

# Constitution of the St. Catharine's College MCR

## (Updated 2020)

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1. There will be a Middle Combination Room in St. Catharine's College in the University of Cambridge (hereinafter referred to as 'the MCR').

1.1. This document in its entirety sets out the Constitution of the MCR. It defines the functions and the membership of the MCR, the conduct of its meetings and elections and the duties of the members of the MCR Committee.

1.2. The Constitution and amendments thereto will be proposed at an open meeting and will subsequently be adopted only after achieving a two-thirds majority of those who vote in an on-line referendum. Amendments will be subject to the approval of the Governing Body (GB) of St Catharine's College.

2. The MCR exists to:

- (a) promote the interests of its members;
- (b) provide social facilities and activities for its members;
- (c) express postgraduate opinion to the senior members of the College.

3. General Membership.

3.1. Unless a postgraduate student of St. Catharine's College opts out of membership of the MCR in accordance with the provisions of §3.2 of this Constitution, they will be a member of the MCR. Associate membership may be granted at the discretion of the MCR Committee and approved by the Postgraduate and Senior Tutors of the College. Associate members must re-apply for their membership at the beginning of each academic year.

3.2. A postgraduate student may exercise the right not to become a member of the MCR. The postgraduate student wishing to exercise this right will notify the designated senior member of St. Catharine's College (see §9) to this effect, in writing, within ten days of commencing their postgraduate studies according to the files of the Board of Graduate Studies.

3.3. Postgraduate students who exercise the right provided for in 3.2 of this Constitution will not be unfairly disadvantaged with regard to the provision of services or otherwise. They will have full use of the college facilities, including but not limited to libraries, college bar and sporting societies. They however will not have access to the MCR and all that it represents. For Formal Hall subsidised by the MCR they must be booked in as a guest and pay the full amount.

3.4. The GB will, in a timely manner, provide every postgraduate student of St. Catharine's College with information regarding the right not to become a member of the MCR. They will also be notified of any arrangements the GB has made with the MCR to provide services for postgraduate students who are not members of the MCR.

3.5. In order for St. Catharine's College to provide similar services to those postgraduate students who have exercised the right provided for in §3.2 of this Constitution, those postgraduates will be charged an amount equivalent to that paid by associate members of the MCR. These funds will be made available to the MCR.

3.6. If a student requests to be disaffiliated from the MCR after the ten-day notice period (§3.2), the member must submit this request, in writing, to the Postgraduate Tutors and MCR President(s).

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Members exercising this right will not be disadvantaged with regard to the provision of services, and the charges outlined in §3.5 will apply.

3.7. The college will be responsible for daily cleaning, maintenance and upkeep. All MCR members will have responsibility for the day to day tidiness of the Christopher Waddams Room (generally known as the MCR), which includes ensuring the kitchen is kept tidy, the coffee machine is cleaned and fully stocked and the recycling is removed. The food and drinks officer will ensure that sufficient stock is available in the MCR for the coffee machine.

#### 4. Fourth Year Undergraduate Membership

4.1. The MCR Committee may invite all fourth year undergraduates of St. Catharine's College to join the MCR as Fourth Year Undergraduate Members.

4.2. A fourth year undergraduate can only opt into MCR membership upon receiving an invitation from the MCR Committee.

4.3. Fourth year undergraduates who join the MCR will be added to the MCR mailing list, be invited to all MCR events and have access to the Christopher Waddams Room.

4.4. Fourth year undergraduate members of the MCR will remain members of the JCR. St. Catharine's College will provide services to these students as members of the JCR rather than the MCR.

4.5. Fourth year undergraduate members will be unable to stand in MCR elections or vote on MCR issues, because they will retain this right in the JCR.

4.6. A fourth year undergraduate member's continued membership is conditional upon their appropriate conduct and may be revoked at the discretion of the MCR Committee with the approval of the Postgraduate Tutors.

4.7. All fourth year undergraduate members may have their memberships revoked at the discretion of the MCR Committee with the approval of the Postgraduate and Senior Tutors.

4.8. Fourth year undergraduate members will be charged a special subscription which is at discretion of the MCR committee.

4.9. In the event that the fourth year undergraduates are invited to join the MCR, as associate members, the fourth year undergraduates will elect a fourth year representative, who is not a member of the JCR committee. The fourth year representative will be in place by the third week of Michaelmas term of each year. The election will be organised by the MCR committee.

