole term of his/her elected period of office shall cease to be a Committee member automatically.
- (h) In case a vacancy on the committee arises by 5(f) or 5(g), the MCR committee shall, at its discretion, either co-opt another official to hold the post jointly or fill the vacancy with a volunteer at a later time. The latter decision is to be ratified at a general meeting.

Committee posts:

- (i) *President:* the duties of the President shall be:
 - i. To conduct all general meetings of the MCR
 - ii. To act for and on behalf of the MCR in negotiations with College and University bodies, and to present and debate MCR policies in Governing Body
 - iii. To meet regularly with the Principal
 - iv. To call, in conjunction with the MCR secretary, an MCR committee meeting at least once per term and whenever he/she thinks necessary; reasonable notice must be given to members of the MCR committee regarding these meetings
 - v. To ensure that all members of the MCR committee fulfil their prescribed roles, and if failing to do so inform the MCR

- vi. To attend Academic Committee.
- vii. To receive complaints from the beneficiaries about the MCR, and to pass them on to the Committee
- viii. To update information and timetable events for the MCR Freshers' week

(j) *Vice-President*: the duties of the Vice-President shall be:

- i. To assist the President in his/her duties
- ii. To be acting-President in the temporary absence of the President, fulfilling the duties listed in section 5(i) of this constitution
- iii. To act as liaison between the MCR and the JCR
- iv. To prepare, formulate and present necessary alterations to the constitution in co-operation with the MCR committee and the Tutor for Graduates, following the rules given in section 7. The right of every MCR member to propose alterations to the constitution remains untouched
- v. To attend meetings of the Estates Committee and the Health and Safety Working Group
- vi. To attend any college committee meeting when the respective MCR official is unable to do so

(k) *Secretary*: the duties of the Secretary shall be:

- i. To convene, in co-operation with the MCR President, all MCR general and Committee meetings and to take minutes of them
- ii. To publish the results of MCR elections as described in section 4(c)(xx)
- iii. To keep the filing cabinet in order
- iv. To attend meetings of the Library Committee and the Fine Arts Committee

(l) *Treasurer*: the duties of the Treasurer shall be:

- i. To keep the MCR accounts and to maintain the books in conjunction with the College Treasurer and his/her staff, who will be responsible for the auditing of the books. Details of all donations and affiliations to external bodies must be included. The MCR accounts shall include a budget to be approved at the AGM
- ii. Generally to work in conjunction with the college Treasurer as decided by Governing Body
- iii. To collect all the bills MCR members are liable to pay the MCR
- iv. To inform the Bank of the name of the new MCR Treasurer in Michaelmas Term
- v. To pay all bills authorised by the MCR
- vi. To attend meetings of Finance Committee

(m) *Environment Officer*: the duties of the Environment Officer shall be:

- i. To raise awareness of and, where possible, to implement recycling schemes in the MCR
- ii. To maintain such stocks (e.g., of milk, tea, coffee, biscuits, etc.) in the MCR as requested by members and authorised by the committee; to cancel or reduce such periodicals and/or newspapers during the vacation

- iii. to pass on to MCR members any information relevant to their accommodation in or out of college
 - iv. to attend meetings of Domestic Forum
 - (n) *Social Secretaries*: there shall be two Social Secretaries. The duties of the Social Secretaries shall be:
 - i. To plan, suggest and organise (as authorised by the MCR committee) social functions
 - ii. To inform the MCR of any function held by other colleges in which the MCR is invited to participate; to inform other Colleges of any MCR functions in which they are invited to participate
 - (o) *Sports Secretary*: the duties of the Sports Secretary shall be
 - i. To inform the MCR of college sports clubs they may join
 - ii. To plan, suggest and organise (as authorised by the MCR committee) sports events
 - (p) *OUSU representative*: the duties of the OUSU representative shall be:
 - i. To act as liaison of the MCR with OUSU (Oxford University Students' Union)
 - ii. To attend OUSU Post-Graduate Assembly; to vote there in accordance with MCR policy, and to inform the MCR of any decisions concerning the MCR
 - iii. Where possible, to attend any other OUSU meetings relevant to graduates; to vote there in accordance with MCR policy, and to inform the MCR of any decisions concerning the MCR
 - iv. To distribute any OUSU publications and information available to graduates
 - (q) *Computer representative*: this post may be held jointly with any other Committee post. The duties of the Computer Representative shall be:
 - i. To attend the Computing sub-committee
 - ii. To ensure that the MCR computer(s) and other related equipment are in good working order
 - iii. To suggest any alterations to the system(s) he/she thinks will benefit users, either in software or hardware configurations
 - iv. To negotiate with the college on computer-related matters
 - v. To negotiate the purchase of software and/or hardware and advise the MCR accordingly
 - vi. To assist and advise members in using the computer(s)
 - (r) *Welfare and Equality Officer*: the duties of the Welfare and Equality Officer shall be:
 - i. To be available for consultation by students, and to inform and advise on any student concerns, particularly about money, health (mental and physical), safety, stress, legal and disciplinary problems, and medical and counselling services inside and outside college.
 - ii. To attend Disciplinary Adjudication Committee and welfare meetings in College
 - iii. To pass on to the MCR any information concerning welfare provision in the university, including but not limited to information on counselling services, peer support, and sexual and mental health.
 - iv. To attend Equal Opportunities Committee

- (s) *Women's Officer*: the duties of the officer shall be:
 - i. To offer information about women's groups and other facilities of which women of the MCR may avail themselves
 - ii. To provide information on sexual health, harassment and safety at night
 - iii. To act as a liaison between the MCR and the OUSU Women's Campaign; where possible, to attend their meetings.
 - iv. To apply for or notify MCR members of sources of funding for women's events
- (t) *Special sub-committees or posts*
 - i. The MCR Committee may create specific limited-duration posts or ad hoc committees and may appoint thereto as it shall see fit, provided that notification is given at a general meeting

6. Facilities

Ordinary usage:

The MCR Common Room(s) shall be open for all beneficiaries at all times when College is open. Magazines and newspapers should be kept in the MCR as decided. A suggestions book will be provided.

