



OXFORD LAW SOCIETY

**THE
CONSTITUTION
— & —
STANDING
ORDERS**

Enacted by the Committee of the Oxford Law Society:
Monday, 2nd December 2019

Commencement:
Wednesday, 1st January 2020

Section 1: Name and Objects

- 1.1 The name of the Society shall be “The Oxford Law Society”.
- 1.2 The aim of the Society shall be to provide:
 - (a) regular social and speaker events for its members;
 - b) a point of contact for solicitors' firms and barristers' chambers wishing to advertise and contact members of the Society;
 - c) opportunities for members of the Society to meet representatives from and obtain information about solicitors' firms and barristers' chambers; and
 - d) general advice on legal careers and academic issues.
- 1.3 The Society shall seek to affiliate with the University by the end of the 2019/20 academic year.

Section 2: Membership

- 2.1 Membership of the Society shall be open to all members of the University of Oxford.
- 2.2 The membership fee shall be set by the President of the Society at the beginning of each term, but will usually be £45.00 for membership to last as long as a member is *in statu pupillari*, or £25.00 for a period of 365 days.
- 2.3 The President may terminate any individual's membership for conduct unbecoming to the Society on the vote of three-quarters of those present at any Committee meeting provided that such a person has been given the prior opportunity to explain their conduct at the meeting. At least seven days' notice of such a meeting must be given to all members of the Committee. There shall be a right of appeal to the Returning Officer.

Section 3: Officers and Committee

- 3.1 The Committee shall consist of not more than nineteen members, excluding the *ex-officio* provisions in rule 3.12 below.
- 3.2 The Committee shall consist of a President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, President-elect, Vice President-elect, Treasurer-elect in addition to any roles the President requires (possibly including, but not limited to, Editor of “Verdict”, Social Secretary, Marketing Officer, Membership Officer, Ball Secretary, Diversity Officer, and IT Officer).
- 3.3 The Executive Committee shall consist of the President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, President-elect, Vice President-elect and Treasurer-elect. The first four of these will be responsible for raising sponsorship during the vacation before their term.
- 3.4 The role of the President shall be to run the Society during their term. They shall be responsible for organising all speaker events and social events and shall oversee the

Oxford Law Society
Constitution and Standing Orders

day-to-day running of the Society including its finances. The President shall be responsible for representing the Society to sponsors, speakers, and members.

- 3.4.1 The President shall ensure that the process of affiliation of the Society with the University shall be completed by the end of the 2019/20 academic year.
- 3.5 The role of the Vice President shall be to assist the President in their duties. Their duties shall vary depending on the direction of the President but shall typically involve helping to organise speaker and social events, overseeing certain Committee functions and liaising with sponsors etc. in the absence of the President.
- 3.6 The role of the Treasurer shall be to manage the accounts of the Society and to provide a copy to the successive Treasurer at the end of their term of office. The Treasurer shall be responsible for ensuring that invoices are sent out and paid as soon as possible, and for dealing with other expenses (including VAT returns) efficiently. The Treasurer shall also keep and prepare all accounts for audit by external auditors at each quarter. The Treasurer will be accountable to the President for their actions.
- 3.7 The role of the Secretary shall be to take minutes of all Committee meetings, the Termly General Meeting (TGM) and any Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM). They shall prepare an agenda in advance of each meeting and circulate the minutes of the previous meeting to all Committee members.
- 3.8 The role of the President-elect shall be to work closely with the President throughout the term of office to learn about the position and what it entails. Where necessary they shall aid the President in their as well as plan their own term of office.
- 3.9 The role of the Vice President-elect shall be to work closely and liaise with the President-elect and Treasurer-elect to learn about what their position will entail.
- 3.10 The role of the Treasurer-elect shall be to work closely with the Treasurer throughout the Treasurer's term of office to learn about the position and what it entails. Where necessary, they shall assist the Treasurer in their tasks.
- 3.11 The Returning Officer shall be in charge of running the Society's elections and, where necessary, organising disciplinary proceedings and interpreting the Constitution and Standing Orders of the Society.
- 3.12 *Ex-officio* members of the Committee shall be past-Presidents of the Society who are still *in statu pupillari*. *Ex-officio* members shall have a vote on the Committee and shall be notified of all Committee meetings, but are not obliged to attend Committee meetings. The right of *ex-officio* members to attend and vote at any Committee meeting may be terminated by the vote of three-quarters of those present at any Committee meeting.
- 3.13 The President shall have the power to delegate any further duties throughout the term to any members of the Committee. The posts occupied by Committee members and their duties shall be allocated by the President at the beginning of each term.