4.10 The elected fourth year Representative, who is not an official member of the MCR committee, will:

- (a) Represent the views and interests of the 4th year undergraduate members of the MCR at MCR Committee meetings;
- (b) Contribute to group discussions and vote on all MCR issues directly relevant to the 4th year undergraduates;
- (c) Liaise with the 4th year undergraduates on MCR business;
- (d) Promote MCR events amongst the 4th year undergraduates;

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- (e) In accordance with 4.5 of this Constitution, this member will be unable to stand in MCR elections or vote on MCR issues outside of Committee meetings;
- (f) In accordance with 7.3 of this Constitution, this member will not be entitled to vote in a secret ballot for any Elected Offices.

### 5. Open Meeting and MCR Committee.

5.1. Not less than once a term a meeting open to all members of the MCR will be held. Between these Open Meetings a committee of its members will administer the MCR. The MCR Committee will be accountable to the Open Meeting for the administration of the MCR.

5.2. All motions to the MCR open meeting must be proposed and seconded by members of the MCR. All motions must be submitted in writing to the MCR Committee at least ten days before the Open Meeting. The agenda of the Open Meeting, including the motions received by the Committee, will be distributed to the MCR mailing list and put on the website not less than one week before the meeting is held.

5.3. At the Open Meeting, decisions will be taken by consensus or by an unqualified majority of votes of those present and voting, unless otherwise provided for by this Constitution.

5.4. The MCR Committee should, so far as is feasible, consist of two Presidents, a Treasurer, a Secretary, a Welfare Officer, two Social Secretaries, an Accommodation Officer, a Green Officer, a Computer Officer, an Education Officer, a Formal Hall Officer, and one or more Food & Drink Officer(s). Whenever possible, the MCR Committee will also strive to include liberations officers (LGBTQ+, Black & Minority Ethnic, Women's & Non-Binary, and/or Access).

5.5. Applications for liberations officers will be called for at each election. In the instance that no candidates come forward, the Welfare Officer will assume their responsibilities.

5.6. The President(s) may, when they deem necessary, name members of the MCR as Co-opted MCR Committee Officers.

5.7. The members of the MCR Committee will act in a manner consistent with this Constitution.

5.8 Any committee role may be shared between two or more people, provided that this is clearly stated when they are elected or co-opted into their role.

### 6. The Duties of Membership of the MCR Committee.

#### 6.1. The President(s) will:

- (a) Chair MCR Committee meetings and MCR Open Meetings or appoint a representative to do so;
- (b) Be an observer at the College GB and represent the MCR to the senior members of the College;
- (c) Try to ensure that all members of the MCR Committee fulfil their constitutional and mandated duties;
- (d) Have ultimate responsibility for the administration of the MCR, and the MCR mailing lists.

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- (e) Call MCR Committee meetings not less than twice per term;
- (f) Ensure that all the necessary Open Meetings and elections are held;
- (g) Explain the purpose of the MCR to new members at the beginning of term;
- (h) Assist and advise individual members of the MCR;
- (i) Liaise with the JCR;
- (j) Liaise with the Cambridge Students' Union (CSU);
- (k) Submit any amendments to this constitution, which have been approved by the MCR, to the designated senior member of the College.
- (l) Have responsibility to circulate the general email bulletin among the membership.
- (m) Have ultimate responsibility for the conduct and good order of bops held in the bar, while adhering to the 'Protocol for the Holding of Bops in the McGrath Centre', as set out by the Dean.
- (n) Arrange for a member of the committee to attend a CSU meeting or to send a vote on any mandates on behalf of the committee in proxy, should the Welfare Officer be unable to attend.

### 6.2. The Treasurer will:

- (a) Be generally responsible for the accurate control and accounting of the MCR finances;
- (b) Collect and disburse monies under the direction of the MCR Committee and be accountable for such expenditure. No donations will be made;
- (c) Make a budget for the year commencing the 1st of September, which will be made available as soon as is feasible after the election, to an Open Meeting, as well as to the designated senior member of College;
- (d) Produce, at the first Open Meeting of every term, the accounts of the previous term;
- (e) At the end of the financial year (June 30th), submit an annual report of the accounts to the designated senior member of College for an audit of the accounts, and make this report available to the members of the MCR (the annual report is submitted by the Treasurer of the previous year);
- (f) Liaise with the designated senior member of the College and with relevant College Committees on financial matters concerning the MCR.

### 6.3. The Secretary will:

- (a) Prepare the agenda and keep minutes of the MCR Open Meetings and of the MCR Committee meetings;
- (b) Circulate copies of MCR meeting agendas by email to the appropriate people prior to the meeting, that is, to the Committee before MCR Committee meetings and to the whole of the MCR before MCR Open Meetings;
- (c) Send copies of the minutes of the MCR Open Meetings and of the MCR Committee meetings to all MCR Committee members and to such other MCR members as the MCR Committee may direct, and ensure that the Computing Officer publishes these minutes on the MCR website;
- (d) Write letters as directed by the MCR Open Meetings or the MCR Committee meeting.

