

Christ's College

Brief Guide for Student Clubs and Societies

1. How to set up a College Society

The Dean is responsible for supervising the activities of teams, clubs and societies in the College (hereafter referred to simply as “societies”). This document is only a brief summary of the full regulations, which can be found in the College’s Statutes and Ordinances online; if necessary, your Tutor or the College’s “Keeper of the Statutes” can help you to understand and interpret them (ask your Tutor for the contact details of the Keeper of the Statutes). The relevant sections are in Statute F.V and its associated Ordinance.

If you want to set up a new Christ’s College student society (including any team, club, or other group whose members are mostly students of the College) then you should put together the following information and send it to the Dean (dean@christs.cam.ac.uk):

- The proposed name of the society
- Its aims, purposes and intended activities
- The names and contact details of the founding members
- If membership is going to be restricted in any way, your proposed criteria for membership

The Dean will let you know whether your society is, in principle, acceptable and whether or not you will be exempted from the usual requirement to register it formally. If you are not given this exemption, you will have to supply further information as explained in section 2 before your society can be registered formally. You will also need to persuade a Fellow of the College to be the Senior Treasurer of your society (see section 3), unless the Dean gives you exceptional permission not to appoint a Senior Treasurer.

Once the Dean has told you that your proposed new society is acceptable – whether or not you need to register – you might also wish to apply for your society to join the Amalgamated Clubs, which will enable you to seek College funding for your society’s activities. See section 5 for further information.

2. Regulations for Registered Societies

This section does not apply if the society has been exempted from the requirement to register with the Dean.

When a society is first registered, it must send the Dean a copy of its proposed constitution (see section 3), a list of the names, positions and contact details of all of its committee members, and the name of the Fellow who has agreed to act as Senior Treasurer.

Thereafter, at the end of every academic year, the society must send the Dean the following information.

- An up-to-date copy of the constitution, with any changes since the last academic year indicated
- The latest accounts
- A list of the names, positions and contact details of all current committee members

The absolute deadline for receipt of this information is 15th September, although it may be more convenient to send it before the start of the summer vacation.

If this information is not received by the annual deadline, the Dean may deregister the society, which would force it to disband. It is therefore particularly important that committee members keep good records (especially of financial matters) and make sure that they are handed over accurately from one committee to the next.

3. Constitutions and the role of the Senior Treasurer

Every registered society must have a constitution, which must be approved by the Dean, and the constitution must as a minimum cover the following points:

- (a) The purpose of the society
- (b) Eligibility for membership of the society
- (c) The composition of the society's committee and its officers
- (d) The rules for election of the committee and officers
- (e) Rules for removal of officers or committee members, and expulsion of members
- (f) How the society's accounts should be kept
- (g) The role of the Senior Treasurer (see below)
- (h) Rules for changing the constitution

A sample constitution can be found in section 6 below.

Under normal circumstances, membership should be open to all students of Christ's College. However, a society may apply to the Dean to restrict membership to students with some specific shared characteristic (such as studying a particular subject, being of a particular faith, or being engaged in a particular sport).

The society's constitution may state that membership can be refused to any individual whose membership would be inimical to the interests of the society – that is, would be harmful, obstructive or hostile to the society's purposes. Any student denied membership in this way can appeal to the Dean.

Every registered society must appoint a Fellow of the College as its Senior Treasurer (unless the Dean permits otherwise). The Senior Treasurer is able to give advice to the society, and to help ensure that it behaves properly in all regards. The Senior Treasurer is also responsible for ensuring that society's annual accounts are accurate. If the Senior Treasurer ever has concerns of any kind about the society's behaviour, he or she should inform the Dean immediately.

4. Disciplinary Action against Societies and their Members

Anybody who has a concern about a College society should approach their Tutor, the Senior Tutor, or the society's Senior Treasurer. They may also, at any time, make a formal complaint to the Dean, who will consider the complaint and investigate accordingly.

At any event organised by a society, members of the society should behave with decorum and civility towards each other and other people present, and no disorderly or unruly behaviour should be tolerated. The complete list of rules for the behaviour of College societies and their members can be found in the Statutes and Ordinances (see section 1 above). Some of the most important other rules are as follows:

- Societies must not engage in any initiation ceremony, or other activity, that is unlawful, dangerous, degrading, humiliating or indecent, or has sexual undertones or features, or involves excessive consumption of alcohol. (Of course some societies must necessarily engage in dangerous activities as an integral part of their purpose, such as a rugby club, and this is permitted.)
- Members of societies must not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion, belief, age, disability, marriage status, civil partnership status, pregnancy and/or maternity. The only exception is when the Dean has granted permission for membership to be restricted to students with some specific shared characteristic (see section 3 above).
- Any event organised by a society, whether on College property or not, must be properly supervised. If it is not then the person(s) responsible will be held accountable. This could mean one or more of the following people: the host of the event, the person who organised it, the person who booked the venue, a person in whose room the event took place, the person who issued invitations, or the officers of the society.

If any rules are broken by a society or its members, the Dean might decide to take disciplinary action against the society as a whole, or might take disciplinary action against individual student members of the society. While the Dean investigates, or while disciplinary action is pending, the Dean might impose immediate temporary restrictions (“precautionary measures”) to restrain the activities of the society or its members. Such measures are not intended to be punitive, but rather to ensure that no further problems arise while the matter is being investigated.

