

Pro Forma Constitution  
of  
Oxford Indian Society

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**Contents**

<b>1</b>	<b>Name and the Objectives</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Compliance</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Membership</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Meetings of the Members</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>The Committee</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Indemnity</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Dissolution</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Schedule</b>	<b>12</b>

# 1 Name and the Objectives

1. The society is called “Oxford Indian Society”, hereafter OIS. The Society’s primary aim is celebration of India and its diversity. At a preeminent university like Oxford, which attracts so many Indian students and students of Indian origin, we see a cogent need to have a society that can bring together not only Indian students and students of Indian origin, but anyone who wishes to enjoy celebrating the diverse culture of India. Our activities will be centred around promoting Indian culture - the rich traditions, festivals, the food, the art and film, the music and so on.
2. We the founders of the OIS aim to increase understanding and fusion of different cultures, because we wish to celebrate the Indian culture not insularly but in an all- embracing fashion - cutting across barriers based on sects, religion and nationalities.
3. Our objective is to promote debates and discussions on issues relevant in a culturally diverse world. We also plan to host cultural events by inviting both prominent artistes and those endeavouring to establish themselves.
4. We hope to use such events as venues to raise funds for assisting charities.
5. We wish to work together with other charitable societies in Oxford University, because we believe entertainment for a noble cause is even more enriching.
6. The OIS shall not affiliate with any national or international religious and/or political organisation.
7. The income and the property of the Oxford Indian Society shall be used solely for the fulfilment of the above aims.

# 2 Compliance

1. The Society shall be administered in accordance with the regulations for University clubs which are published from time to time in the Proctors’ and Assessor’s Memorandum (“the Proctors’ Memorandum”)

2. The Society shall observe the Code of Conduct on safety matters which is set out in the Schedule to this Constitution, ensure compliance with the Code by the members of the society, and follow an appropriate procedure for risk assessment. Both the Code of Conduct and the procedure for risk assessment must be acceptable to the University's Safety Officer.
3. No member of the Society shall participate in any activity overseas organised by the Society, whether during term-time or vacation, unless the plans for such activity have been notified at least one calendar month in advance of the date of departure from the United Kingdom to the University Marshal. Each member participating in such activities overseas shall observe any conditions imposed by the Proctors on the recommendation of the University Marshal, e.g. relating to the deposit of contact address, fulfilment of health, safety and insurance requirements, and stipulation of Senior Members to accompany the trip.

### **3 Membership**

1. The members of the Society shall be those who are eligible and apply for membership of the Society, who are admitted to and maintained in membership by the Committee, and who have paid the relevant Society subscription.
2. All student and staff members of the University, and all persons whose names are on the University's Register of Visiting Students, shall be eligible to become members of the Society. A student member is a matriculated member of a College or Hall who is reading and registered for a recognised degree, diploma or certificate (or whose status is suspended). A member is resident if during term the member satisfies the requirement for residence laid down by the University. A member shall continue to be eligible until he or she is given permission to supplicate to for his or her degree, diploma or certificate, regardless of whether or not he or she continues to be liable to pay fees to the University.
3. The Committee may also, at its discretion, admit to membership:
  - (a) members of Ruskin College; Plater College, Ripon College, Cuddesdon and the Oxford Institute of Legal Practice;

- (b) members of the Westminster Institute of Oxford Brookes University who are registered to read degrees or other qualifications validated by the University of Oxford; and
  - (c) other persons not falling within paragraphs 2, 3(a) or 3(b) above provided that non-university members shall not constitute more than one-fifth of the total membership.
4. A person may be removed from membership of the Society by a simple majority of votes of the Executive Committee. Such an action may not be taken until the person concerned has been given a chance to present her or his case before the Executive Committee. On removal the person concerned may appeal against such removal to the Senior Member.

## 4 Meetings of the Members

1. There shall be an Annual General Meeting (AGM) for all the members of the Society in Michaelmas Full Term, convened by the Executive Secretary on not less than fourteen days' notice. The AGM shall be presided by the outgoing President.
2. The Annual General Meeting will:
  - (a) receive the annual report of the Committee for the previous year and the annual accounts of the Society for the previous year, the report and accounts having been approved by the Committee.
  - (b) receive a report from the Committee on the Societys compliance with Section 2, above and officially endorse the results of the election for the Executive Committee (as per Section 2, paragraph 4) that will be in charge during the year starting the said Michaelmas Full Term.
  - (c) elect Members of the Committee in accordance with Section 5 paragraph 11, below: the Committee's nominations for the Officers and the Senior Member shall be contained in the notice of the Meeting: any alternative nominations must be seconded and have the consent of the nominee, and must be received in writing by the Executive Secretary not less than seven days before the date

of the Meeting: nominations for the other Committee Members may be taken from the floor of the meeting.

- (d) consider any motions of which due notice has been given, and any other relevant business.
- 3. An extraordinary General Meeting may be called in any Full Term by the President, the Executive Secretary or the Treasurer on not less than seven days' notice; or on a written requisition by [seven] or more members, stating the reason for which the meeting is to be called, and delivered to the Executive Secretary not less than fourteen days before the date of the Meeting.
- 4. Prior to all General Meetings notice of the agenda shall be sent out with the notice of the Meeting.
- 5. The quorum for a General Meeting shall be fifteen members present in person. When any financial business is to be transacted there must be present the Treasurer, or a member of the Committee deputed by the Treasurer to represent his or her views to the Meeting (provided that where it is a case of a deputy, the only financial business transacted shall be that which was set out in the agenda accompanying the notice of the meeting).