Parties:

The MCR Common Room(s) may be booked (only by beneficiaries) at a set charge decided by the MCR Committee. Each member may book a room only once a term and he/she is responsible for informing the President well in advance so that members may be notified that the room will be occupied. The member is responsible for any damage caused by him/herself or his/her guests and for cleaning and tidying up the room afterwards. Bookings may not be taken on 'Guest Nights'. The MCR committee may refuse a booking.

General:

In accordance with decisions taken at General Meetings, the MCR Committee (on behalf of the MCR) reserves the right for itself to introduce or cancel any such facilities as the MCR members see fit, for example, to operate a bar or to cancel (or order) certain periodicals and/or newspapers. All suggestions for possible services will be considered by the Committee.

If beneficiaries have a complaint against the MCR, they can seek redress by writing in the suggestions book or communicating to the President their complaint. Complaints that remain unresolved by the Committee shall be referred to the College Advisers. The MCR shall consider and act upon their recommendation(s).

7. Alterations to the Constitution

- (a) Proposals for alterations to the Constitution may be made only at the AGM or at a specifically designated meeting of which no less than one week's notice must be given. Proposed alterations shall be notified to the representative of Governing Body (the Tutor for Graduates) not less than two weeks before any specially convened meeting. To become effective, amendments must receive a majority of not less than two-thirds

of the members present and voting. Amendments must then go forward to Governing Body for its approval. They become effective only after this approval is given.

- (b) Should the Constitution be found ambiguous at any point, or if it fails to cover unforeseen events, the MCR President shall issue a temporary ruling in consultation with the Tutor for Graduates. This ruling shall have force until the constitutional ambiguity or vacancy shall have been resolved by the normal process of constitutional alteration, as already defined.
- (c) This constitution shall have effect from the fourth week of Michaelmas Term 2005

Appendix: Alternative Voting System

The St. Anne's College MCR uses the "*Alternative Vote*" or "AV" system for all elections for its Committee members. This appendix explains how this system operates, and how it shall be used for such elections.

It is taken from <http://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/votingsystems/avrules.htm>

1. Each voter shall have one transferable vote.
2. A voter in recording his/her vote on a printed voting paper:
 - i. must place on his/her voting paper the figure 1 opposite the name of the candidate for whom he/she votes;
 - ii. may indicate the order of his/her preference for as many other candidates as he/she pleases by placing against their respective names the figures 2, 3, 4 and so on.
3. A voter in recording his vote on a plain voting paper:
 - i. must write on his/her voting paper the name of the candidate for whom he/she votes;
 - ii. may indicate the order of his/her preference for as many other candidates as he/she pleases by writing their names in order of preference.
4. The returning officer shall examine the papers and shall sort them into parcels according to the first preference recorded for each candidate, rejecting any that are invalid.
5. The returning officer shall count the papers in each such parcel and shall credit each candidate with a number of votes equal to the number of valid papers on which a first preference has been recorded for that candidate.
6. If the vote for any one candidate equals or exceeds the votes of all the other candidates combined, that candidate shall be declared elected.
7. If not, the returning officer shall exclude together the two or more candidates with the least votes if the total vote of such two or more candidates does not exceed the vote of the candidate next above, otherwise he/she shall exclude the candidate having the fewest votes
8. The papers of the excluded candidates shall be transferred to whichever of the continuing candidates is marked by that voter as his/her next available preference, and the votes thus transferred shall be added to the first preference votes of those candidates.
9. Any paper on which no further preference is marked shall be set aside as non-transferable and the total of such papers shall be recorded.
10. If when a candidate has to be excluded, two or more candidates have each the same number of votes and are lowest on the poll, the candidate with the lowest number of votes at the earliest stage in the count, at which the candidates in question had an unequal number of votes, shall be excluded.
11. If two or more candidates are still equal and lowest, the returning officer shall decide which shall be excluded

DEFINITIONS

- The expression 'first preference' means the figure 1 standing alone opposite the name of a candidate or the name of the candidate given first in the list of order of preference by the voter.
- The expression 'valid voting paper' means a voting paper on which a first or only preference is unambiguously expressed.
- The expression 'invalid voting paper' means a voting paper on which no first or only preference is expressed, or on which any first preference is void for uncertainty.
- The expression 'continuing candidate' means any candidate not yet excluded.
- The expression 'next available preference' means a second or subsequent preference recorded in consecutive numerical order for a continuing candidate, passing over earlier preferences for candidates already excluded.
- The expression 'transferable paper' means a voting paper on which a next available preference is unambiguously expressed.
- The expression 'non-transferable paper' means a voting paper on which no next available preference for a continuing candidate is expressed, or on which any next available preference is void for uncertainty.