### 6.4. The Welfare Officer will:

- (a) Be available for consultation in matters pertaining to the welfare of all the members of the MCR;

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- (b) Liaise with the senior members of the College on matters relating to the welfare of MCR members, without at any stage compromising the confidentiality of the information received from any MCR member, prior to obtaining that person's consent;
- (c) Liaise with the JCR Welfare Officer;
- (d) Liaise with CSU;
- (e) Publicise matters related to the interests and/or welfare of all members of the MCR;
- (f) Be involved with the College's equal opportunities policies;
- (g) If required, act as returner and observer during the counting of votes in any election for the office of CSU and ensure that the process is conducted in a fair and democratic manner;
- (h) Publicise matters related to the facilities and/or campaigns organised by CSU;
- (i) Liaise with charities requesting support;
- (j) Notify the president(s) in the first instance if they are unable to attend a CSU meeting, who will arrange for an alternative committee member to attend or a vote in proxy.

### 6.5. The LGBTQ+ Officer will:

- (a) Be available for consultation in matters pertaining to LGBTQ+ members of the MCR;
- (b) Liaise with the senior members of the College on matters relating to the LGBTQ+ community within the MCR, without at any stage compromising the confidentiality of the information received from any MCR member, prior to obtaining that person's consent;
- (c) Liaise with the JCR LGBTQ+ Officer;
- (d) Liaise with CSU, particularly the CSU LGBT+ Campaign;
- (e) Publicise matters related to the interests and/or welfare of LGBTQ+ members of the MCR;
- (f) Be involved with the College's equal opportunities policies.

### 6.6. The Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) Officer will:

- (a) Be available for consultation in matters pertaining to BME members of the MCR;
- (b) Liaise with the senior members of the College on matters relating to the BME community within the MCR, without at any stage compromising the confidentiality of the information received from any MCR member, prior to obtaining that person's consent;
- (c) Liaise with the JCR BME Officer;
- (d) Liaise with CSU, particularly the CSU BME Campaign;
- (e) Publicise matters related to the interests and/or welfare of BME members of the MCR;
- (f) Be involved with the College's equal opportunities policies.

### 6.7. The Women & Non-Binary (NB) Officer will:

- (a) Be available for consultation in matters pertaining to self-identifying women and non-binary members of the MCR;
- (b) Liaise with the senior members of the College on matters relating to the women and non-binary community within the MCR, without at any stage compromising the confidentiality of the information received from any MCR member, prior to obtaining that person's consent;
- (c) Liaise with the JCR Women & Non-Binary Officer;
- (d) Liaise with CSU, particularly the CSU Women's Campaign;
- (e) Publicise matters related to the interests and/or welfare of women and non-binary members of the MCR;

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- (f) Be involved with the College's equal opportunities policies.

### 6.8. The Access Officer will:

- (a) Be responsible for the well-being and representation of members of the MCR who identify with having disabilities;
- (b) Liaise with senior members of the college on matters relating to access, underrepresentation and disabilities of members of the MCR;
- (c) Publicise matters related to the interest and/or involvement of all members of the MCR;
- (d) Be available for consultation on matters pertaining to access for all members of the MCR;
- (e) Publicise matters related to the facilities and/or campaigns organised by CSU;
- (f) Be involved with the College's equal opportunity policies;
- (g) Liaise with the college Nurse, Tutor for Disabilities, College staff, JCR Officers and the CSU Disabled Students Officer on all relevant issues.

### 6.9. The Social Secretary(/ies) will:

- (a) Be generally responsible for all social events organised by, or involving, the MCR Committee and the MCR facilities, other than formal halls;
- (b) Publicise events organised by CSU;
- (c) Where appropriate, liaise with the designated senior member of the College on matters related to the organisation, publicity and control of such events;
- (d) Collect and disburse monies relating to the provision of entertainment for MCR members under the direction of the Treasurer and be accountable for such expenditure;
- (e) Liaise with the JCR Entertainments Officer(s).

### 6.10 The Accommodation Officer will:

- (a) Produce, with the help of the Computer Officer, online documentation of the College postgraduate accommodation, including up to date photos, descriptions and costs for each postgraduate room;
- (b) Act as the designated Health & Safety representative for the postgraduate student body and attend the College Building & Services meeting;
- (c) Liaise with CUSU and the appropriate College Staff to gather information on accommodation provisions, both within the College and across the University;
- (d) Participate in the annual rental negotiations, taking other committee members as desired;
- (e) Facilitate communication between members and College Staff on accommodation matters, collecting members' views before advising on appropriate action.

