

# Constitution of the Cambridge University Scientific Society

13 March 2022

## **1 The Society**

1.1. The Society shall be known as 'The Cambridge University Scientific Society', abbreviated as 'SciSoc' and hereafter referred to as 'the Society'.

1.2. The aim of the Society shall be to promote all branches of science within the University and to make science more accessible to all members of the University and the wider public.

## **2 Activities of the Society**

2.1. The Society shall organise regular talks, open to Society Members free of charge and to non-members for a non-refundable fee.

2.2. Occasionally, the Society may organise visits to places of scientific interest in the UK and abroad.

2.3. The Society shall organise social events.

2.4. The Society shall hold an Annual Founders' Dinner.

2.5. Some of these events may be held in collaboration with other Cambridge societies or external organisations.

2.6 The Society may hold other events including but not limited to scientific symposia or internship/career events.

2.7 The Society shall organise the aforementioned activities except under extenuating circumstances including but not limited to war, pandemic, natural disaster or other instances of *force majeure*.

## **3 Membership and subscriptions**

3.1. Membership of the Society is open to all, regardless of race, sex, gender, sexuality, disability, political opinion or religious belief. In addition, membership to the Society shall also be made open to persons outside of the University.

3.2. Membership is divided into:

a) Life Membership;

b) Honorary Membership.

3.3. Life Membership is acquired for a non-refundable fee. Life Membership shall last indefinitely or may be terminated as outlined in 3.5. and 3.6. A person who holds life membership of the Society shall be referred to hereafter as a 'Member'.

3.4. Honorary Membership is granted at the discretion of the Executive Committee, which shall elect Honorary Members either at a Committee meeting or a General Meeting. All patrons of the society shall be granted Honorary Membership.

3.5. Members may request to have their membership revoked at any time.

3.6. Any Member that has behaved disruptively or disrespectfully to the Society, its guests or its Members may have their membership revoked. A simple majority of the Executive Committee is required for membership revocation.

#### **4 Governing and advising bodies**

4.1. The Society shall be governed by the Executive Committee (hereafter referred to as 'EC') which is split into the core EC and the extended EC.

4.2. The EC is supported by the General Committee (hereafter referred to as 'GC').

4.3. The Society shall be advised by the Academic Advisory Board (hereafter referred to as 'AAB').

4.4. The core EC shall consist of the following positions, no two of which may be held by the same person:

- a) President(s);
- b) Secretary;
- c) Junior Treasurer.

The role of the President(s) may be occupied by up to three persons, and may be referred to as 'Co-Presidents' or simply 'Presidents'.

The Junior Treasurer may be referred to simply as 'Treasurer' in common usage.

4.5. Responsibilities of the core EC:

- a) The President(s) chair the meetings of the Society and represent the Society. The President(s) may appoint any member of the EC to act on their behalf on appropriate occasions.
- b) The Secretary is responsible for the formal proceedings of the Society. This includes, but is not limited to, the taking and timely distribution of minutes of Society meetings.
- c) The Junior Treasurer shall be in charge of the funds of the Society. They shall maintain the accounts and, on request, shall inform any member of the EC about the financial situation of the Society. Further requirements are outlined in detail in Section 10.

4.6. The extended EC shall consist of the following positions:

- a) Director for Sponsorship;
- b) Director(s) for Publicity (up to two positions);
- c) Director(s) for Events (up to two positions);
- d) Director(s) for Logistics (**up to two positions**);
- e) Director for Technical Affairs.

**f) Director for Speaker Affairs.**

4.7. Responsibilities of the extended EC:

- a) The Director for Sponsorship shall liaise with existing and potential sponsors to secure sufficient funding for the Society.
- b) The Director(s) for Publicity shall publicise all events via suitable media and prepare the relevant advertising material. They shall also publicise the Society and build and maintain the Society's brand and public image.
- c) The Director(s) for Events shall be responsible for organising social as well as academic events.
- d) The Director(s) for Logistics shall assist in providing practical and logistical support for the Society, including at all talks and events.
- e) The Director for Technical Affairs shall be responsible for managing the Society's website, the Society's mailing lists and any other technical issues relevant to the Society.
- f) The Director for Speaker Affairs shall be responsible for liaising with the speakers, including, but not limited to: responding to all email correspondence and confirming the time, date, title and abstract for the talk. This role will receive support from the Presidents.

4.8. The majority of the EC shall be made up of undergraduate or graduate students of the University of Cambridge.

4.9. Members of the GC shall assist the EC officers in their functions to allow the Society to run smoothly as the EC sees fit.

4.10. The AAB consists of senior members of the scientific community who are willing to take up this role. Its purpose is to provide continuity of the Society over multiple years, to act in an advisory capacity when the EC is unsure about something, and to advise the direction of the Society.

## **5 Election and tenure of members of the Executive Committee**

5.1. The members of both the core and extended EC are elected at the elections held at the Annual General Meeting in Lent Term.

5.2. Any person who is a Member of the Society can stand for election to a position. A Member standing for election to a position is hereafter referred to as a 'candidate'.

