

# Sidney Sussex MCR Constitution

## I. Principles

### §1 Membership

1. The MCR is a student union as defined by the 1994 Education Act, Part II (“Student Unions”). Its constitution has been drafted in accordance with the principles laid out for student union constitutions within the 1994 Education Act, Sections 20 – 22.
2. The MCR is also the community of graduate students at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, constituted by all master’s, PhD, Part III Mathematics, Physics and Astrophysics students as well as medicine students in the 4<sup>th</sup> year and beyond.
3. Students mentioned in §1.2 are made members of the MCR by default. They can opt out of the MCR upon request, which is to be directed to both the MCR President and the Graduate Tutors.

### §2 MCR Room

1. The MCR has at its disposal a common room in College, which it arranges, runs and maintains independently to a significant degree.

### §3 Relationship to Sidney Sussex student body

1. The MCR is self-run in student matters and independent of the JCR/SSCSU, which comprises undergraduate students at Sidney Sussex College
2. Together with the JCR/SSCSU, the MCR is the student representation of the college.
3. MCR and JCR cooperate on certain issues, including but not limited to student representation in college bodies and the ‘Joint Budget’.

### §4 Relationship to college bodies

1. The principal administrative and pastoral point for contact for MCR students are the Graduate Tutors and the Graduate Office.

## II. Committee

### §5 Purpose of the MCR Committee

1. The MCR committee (from here on referred to as “the Committee”) is responsible for the self-administration of the MCR and its external representation, for example towards college or the JCR.
2. Its members are members of the Sidney Sussex MCR
3. It is elected by the members of the Sidney Sussex MCR
4. The electoral term for the committee is twelve months; it starts with the beginning of Eastern term and ends on the last day of the following Lent term.
5. The committee shall meet on a regular basis, with a recommended frequency of one meeting a month during term time.
6. Decisions in committee are taken by vote with simple majority.
7. No decision taken by the committee shall be executed without the knowledge of the MCR President who shall be entitled to require any decision taken by the Committee

which the MCR President shall consider to be outside its jurisdiction to be presented instead as a motion at an open meeting.

8. The MCR President shall chair committee meetings. In case of unforeseen absence, the MCR Secretary shall chair the meeting.
9. Participation in the committee is a voluntary activity

#### §6 Makeup of the committee

1. Members of the committee are the MCR President, the Treasurer, the Secretary and a variable number of officers
2. MCR President, Treasurer and Secretary are core constituents of the MCR committee which are required to be filled for the committee to fulfill its duties
3. A president shall attempt to fill as many officer positions as possible.
4. The individual positions shall be outlined below

#### §7 The MCR President

1. The MCR President shall be a Full Member of the MCR, whose degree is not scheduled to end before the end of his/her tenure.
2. The MCR President shall hold no other post in the committee.
3. The MCR President shall be elected annually by a ballot of all MCR Members during the Lent Term. Their term of office shall begin on the first day of the Easter Term following the election.
4. Nominations for the post MCR President shall only be proposed and seconded by Full MCR Members.
5. The MCR President shall be responsible, together with the committee, of which the MCR President is Chair, for the management of the MCR.
6. The MCR President is responsible for inviting applications for the MCR co-opted Officers from the end of Lent term.
7. The MCR President shall ex officio be a member of College Council, Governing Body, Buildings and Environment Committee, Prevent Committee and Education committees. The MCR President can, in coordination with the committee chair, nominate suitable officers as permanent representatives for individual committees (not College Council or Governing Body).
8. The MCR President shall produce a report at the end of their term of office outlining achievements, ongoing projects and any other pertinent information. The report shall be given to the newly elected MCR President at the beginning of their term of office. All members of the MCR shall have access to the report upon request.
9. The MCR President shall, in consultation with the MCR Treasurer, determine the date and time of all MCR Meetings.
10. The MCR President shall provide and circulate an agenda for committee meetings in advance of those meetings.
11. The MCR President shall be jointly responsible for the holding of any emergency meetings called in the authorised manner.
12. The MCR President is jointly responsible for overseeing the operations of the Student Run Bar to ensure its financial viability. They work with the JCR President and Bar Finance Manager to produce a report on the Bar's financial performance in the past year and a budget for the coming year. These are to be submitted to College Council at the beginning of Michaelmas term, in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Bar Operating Rules.

