

Document Progeny

Originally drafted by the OULS Committee '24-'25 and approved by membership on 24/07/2025.

Subsequent Amendments:

Amendment Description	Committee Year and Incumbent Chair	Date Approved by Membership
<p>Officers and committee members may also be appointed by the Committee but all OULS members must be invited to submit nominations in advance of such an appointment. Unless a new committee member role is implemented to facilitate affiliation with another entity: society; club; or otherwise, within the university or external, in which case the representative of the entity i.e. Head of; or contact within; may be appointed by the committee to occupy the new post without nominations being open to all OULS members, providing they themselves are an OULS member.</p>	2024-2025 - Patricia Thomson	24/07/2025
<p>Suspension of Officers and Committee Members An Officer or a committee member who is suspected of misconduct by 2 or more Officers of the committee; or is found to have an inactive membership due to unpaid fees; may be suspended from their post immediately with access to all OULS accounts revoked pending an investigation; following the support of 2 Officers in writing. Misconduct including wrongful, improper, or unlawful conduct breaching the society's aims and standards.</p>	2024-2025- Patricia Thomson	24/07/2025
<p>Absent Officers and Committee Members The disappearance without notification of an Officer or committee member for a period of 4 weeks classifies as misconduct enabling the Officers of the committee to follow the guidelines of suspending an Officer or Committee member. Another officer can fulfil the position until the person resumes their position, or the vacancy is fulfilled upon their removal. In the absence of the chair, the vacancy must be filled by the Vice-Chair. A letter or email should be sent to the officer or committee member requesting they make contact with someone in the committee within the next 4 weeks. Failure to do so will result in immediate removal from the committee without a vote at a Quorate meeting or assembly. Officers of the committee reserve the right to extend the deadline if it is within the society's aims to do so.</p>	2024-2025 - Patricia Thomson	24/07/2025
<p>The Committee will endeavour to make reasonable adjustments for health, disability or other reasons; for any Officer or Committee Member upon their request to uphold equality, inclusivity and diversity. However, if such requests affect the person's ability to fulfil their duties, another Officer or Committee Member may be appointed to share or overtake some or all of the responsibilities, on a temporary or permanent basis to ensure the society's offering to its membership is not negatively impacted. The Officer or Committee Member will not be removed from their post, enabling them to continue to participate in committee meetings and decisions.</p>	2024-2025 - Patricia Thomson	24/07/2025
<p>In the absence of either the Chair or the Treasurer due to the role being vacant, another Officer namely the Vice Chair or Secretary can jointly authorise small pieces of spending instead. In the event only one Officer role is occupied, they may authorise small pieces of spending (up to the value of £300 per item and not exceeding £300 per year).</p>	2024-2025 Patricia Thomson	24/07/2025

Amendments to the OULS Charter

All amendments to the OULS charter require the support of two-thirds of the incumbent committee, followed by the presentation of any proposed amendments at the next election cycle, at which a two-thirds majority of the wider membership must endorse the change. Presentation of the amendment must include the quoting of any wording proposed to be removed, as well as any wording proposed to be added. If at the close of the election support for this change is given, this document should be updated accordingly and the nature of the change noted using the document progeny form on its first page.

Elections and AGM

The Chair and wider Committee shall be obligated to hold an election for their posts each year in the month of June. All Officer and Member posts provided for below, as well as any created roles on which a simple majority agrees, must be made available and to which paid OULS members may nominate themselves. All nominations in which the candidate is a 'paid-up' OULS member, nominating themselves for an advertised role, but has not sought to run for more than two of the available vacancies, must be placed on the ballot to be voted upon by the wider membership:

Although the committee shall strive to provide a longer window of opportunity, all members must be invited to nominate themselves during a nomination period of no less than 72 hours. The period of election itself, in which members are invited to vote shall be no less than 72 hours also.

No more than 6 weeks from the last day of voting in an election period, an AGM shall be called, at the close of which, control of all OULS resources (including every active OULS email address, financial account information, websites, social media accounts, and all other others) shall be turned over to the new committee and they shall be considered the new office holders.

The Committee and its Officers

Posts, Officers, and Meetings

The Committee shall be composed of a Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, two individuals acting as Masters/Mistresses of Moots, an Editor, and a Careers Coordinator. Of these roles, the Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Secretary shall be considered Officers of the Society and a two thirds majority of these Officers shall constitute a quorum in any meeting or assembly of the OULS. Although any non-Officer post can be occupied, they need not be occupied for the election/appointment of a new committee to be considered valid and for that Committee to begin administrating the OULS. Officers and committee members may also be appointed by the Committee but all OULS members must be invited to submit nominations in advance of such an appointment. Unless a new committee member role is implemented to facilitate affiliation with another entity: society; club; or otherwise, within the university or external, in which case the representative of the entity i.e. Head of; or contact within; may be appointed by the committee to occupy the new post without nominations being open to all OULS members, providing they

themselves are an OULS member.

