

OPEN UNIVERSITY LAW SOCIETY



OULS Elections 2021

Guidance notes for the April 2021 OULS elections.

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The Society and committee	

The Open University Law Society was founded in 2010 and is entirely student run. The current membership is over 800 hundred strong and covers the whole of the United Kingdom and beyond.

A small and dedicated committee of volunteers runs the Society, and elections take place in each year for every committee position. The new officers take on their roles during the start of May, following a suitable handover period with the current officers.

This year's nominations open on **2nd April**, and you can find a full timetable at the end of this article.

Eligibility criteria

- You must be a current member of the Open University Law Society
- You can stand for multiple roles, but can only be successfully appointed to two.

Nominations

Email chair@ouls.org with your name and an election statement. Your statement must be no more than 500 words. As a guide, you may want to include:

- Who you are
- Where you are in OU study - if you are in OU study
- Why you would like to stand for the position
- What you could bring to the role
- Why members should vote for you

The election statements will be made available to OULS members. This is your chance to shine!

Please take care to read the election timetable later in this document. It is imperative that if elected you can participate in the Annual General Meeting, via Zoom, on **Sunday 2nd May at 7pm** (subject to change).

The deadline for nominations is 16th April 2021 at 10am.

A full OULS committee consists of the following roles, and nominations are invited for all:

Chair
Vice-Chair
Secretary
Treasurer
Systems Manager
Careers Coordinator
Master / Mistress of the Moots (x 2)
News Editor
News Reporter (x2)
Officer for Scotland
Street Law Coordinator

A description of each role can be found below. But remember, these roles develop as time goes on, and the OULS is looking for committee members who can both inherit what has gone before, but also bring new ideas and themes to the Society.

Chair

The main duties of the Chair include:

- Maintaining compliance with Policies, the Constitution, and external regulations
- Chairing committee and other meetings
- Calling special or additional meetings where necessary

- Exercising a casting vote at meetings
- Ensuring the Committee's focus on major strategic issues
- Making sure that there is a supportive working relationship between all
- Maintaining awareness of the distinction between governance and management
- Ensuring regular self-appraisal of the Committee's performance
- Developing the Committee as a team
- Checking that actions are followed up between meetings
- Lead OULS social media content
- Acting on behalf of the Committee between meetings (with prior consensus)
- Attending events in person on behalf of the OULS

The personal characteristics of an effective Chair are expected to include:

- Integrity
- The ability to influence
- Decisiveness with an insistence on getting things done
- The capacity for understanding, thinking and reasoning
- Authoritativeness - but being engaging at the same time
- The capacity to engage others in debate
- The capacity to challenge
- The ability to steer and provide direction
- Be committed to the post for the duration of the one-year term

Vice Chair

The role of the Vice Chair is to support the Chair and act in the Chair's absence. This means more than stepping in to Chair occasional meetings, but to maintain a strategic overview and be prepared to lead with authority on key issues, both when the Chair is not present and in tandem. The same personal qualities that make an effective Chair make a good Vice Chair.

Secretary

The role of the Secretary is largely administrative in nature and in order to be effective, the Secretary should expect to carry out the following activities:

Before Meetings:

- Liaising with the Chair to plan meetings
- Receiving agenda items from Committee Members
- Ensure that the notice of the meeting is given appropriate time
- Circulate to all Committee Members any papers to be discussed at the upcoming meeting and a copy of the agenda, minutes of the previous meeting
- Make sure that any reports or information requested at the last meeting is available or that there is a good reason why not.

During Meetings:

- Be prepared, with the minutes and with all the relevant correspondence
- Record the names of those who are present, and convey and record apologies received from those who are absent

- Obtain approval or amendments to the minutes of the previous meeting and obtain the Chair's approval on them
- Share any important correspondence that has been received
- Take notes of the meeting, recording the key points and making sure that all decisions and proposals are recorded, as well as the name of the person or group responsible for carrying them out
- Make sure action points are clear
- Make sure that the Chair is supplied with all the necessary information for items on the agenda, and remind the Chair if any item has been overlooked.

After Meetings

- Prepare a draft of the minutes and consult the Chair for approval
- Circulating approved minutes
- Send all correspondence as decided by the Committee.

Away from meetings

- Ensuring elections are in line with stipulated procedures
- Helping to ensure that the society's activities are in line with its objectives
- Sitting on appraisal and disciplinary panels, as required
- Keeping up-to-date contact details (i.e. names, addresses and telephone numbers) for the committee.

The personal skills and characteristics of an effective General Secretary include:

- Being methodical, with a good eye for detail; being well organised
- Being able to work well within a team
- Integrity

Treasurer

The main duties of the Treasurer are:

- Oversee and present budgets, accounts and financial statements to the Committee
- Liaise with other Committee Members (including sub-groups) about financial matters
- Ensure that appropriate financial systems and controls are in place
- Ensure that record-keeping and accounts meet the conditions of the OUSA
- Ensure compliance with any relevant legislation
- Prepare and present budgets for new or ongoing work
- Advise on financial implications of strategic and operational plans
- Present revised financial forecasts based on actual spend
- Present regular reports on the Society's financial position
- Prepare accounts for audit and liaise with the auditors, as required
- Present accounts at the AGM
- Manage and reconcile the Society's bank accounts
- Set up appropriate systems for book-keeping and payments
- Ensure that everyone handling money keeps proper records and documentation
- Undertake any other tasks deemed appropriate to the role

The appropriate skills and characteristics for a good Treasurer include:

- Experience in dealing with money and budgets
- Have an eye for detail
- Availability to be contacted for ad hoc advice

- Good communication and interpersonal skills.

