



# Christ's College Graduate Society

## Constitution

### I. General

#### 1. Terms used

In this Constitution, the expression 'GB' shall mean the Governing Body of Christ's College; 'the College' shall mean Christ's College; 'the Society' shall mean Christ's College Graduate Society; 'the Committee' shall mean the Executive Committee of Christ's College Graduate Society; 'CCSU' shall mean Christ's College Student Union; 'elected officers' shall refer to those members of the Committee directly elected by the Society (as defined in §II, 2); and the expression 'affiliation to an external organisation' shall include any form of membership of, or formal association with, an organisation whose purposes are not confined to purposes connected with the College.

#### 2. Name

The Society shall be called Christ's College Graduate Society.

#### 3. Membership

Membership of the Society shall consist of all resident students of B.A. or M.A. status and affiliated students who are members of the College, undergraduates in their fourth year after matriculation and any individual who shall be admitted to honorary membership with the prior approval of the GB.

#### 4. Right not to be a member

i. Notwithstanding any provisions in this Constitution as to automatic membership of the Society, any person, who

would by virtue of those provisions be a member of the Society, may in any academic year declare by written notice that he or she does not wish to be a member, and in that case such a person shall not be a member of the Society for that academic year. Such written notice shall be served on the President of the Society within one week of the commencement of the Michaelmas Term.

ii. A graduate member of the College who exercises the right not to be a member of the Society shall not be unfairly disadvantaged with regard to the provision of services or otherwise.

## **5. Conduct**

The Society shall act in a fair and democratic manner in accordance with the provisions of the 1994 Education Act.

## **6. Objects**

The objects of the Society shall be in general to promote the interests of its members, within the bounds permitted by Charities Law and the 1994 Education Act, and in particular, subject to the aforementioned laws:

- i. To promote co-operation among graduate and affiliated members of the College for intellectual, social, and cultural activities.
- ii. To provide a channel of communication in especial between members of the Society and the GB, and between members of the society and CCSU, and also to represent the members of the Society in all College, University and other matters.
- iii. To provide a bar and other amenities for members of the Society.
- iv. To co-operate with any like society or association of graduate students in accordance with the interests of the members of the Society.
- v. To pursue such other aims consistent with the Society's constitution as the Society may from time to time determine.

## **7. Interpretation**

In the event of any dispute as to the interpretation of any provision of this Constitution, the ruling of the GB, in accordance with the Statutes of the College, shall be final.

## **II. The Executive Committee of the Society**

### **1. Purpose**

The Committee shall be responsible for the administration and organisation of the Society's activities and shall do its utmost to promote the welfare and interests of its members.

### **2. Composition**

The Committee shall consist of the following elected officers with voting rights:

- i.** The President
- ii.** The Treasurer
- iii.** The Secretary
- iv.** The Welfare and Equality Officer
- v.** The Bar Manager

In addition, the Committee shall consist of the following co-opted officers, also with voting rights:

- vi.** The External Officer
- vii.** The Halls Officer
- viii.** The Entertainments Officer
- ix.** The Academic Programme Officer

### **3. Co-option**

The Committee reserves the right to co-opt a member or members of the Society to act as members of the Committee, but with specific responsibilities or duties as outlined by the Committee, providing that the Committee shall not exceed fourteen members in total at any one moment. All co-opted members of the Committee shall have voting rights on the Committee.

### **4. Vice-President**

The Vice-President shall be elected from within the committee by majority (in accordance with §II,15). Any member of the committee is eligible to stand for election as Vice-President.

### **5. Tenure**

The elected officers shall hold office from the Saturday after the end of Lent Full Term until the last Friday of Lent Full Term in the following year. This will be considered the duration of the Committee's period in office. Co-opted members, whether under §II, 2 or §II, 3 shall hold office at least until the end of the University Term in which they

are appointed, and potentially for the entire duration of that Committee's period in office. The position of Academic Programme Officer, however, shall be held for the entire duration of the Committee's period in office, except as may be provided under §II, 7, or §IV, 9.