When disciplinary action is being taken against a society as a whole, the Dean will hold a hearing at which up to three of its members may attend and speak. They will have the opportunity to examine the evidence and present a defence (including inviting other witnesses and presenting further evidence). The Dean can impose one of the following penalties:

- Dissolution of the society
- Temporary suspension of the society and its activities
- Restrictions on the society’s future activities
- A fine of up to £5,000 from society funds
- Payment of compensation to any person who has suffered injuries or damage to their property
- Being required to make a formal (written) apology to anybody who was affected by the offence

When disciplinary action is being taken against one or more individual students, the Dean may choose **either** to refer them to the College’s normal disciplinary processes (which are described in the separate *Brief Guide to the College’s Disciplinary Procedures*) **or** may impose one of the following direct penalties on each student who has been found responsible:

- Expulsion from the society
- Restrictions on the student’s participation in the society’s activities
- Removal of the student from their official position in this society or any other one, or from committee membership, either temporarily or permanently

- Disqualification, either temporarily or permanently, from holding an office or committee membership in the future, in this society or any other one
- A fine of up to £500
- Payment of compensation to any person who has suffered injuries or damage to their property
- Being required to make a formal (written) apology to anybody who was affected by the offence
- A formal warning placed on the student's file

Such penalties would be imposed only after giving each student the opportunity to examine the evidence and present a defence (including inviting other witnesses and presenting further evidence).

Any fine issued (either to the society as a whole or to an individual student) is in addition to the invoices that might be sent by the College to cover damage to College buildings, fixtures and fittings. All fines received are added to the Sizars' Fund (the College's hardship fund).

Any student who wishes to appeal against a penalty should write to the Dean within 14 days giving an explanation of the grounds of appeal. The case will then be considered by the College's Student Behaviour Appeal Panel.

5. Funding

Funding for College societies is provided by the Amalgamated Clubs, which is run by the Christ's College Student Union (CCSU). Any society may apply to join the Amalgamated Clubs by placing a motion before an Open Meeting of either the JCR or MCR. The society's treasurer should then liaise with the treasurer of the JCR to apply for funding.

There may also be other College or University sources of funds. For example, for academic activities that lie within the fields of the arts and humanities, the Levy-Plumb Fund for the Humanities may offer support.

6. Sample Constitution

The following pages give a simple but sufficient constitution that you could use as a starting point for writing one for your own society.

Sample Constitution

Christ's College Yak Appreciation Society

1. Purpose of the Society

Christ's College Yak Appreciation Society aims to promote the appreciation of yaks, both domestic and wild, and to encourage an understanding of their husbandry.

2. Membership

- (i) Membership of the Society shall be open to all members of Christ's College.
- (ii) The Committee of the Society may suspend or expel any member whose conduct seems likely to bring the Society into disrepute, in accordance with section 6 of this constitution.
- (iii) Membership of the Society may be refused to any person holding views that are in opposition to the purposes of the Society, for example those who promote the worldwide elimination of yaks through the introduction of Tibetan wolves. Any person thereby refused membership may appeal to the Dean.
- (iv) The Secretary shall be responsible for maintaining a list of members of the Society.

3. Committee

- (i) The Society shall be run by a Committee, which shall normally be elected at the Annual General Meeting. The Committee shall consist of a President, Secretary and Treasurer, plus two General Committee members, all of whom must be current student members of Christ's College. In addition there shall be a Senior Treasurer, who shall be appointed by the Committee and must be a current Fellow of Christ's College.
- (ii) Meetings of the Committee shall be chaired by the President.
- (iii) The quorum for a meeting of the Committee shall be three members.
- (iv) The Treasurer shall be responsible for keeping the accounts of the Society and for managing monies held by the Society.
- (v) At the end of every academic year, the Secretary shall send the Dean of Christ's College a copy of the constitution, the accounts, and a list of the current Committee members.

4. Annual General Meeting

- (i) The Society shall hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Easter Term each year.
- (ii) All members of the Society shall be entitled to attend and vote at an AGM.
- (iii) All members of the Society should receive at least 7 days' advance notice of the time, date and location of the AGM.
- (iv) The quorum for the AGM shall be 20 members of the Society.
- (v) The President shall chair the AGM, and shall have a vote. In his or her absence the meeting shall elect a chairperson for the duration of the meeting.
- (vi) The Secretary, or a deputy, shall keep minutes of the AGM.
- (vii) At the AGM, the Committee for the coming academic year should be elected. All candidates must be proposed and seconded by two other members of the Society. Voting shall be by secret ballot and, if there are more than two candidates for a post, by Single Transferable Vote.
- (viii) The new Committee shall take office 7 days after the AGM.

- (ix) The AGM may amend this constitution, but only with a majority of two-thirds of those members present. Any motion for a constitutional change must have been proposed and seconded by two members of the Society, and must have been distributed to all members of the Society at least 7 days in advance of the meeting.
- (x) The AGM may also vote, by a simple majority, on any non-constitutional motion. Any such motion must have been proposed and seconded by two members of the Society, and must have been distributed to all members of the Society at least 3 days in advance of the meeting.

5. Extraordinary General Meetings

- (i) The Society shall hold an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) during Full Term whenever called by the Committee or at the written request of at least 10 members.
- (ii) All members of the Society should receive at least 14 days' advance notice of the time, date and location of the EGM.
- (iii) The quorum for an EGM shall be 15 members of the Society.
- (iv) In all other regards, an EGM shall have the same powers as an AGM and the procedures outlined in the previous section shall apply.

6. Discipline

- (i) The Society may suspend or expel any member of the Society in accordance with section 2 of this constitution.
- (ii) A meeting of the Committee shall be called to consider any proposal for such action, and the Senior Treasurer shall be invited to the meeting.
- (iii) The action must be approved by a majority vote.
- (iv) Any member suspended or expelled may appeal to the Dean.