13. The MCR President shall jointly ensure that, at the end of their term of office, all minutes for the MCR committee and any other relevant meetings are made available to the next MCR President.
14. The MCR President shall be jointly responsible for any constitutional amendments that may be necessary in their term of office.
15. The MCR President shall work in conjunction with the MCR officers to ensure that the activities and news of the MCR are actively communicated to MCR members.
16. The MCR President shall produce, at the beginning of every term, a document outlining each MCR Officers reports for the previous term and plans for the subsequent term. The MCR President shall present this document to the first MCR Meeting of every term, and to the first College Council Meeting of every term. The report shall be made available to MCR members upon request.

#### §8 The MCR Treasurer

1. The MCR Treasurer shall be a Full Member of the MCR, whose degree is not scheduled to end before the end of his/her tenure.
2. The MCR Treasurer shall hold no other post in the committee.
3. The MCR Treasurer shall be elected annually by a ballot of all MCR Members during the Lent Term. Their term of office shall begin on the first day of the Easter Term following the election.
4. Nominations for the post MCR Treasurer shall only be proposed and seconded by Full MCR Members.
5. The MCR Treasurer shall be responsible for the management of the MCR finances and for the budget allocated to the MCR by college.
6. The MCR Treasurer shall draw up an annual budget plan, outlining the intended use of finances by the MCR committee.
7. The MCR Treasurer shall, together with the JCR Treasurer and in coordination with the Senior Bursar, draw up the budget for Sidney clubs and societies ('Joint Budget'). The MCR Treasurer shall ensure that MCR members are informed about application procedures and deadlines to the 'Joint Budget'. The MCR President shall be informed about the proposed spending plans from the 'Joint Budget'.
8. The MCR Treasurer shall support the Graduate Office in publicizing sources of financial support for graduate students on college level to MCR members.
9. The MCR Treasurer shall produce a report at the end of their term of office outlining achievements, ongoing projects and any other pertinent information. The report shall be given to the newly elected MCR Treasurer at the beginning of their term of office. The report shall be made available to MCR members upon request.

#### §9 The MCR Secretary

1. The MCR Secretary shall be a Full Member of the MCR, whose degree is not scheduled to end before the end of his/her tenure.
2. The MCR Secretary shall be elected or co-opted. The MCR Secretary's term of office shall commence at the start of Easter term.
3. The MCR Secretary shall be responsible for the taking of minutes at MCR meetings and their distribution after committee meetings, as well as arranging for their publication on the MCR website, and undertaking the general administrative needs of the MCR committee.

4. The MCR Secretary represents the MCR on the library committee, upon coordination with committee chair.

#### §10 The MCR Social Officer

1. Up to four MCR Social Officers may be elected or co-opted
2. The MCR Social Officers are responsible for the organisation and running of all social graduate specific events, including the fortnightly Graduate Formals and intercollegiate swaps.
3. Social officers can take on special and exclusive responsibility for swaps (swaps officer) or events (events officer).

#### §11 The MCR welfare officer

1. Up to two MCR welfare officers can be elected or co-opted.
2. The MCR Welfare Officer shall be responsible for welfare related concerns in committee work.
3. The MCR Welfare Officer shall organise events to the benefit and support of the welfare of Sidney Sussex MCR members.
4. The MCR Welfare Officer functions as point of contact for college on welfare matters
5. The MCR Welfare Officer or Officers shall be the primary people for graduates to approach with personal welfare related problems, including such issues as stress, depression, sexual harassment and safety etc. The MCR Welfare Officer or Officers will either attempt to provide support individually or point to qualified external sources of support.
6. The MCR Welfare Officer shall be responsible for publicising the hardship fund and advising graduate students on financial issues.
7. One MCR welfare officer can take on the additional duty of MCR Women's officer, who shall represent the views and concerns of the female members of the MCR to the committee, relevant college authorities and the CUSU/GU Social Welfare Council and Women's Council.