## **6. Payment**

Contrary to the provisions of s.22(2)(f) of the 1994 Education Act, there shall be no sabbatical or paid elected office in the Society

## **7. Voluntary Resignation**

Any member of the Committee apart from the President may resign by giving written notice to the President. The President may resign by giving notice in writing to every member of the Committee, the Society's emailing list and by announcement on the Society's noticeboard in the MCR. Letters of resignation shall include a date from which the resignation shall be considered effective. If an elected officer resigns, a by-election shall be held as appropriate to fill the unexpired period of office of the member resigning. The Committee may ask the resigning officer to continue to act until his or her successor shall have been elected, or may temporarily transfer the duties to another member of the Society.

## **8. Duties and responsibilities**

Except in so far as specific duties and responsibilities are assigned to individual posts of the Committee in this Constitution, the Committee may determine the exact duties and responsibilities of each post at the start of its period of office, while always paying due regard to the necessity of mutual assistance between Committee members and the collective responsibility of the Committee as a whole.

## **9. Frequency**

Meetings of the Committee shall be called by the President whenever it is deemed desirable provided that there shall be at least two such meetings each term. The Secretary shall publicise such meetings of the Committee at least one clear day in advance.

## **10. Publicity**

The date, time and location of all meetings of the Committee shall be made available to any members of the Society who request such information.

## **11. Quorum**

The quorum for the Committee shall be five members of the Committee including at least three elected officers of the Committee.

## **12. Chairperson**

The President shall act as Chairperson of the Committee. In his or her absence the Vice-President shall act as Chairperson. In the event of the Vice-President's absence, the remaining officers shall elect a Chairperson from among themselves.

## **13. Transparency**

All Members of the Society are entitled to attend meetings of the Committee, but the President, at his or her discretion, may exclude from the discussion of any confidential or sensitive matter all ordinary members present other than those directly concerned. Members attending meetings of the Committee may speak with the permission of the Chairperson, but not vote. Members may present petitions providing that they have notified the Secretary in advance.

## **14. Minutes**

The Secretary shall ensure that the Minutes of all Committee meetings are taken, and circulated to all members of the Committee and others present, within one week of the meeting. The Minutes of all meetings shall be publicized on both the MCR notice board and on the MCR website, and they shall also be made available to any member of the Society upon written request to the Secretary. The Secretary shall be responsible for the preservation of the Minutes in hard copy from one year to the next.

## **15. Voting**

In the instance that a consensus cannot be found during a meeting of the committee, then a vote may be called by the Chairperson. In the event that the committee is evenly divided, the matter shall be referred to the President who shall hold the casting vote.

# **III. Elections**

## **1. Date**

The elected officers of the Committee shall be elected by members of the Society not more than five weeks before the end of University Full Lent Term each year.

## **2. Candidature**

No person may stand for, or be elected to, a position on the Committee who is not a member of the Society. In particular, the President shall be a member of the College in good standing, and shall expect to remain a member of the College until the end of his or her full period in office. For those pursuing one-year degrees, evidence of intention to continue as a graduate student of the University and member of the College will be required.

### **3. Voting**

Elected officers shall be appointed in a secret ballot in which all members of the Society are entitled to vote, and at which a Fellow of the College shall act as Returning Officer. The Fellow acting as Returning Officer shall be assisted by a member of the Society, called the Election Officer, not standing in the election and appointed by the Committee for the purpose and to whom may be delegated specific duties. An online voting system may be applied in addition to the traditional ballot system, and the Returning Officer will be responsible for proving the security of the system. Provisions shall be made, upon request, for absentee voting for any member of the Society who is bona fide unable to attend or to vote via the online voting system if applied.

### **4. Election Officer**

The Election Officer shall assist the Returning Officer in the election arrangements. The Election Officer may, as necessary, appoint assistants who shall not be candidates in the election or by-election and to whom may be delegated his or her duties and responsibilities.