Section 4: Committee Meetings

- 4.1 The President shall convene a Committee Meeting at least once a fortnight in full term.
- 4.2 All members of the Committee shall be notified of the time and place of each Committee meeting at least one week in advance. A single notice each term of a regular time and venue shall be deemed notice of all such meetings so long as Committee members are notified of any changes to the time and venue.
- 4.3 The quorum at a Committee meeting shall be seven Committee members, including two members of the Executive Committee.
- 4.4 Committee members shall attend all Committee meetings unless the Executive Committee is notified of a valid excuse.
- 4.5 Should the validity of any excuse be brought into question by the President or two other Committee members, its validity shall be put to the vote. The vote of two-thirds of those present at any Committee meeting shall be necessary to hold an excuse invalid.
- 4.6 Failure to attend Committee meetings or late attendance on a regular basis without valid excuse(s) shall be a ground for disciplinary proceedings. If a Committee member misses three meetings within one term, the Executive Committee, as indicated in Section 3.3 above, must meet to determine whether to bring disciplinary proceedings, based on the Committee member's excuses, their work in their specific duties, and their general conduct whilst on Committee.
- 4.7 Any matter requiring a vote at a Committee meeting shall be decided by a majority of two-thirds of those present at any Committee meeting unless otherwise specified in the Constitution or in the Standing Orders.
- 4.8 Any matter may be brought to vote at the instigation of the President or any other two Committee members present, except matters specifically stated in the Constitution which will be at the sole discretion of the President.
- 4.9 In the event of the total number of Committee members being less than nineteen or in the event of the resignation or impeachment of a member of the Committee, or in the event that the Committee's workload threatens to overwhelm the existing Committee members, the President may appoint additional members for one term at a time, subject to a vote of the Committee, in accordance with rule 4.10.
- 4.10 The appointed member(s) shall be any unsuccessful candidate(s) from the previous term's election. The highest polling of these candidates will be the first choice of the President. If there are no unsuccessful candidates to choose from, or they are unwilling to take on the position, the President may recommend a candidate for each position, subject to the approval of the Committee.
- 4.11 In the event of an Officer resigning or being removed from office, the President may appoint a substitute at their discretion from the members of the Committee. In the event of the President resigning or being removed from office, the Vice President shall be appointed as a substitute for the remainder of the term in question.

Section 5: Termly General Meetings and Elections

- 5.1 A Termly General Meeting (TGM) shall be held in eighth week of each term, preferably after the last speaker or social event of that term.
- 5.2 The Officer posts to be elected each term are those of President-elect, Vice-President, and Treasurer-elect.
- 5.3 The number of Committee positions open for election shall not exceed the number vacant at the end of that term having regard to rule 3.1 above.
- 5.4 To stand for election, candidates must be members of the Society.
- 5.5 To stand for the post of President-elect, Vice President-elect or Treasurer-elect, candidates must have served at least one term as an elected member of Committee.
 - 5.5.1 For the avoidance of doubt, the IT Officer may not stand for election to any of the aforesaid posts in 5.5, as well as the post of Secretary, without first being elected to an officer post on Committee.
- 5.6 An elected member of the Committee may remain on the Committee for a maximum of four terms, but will change post at the beginning of each term at the discretion of that term's President.
 - 5.6.1 An elected member of the General Committee may remain on the General Committee for longer than four terms, if their request to remain on the General Committee is passed by a two-thirds majority vote of the Committee.
 - 5.6.2 This subsection (5.6) does not apply to the IT Officer. For the avoidance of doubt, the IT Officer serves at the President's pleasure.
- 5.7 The President may appoint a Committee member to an uncontested Officer post provided that they have served at least one term and preferably two terms on the Committee.
- 5.8 Subject to 5.9 below, the expiry of an Officer's term of office does not preclude them standing for re-election to the Committee.
- 5.9 A person may hold each of the posts of President, Vice President, Treasurer of the Society once only.
- 5.10 After the conclusion of their term, the President, Vice President, Treasurer of the Society must step down from Committee.
- 5.11 Detailed provisions for the running of elections may be laid down in standing orders.

Section 6: Extraordinary General Meetings

- 6.1 An Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) of the Society may be called at the instigation of the President or of any twenty-five members of the Society. At least seven

Oxford Law Society
Constitution and Standing Orders

days' notice of such a meeting shall be given to all members of the Society. The quorum at such a meeting shall be fifty members. The President, or, if the meeting directly concerns them, the Vice-President shall be responsible for publicising such a meeting.