### 6.11 The Green Officer will:

- (a) Be generally responsible for the establishment and maintenance of recycling programs within the MCR and all postgraduate residences. Liaise with appropriate College Staff in order to make this possible;
- (b) Liaise with the JCR Green Officer;
- (c) Publicise matters relating to facilities and/or campaigns organised by and within the University as a whole;
- (d) Be involved with the College on its energy saving policies.

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### 6.12 The Formal Hall Officer will:

- (a) Publicise formal halls held both in St. Catharine's and other colleges to which MCR members have been or will be invited;
- (b) Liaise with the relevant senior member(s) of the College and the Catering Service on matters related to the organisation of formal dinners for postgraduates in St. Catharine's College and be responsible for hall bookings;
- (c) Liaise with other colleges' MCR committee members to organise exchange formal halls ('swaps');
- (d) Collect and disburse monies at swaps under direction of the Treasurer and be accountable for such expenditure;
- (e) Liaise with the Social Secretaries to organise post-formal hall events;
- (f) Contact the food and drink officer in the first instance if unable to attend a formal hall event; contact the President(s) if the Food and Drink officer is also unable to attend.

### 6.13 The Food and Drink Officer(s) will:

- (a) Attend meetings of the College Hall and Bar Committee to represent the views of postgraduates regarding the College's food;
- (b) Consult MCR members about how the College Catering could be improved to better serve the postgraduate community;
- (c) Be responsible for food and drink orders for MCR events;
- (d) Liaise with the Social Secretaries and Formal Hall Officer to organise events;
- (e) Act as Formal Hall Officer on the evening of an event if the Formal Hall Officer is unable to attend.

### 6.14 The Educational Officer will:

- (a) Be available for all the members of the MCR to discuss matters related to education, including support for MCR members who supervise undergraduate students;
- (b) Represent the MCR at the college Education Committee meetings;
- (c) Organise MCR Seminars and other talks for the MCR;
- (d) Publicise talks and other educational events;
- (e) Liaise with the JCR Academic Affairs Officer and the Welfare Officer as required;
- (f) Oversee the organising committee for the annual MCR Postgraduate Symposium, advertising for members to join the committee, taking up a committee role if desired and ensuring that adequate preparations have been made for the event.

### 6.15 The Computer Officer will:

- (a) Be responsible for the upkeep of the MCR website;
- (b) Liaise with the relevant College Committees;
- (c) Publicise the facilities available from the College Computer Officers and the University Computing Service (UCS);
- (d) Be responsible for the audio/visual equipment in the MCR, and the use of such equipment by the MCR in the McGrath Centre Auditorium.

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6.16 The President(s) may co-opt MCR members to fill a vacant position or other temporary role on the MCR Committee, until an appropriate time at which a by-election can be held. Should the co-opted member wish to continue in this position, they will be required to run in the by-election. Co-opted Officers will work on whatever matters for which the President(s) have made them responsible.

6.17 The MCR Committee will:

- (a) Try to ensure that all events are conducted in an orderly fashion;
- (b) Assist in setting up before and tidying up after all MCR events.

7. Election Procedures.

7.1. The elections for the MCR Committee positions of Presidents, Treasurer, Secretary, Welfare Officer, Social Secretaries, Accommodation Officer, Green Officer, Computer Officer, Education Officer, Formal Hall Officer, Food and Drink Officer(s), LGBTQ+ Officer, BME Officer, Women & Non-Binary Officer, and Access Officer will be held in June of each year, with a handover period between Committees in July. Hereafter, these positions will be referred to as Elected Offices, and their holders as Elected Officers.

7.2. Any member of the MCR who will still be a student or an associate member during the whole of the following academic year, but not also a member of the JCR, may stand in elections for any of the Elected Offices. If a current 4th year undergraduate has accepted a place and has either met or has an unconditional offer then they are eligible to stand, but cannot take up office until they have started as postgraduates, which will be matriculation day of each year.

7.3. Every member of the MCR, who is also not a member of the JCR, is entitled to vote in a secret ballot for all Elected Offices.

7.4. Votes in the ballot for Elected Offices will be counted in accordance with the regulations for single transferable vote elections, as given in Chapter 1 of the Ordinances of the University of Cambridge.

7.5. The votes will be counted by the CSU voting system, and the results will be forwarded to the membership by email.

7.6. The new Elected Officers will be declared as the new Committee at the MCR Midsummer Dinner.

7.7. In the interim between results being announced and the MCR Midsummer Dinner a motion can be proposed by MCR members to reject any Officers of the new Committee. If such a motion is passed, a public vote will be conducted. If the unqualified majority is against the Officer(s), the Officer(s) will have to stand down and by-elections will be conducted. If the Midsummer Dinner is cancelled for any reason, its date shall be assumed to be nine days after the end of Full Easter Term.