#### §12 The MCR External Officer

1. One MCR External Officer shall be elected or co-opted.
2. The MCR External Officer shall be responsible for the communication of the views, decisions and policies of the MCR to the GU and CUSU, and for the communication of the decisions of the GU and CUSU to the MCR.
3. The MCR External Officer shall vote at GU Council in accordance with the views of Sidney's graduate community.
4. The MCR External Officer shall vote at CUSU Council in accordance with the views of Sidney's graduate community.
5. The MCR External Officer shall be responsible for the communication of literature and any relevant information (such as agendas and minutes of meetings) sent to him/her by the GU and CUSU to the committee and, if deemed relevant, to the MCR as a whole.

#### §13 The MCR Computer Officer

1. One MCR Computer Officer shall be elected or co-opted.

2. The MCR Computer Officer shall be in charge of and update all graduate email lists. They shall be responsible for moderating email sent via these lists.
3. The MCR Computer Officer shall develop and maintain MCR website and social media presence.

#### §14 The MCR Green Officer

1. The MCR Green Officer shall be elected or co-opted annually.
2. The MCR Green Officer shall propose steps to improve environment-friendly behaviour in the MCR.
3. The MCR Green Officer shall communicate environmental and ethical issues to the committee, the JCR and/or college and work together with these groups to mitigate such issues.

#### §15 The MCR LGBTQ Officer

1. The group to be represented by the MCR LGBTQ Officer shall be all students who consider their sexuality and/or gender to fall within the area defined by LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans\* and Queer/Questioning), henceforth referred to as “LGBTQ students”.
2. The MCR LGBTQ Officer shall be elected or co-opted annually.
3. The MCR LGBTQ Officer shall work in connection with the JCR LGBTQ officer, the MCR Welfare Officers and the JCR Welfare officers in advising any Sidney Sussex students on matters concerning sexuality and sexual health.
4. The MCR LGBTQ Officer shall represent the views and concerns of MCR LGBTQ students to the committee and to relevant college authorities.
5. The MCR LGBTQ Officer shall organise social and welfare events for MCR members who self-define as LGBTQ.

#### §16 The MCR BME Officer

1. The group to be represented by the MCR Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Officer shall be all students who consider themselves to belong to Minority Ethnic communities henceforth referred to as “BME students”.
2. The MCR BME Officer shall be elected or co-opted annually.
3. The MCR BME Officer shall work in connection with the MCR Welfare Officers to ensure that MCR BME students’ views are considered within college and student life.
4. The BME Officer shall represent the views and concerns of MCR BME students to college and the committee.
5. The BME Officer shall organise social and welfare events for any MCR members who consider themselves BME.
6. The BME Officer shall, upon coordination with the committee chair, represent the MCR in the college’s PREVENT committee.

#### §17 The MCR Freshers’ Representative

1. The MCR Freshers’ Representative is responsible for representing graduate students in the first year of their studies.
2. The MCR Freshers’ Representative shall be elected by MCR members in Michaelmas term, with office lasting until the following Michaelmas term.

3. Should there be only one candidate for MCR Fresher's Representative, the position can be co-opted.
4. The MCR Freshers' Representative shall organise events (in collaboration with the MCR Social Secretaries) for first-year graduate students throughout the year. This particularly includes events at the beginning of Lent and Easter terms to engage mid-year intake graduate students in MCR life.