- 6.2 An EGM shall have the power to:
- (a) Require any Committee member to give an account of their actions;
 - (b) Remove any Committee member from office;
 - (c) Elect new Committee members subject to section 4 above; and
 - (d) Alter the Society's constitution.
- 6.3 Any proposed action at an EGM shall be approved by a two-third majority of those members present at the meeting.
- 6.4 The Chairman of the EGM shall be the President unless any business to be raised at the meeting concerns them directly, in which case the Committee shall elect a Chairman before the meeting is convened. Such an election shall require a two-thirds majority vote of those present at a Committee meeting.
- 6.5 Any Committee member removed from office by the EGM through the procedure outlined above shall have a right of appeal to the Returning Officer.

Section 7: Discipline

- 7.1 If any Committee member is considered to be failing in their duty as a Committee member, subject to 7.6, a vote of impeachment may be proposed by either the President or two other Committee members.
- 7.2 The proposers of such a motion shall give at least seven days' notice to all Committee members of their proposal prior to the Committee meeting at which the matter shall be discussed.
- 7.3 The member in question shall be permitted to answer any allegations of misconduct or negligence brought against them prior to a vote on the matter.
- 7.4 If a majority of those present at the meeting (excluding the member in question) considers that member to be guilty of failing in their duty as a member of the Committee, they may be removed from the Committee subject to an appeal to the Returning Officer.
- 7.5 Such a vote of impeachment shall be a secret ballot undertaken in the absence of the member in question.
- 7.6 "Failing in their duties" can include: insufficient fulfilment of their role, dishonest conduct, dangerous conduct, abuse of position, misrepresenting the Society, financial misconduct, or misconduct towards Members or the Committee.

Section 8: Financial

- 8.1 The President shall be ultimately responsible for the financial dealings of the Society.
- 8.1.1 The President shall oversee the work of the Treasurer and keep abreast of the income and expenditure of the Society throughout the term and ensure that by the end of the term the account is still in credit, in conjunction with 8.1.2.
- 8.1.2 The President shall abide by the financial limits herein:
- 8.1.2.1 The President of Michaelmas Term shall oversee the financial dealings of the society in order to ensure that 30% of its termly budget is left behind for Hilary Term.
- 8.1.2.2 The President of Hilary Term shall oversee the financial dealings of the society in order to ensure that 20% of its termly budget is left behind for Trinity Term.
- 8.1.2.3 The President of Trinity Term shall ensure that £500 is left for the President of Michaelmas Term so as to cover any costs incurred before the receipt of any sponsorship income.
- 8.1.2.4 The President or Treasurer shall report to the Executive-elect at each committee meeting the amount of the termly budget expended to date and any amounts remaining for the term, in conjunction with 8.1.2.1, 8.1.2.2 and 8.1.2.3, so that the Executive-elect may exercise scrutiny over the term's spending to date.
- 8.1.2.5 The amounts contained in 8.1.2.1, 8.1.2.2 and 8.1.2.3 may only be altered pursuant to the consent of four-fifths of present Committee at a Committee meeting, and pursuant to the consent of the majority of the executive-elect, notwithstanding the provisions of 4.7.
- 8.1.3 If invoices for debts owed by the Society, including VAT, are not received by the end of term, then the President in conjunction with the Treasurer shall ensure that enough money is left in the account to cover those debts when the Society is invoiced either during the vacation or the following term and that the following term's President and Treasurer are notified of the situation. For the avoidance of doubt, the amounts in 8.1.2 are exclusive of any VAT to be paid.
- 8.2 The Treasurer shall be responsible for ensuring that all monies owing to the Society are received by the end of the term and that all debts owed by the Society are paid by the end of the term subject to 8.1.3 above.
- 8.2.1 The Treasurer shall keep complete and accurate accounts throughout the term and ensure that a copy is given to the following term's Treasurer. A copy of the accounts shall also be supplied to the external auditors at the end of each financial year.

