

Changes to the MCR Constitution, MT16

Accompanying notes

Proposed revision to the MCR constitution are enclosed. Additions are highlighted and underlined in blue, and deletions are struck through in red. The main changes are as follows (with rationale for individual changes below):

- Definition of ‘membership’ is updated to bring it in line with current college policy, and the age of ‘mature’ student has been lowered from 25 to 21, bringing it in line with University policy.
- More clarity is given on who is eligible for ‘associate membership’, including widening the definition to encompass all fourth-year undergraduates, rather than just science students.
- A clause has been added to allow minor changes to a proposed amendment to the constitution at the general meeting in which it is being discussed.
- The timescale for elections to the executive committee has been altered to give the incumbent committee more flexibility in the precise schedule, and rules on election of the CRO have been rationalised.
- A clause has been removed in order to allow the president to apply to the Barbara Craig Fund.

More detail on specific changes:

4a) Altered to read as a list of applicable categories, including students on a second undergraduate degree, graduate entry medicine degree, and the diploma in legal studies. The College currently offers full membership of the MCR to these categories. In addition, the age of ‘mature’ student is reduced to 21, which is the definition the University uses, and a better fit in terms of age than 25.

4b) Removed reference to ‘keys’ and ‘access cards’ to make the section more general.

4c) Altered to read as a list of applicable categories, and to bring associate membership in line with what is currently offered. The main change is that the MCR would like all fourth-year undergraduates the ability to apply for associate membership. Currently, only fourth year students studying at masters’ level may apply (MMath, MChem, MEng, etc), and this proposed change has been welcomed both by the MCR and by fourth year undergraduates.

4d) Altered to ensure appropriate associate membership applications cannot arbitrarily be rejected by the executive.

4e) Altered the list of access rights of associate members to include access to the library. This is not expected to appreciably increase use of the library, as most associate members are either former full members, who either are no longer at Oxford, or who have a new college, or fourth-year undergraduates, who already have access to the library. This would, however, allow for the

occasional situation where, for instance, a former member is returning for an event, arrives early to avoid the traffic, and could do with somewhere quiet to work for an hour or two. As said, the MCR do not expect the addition of this access right to impact upon the library in a meaningful way, but would like it to be included (certainly with the expectation that if it were to ever cause any problems, it could be removed).

11a) Added a clause to allow minor amendments to resolutions to amend the constitution, at the General Meeting at which they are to be discussed. This would have tremendous utility, as very often the precise language of a proposed amendment is debated at length. The ability to alter wording to remove ambiguity, or to aid clarity, or to correct grammatical oddities, would make the process of changing the MCR constitution much more pleasant, without (in our opinion) any detrimental side-effects.

Schedule 1:

2d) It is strictly speaking not possible to elect a new CRO “according to the procedure above” as a specific general meeting is required. Instead, we have replaced it “in a manner similar to”.

3) Removed the requirement of an 8 day period between nominations closing and the election occurring, as this is unnecessarily long. In addition, we have increased the maximum number of social secretaries from two to three, reflecting the much more active MCR community. Removed the possibility of a candidate for president becoming vice-president if they secure the second-most number of votes. This is unlikely to ever be the desired outcome for a presidential candidate (the roles are certainly distinct), and may indeed deter someone for running for president.

5b) Same rationale as 2d).

6c) Allow the Executive committee to appoint a CRO for by-elections, should a CRO not be incumbent. There are often by-elections near the start of MT to fill positions vacated by students who graduate. The CRO will often have graduated as well, and it is necessary for the elections to proceed promptly.

Schedule 3:

3b) Currently the president may not apply to the Barbara Craig Fund. This creates a potential financial disincentive to running for president which, in the opinion of the MCR, is unnecessary. The job of the MCR president with regard the Barbara Craig Fund is to receive and anonymise the applications, before deciding upon their outcome in conjunction with the rest of the committee. It is not clear that the president has any greater ability to unfairly influence their own application than does any other member of the committee. Given that the MCR currently trust the committee as a whole to preside over the application process, it seems right to extend that trust to the president, particularly if in doing so, a financial penalty to holding the office is removed.