Other posts may be established by the Committee as required but these roles shall never be treated as Officers of the Society. Where such a role has been created, a vote of the committee must be held prior to the election in order to determine whether this role is to be included in the ballot. If any given role, not defined below, is brought into existence and is occupied for a period of 2 years then this document should be updated to include this role and offered to the membership for ratification at the next scheduled election.

No meeting of the OULS Committee shall be considered quorate unless an invitation to participate has been circulated to all Committee members in advance of the meeting.

Officers' Veto

In cases where all four Officers of the Society object to a given action, spending allocation, or other undertaking of the OULS that act will not proceed and will be considered vetoed.

Remits

Chair - Responsible for the overall direction, management and administration of the society. This includes the supervision of, and contribution to, the work of fellow committee members. The Chair should consider their most fundamental obligation to be the continuity of the OULS via the holding of an election and appointment of a successor committee following the completion of their term. If nominated and elected jointly, no more than two individuals may occupy this post as 'Co-Chairs' but no other position may be held by more than one person.

Vice Chair - Responsible for assisting the Chair in the management of the OULS and to act for the Chair, with their consent, in meetings or assemblies where the Chair is not present. The Vice Chair may vote on behalf of the Chair in these instances but should seek advice from the Chair in advance of this. The Vice Chair is expected to undertake projects, or to facilitate events and opportunities, with a view to improving the OULS's offering to its membership.

Treasurer - Responsible for the solvency of the OULS, as well as the fair and transparent administration of its finances. The Treasurer, although not empowered to apportion funds without a vote of the committee, shall have access to any and all financial accounts held by the OULS for the purpose of their accounting.

Secretary - Responsible for the administration of OULS meetings and the accurate compilation of minutes/records. The Secretary will work with the *Chair* and *Vice Chair* to deliver any elections occurring during their tenure and assist with the orderly delivery of events.

Masters/Mistresses of Moots - Responsible for the delivery of the OULS's internal mooting services, as well as facilitating the Society's participation in a range of external mooting events.

Editor - Responsible for the curation of the OULS website and its social media activity, including the management of any active reporters/contributors to those resources. The Editor will also produce a monthly newsletter for circulation to all members as well as assist with the advertising of any OULS events or services to the membership.

Careers Coordinator - Responsible for the provision of career development opportunities and events to the OULS membership in partnership with the University

and outside affiliates.

The Committee will endeavour to make reasonable adjustments for health, disability or other reasons; for any Officer or Committee Member upon their request to uphold equality, inclusivity and diversity. However, if such requests affect the person's ability to fulfil their duties, another Officer or Committee Member may be appointed to share or overtake some or all of the responsibilities, on a temporary or permanent basis to ensure the society's offering to its membership is not negatively impacted. The Officer or Committee Member will not be removed from their post, enabling them to continue to participate in committee meetings and decisions.

Votes of the Committee

Any member of the Committee may, without restriction, propose any matter for a vote of the OULS committee and, provided an *Officers' Veto* is not invoked, where 51% or greater of votes cast are in support then the vote shall be considered carried. Where an individual occupies more than 1 committee post, they shall nevertheless only hold 1 castable vote on that committee.

Removal of an Officer or Committee Member

The removal of an Officer or a Committee Member from their post can be performed at any quorate meeting or assembly of the OULS Committee where 51% or greater of votes cast support the removal, as well as that all Officers who are not themselves the subject of said vote support the removal. Votes submitted in advance of such a meeting from any Committee Member who is not themselves the subject must also be included alongside the votes of those present. Only one member may be the subject of any vote to remove and any vote of removal applying to multiple members simultaneously shall be considered void, whether it carried the majority's support or not.

Suspension of Officers and Committee Members

An Officer or a committee member who is suspected of misconduct by 2 or more Officers of the committee; or is found to have an inactive membership due to unpaid fees; may be suspended from their post immediately with access to all OULS accounts revoked pending an investigation; following the support of 2 Officers in writing. Misconduct including wrongful, improper, or unlawful conduct breaching the society's aims and standards.

