

CONSTITUTION OF THE LAW STUDENTS' DEBATING SOCIETY OF IRELAND (agreed on 27 May 2005)

1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. The Society shall be known as The Law Students' Debating Society of Ireland ("The Society") being the reconstitution of the original Law Students' Debating Society of Ireland. It will be independent of any rules or regulations heretofore existing.
2. The objects of the Society are the discussion of legal, historical, and general subjects, contributing to and assisting the furtherance of the legal education of its members, the organisation of debates and moot court competitions, sports and entertainment.
3. The Society shall consist of a president, three vice presidents, an auditor, a committee of management and of ordinary members.
4. The order of precedence shall be the president, the vice presidents and the auditor. The auditor shall be elected by the ordinary members.
5. The Chief Justice in office shall be nominated as president for the duration of his term in office. In the event of the Chief Justice declining nomination, the committee of management ("the Committee") shall nominate a judicial bencher or member of the Law Library.
6. The chairman of the Bar Council shall be nominated for one of the offices of vice president for the duration of his term as chairman of the Bar. In the event of the chairman of the Bar declining nomination, the Committee shall nominate a judicial bencher or member of the Law Library.
7. (a) The other two vice presidents shall be nominated by the Committee from the ranks of judicial benchers and members of the Law Library.
(b) Where such a vice president holds a public office within the legal profession, he or she shall be vice president for the duration of such office, or until resignation as vice president of the Society.
8. The auditor shall be elected annually from the ranks of the ordinary members in the manner prescribed in Article 2, ELECTIONS, below.
9. Every person who is a student of the Honorable Society of King's Inns shall be deemed to be an ordinary member of the Society.
10. The management of the Society shall be entrusted to the Committee (not exceeding 11 members) consisting of the auditor, the treasurer, a records and correspondence secretary (the secretary), the education officer, a social secretary, a debates convenor, a moots convenor and a maximum of four other members. All members of the Committee will be current student members of King's Inns.
11. The positions of treasurer and secretary shall be appointed by the auditor; these three officers shall make all other appointments to the Committee bearing in mind the requirement that there should be student representation from all current courses and years.
12. The auditor shall take office immediately following election and shall, subject to the provisions of this constitution, continue to act until his successor

assumes office in the following year. Thus the auditor will hold office for a 12 month period from Michaelmas term to the following Michaelmas term.

13. The Committee shall take office immediately following appointment and shall continue to act until its successor assumes office i.e. Michaelmas term to Michaelmas term.
14. Any dispute arising out of the interpretation of this constitution shall be submitted to the president, or in his absence, to any of the vice presidents for binding interpretation.
15. Save where the context otherwise requires, in these rules the masculine shall include the feminine and the singular shall include the plural.
16. These rules may be altered from time to time by a resolution of a general meeting of the members passed by not less than two-thirds of the votes cast at such meeting and agreed to by a resolution of the Committee but no alteration shall otherwise be made. Notice of the resolution shall be given to all ordinary members at least three days before the meeting by email or by posting on the student noticeboards. Any such changes shall be publicised by the secretary.

2. ELECTIONS

1. (a) The Auditor shall be elected on polling day, which shall take place in Michaelmas term of each year.
(b) The results of such election shall be announced immediately after the election results have been declared valid.
2. (a) Candidates for the office of auditor must be a current student of King's Inns and must be proposed and seconded in writing by current members of the Society.
(b) Every nomination paper shall contain the signature of the person so proposed, signifying his or her consent to the nomination.
3. (a) An electoral committee shall be formed to oversee the elections.
(b) The electoral committee shall consist of two out-going members of the Committee, appointed by the Committee, and one representative for each candidate appointed by that candidate.
(c) Such electoral committee shall be steered by a returning officer, who shall be determined by the Committee from among the members of the electoral committee but who cannot be a candidate's representative.
(d) The returning officer shall be the chair of the electoral committee and his duties shall include the conduct and control of electoral proceedings. The returning officer will not have a vote. In the event of a "tied" result for the auditorship, the returning officer will have a casting vote.
4. The voting shall be by secret ballot and on the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote. Each student member shall be entitled to one voting paper only.
5. The electoral committee shall fix the date, times and place for voting on polling day, and shall post such details on the Society's notice boards in the King's Inns and in the Library not less than five days before polling day. Polling shall be held on a day when all students are scheduled to be at lectures or other general gathering.
6. The results of the election shall be announced by the returning officer.
7. In the event of an elected auditor being unable to take office for any reason, the candidate having the next highest poll to the elected auditor shall act as auditor for the time being and elections for a new auditor shall be held within one week of the Society being informed by the elected auditor or of the event preventing the elected auditor from taking office. The rules governing the election in these circumstances shall be the same as those set out a paragraph 2.1- 2.6 inclusive above.