5.3. The candidate must submit a manifesto which should be published by the EC to all Members at a reasonable time before the elections take place. The candidate must be present at the elections to take questions from Members, unless in the case of exceptional circumstances, subject to the judgement of the EC.

5.4. Any Member of the Society who is present at the elections is eligible to vote in the elections.

5.5. Elections shall be run under the Single Transferrable Vote system.

5.6. A candidate is elected when they receive a simple majority of all votes cast for the position they are running for. The outgoing President(s) shall count the votes and announce the results of the elections.

5.7 In the event of a tie between candidates, the outgoing President(s) shall make the final decision on the most suitable candidate(s) and may allow multiple candidates to take up the position.

5.8. If, after the elections, any of the positions on the core and extended EC remain unfilled, a second round of elections may take place. Any candidate that was not elected, or any other Member, may then be invited by the EC to run for any unfilled position. All Members attending this round of the elections are eligible to vote.

5.9 The results of the elections shall be published to all Members of the Society.

5.10. After the elections, the retiring EC and the incoming EC shall decide when the actual handover to the new EC will take place. On this day the retiring EC and incoming EC will meet to officially pass on the responsibilities and the documents of the Society.

5.11. The formal tenure of a member of the EC will be from the start of Easter Term until the start of the next Easter Term. A member of the EC remains as such until:

- a) the handover to the next EC takes place (see 5.12.);
- b) the EC decides to revoke their membership (see 5.13.);
- c) the member resigns from their post.

5.12. There are no restrictions on the number of times a Member can stand for election to the EC. However, no Member may occupy the same post on the EC for more than two consecutive terms of office, unless no other candidate is elected to fill the post.

5.13. Any member of the EC who does not fulfil the duties of their role or acts in a manner that is obstructive to the goals of the Society can be dismissed by the Senior Treasurer with the support of a simple majority of the EC.

5.14. After the elections, the incoming EC may amend the structure of the EC and GC as they see fit, provided that no elected member is removed from their post, for the duration of their tenure.

5.15. A more permanent change to the structure of the EC or GC must be proposed and voted on by Members at a General Meeting, in the format of an amendment to the Constitution.

## **6 Appointment and tenure of members of the General Committee**

6.1. Any Member can be proposed by an EC member and appointed as a member of the GC by a simple majority of the EC.

6.2. The formal tenure of a member of the GC will be from the start of Easter Term until the start of the next Easter Term. A member of the GC remains as such for the duration of their term, or until:

- a) the member indicates to the EC that they no longer wish to be a member of the GC;
- b) the EC decides to revoke their membership (see 6.3.).

6.3. Any member of the GC who does not fulfil the duties of their role or acts in a manner that is obstructive to the goals of the Society can be dismissed by a simple majority of the EC.

## **7 Invitation and tenure of members of the Academic Advisory Board**

7.1. Only the EC can decide to invite a person to the AAB.

7.2. The formal tenure of a member of the AAB will be from the start of Easter Term until the start of the third subsequent Easter Term. A member of the AAB remains as such for a term of three years, or until:

- a) the member indicates that they no longer wish to be a member of the AAB,
- b) the EC decides to revoke their membership (see 7.3.).

7.3. Any member of the AAB who does not fulfil the duties of their role or acts in a manner that is obstructive to the goals of the Society can be dismissed by a simple majority of the EC.

7.4. The members of the EC shall consult the AAB at least once, in person, per year.

7.5. At the end of a three-year term, the simple majority of the EC may vote to invite any number of members of the AAB to continue in their position for another three-year term.

## **8 Amendment of the Constitution**

8.1. Amendments to the Constitution must be discussed and voted upon at a General Meeting. Any Member may suggest an amendment, in writing, to the Secretary at least two days before the General Meeting is due to take place.

8.2. No amendment to the Constitution intended to remove the position of Senior Treasurer, to alter its prerogatives and duties, or to change the criteria and procedure for the appointment of a Senior Treasurer can be put to a vote without the prior agreement of the Junior Proctor of the University of Cambridge.

## **9 Dissolution of the Society**

9.1. If the EC decides that it is necessary or advisable to dissolve the Society, it shall call a General Meeting. At this Meeting a vote shall decide whether the Society should be dissolved.

9.2. Upon dissolution the EC shall have the power to realise any or all assets held on behalf of the Society to satisfy any proper debts and liabilities. Any assets remaining shall be transferred to the Societies' Syndicate.

## **10 Accounts and expenses**

10.1. All expenses incurred by the Society shall be such that they benefit the aims of the Society. This includes the reimbursement of reasonable travel costs and the provision of dinner to speakers.

10.2. Members of the Committee may be reimbursed for expenses incurred on behalf of the Society. The Junior Treasurer shall keep records of any reimbursements made in this way and make them available to any member of the EC upon request.

10.3. The funds of the Society alone shall be liable for any debts or obligations incurred. In particular, no member of the Society shall be held personally liable.