### **5. Duties of the Election Officer**

The Election Officer, overseen by the Returning Officer, shall:

- i.** Open a nominations book at least 12 days before the date of the election and close it five days before the election.
- ii.** On the day following closure of the nominations book, announce as candidates the names of those members who have been proposed and seconded in the nominations book by members entitled to vote for the position concerned.
- iii.** Notify each member of the Society at least three days in advance of the election about the names of candidates, the date of the election and method of voting including the method of absentee or online voting referred to in §III, 3. above.
- iv.** Where the number of candidates for any position is exactly one, declare the candidate provisionally elected. Members shall have five days within which to ask the Election Officer that nominations be re-opened. Such requests shall be treated in strictest confidence by the Election Officer. If fewer than 12 members of the Society exercise this right, the candidate shall be declared elected. If 12 or more members do exercise this right, then an election shall be held.
- v.** When no candidates are nominated for a position, announce at the close of the nominations period the extension of the nomination period by two days. If no nominations are received by the close of this extended nominations period, the positions with no nominations shall be co-opted by the elected members of the committee. The co-option shall take place at the first meeting of the newly elected committee. The quorum shall be comprised of all the newly elected officers.

- vi.** Where an election is required, either because the number of candidates for any position is greater than one, or an election is necessitated according to §III, 5. (iv), conduct the election on the date appointed. A re-open nominations (RON) option shall be included on the ballot paper or the online voting system if applied.
- vii.** Arrange for the online voting system, if applied, to be open on the day of the election for a period of time prior to the opening of the ballot boxes that ensures the integrity of the election.
- viii.** Arrange for the ballot boxes to be open for at least two hours on the day of the election and ensure that they are properly manned throughout that period.
- ix.** Give one copy of the correct ballot paper to each member entitled and wishing to vote and having not done so via an online option.
- x.** Count the votes.
- xi.** Adjudicate on the validity of any unconventionally marked ballot papers.
- xii.** The result shall be determined by Single Transferable Vote. Should RON win, nominations are re-opened. Candidates against whom the RON option has been exercised may stand again for the position in question, but anyone whose candidacy is successfully opposed by RON in two consecutive elections shall not be eligible for that position for six months from the date of the second election.
- xiii.** Publicise the results by declaring elected the winning candidate or candidates, or calling a new election if necessary.
- xiv.** In the event of a tie for any post, determine the result by drawing lots among the tying candidates unless one or more of these candidates objects. In this case there shall be another election between tying candidates only, to be held as soon as possible.

## **6. By-elections**

If an elected office falls vacant for any reason, a by-election shall be held as soon as possible under the above procedure.

## **IV. Open Meetings**

### **1. Status**

The Open Meeting of the Society is the highest decision-making body within the Society. The powers of the

Committee are delegated to it by the Open Meeting through the Constitution. All decisions made at an Open Meeting in accordance with the Constitution are binding until the Open Meeting shall decide otherwise.

## **2. Frequency**

An Open Meeting of the Society may be called by resolution of the Committee. An Open Meeting must be called within 10 days of the receipt by the Committee of a written request for an Open Meeting signed by 20% of the membership of the Society.

## **3. Quorum**

The quorum of an Open Meeting shall be 18 members of the Society unless the Open Meeting is discussing amendments to the Constitution, Standing Orders, or votes of no confidence in any member or members of the Committee, for which motions the quorum shall be 25 members of the Society.

## **4. Publicity**

The date, time and location of an Open Meeting shall be publicised via the Society's emailing list and by announcement on the Society's noticeboard in the MCR at least seven days in advance. Notice of motions must be submitted to the Secretary not less than six days in advance for constitutional motions and not less than three days in advance for ordinary motions. Motions shall be publicised via the Society's emailing list and by announcement on the Society's notice board in the MCR not less than two days in advance of the Open Meeting.

## **5. Chairperson**

The President shall act as Chairperson of the Open Meeting. In his or her absence the Vice-President shall act as Chairperson. In the event of the Vice-President's absence, the remaining voting officers of the Committee shall elect a Chairperson from among themselves.

## **6. Standing Orders**

Open Meetings shall be carried out in accordance with Standing Orders.

## **7. Minutes**

The Secretary shall ensure that the Minutes are taken and made available to all the Members of the Society within one week of the Open Meeting. The Minutes shall be preserved in hard copy from one year to the next.