#### §18 The MCR Gym Officer

1. Up to two MCR Gym Officers shall be elected or co-opted
2. The MCR Gym Officer shall ensure that the gym is clean and tidy, that the equipment is free of faults and that safety information, rules of the gym, and usage guidelines are clearly displayed.
3. The MCR Gym Officer shall ensure that at the start of every term the College Office and Porters have up-to-date lists of all members.
4. The MCR Gym Officer shall provide training on the use of the gym whenever required and shall ensure that ALL graduate members of the Gym are given an induction prior to use. Extra training sessions shall be provided during Freshers' Week.
5. The MCR Gym Officer shall ensure that all graduate members of the gym have completed a medical information form and have signed to say they are fit to exercise and have understood the rules of the gym.
6. The MCR Gym Officer shall assist in the administration of the Gym Fund, and liaise with the MCR and JCR treasurers for the purchase of new equipment.
7. The MCR Gym Officer shall keep records of member information, induction forms, maintenance updates, equipment replaced and shall pass this on to their successor.
8. In these duties the MCR Gym Officer shall cooperate closely with the JCR Gym Officer.

#### § 19 The MCR Film Officer.

1. One MCR Film Officer shall be elected or co-opted.
2. The MCR Film Officer is responsible for organising and advertising regular MCR film nights in the MCR.

#### § 20. Removal of Officers.

1. Officers are elected or appointed until the committee's term ends at the end of Lent term.
2. Any member of the MCR can request the removal of any committee member, including the MCR president, from office. Such removal has to be approved by simple majority at an open MCR meeting. The organisation of such an open meeting upon request by an MCR member follows the regulations as laid out in §28.
3. The Graduate Tutors of the college can, upon presentation of evidence to the MCR about gross misconduct of the committee or individual committee members request the removal of the committee or said committee members. Such a request has to be approved by the Governing Body of the college.

### **III. Elections**

## §21 Organisation of elections.

1. Regular elections to the MCR committee shall be held once a year, towards the end of Lent term.
2. The election shall be organised by the outgoing Committee, with the exception of any officers standing for re-election.
3. The returning officer organizing the election shall be an outgoing member of the committee, who will be announced by the Committee at least 7 days before the election.
4. The returning officer shall organize an open meeting for candidates to present themselves to the MCR ('hustings').
5. The elections are overseen by the Graduate Office.

## § 22 Nominations

1. The deadline for nominations for committee positions is 7 days before the election
2. All members of the MCR, whose degree is expected not to finish before the end of the next committees term, can nominate themselves or be nominated by another member of the MCR. In the case of MCR President, only members of the current MCR committee can be nominated or nominate themselves for election.
3. Nominations shall be made to the Returning Officer of the MCR election
4. Each nomination requires two sponsors, who have to be members of the MCR.
5. Should there be no candidate for MCR president from the current MCR committee, or a lack of committee sponsors for candidates for MCR president, the Returning Officer can decided to open up applications to the position as well as sponsors to non-committee members. In that case, the Returning Officer can decide a delay to the election procedure of up to 7 days.

## §23 Mode of elections

1. Each MCR member has one vote.
2. Elections shall be held by secret ballot, either electronically (preferred option) or in an open meeting of all MCR members.
3. On every ballot paper there shall appear the names of the nominees for that election and an additional candidate, Re-Open Nominations. For the purpose of counting the votes, the "re-open nominations" box shall be treated as if a candidate. If the "re-open nominations" candidate gains the highest number of votes cast in a poll for that election, it shall be deemed to have been elected and another election for that officer shall be held between 10 and 14 days later, this time without the "re-open nominations" candidate.

## §24 Elected and co-opted committee positions

1. The position of MCR President and MCR Treasurer request election.
2. In case of a failure to elect candidates for MCR President and MCR Treasurer, the current office holders shall remain in their post to ensure the basic operation of MCR self-administration. The key task of the acting MCR President in this case is to ensure the organization of bi-weekly elections, until new candidates for MCR President and MCR Treasurer have been elected. If only a new MCR treasurer has to be elected, the

- old treasurer will remain acting in his position, until the new MCR President has successfully organised the election of a new MCR Treasurer
3. Officer positions shall preferentially be filled by election.
  4. If certain officer positions are not contested or cannot be filled by election, this position can be filled by co-option. Co-option happens through the agreement of MCR President and MCR Treasurer to fill a position with a certain candidate, upon that candidate's approval.
  5. Co-optations can occur throughout the committee's tenure, but end with the end of a committee's tenure at the end of Lent term.

