

Changes to MCR Associate Membership

Current constitution:

1. Associate membership of Worcester College MCR is open to:
 - a) spouses and long-term partners (typically co-habitees) of MCR members;
 - b) 4th-year undergraduates (not including those reading for a Bachelors degree); and previous JCR or MCR members who still have an academic connection to Oxford University or Oxford Brookes University or who are living and working in Oxford.
2. Associate Membership will be extended to applicants upon:
 - a) confirmation of their eligibility by the Tutor for Graduates; and
 - b) approval by the MCR President.

Changes:

2. Associate Membership will be extended to applicants upon
 - a) confirmation of their eligibility by the Tutor for Graduates; and
 - b) approval by the MCR President, and

c) confirmation from either:

- i) the Dean for those eligible under 1.(b); or**
- ii) their spouse or partner for those eligible under 1.(a)**

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that they know of no reason why they should not be granted associate membership; unless

d) applicants are not able to satisfy 2.c) i) or ii), whereupon either:

- i) they have the right to withdraw their application; or**
- ii) they give permission for any relevant details to be passed (in confidence) to the MCR president and secretary by those stated in 2.c)i) or ii).**

The decision to confer associate membership will then be made by the MCR president and secretary after further consultation with the applicant.

Rationale

The MCR associate membership procedure (issued by college) states:

- Associate membership of the MCR is a privilege, not a right.
- Membership is granted by the MCR, not the Tutor for Graduates.
- The MCR Committee must ascertain the eligibility of any applicant and then vote on whether or not to admit him or her.

However, it should also be noted that:

- "neither the College (in an academic sense) nor the Dean would have any power over associate member of the MCR if problems arose, so care should be exercised when admitting such members."

With this in mind, there are several problems with the current system:

- We currently have no way of ascertaining whether people who apply for associate membership are appropriate. Currently we have to assume that everyone who applies is suitable, or rely on subjective impressions (rumours, previous knowledge etc), which isn't fair to either the person applying for membership or the committee.
- The constitution also states that people may only be removed from college associate membership when they fail to be eligible. As a result the current MCR (and college) has no way of dealing with associate members who behave in a way which contravenes college regulations.

The MCR has a responsibility first and foremost to its current members. We also have a responsibility to make our applications procedure as open and fair as possible to those applying for associate membership. As a result we propose the changes to the MCR constitution. Changes relating to disciplinary procedures are also planned, but will take longer and need to be done in consultation with college.