Absent Officers and Committee Members

The disappearance without notification of an Officer or committee member for a period of 4 weeks classifies as misconduct enabling the Officers of the committee to follow the guidelines of suspending an Officer or Committee member. Another officer can fulfil the position until the person resumes their position, or the vacancy is fulfilled upon their removal. In the absence of the chair, the vacancy must be filled by the Vice-Chair. A letter or email should be sent to the officer or committee member requesting they make contact with someone in the committee within the next 4 weeks. Failure to do so will result in immediate removal from the committee without a vote at a Quorate meeting or assembly. Officers of the committee reserve the right to extend the deadline if it is within the society's aims to do so.

Finance and Accounting

Transparency of Accounts

OULS accounts shall be filed in compliance with the Open University Students' Association and published annually on the OULS website. Each year, two 'paid-up'

members of the OULS who have never priorly sat on the Committee shall be invited by the Treasurer to scrutinise accounts and raise any issues they identify with the Committee, who must supply a written response.

Expenditure Policy

The Committee is empowered to decide what is, and is not, an appropriate use of OULS funds without restriction. Any vote concerning expenditure is conducted as described in '*Votes of the Committee*' and following a successful vote of budget allocation, the members responsible for the use of funds in this manner shall be empowered to act immediately to do so.

Recurring and Planned Expenditure

So far as is possible, the Treasurer shall act to inform the Committee of any recurring outgoings (or those committed to by prior Committees) in advance of their occurrence so that the committee may decide if it wishes to proceed. Where an example of recurring/planned expenditure represents the reimbursement of a member or former member for costs they incurred, and were authorised to incur at the time, the Committee shall consider themselves bound to proceed with that reimbursement.

Discretionary Spending

The Chair and Treasurer are empowered to jointly authorise small pieces of spending (up to the value of £300 per item and not exceeding £1500 per year). In the absence of either the Chair or the Treasurer due to the role being vacant, another Officer namely the Vice Chair or Secretary can jointly authorise small pieces of spending instead. In the event only one Officer role is occupied, they may authorise small pieces of spending (up to the value of £300 per item and not exceeding £300 per year). Where funds have been allocated under the 'Discretionary Spending' clause this should be indicated on any relevant administrative paperwork and on the OULS accounts.

Sponsorship Agreements

The Committee are empowered to commence or terminate sponsorship agreements without restriction. These matters shall be resolved as described in '*Votes of the Committee*' and following a successful vote the Chair, Vice Chair, and Treasurer may draft and sign an agreement.

Terms Binding on Paid Members

Any paid member of the OULS who provides written material for circulation, or participates in a recorded event, does so without restriction and on the understanding that all rights of distribution and ownership are yielded to the society without limit or duration. Membership fees are determined by the incumbent committee as described in '*Votes of the Committee*' and may be considered payable for any new member, or membership renewal, that occurs following such a vote. Members are entitled to a refund of such fees within the first 7 days of their membership and thereafter may approach the incumbent Treasurer with a refund request who may grant or deny such a request solely at their own discretion.

Terms Binding on Candidates for Election to the Committee

In presenting themselves for election Candidates agree to read and adhere to the system of administration laid out in the OULS Charter. They undertake to conduct themselves well in any election, and as a member of the committee should they be successfully elected, as well as to strive to pass the OULS on to those who are elected after them in a way that maximises their likelihood of success and avoids the dilution or destruction of

any value that the group possesses.

There shall be considered no restrictions as to the number of terms, or years, in which a Candidate may present themselves for election and, with the exception of any restrictions set forth in '*Elections and AGM*', may run and successfully be elected to the committee at any number of elections, consecutively or otherwise.

Candidates for election are not eligible to be removed as registered members of the OULS on any grounds, or for any reason, between the receipt of their nomination forms and the announcement of election results.

Petition for a Recall Election

Any and all committee positions, either simultaneously or individually, can be subject to a recall election. Where a petition, signed by 15% or greater of the existing 'paid-up' OULS members, is presented to the committee, the position(s) identified by such a petition must be re-opened for nomination and subsequent election in a process not to exceed 4 weeks from the date on which the petition was received.

Affiliation/Disaffiliation Motions

The affiliation or disaffiliation of the OULS with any external organisation, charity, or corporate entity (including the Open University Students' Association) will be decided by a simple majority (51%) vote amongst the sitting Officers at the point of affiliation or disaffiliation.

Any affiliations (including the Open University Students' Association) are presumed to be inherited by newly-elected committees and can only be terminated by a vote of the Officers as described above.

Dissolving of the OULS

Where it is clear that the OULS is no longer tenable: such as in the sustained inability to elect or appoint a Committee, then the incumbent members of the Committee may opt to dissolve the Society. Such a vote must be unanimous amongst attendees and all Committee members must be invited to participate at least 72 hours prior to said meeting. Votes submitted in advance of such a meeting from any Committee Member who is not present must also be included alongside the votes of those present.