Oxford Law Society
Constitution and Standing Orders

- 8.2.2 The Treasurer shall also ensure that valid receipts are kept for every transaction that is made on the Society's behalf and that these receipts are kept along with the accounts of the Society ready for audit.
- 8.2.3 The Treasurer shall ensure that any VAT entitled to be reclaimed by the Society shall be reclaimed to the fullest extent reasonably possible. To this end, the Treasurer shall ensure that all Committee members are aware of the Society's obligations with regards to VAT and encourage them to obtain a 'long receipt' for each event.
- 8.2.4 The accounts of the Society shall be kept in the Executive Committee's Google Drive. All copies of the Society's accounts shall be handed over to the next term's President and Treasurer.
- 8.3 Other than expenses necessary for the running of the term, such as monies to finance events and publicity, expenses shall only be deemed reasonable if proposals for such expenses have been placed before the President and the Committee has approved such proposals by a majority of two-thirds of those present at any Committee meeting and if the explicit approval of the Vice President has been obtained.
- 8.4 In order for any Committee expenses to be reimbursed they shall first be approved by the President and a valid receipt must be given to the Treasurer. No expenses shall be refunded without a valid receipt. Any member of the Committee who makes any payment on behalf of the Society without the express authority of the President shall not recover any such payment from the Society without the Committee's subsequent notification and approval.
- 8.5 In considering whether a proposed expense is reasonable, the Committee shall have regard to the scale of the expenditure in proportion to the potential benefits including the recruitment of new members and other relevant factors.
- 8.6 If the proposed expense falls under section 8.3 above and will be recurrent, then both the maximum cost and frequency of the expense will be expressly brought before the Committee. If passed, the expense will not need to be brought before the Committee again for the entire term.
- 8.7 The Treasurer may only borrow money on behalf of the society with the agreement of the President and Vice-President and two thirds of the committee.

Section 9: Standing Orders

- 9.1 Detailed provisions concerning election procedures, duties of Officers and any other business may be laid down by the Committee in Standing Orders.
- 9.2 Any provision in such Standing Orders is subject to approval by a two-thirds majority of those present at any Committee meeting, with the exception of Standing Order 12 which is subject to the approval of four-fifths of those present at any Committee meeting. At least seven days' notice of such a meeting shall be given to all Committee members.

Oxford Law Society
Constitution and Standing Orders

- 9.3 In the event of any conflict between the Standing Orders and this Constitution, this Constitution shall prevail.

STANDING ORDERS

Standing Orders: ELECTIONS

- 1 The Returning Officer: The conduct of the Society's elections to membership of the Committee shall be the responsibility of the Returning Officer. The Returning Officer shall be responsible for booking a venue for the election and all the administration relating to the election.
 - 1.1 The previous term's President shall be the Returning Officer.
 - 1.2 The Returning Officer may appoint such Returning Officers' Assistants (ROAs) as they see fit from the membership of the Society, who are not candidates, to assist them in their work.
 - 1.3 If the previous term's President is not able to be the Returning Officer, then the previous term's Vice-President shall take over. Failing this, the President may select someone who if approved by two-thirds of the Committee will serve as Returning Officer.
 - 1.4 The decision of the Returning Officer with regards to the running of the elections or an interpretation of the Constitution shall be absolute and final.
- 2 Elections: The elections shall take place as soon as is reasonably possible after the TGM during eighth week. The Returning Officer shall ensure that all candidates and members of the Society are duly notified, by email, when the online voting system opens. The Returning Officer shall also ensure that the online voting system remains open for a period of at least one week.
 - 2.1 For the avoidance of doubt, notwithstanding any provision to the contrary, the Committee post of IT Officer is an unelected position. The IT Officer shall be appointed by the President subject to the advice of the Committee. In appointing the IT Officer, the President must have regard to the technical competence and past technological experience of the prospective appointee.
- 3 Opening of Nominations: The opening of nominations shall be during sixth week, one week before the close of nominations. The Returning Officer must ensure that all candidates and members of the Society are duly notified of the opening of nominations, by email, at least five days in advance. Subject to the next sentence and to 5 below, prospective candidates should nominate themselves by writing to the Returning Officer. Candidates for the Officer posts should have a member of the Committee to propose and second their nomination.
 - 3.1. A Committee member may only nominate a maximum of two candidates. If they are nominating two candidates, the candidates must be applying for separate positions.
- 4 Close of Nominations: The close of nominations shall be in seventh week, one week before the elections. The Returning Officer must ensure that all candidates and

Oxford Law Society
Constitution and Standing Orders

members of the Society are duly notified of who is standing for election either by email or post at least five days in advance of the elections.