## **8. Voting**

Voting shall be by a show of hands. The Chair shall appoint two tellers from the Committee. A recount shall be held if the tellers disagree on the decision, or the Chair deems it necessary. Amendments to the Constitution or to Standing Orders require a 75% majority of those present and entitled to vote; for other votes, a simple majority of those voting is required.

## **9. Votes of no confidence**

Any member of the Committee may be removed from office by a simple majority of members at an Open Meeting quorate for such a motion. The officer or member may appeal to the members of the Society to convene a second Open Meeting within four days, otherwise the member shall be deprived of office effective from the fifth day after the motion of no confidence. If he or she gets the support of at least 20% of the membership of the Society a second Open Meeting shall be held. The vote of no confidence is then repeated. A simple majority of those voting in this second Open Meeting will again suffice. There will be no further appeal. Following a second successful vote of no confidence the Committee member is immediately deprived of office. A by-election is called following a successful vote of no confidence.

# **V. Representation**

## **1. Nominations for Representation**

The Committee shall, when necessary, nominate members of the Society, normally officers of the Committee, to sit on committees requiring the representation of the Society's members.

## **2. GB**

Up to two representatives of the committee, including the President, shall act as the Society's representatives on GB, when duly elected by that body (in accordance with Statute B, Chapter III of the Statutes of the College), and report back to the Committee.

## **3. Graduate Liaison Committee**

This committee shall be the primary mechanism for interaction between the Society and the College. The Society's representatives shall be those three voting officers of the Committee best able, in the view of the Committee, to represent the Society on the matters to be discussed, but normally the President, Treasurer and one other. A report shall be made to the Committee following each meeting of the Graduate Liaison Committee.

#### **4. CCSU Executive Committee**

The Society's representative on the CCSU Executive Committee may be any elected officer of the Committee. The representative shall attend CCSU Executive Committee meetings when relevant matters are to be discussed.

#### **5. CCSU Liaison Committee**

At least once a term, representatives from the Committee shall meet with representatives from the Christ's College Junior Combination Room Executive Committee to discuss matters of mutual interest and concern, thereby promoting good relations between the undergraduate and graduate members of CCSU and co-ordinating policy where necessary and appropriate. There shall be a minimum of two and a maximum of five representatives from the Society for any one meeting.

#### **6. Cambridge University Graduate Union**

Ordinarily the President shall act as the Society's representative on the Cambridge University Graduate Union and report back to the Committee. In the event of the President being unable to attend any meeting, a representative may be chosen by the Committee.

#### **7. Other Committees**

Representatives of the Society shall be appointed by the Committee to any other College committee which specifically require graduate representation. Any member of the Society is eligible to sit on these committees and report back to the Committee.

#### **8. Banners**

Any banner which might be interpreted as representing the Society shall only be displayed in public with the prior consent of the Committee or an Open Meeting.

### **VI. Financial Matters**

#### **1. Treasurer**

The finances of the Society shall be supervised by the Treasurer.

#### **2. Financial Year**

The financial year of the Society shall run in tandem with the College's financial year, currently from the 1 July in any year until 30 June in the following year.

### **3. Handover**

Whenever a Treasurer's term of office ends, whether through expiry (§II. 4.) or resignation (§II. 6.), and as soon as a new Treasurer is elected, both the outgoing and incoming Treasurers shall meet with the Bursar's representative to ensure that the accounts are in order at the start of the incoming Treasurer's term of office.

### **4. Audit**

The Treasurer shall present to the Bursar of the College at the end of the financial year a statement of the financial transactions of the Society for that year for preparation of final accounts and submission to the College Auditors.

### **5. Financial report**

The Society shall publish annually to all Graduate members of the College a financial report, which shall also be presented to the Graduate Liaison Committee. The report shall include details of any donations made by the Society to external organisations in the period to which it relates.

### **6. Budget**

At an Open Meeting before the division of the Easter Term the Society shall vote on a budget proposed by the Treasurer and approved by the Committee for the coming year. The budget shall be taken as a whole and without amendment. If passed the budget shall be submitted to the Graduate Liaison Committee for approval. A simple majority of those voting at the Open Meeting will suffice.