3. MANAGEMENT

1. The Committee shall be responsible for the day to day management of the Society.
2.
 - (a) Any officer of the Committee who shall absent himself or herself from three consecutive meetings of the Committee shall be considered to have vacated his place from the termination of such meeting.
 - (b) The auditor, with the consent of a qualified majority of the Committee, shall appoint a replacement to fill any vacancy on the Committee.
 - (c) In the event of the auditor ceasing to be auditor, the Committee shall be deemed to be dissolved within two weeks of said meeting. The Committee shall then announce the vacancy and elections for auditor shall be held at the next subsequent meeting.
 - (d) The auditor may excuse officers from committee meetings.
3. The Committee shall meet at least once each term during the session and as often besides as shall be necessary for the transaction of business.
4. Three members of the Committee, of whom the auditor shall be one, shall form a quorum.
5. The Committee shall agree subjects for debates, moots, topics for discussion and seminars for all general meetings.
6. Any member of the Society may bring a motion to impeach any member of the Committee. Such motion shall be on two weeks notice, and shall be passed only on two thirds majority of the members present. No motion to impeach shall be brought for frivolous and/or vexatious reasons.
7. Any officer may be removed from office by the auditor on foot of a motion on notice to the Committee, and by two thirds majority of the officers of the Society during the session, including the officer concerned. No motion to impeach shall be brought for frivolous and/or vexatious reasons.
8. The Committee, and in particular, the auditor, shall ensure that an annual report for the session is published. The annual report shall contain a summary of activities and an abstract of accounts for that particular session.
9. Where the provisions of this Constitution require the Committee to make a decision, such a decision shall be deemed to be passed by a two thirds majority of the Committee, unless otherwise stated.

4. OFFICERS

THE AUDITOR

1. (a) The auditor shall deliver an address on the night of the inaugural meeting, and in the case of his being prevented from so doing, the Committee may appoint a substitute.
(b) The inaugural meeting shall be held before the Easter Term commences.
(c) The order of proceedings at the inaugural meeting of each session shall be as follows:

The Chair having been taken, the secretary shall read or may deem to have read the minutes of the last public proceedings of the Society. The chairman shall then call upon the auditor to deliver his address which shall be responded to by invited guests. After the delivery of the auditor's address and any responses, it shall be moved and seconded, that the best thanks of the Society is worthy of support.
2. (a) The auditor shall act as advisor to the chairman at general meetings of the Society, and shall interpret at such meetings, the constitution of the Society for him. He shall be the sole judge of order at general meetings.
(b) The auditor shall have power to caution a member following a breach of order or of the constitution of the Society. The member shall incur automatic suspension on being cautioned by the auditor for a third time during any one meeting of the Society. The suspension shall last for the duration of the meeting.
(c) The auditor shall have the power to expel a member who, having incurred suspension, persistently attempts to address the meeting or disrupt its conduct. The Society may readmit an expelled member only upon motion on notice to that effect.
3. The auditor does not have power to suspend or refuse to implement any of the provisions of this constitution.
4. It shall be the responsibility of the auditor to ensure that tellers are appointed in debates and private business.
5. The auditor shall have the power to make rulings. Such rulings shall have immediate effect, and shall be announced in committee meeting and in general meeting. Rulings of the auditor must be recorded in the Society's records.

All rulings of the auditor shall be subject to review by the Society, with three days' notice to the members having been given by email or other form of communication, of a motion to that effect.

6. The auditor shall have the power to appoint sub-committees and shall appoint the time within which the sub-committees shall report. The records secretary shall record in the minutes, the personnel of each sub-committee and the date of its appointment and all changes in its personnel shall be similarly recorded.
7. (a) The auditor shall chair the meetings of the Committee. In the absence of the auditor the Committee shall appoint a chairman from among its ranks,
(b) The chairman shall have a deliberative vote, and in the case of an equal division of votes, a casting vote also.

8. Where there are a minimum of 20 members present at a general meeting, (excluding the committee), the auditor may, with the permission of the majority of members present at such meeting, and eligible to vote, permit a person not a member of the Society to address the house.
9. The auditor shall make available to every new member of the Society, upon request, a copy of the constitution within the first term of the academic year.

THE EDUCATION OFFICER

10. The education officer shall take such action as he considers necessary to promote the educational interests of the Society's members, including the organisation of seminars, talks and discussions.
11. The education officer may take such action as he considers appropriate, in promoting the Irish language within the Society.