- 5 Candidates: Candidates for President-elect, Vice President-elect and Treasurer-elect must have served at least one term on the Committee, and must not have served on the Executive committee previously. This does not apply to the Secretary.
- 6 Publicity: Each candidate for an Officer post shall be invited by the Returning Officer to submit a written manifesto of up to and including 300 words by the close of nominations. Each candidate for a non-Officer post shall be invited by the Returning Officer to submit a written manifesto of up to and including 100 words by the close of nominations. These limits are to be strictly enforced by the Returning Officer; the Returning Officer shall ask for the manifesto to be resubmitted or shall publish the manifesto in its submitted form severing any sections in excess of the relevant word limit.
 - 6.1 The manifestos will be distributed among the membership at least five days before the election and will be included in the email which provides access to the election website.
 - 6.2 The Returning Officer shall reject a manifesto and ask for it to be resubmitted if they have reasonable grounds to doubt the accuracy of any statement contained therein. This power must be exercised in good faith.
 - 6.3 For the avoidance of doubt, failure to comply with any of the requirements for a manifesto enumerated in Standing Order 6 shall not constitute an electoral offence, except insofar as the manifesto contravenes Standing Order 8.2.
- 7 Hustings: Hustings shall take place at the TGM and all candidates for all posts shall be given the opportunity to make a speech.
- 8 Electoral Offences: The list of electoral offences includes, but is not limited to, the following.
 - 8.1 It shall be an electoral offence to publish election material other than that approved first by the Returning Officer. For the avoidance of doubt, this include physical materials such as leaflets, and non-physical materials such as online advertisements or notices intended to be seen by the membership at large.
 - 8.2 It shall be an electoral offence to conduct any type of intimidation or make defamatory imputations about other candidates.
 - 8.3 It shall be an electoral offence to use the membership database during the election for the purpose of electoral advantage.
 - 8.4 It shall be an electoral offence to directly expend monies on campaigning.

Oxford Law Society
Constitution and Standing Orders

- 8.5 It shall be an electoral offence to engage in the practice known as ‘slates’, which consists of liaising with other candidates so as to form an electoral pact, potentially with a view to encouraging voters to vote for candidates on the particular team. This provision applies only to elections to General Committee.
- 8.6 It shall be an electoral offence to post or distribute any materials designed to solicit support for particular candidates in forums, physical and non-physical, consisting of more than 15 persons. This includes, but is not limited to, Facebook groups (including JCR/MCR groups) and pages.
- 8.7 The practice of seeking the support of particular Committee members with a view to encouraging them to encourage their own contacts to support a particular candidate is henceforth an electoral offence. It is also an electoral offence for any Committee member to campaign on behalf of any candidate, regardless of whether their doing so has been solicited by the candidate; no Committee member may publicly express any preference for any particular candidate in any capacity whatsoever. This provision applies only to elections to General Committee.
- 8.8 If the Returning Officer considers that any candidate has, through themselves or through another, committed or caused to be committed an electoral offence, they shall, without unreasonable delay, bring the matter before the Committee in a specially-convened EGM. Subject to the support of a two-third majority of those present at the Committee meeting (excluding the President), the Returning Officer shall declare that the candidature or election of the candidate in question is invalid. Such a declaration is subject to an appeal to the President. Where the candidate is found to have acted in concert with other members or Committee officers in pursuit of a common design, the member or Committee officer concerned shall also face disciplinary action in accordance with Section 2 or Section 7 of the Constitution respectively.
- 8.8.1 Where a Committee officer has committed an electoral offence to benefit a particular candidate, but the candidate concerned is ignorant of the Committee officer’s design, the Committee officer shall face disciplinary action in accordance with Section 7 of the Constitution but no disciplinary action shall be brought by the Returning Officer under 8.8 against the candidate concerned.
- 9 Polling: The poll shall open as soon as is reasonably possible from the last speech by the last candidate at the hustings and shall remain open for seven calendar days, not including the day the poll opens.
- 10 Eligibility to Vote: Only members of the Society shall be eligible to vote. For the purposes of the elections, the Society’s membership lists shall close on the opening of voting each term.

Standing Orders: THE CONSTITUTION

- 11 The Constitution, which includes the Standing Orders, subject to Standing Order 12 below, may only be changed as follows:
 - (a) by the procedure described in the Constitution itself; or
 - (b) by a three-quarter majority of those members present at any Committee meeting. At least seven days' notice of such a meeting shall be given to all Committee members.

- 12 Notwithstanding the procedures outlined above, Section 8.1.2 and this Standing Order 12 may only be changed by a four-fifths majority of those present at an EGM or Committee meeting, subject to the usual requirements of notice of such meeting having been met.