7.8. An election report will be made available to the designated senior member of the College by the outgoing MCR President(s) so as to satisfy the College about the fair and proper conduct of the elections.

7.9. If an elected post falls vacant, by-elections will be held and nominations for positions on the MCR Committee will be made, as necessary, during the year.



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### 8. Affiliation to External Organisations.

8.1. A referendum to affiliate to an external organisation will be held if requested in writing by ten percent of all members of the MCR, and if this request is confirmed at an Open Meeting. The referendum will be conducted by secret ballot. The ballot box will be open twice a day, each time for at least one hour, and over two consecutive days. The President(s) and the Treasurer will count the votes and announce the results at an Open Meeting to be held on the last day of voting.

8.2. The MCR will not affiliate to CSU unless votes are cast in favour of such affiliation by two thirds of the members voting, provided that at least one half of the members of the MCR vote. The MCR will not affiliate to any other external organisation unless a majority of the members vote in favour of such an affiliation.

8.3. In the event of a referendum to affiliate to an external organisation, the MCR Committee will publish notice on the MCR website and email the membership to inform them of the organisation's name and of details of any subscription or similar fee to be paid. Any such notice will be made available to the designated senior member of the College and to all members of the MCR.

8.4. In the event of the MCR having affiliated to an external organisation, the Treasurer will include in the annual report a list of the external organisations to which the MCR is affiliated and the details of subscriptions or similar fees paid in the last year.

8.5. In the event that the MCR has affiliated to an external organisation, the MCR Committee will submit annually a current list of affiliations to its members at the first Open Meeting held in Michaelmas Term. A written request for a referendum on disaffiliation to any particular organisation may be made by at least five percent of the members of the MCR. It will be confirmed at an Open Meeting and be decided upon in a referendum.

8.6. Disaffiliation from an external organisation will take place if approved in a referendum conducted in accordance with the requirements, *mutatis mutandis*, specified in §8.1 and §8.2.

### 9. Complaints procedure.

9.1. Complaints from members of the MCR or from postgraduate students of St. Catharine's College who are not members of the MCR and who, (a) are dissatisfied in their dealings with the MCR, or (b) claim to be unfairly disadvantaged by virtue of having exercised the right not to become a member of the MCR, will be heard by the appropriate members of the MCR Committee and will, when necessary, be kept confidential. Complaints will be dealt with promptly and fairly and a reasonable and effective solution to the problem will be sought in a spirit of conciliation.

9.2. Should the problems not be solved within a reasonable period of time, or should the complaint be serious and of such a nature that it cannot be solved through or with the aid of the appropriate MCR Committee members, a complaint may then be filed or filed directly with the designated senior member of College. They will act independently of the parties involved and in the interests of all concerned. They will endeavour to solve the problems in accordance with the normal solutions available under St. Catharine's College practices.

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## 10. Relationship with the Governing Body.

10.1. The GB will designate one or more of its members to liaise with the MCR, MCR Committee, and other postgraduate members of the College, and to ensure that the MCR operates in a fair and democratic manner and is accountable for its finances. Unless otherwise designated by the GB, this member will be the Postgraduate Tutor. If there is more than one Postgraduate Tutor, this will be the Postgraduate Tutor so designated. Their duties will be:

- (a) To receive from the MCR Treasurer as soon as it is feasible after an election, the MCR budget for the year commencing the 1st September, together with a written statement of the procedures for allocating these resources;
- (b) To receive from the MCR Treasurer the MCR draft accounts at the end of each financial year (30th June). These accounts must be submitted to the College auditors for auditing along with the College accounts;
- (c) To act as an observer during any election for the major offices of the MCR Committee and to ensure that the process is conducted in a fair and democratic manner;
- (d) To receive from the MCR President any amendments to the MCR Constitution which have been approved by the MCR and submit them to the GB for approval and to present the MCR Constitution to the GB for review every five years;
- (e) To receive from the MCR President any notice of a decision by the MCR to become affiliated to an external organisation and to present it to the GB for ratification;
- (f) To receive annually from the MCR Treasurer a report stating the names of all the external organisations to which the MCR is affiliated and details of any subscriptions or similar fees paid to these organisations within the year covered by the report;
- (g) To receive any appeal, which follows from a complaint, as described in §9, referred to the MCR Committee; to investigate and, if necessary, report any such appeal to the GB for a decision.