THE TREASURER

12. The treasurer shall perform the duties set out in the constitution of the Society, and shall, in general, perform such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to him by the Society, the Committee or the auditor.
13. The treasurer and the auditor shall have sole responsibility for all the financial transactions of the Society and no financial transaction of the Society shall be entered into save with the approval of the treasurer and the auditor.
14. At the beginning of each academic year, the Treasurer and the Under Treasurer of King's Inns will meet to discuss funding for the forthcoming session. The treasurer shall keep an account of the monies received and expended, mentioning from whom and when received and what upon and what expended.
15. The treasurer shall, in consultation with the Committee, prepare budgets and forecasts for the Society, and shall, at the end of the year, prepare final accounts to be presented to the annual general meeting and to the Under Treasurer of The Honorable Society of King's Inns.
16. The treasurer shall present his account books for inspection when required to do so either by the Committee or by any member of the Society with reasonable notice.
17. (c) The treasurer shall make available, one week before the annual general meeting, the account books, together with all relevant receipts, presented in a clear and coherent manner, and shall present them to the Committee. He shall also, at this time, post notices on the Society's notice board informing members that these accounts are available for inspection.
(b) He shall present a supplementary abstract of accounts to cover the periods from the presentation of the books to the Committee, up to the annual general meeting, and from the presentation of the accounts to the annual general meeting to the handing over of the account to the next treasurer, if any monies are expended in these period.
18. No part of the Society's funds shall be given to any collection, political party, charity or religious body, or any other organisation or body without the sanction of the Society. Such sanction shall be by motion on notice, and shall be passed by a simple majority of members present at a general meeting.
19. No part of the Society's funds shall be used for entertainment, either public or private, of officers, guests, members or their friends unless on foot of a motion on notice,

notice for which shall be one week. No notice shall be necessary in the following circumstances:

Entertainment of the Society's guests: Such entertainment shall be undertaken by the auditor, or another officer expressly nominated in advance, and notified to the treasurer by the auditor on each occasion.

20. Receipts for all expenses shall be given to the treasurer detailing the reason for the expenditure.
21. The Society may meet the expenses involved in procuring speakers or guests for meetings provided always that such speakers' attendance will be of benefit to the Society. Such expenses will cover necessary fares, accommodation and food only.
22. The Society may make a grant to representatives of the Society for necessary fares, accommodation and food, while representing the Society in events, participation in which has been authorised by the Committee. The Society shall demand receipts for the amounts expended.
23. The Society shall hold at least one maiden debate and one impromptu debate during the session.

THE RECORDS AND CORRESPONDENCE SECRETARY

24. (a) The records and correspondence secretary (the secretary) shall keep the records of the Society, and in particular, a roll of members, shall act as secretary to the Committee and perform the duties set out particularly in the constitution, and in general such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to him or her by the Society, the Committee or the auditor.
(b) He shall, in particular maintain a file of correspondence received and correspondence sent, the minutes of general meetings and Committee meetings and shall have responsibility for the Society's attendance book.
25. The secretary shall post all notices, not otherwise provided for, connected with the business of the Society on the Society's notice boards in the King's Inns and the library of King's Inns.
26. The secretary shall see to it that those members who wish to place their attendance at a meeting of the Society on the records of the Society by signing the Society's attendance book, shall have access to the attendance book at all times during that meeting.
27. The secretary shall be responsible for furnishing the media with reports of the meetings of the Society.
28. He shall make available to the Library of the King's Inns, not later than one week after the annual general meeting, a true copy of the correspondence and minutes of the Society for that session, and in particular, a copy of the annual report.
29. It shall be the responsibility of the secretary to make available a copy of the laws and constitution of the Society at the first meeting of a particular session.
30. The Society shall hold at least one internal mooting competition during the session.

THE SOCIAL SECRETARY

31. The social secretary shall look after all the entertainment for the Society, including its members and guests, and in general, such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to him by the Society, the Committee or the auditor.