In the event of such a *vote to dissolve* passing, all funds currently held in any form or location will be donated to the Open University Students' Association without exception or qualification. Prior to any attempt to dissolve the OULS, the Committee undertakes to communicate the needs of the society with members, and to offer members the chance to run in a by-election in order to fill vacant posts and ensure the group's continued existence.

Members shall also be notified via email when a *vote to dissolve* has passed, including a tabulation of the committee vote, and the active iteration of the OULS Charter evidencing that such a vote is sufficient to close the group.

Administrative Documents

In an attempt to facilitate the orderly running of the society, and its effective transition following an election, relevant documents are provided as addendums to the rear of this

Charter. Amendments to these attached documents do not require a vote of the group's membership and are maintained by each committee as a gift to the next in the hope that they will prove useful in delivering the various objectives and obligations set forth above.

A list of actively available documents is provided below:

- Committee Elections Nomination Form (Appendix 1)
- Charter Amendment Proposal (Appendix 2)
- Committee Member Handover Form (Appendix 3)
- Template of Financial Accounts (Appendix 4)



Nominations and Elections

We are really pleased that you're considering nominating yourself for a committee position within the Open University Law Society. Only paid members may nominate themselves, nominations must be made in your own name, and each member may only nominate themselves (and subsequently hold) two positions within the committee - provided that only of those posts qualifies as an 'Officer' position.

The Society is affiliated with the Open University Student Union (formally the Open University Student's Association) and is governed both by its terms, and the OULS Charter. We advise consulting both of these documents as you will be expected to adhere to the terms of both in respect of both your participation in the election and any office you hold as a result.

Please complete the information at the bottom of this page as well as provide your overleaf and return this form via email by 23:59 on

_____.

Completed forms should be submitted to chair@ouls.org

First Name: Surname:

Email address:

Telephone: Postal Address:

Are you an Open University student or alum?

Current/Past Programme of Study: Current/Final Stage of Study:

Position Selection(s)

Please select the position(s) you wish to nominate yourself for in the approaching election. Descriptions of these posts can be found in the OULS Charter.

	Chair		Vice-Chair
	Treasurer		Secretary
	Master/Mistress of Moots		Editor
	Careers Coordinator		

Election Campaign Statement

Please provide a brief election statement of no more than 300 words. This statement will be shared with OULS members during the course of the campaign.

In signing below you declare that you are presently a 'paid-up' member of the OULS and will abide by its Charter as both a candidate and, if successful, an office holder.

Date: _____ Signature: _____

The amending of the OULS Charter must be performed using this form, which divides the process into two stages. At the first stage (Committee), members propose amendments using the boxes below and votes are tabulated on this form. Two-thirds of the incumbent committee must support a change in order to present it to the wider membership (stage two), where two-thirds of the 'paid-up' membership must also support the change in order for it to be implemented.

Committee Stage

Proposer(s): Committee Positions:

Chair - Patricia Thomson proposed changes to the OULS charter during the 2024-2025 term to be voted on by the membership during the Summer 2025 elections. These changes are outlined in the "Subsequent Amendments" section on page 1 of this document.

Language for the OULS Charter to be Removed:
(Please provide the relevant sub-headings also)

Committee Stage Tabulation

For (Name and Position):

Chair - Patricia Thomson

Acting Vice Chair/Secretary - Will Brazier

Treasurer - Mark Lindley-Highfield of Ballumbie Castle

Against (Name and Position):

100% For - 0% Against

Electorate Stage

Having secured the requisite two-thirds support of the incumbent committee, we present the above change(s) to the OULS Charter for confirmation by the membership.

Below is a statement from a proposing committee member in support of the change:

Proposer's statement:

In response to some of the issues the committee have faced this term; and during the previous term which contributed to the society's dormancy, the chair (Patricia Thomson) with the support of the officers of the committee (Will Brazier and Mark Lindley-Highfield of Ballumbie Castle) has drafted 5 proposed changes to the the OULS charter.

The purpose of these changes is to prevent similar issues occurring in the future, improving the society's offering to its membership and preventing the society from becoming dormant again.

Please read the 5 changes below before casting your vote in the election.

Electorate Stage Tabulation

Closing Date of Election/Vote:
24/07/2025

Date: 24/07/2025

Percentage of votes for: 95.3%

Percentage of votes against: 4.7%

Declaration by Incumbent Chair(s)

The above motion to amend the OULS charter is **adopted**/rejected

Signature Patricia Thomson