The Society is required by the OUSA to provide annual accounts for audit. Providing these accounts is one of the criteria to maintain formal affiliation with the OU – allowing us to use their name for our Society.

Systems Manager

Duties include:

- Maintaining the OULS website
- Maintaining and resetting passwords for Google business accounts
- Providing technical advice
- Being contactable for ad-hoc advice

The appropriate skills and characteristics for a good Systems Manager include:

- A good working knowledge of WordPress
- Sufficient technical competency to select, setup, and maintain the systems which the Society require for day-to-day running (domains, email, groups, collaboration, SMS, telephone, website, CMS, hosting, calendar, databases, consultation systems, auditing systems, statistics and general monitoring)
- Patience
- An eye for detail

Careers Coordinator

Duties include:

- Promoting careers opportunities among OU Law Society members, including the arrangements of external and internal careers events
- Raising the profile of OU Law Society members among the legal profession
- Helping OULS members promote themselves and become more employable
- Liaising with the OU Careers Service and maintaining an effective relationship

The appropriate skills and characteristics for a good Careers Coordinator include:

- A strong interest in the legal profession and career development
- The ability to communicate with legal and other professionals
- Strong research skills
- Preferably; key links to professionals and academics within the legal sector

Master / Mistress of the Moots (two posts)

Duties include:

- Co-ordinate internal and external mooting competitions

- Select OULS mooting teams to represent the Open University in intervarsity competitions in a fair, consistent and transparent way
- Maximise opportunities for OULS members to get involved with mooting e.g. by spectating, clerking, and participation in open competitions
- Building relationships with mooting coordinators from other universities
- Procuring Original Moot Problems (approx. 2-3 per year)
- Sourcing suitable moot judges for internal and external competitions
- Securing venues for mooting events
- Assist teams with preparation for intervarsity competitions
- Providing guidance and instruction on mooting to OULS members, including by workshops
- Keep track of spending on OULS mooting events and advise the OULS Committee accordingly
- Liaise with the OULS Committee on mooting performance and resourcing

News Editor

- Exact final editorial decision over content and design of newsletter
- Oversee the production and design of a regular newsletter
- Produce and source original newsletter content
- Liaise with other Officers to ensure timely member notification of any OULS events
- Maintain and update the OULS website regularly

News Team Reporter

- Assist in production and design of a regular newsletter
- Produce and source original newsletter content
- Researching areas of law or items of interest
- Sector research
- Contribute to OULS social media content

The appropriate personal skills and characteristics for News Team members are:

- Good organisational ability
- The ability to work to tight deadlines
- Outstanding communication, articulation and interpersonal skills
- Excellent command of written English
- The ability to work within a team
- Interest in current affairs

Officer for Scotland

Duties include:

- Promoting the interests of OU Law students in Scotland
- Organising events and meetings for OU Law students
- Organising mooting workshops in Scotland
- Promoting, training and running moots in Scotland

- Supporting students competing at moots in Scotland
- Furthering employability of OU Law students in Scotland
- Creating links with the legal profession in Scotland
- Ensuring a collaborative working relationship between OU Scotland and the rest of the OULS committee
- Leading OULS social media content relating to Scotland

Street Law Coordinator

Duties include:

- Keeping in regular contact with the Open Justice team
- Attend meetings with the Open Justice team
- Support students in communicating with local school or community groups
- Work with a small group of students to facilitate and deliver a Street Law workshop
- Help students plan and develop a successful presentation.
- Prior Street Law experience preferred.

Election Timetable

Friday 2nd April 2021 10am Nominations Open

Friday 16th April 2021 10am Nominations Close

All election statements are made available and distributed to OULS membership.

Saturday 17th April 2021 11am Online Voting Opens

Thursday 29th April 2021 10am Voting Closes

Friday 30th April 2021 6pm Results announced

Sunday 2nd May 2021 7pm Annual General Meeting

All 2021/22 committee officers will ensure suitable handover to the new officers before the AGM and continue to offer help and assistance as required.

Timetable subject to change.

Contact us

The Open University Law Society: <http://www.openuniversitylawsociety.co.uk>

Facebook: www.facebook.com/OULawSoc

Twitter: [@OULawSoc](https://twitter.com/OULawSoc)

If you have any questions regarding the election, please contact us at chair@ouls.org.

Outgoing 2020/21 Committee

Chair: Laurie-Elizabeth Ketley

Secretary: Tom Morris

Mooting Coordinators: Charlotte Eker and Johnny Martin

Careers: Zoe Martin

News Editor: Victoria-Jayne Scholes

News Reporter: Chloe Lydell and Ben Landy

Street Law Co-Ordinator: Elizabeth Walker