10.4. The Committee shall appoint a Senior Treasurer who acts as an auditor of the Society's accounts and ensures that they comply with the regulations imposed by the University. The Senior Treasurer has to be a member of the Regent House or other person approved by the Junior Proctor of the University of Cambridge. The Junior Treasurer shall make the accounts available to the Senior Treasurer upon request and ensure that they are checked by the Senior Treasurer at the end of the Junior Treasurer's tenure.

10.5. The Senior Treasurer shall not be liable for any financial debt or other obligation of the Society unless they have personally authorised such debt in writing.

## **11 Meetings**

11.1. The Society shall hold an Annual General Meeting during Lent Term, where members of the EC are elected.

11.2. An Extraordinary General Meeting shall take place at the request of at least two members of the EC or 20 members of the society.

11.3. Any General Meeting is open to all Members. The date and venue of any General Meeting shall be announced at least one week in advance.

11.4. Any Member may submit a motion to be discussed at a General Meeting. The motion must be submitted to the Secretary, in writing, at least two days before the General Meeting.

11.5. A motion at a General Meeting shall be passed if it is supported by a two-thirds majority of all votes cast, subject to fulfilling a quorum of 8 members, including 4 from the EC.

11.6. If the Constitution is found to be ambiguous regarding a matter that arises during a meeting, the EC may create a canonical interpretation, subject to a two-thirds majority of the entire EC agreeing to it. The Constitution should then be edited at the earliest available opportunity to remove the ambiguity.

11.7. The EC shall hold regular Committee Meetings which are open to the members of the EC and the GC.

11.8. An Extraordinary Committee Meeting shall take place at the request of any member of the EC.

11.9. The date and venue of any Committee Meeting shall be communicated to the members of the EC and the GC at least 24 hours in advance.

11.10. If a member of the EC is unable to attend a Committee Meeting, they should inform the Secretary in advance.

11.11. Minutes of all meetings shall be recorded, archived and made available upon request to any Member of the Society.

## Revision history

**13 March 2022**

**Added position of Director for Speaker Affairs.**

**06 March 2021**

See companion document for information on changes.

**31 December 2017**

Added possibility of co-presidency (up to three co-presidents), added positions of Director for Social and Academic Events, Director for Speaker Affairs, Director for College Representatives and Director for Outreach Activities. Added College Representatives as members of GC.

**01 March 2014**

Clarified voting procedure for elections and added tie-breaking method; changed tenure of committee members to remove period in which there was technically no committee between the end of Lent Term and the start of Easter Term.

**02 February 2014**

Added revision history.

**29 January 2014**

Changed recipient of transfer of assets upon dissolution to Societies' Syndicate, following instructions from the Junior Proctor.

**07 December 2013**

Improved formatting and wording; amended role of Director for Events and Logistics; added explicit mention of the ability of EC to amend structure of EC and GC for the duration of their tenure; added three-year term limit for members of AAB; added ability for EC to grant AAB members further terms; removed requirement for all expenditure to be agreed upon by EC in advance; removed stipulation of cheque signatories; removed annotations.

**February 2010**

Removed possibility of one-year membership; renamed posts of Director for Publicity, Marketing and Press to Director for Publicity; split post of Director for IT and Membership Affairs into Director for IT and Director for Membership Affairs; added details on Academic Advisory Board; removed vacancy procedure; removed expectation of weekly committee meetings; standardised notice required for General Meetings to one week; removed possibility of online voting; raised quorum from 9 to 30 members; changed majority required to elect EC member from 50 to simple majority; added suggestion for date of handover meeting to be within two weeks of an election; removed requirement for non-electronic archives of minutes; added clause requiring all expenditure to be agreed upon by EC in advance; added Vice-president to list of possible cheque signatories; added annotations.

**March 2007**

Added allowance for voting through online system; removed procedure for committee votes and discussions conducted through e-mail; renamed posts of Publicity Officer, Membership Secretary and Sponsorship Liason Officer to Directors for Publicity, Marketing and Press, IT and Membership Affairs, and Sponsorship, respectively; added Director for Events and Logistics to list of EC posts; divided EC into core and extended parts; removed limit on number of GC members; replaced election of GC members with appointment by EC; moved election of the Junior Treasurer to the end of Lent term (in line with all others); added requirement for EC and GC candidates be members of the Society; modified vacancy procedure; removed explicit mention of College Representatives; changed the expected frequency of committee meetings to weekly; changed required signatories for cheques to just Junior Treasurer; removed e-mail policy appendix.

#### **March 2004**

Added explicit statement that fee for membership is non-refundable; added requirement for candidates for posts in EC and GC to be current students of the University of Cambridge; added possibility of reimbursing speakers' travel costs; added e-mail policy appendix.

#### **March 2002**

Added post of Sponsorship Liaison Officer to EC; added a restriction of two consecutive terms for which a person can occupy a post; changed required signatories for cheques from President and Junior Treasurer to Junior Treasurer and one other member of EC.

#### **March 2001**

Constrained date of the handover meeting to be in May; added requirement for 24 hours notice from President for normal committee meetings.