#### §25 Results and contestation

1. All election results shall be communicated to the MCR within 48 hours upon the election taking place.
2. Election results can be contested by any MCR member under presentation of a concrete cause of grievance to the Returning Officer within 7 days. Should the Returning Officer not deal with a contestation within 7 days or reject it, the MCR member can forward the contestation to the Graduate Tutors for review within another 7 days.

### **VI. Budget**

#### §26 Use of budget

1. The committee finances its activities through the MCR budget, which is provided by college on an annual basis.
2. MCR President and MCR Treasurer shall consult with the Senior Tutor and the Senior Bursar on the annual composition of the budget and the amount of individual 'subs'.
3. The MCR Treasurer shall provide college with a yearly spending plan at the beginning of Michaelmas term. The spending plan has to be approved by the committee before its presentation to the college.
4. Significant financial undertakings have to be approved by committee. Smaller financial operations (under GBP 50) only require approval by the MCR President, the MCR Treasurer and, if applicable, by the affected officer.
5. MCR expenditure shall be reviewed and supervised by college.

#### §27 The 'Joint Budget'

1. The 'Joint Budget' for MCR and JCR clubs and societies shall be prepared by the MCR Treasurer in line with §8.7.
2. Decisions about the use of 'Joint Budget' reserves shall be made, from an MCR side, by the MCR President and the MCR Treasurer.

### **V. Open meeting**

#### §28 Purpose, organisation and running of open meetings

1. The MCR president can call one open MCR meeting per term, if the MCR President or the committee consider the necessity to discuss certain points, policies or changes to the constitution with the MCR community as a whole.
2. An MCR member who is not a member of the committee can demand the organization of an open meeting, if this member can produce proof of sponsorship by at least 10% of MCR members.
3. An open meeting has to be advertised by email and all other relevant means to the MCR membership at least 7 days in advance. An agenda has to be circulated at least 48 hours in advance
4. The MCR President shall manage the open meeting. In case of illness or other reasons for absence, this responsibility shall fall to the MCR Secretary, then MCR Treasurer.
5. Decisions at the open meeting shall be taken by simple majority, with a quorum of 10% of MCR members present at the meeting.
6. The senior tutor and graduate tutors shall be invited to follow any open meeting as guests.

## **VI. Changes to the constitution.**

### §29 Inception

1. This constitution has come into effect by committee decision on XX of March 2020.
2. It has been drafted in accordance

### §30 Validity

1. This constitution shall remain valid until the de-constitution of the Sidney Sussex College MCR.

### §31 Potential with college regulations.

1. This constitution has been drafted to comply with official legislation and college regulations, in particular Ordinance XXII and Regulation G17.

### §31 Review

1. The MCR constitution shall be reviewed and, where needed, updated by the MCR committee every five years.
2. The result of that review shall be communicated to the MCR, including a recommendation against any changes. Changes shall be decided by the committee and communicated to the MCR.
3. If an MCR members challenges the decision by committee over the review of the constitution, an open meeting shall be convened to put this decision to a vote by MCR members (simple majority). The open meeting shall be organised alongside the principles laid out in §28.
4. The review of the constitution requires approval by the Governing Body of the college.

### §32 Changes

1. Changes to the constitution can be proposed by the committee through two-thirds majority. Proposed changes shall be communicated to the MCR within 48 hours, under communication of the rules of objections.
2. Changes come into practice should there be no objection from an MCR member within 7 days. In case of a single objection, the committee shall withdraw the proposed change or the MCR President shall organize an open MCR meeting. Regular open meetings rules apply for procedures.
3. An MCR member who is not a member of the committee can propose a change to the MCR constitution, if this member can produce proof of sponsorship by at least 10% of MCR members. In this case, the MCR president has to organize an open meeting within 14 days to put the proposed change to a vote. Regular open meetings rules apply for procedures.