THE DEBATES CONVENOR

32. It shall be the duty of the debates convenor to:
- (a) Secure the services of a chairman and guests for each debating general meeting;
 - (b) Advise the committee on matters relating to the Society's participation in, and organisation of debates;
 - (c) Bring to the attention of the Committee, (immediately upon receipt and at the next committee meeting), debates in which the Society has been invited to participate and to ensure that speakers are selected to represent the Society in such debates;
 - (d) Where the Committee has authorised participation in such a debate, but has failed to select speakers in good time, the debate convenor may select them;
 - (e) To publicise those debates immediately upon receipt of any invitation, whether organised by the Society or in which the Society has been invited to participate, to the ordinary members of the Society.
- 33 If the auditor considers it appropriate, more than one debates convenor may be appointed to serve in a single session in which case the responsibilities of the office shall be allocated between the convenors by the auditor.
- 34 The Society shall be reminded that it is the aim of the Society to promote debating among its members. It shall be the aim of the Auditor and the Committee to ensure that all members of all classes of the Honorable Society of King's Inns shall be invited and encouraged to speak and participate in both internal and external debating events.

THE MOOTS CONVENOR

35. It shall be the duty of the moots convenor to:
- (a) Secure the services of a judge or judges and guests for each moot court;
 - (b) Advise the committee on matters relating to the Society's participation in, and organisation of moot courts;
 - (c) Bring to the attention of the committee, (immediately upon receipt and at the next committee meeting), moot court competitions in which the Society has been invited to participate and to ensure that speakers are selected to represent the Society in such debates;
 - (d) Where the Committee has authorised participation in such a moot court competition, but has failed to select speakers in good time, the moots convenor may select them;
 - (e) To publicise those moot court competitions immediately upon receipt of any invitation, whether organised by the Society or in which the Society has been invited to participate, to the ordinary members of the Society.

36. If the auditor considers it appropriate, more than one mooting convenor may be appointed to serve in a single session in which case the responsibilities of the office shall be allocated between the convenors by the auditor.
37. The Society shall be reminded that it is the aim of the Society to promote mooting among its members. It shall be the aim of the Auditor and the Committee to ensure that all members of all classes of the Honorable Society of King's Inns shall be invited and encouraged to speak and participate in both internal and external mooting events.

5. GENERAL MEETINGS

1. An annual general meeting shall be held in the final term of the academic year.
2. The Society shall hold at least five general meetings in an academic year (of which the annual general meeting shall be one).
3. A quorum at the annual general meeting shall consist of ten members.
4. A quorum at an ordinary general meeting shall be seven members.
5. General meetings shall be divided into private business and public business (to include moots and debates).
6. The Committee shall determine the time and duration of private business. Any business pending at the end of private business shall be resumed at the next meeting.
7. The order of business shall be as follows:
 - (i) **Minutes of previous meeting**
The minutes of the previous meeting will be read and the auditor or whoever is chairing the meeting shall enquire as to whether there are any objections or motions to amend the minutes.
If there are no objections, or after any amendments are made, the auditor shall sign the minutes.
 - (ii) **Matters arising from the minutes**
If there are any matters arising from the minutes, or outstanding from the minutes, they will be discussed or reported upon at this time.
 - (iii) **Questions to the Committee**
Questions may be put by members of the Society to any officer about the conduct of their business.
 - (iv) **Reports to be read**
Short reports will be delivered on activities which have occurred.
 - (v) **Notices of Motion**
Motions to be put on notice will be handed to the records secretary at this time, and the procedure outlined below observed.
 - (vi) **Motions to be discussed**
Motions for which three days' notice has been given shall be discussed at this time, and the motion put to the Society.
 - (vii) **Motions not on Notice**
Motions not on notice will be discussed at this time, at the discretion of the auditor and the motion put to the house.
 - (viii) **General Business**
All other matters of the Society shall be dealt with at this point, including announcements of up-coming events, invitations to debates, moot court and other external events, etc
8. There must be at least three days notice of a motion on notice on the Society's notice board or sent by email to all students, such motion having been handed to the secretary of the Society (or in his absence, any officer).

9. The following privileged motions shall be entered during private business:
 - (i) Motions for adjournment
 - (ii) Votes of thanks or sympathy or of censure
 - (iii) Amendments of motions
 - (iv) "*That the question be now put*"
 - (v) Motions for the suspension of standing orders
10. The auditor may rule out of order, any motion which is obstructive or frivolous.
11. All notices of motion must be in writing signed by two members as proposer and seconder, and delivered to the records secretary (or in his absence, any officer) to be read aloud by him and then entered into the minute book.
12. If neither of the members who have given such notice of motion be present in person, or by substitute to bring forward the motion when called on by the record secretary, such motion shall lapse and can be renewed only by the same procedure as in the case of an original motion.
13. No member except the proposer shall speak more than once to any motion in its unamended form. When an amendment has been duly moved and seconded, any member may speak to it, although he or she may have previously addressed the Society upon the question to which the amendment is proposed.
14. No member shall be permitted to move or second more than one amendment to any motion.
15. No two amendments can be before the house at the same time.