### **7. Overspending**

All unbudgeted expenditure must be approved by the Committee.

### **8. Fair allocation**

The Society shall set down in writing, and make freely accessible to all those eligible for membership of the Society, and to the GB, a statement of the procedure for allocating resources to groups and clubs, ensuring that the procedure is fair.

### **9. Account signatories**

For any account belonging to the Society the Committee will authorise two elected officers to execute instructions individually on the account.

## **VII. Affiliation to External Organisations**

### **1. Notice of affiliation**

If the Society decides to become affiliated to any external organisation, it shall make known to all those eligible for membership of the Society, and to the Graduate Liaison Committee, a notice of this decision stating the name of the organisation and the details of any subscription or similar fee paid or proposed to be paid, and of any donation made or proposed to be made, to the organisation.

### **2. Annual report**

The Society shall annually make available to all those eligible for membership of the Society, and to the Graduate Liaison Committee, a report stating the names of all the external organisations to which it is affiliated and the details of any subscriptions or similar fee paid, and of any donation made, to the organisations within the year covered by the report.

### **3. Challenge to continued affiliation**

Upon request of at least 4% of its members, the Society shall submit for the approval of its members a list of the organisations to which the Society is affiliated. If at least 4% of the members so require, the question of continued affiliation to any particular organisation shall be decided upon by a secret ballot at which all members are entitled to vote.

## **VIII. Grievances**

### **1. Procedure**

All those eligible for membership of the Society or groups of such members who are dissatisfied in their dealings with the Society, or dissatisfied with the Society's expenditure, or who claim to be unfairly disadvantaged by reason of having exercised the right not to be a member of the Society, may refer a complaint to the President of the Society for a decision. Any appeal may be made to the Master within a period of 14 days and the Master shall appoint a Fellow for this purpose, who may not delegate his or her responsibility for hearing the appeal. The GB shall have power to provide such effective remedy if any as they consider appropriate when a complaint is upheld.

## **IX. Constitution.**

### **1. Status**

- i. This Constitution represents the Rules of the Society. Nothing in any previous Constitution shall retain any validity or effect once this Constitution has been ratified by GB.

ii. This Constitution is a revised version of that passed by GB on 2 March 2010 and amended 6 March 2012. It shall have full force and effect when it shall have been passed by the GB at a meeting during the academic year of 2014 - 2015.

iii. The Constitution shall be resubmitted to the GB for review at intervals of not more than five years.

## **2. Amendments**

i. The Committee is responsible for drawing up any changes to the Constitution that might be considered desirable, having due regard to the wishes of the members of the Society.

ii. Any changes to these Rules shall be submitted to an Open Meeting for approval, as outlined in Section IV above.

iii. No alteration shall be made to any part of this Constitution without the approval of the GB.

iv. No alteration shall be made to any of this Constitution except in accordance with the provisions of the 1994 Education Act.

Last Amended by an Open Meeting held on 2 June 2015 , and approved by the Governing Body on 7 July 2015 . J.H.R. Farmery, A.W. Phillips, E. Chen, L.M. Wittern, N.D. Burke, for CCGS

**This version of the constitution was accepted by the Governing Body on 7th July on the condition the following notes were appended to the document:**

- The next time this constitution is amended, references to the 1994 Education Act should be amended to accurately reflect the content of the acts.
- The size of the Committee should be reviewed when the constitution is next amended. The amendments accepted on the 7th of July expanded the committee from 12 to 14 members. The purpose of these changes was, in part, to give the committee the power to elect a "first year Officer" whose role is to represent first year MCR members with an election at some point in Michaelmas term. If trials of this scheme work this position should be incorporated into the constitution.
- The Governing Body advise that ethnic and gender equality are expressly considered next time the constitution is amended. Another reason for the expansion of the committee is to give more power to coopt in order to correct any imbalance in representation. If cooption is used in this manner in future, reviewers should consider whether some rules regarding gender or ethnic balance is written into the constitution.

- J.H.R Farmery (MCR President)

07/07/2015