## **5 The Committee**

- 1. The affairs of the Society shall be administered by an Executive Committee (hereafter referred to as the Committee) consisting of not more than [eight] persons and the number being always odd, which shall determine the subscriptions payable by the members of the Society, and have ultimate responsibility for the activities of the Society. Members of the University shall at all times make up the majority of the members of the Committee. The Committee shall have control of the funds and property of the Society, and of its administration.
- 2. The Committee shall be made up of the President, the Executive Secretary, the Treasurer, and following four secretaries:
  - (a) Secretary - Cultural Events

- (b) Secretary - Public Relations
- (c) Secretary - Seminars and Lectures
- (d) Secretary - Information Management

The Society shall also have a Senior Member. The Senior Member is a staff member of the University, and is nominated for a minimum of one year term by the Executive Committee. The President, the Executive Secretary, the Treasurer and the four secretaries (as listed above) shall be either a *student* member of the Society whose eligibility stems from Section 3, paragraphs 2, 3(a) and 3(b) above, or (with the approval of the Proctors) a member of Congregation. If his or her eligibility stems from Section 3, paragraphs 3(a) or 3(b) above, on election to office he or she must sign an undertaking to abide by the Proctors' Memorandum, and to accept the authority of the Proctors on Society matters.

3. The quorum for a Committee meeting shall be a majority of members present in person. When any financial business is to be transacted, there must be present either the Treasurer or a member of the Committee deputed by the Treasurer to represent his or her views to the meeting.
4. The outgoing Executive Committee shall be responsible for electing the new committee in the following way:
  - (a) The Executive Committee shall elect the Chief Electoral Officer from among the general membership of the Society to conduct the elections.
  - (b) The Chief Electoral Officer will be assisted by four other Electoral Officers who have volunteered their services. If more than four general members volunteer to become Electoral Officers then they will be selected by a draw of lots. None of the Electoral Officers will be eligible to stand for election.
  - (c) The Chief Electoral Officer will conduct the elections in the Michaelmas Full Term of every year. He or she will give one week notice for filing nominations. Nominations *must* be proposed and seconded by two members in addition to the nominee. Nominations will be filed by email sent to the Chief Electoral Officer.

- (d) The elections will be held one week after the closing of nominations. Voting will take place over two working days. Ballots can be cast in person or electronically - depending upon what methods of voting are in effect, authorised by the Executive Committee and The Chief Electoral Officer. Elections will follow the single transferable vote system.
5. In order to help the new Executive Committee achieve the goals of the Society, the past Executive members of the Society shall act in an advisory role to the new Executive Committee members. To facilitate this the outgoing Executive Committee members by default become the members of the Past Executive Members Committee. The founders of the Constitution shall continue to be the members of the Past Executive Members Committee as long as they fulfil the Membership criteria of the Society, Section 3.
  6. An impeachment motion against any member of the Executive Committee may be moved by a minimum of five general members at an extraordinary general meeting (EGM). Such an EGM must have a quorum of half the general membership of the Society. An impeachment motion can be passed only by two-thirds majority of the members present and voting.
  7. The President shall have the right to preside at all meetings of the members of the Society and at all meetings of the Committee. Should the President be absent, or decline to take the chair, the Committee shall elect another member of the Committee to chair the meeting.
  8. The Executive Secretary shall:
    - (a) maintain a register of the members of the Society, which shall be available for inspection by the Proctors on request.
    - (b) give notice of meetings of the members and the Committee.
    - (c) draw up the minutes of those meetings.
    - (d) notify the Proctors promptly following the appointment and resignation or removal of Office Holders and other members of the Committee.
    - (e) advise the Proctors promptly of any changes in this Constitution.

- (f) notify the Proctors not later than the end of the second week of every Full Term of the programme of meetings which has been arranged for that term (e.g. by providing them a copy of the term card) and;
- (g) provide the Insurance Section with full details of any insurance cover purchased from or through a national governing body pursuant to Section 2, paragraph (b) above.
- (h) inform the Proctors if the Society ceases to exist, or is to be dissolved, and in doing so present a final statement of accounts.
- (i) ensure that if the Society has a website, it is up to date.

9. The Treasurer shall:

- (a) keep proper records of the Society's financial transactions in accordance with the current accepted accounting rules and practices.
- (b) develop and implement control procedures to minimise the risk of financial exposure, such procedures to be reviewed regularly with the University's Internal Audit Section ("Internal Audit")
- (c) ensure that bills are paid and cash is banked in accordance with the procedures developed under (b)
- (d) prepare an annual budget for the Society, and regularly inform the Committee of progress against the budget
- (e) ensure that all statutory returns are made including VAT, income tax and corporation tax if appropriate
- (f) seek advice as necessary on tax matters from the University's Finance Division
- (g) develop and maintain a manual of written procedures for all aspects of the Treasurer's responsibilities
- (h) make all records, procedures and accounts available on request to the Senior Member, the Proctors and Internal Audit
- (i) forward to the Proctors by the end of the second week of each Full Term a copy of the accounts for the preceding term signed by the Senior Member, for retention on the Proctors' files and

- (j) if the Society has turnover in excess of £15, 000 in the preceding year, or if owing to a change in the nature or scale of its activities, it may confidently be expected to have such a turnover in the current year, subject its account for audit by the University's auditors (or other auditors approved in advance by the Proctors). Accounts are to be ready for audit within four months of the end of the Society's financial year and the costs of the audit shall be borne by the Society. If requested by the auditors, the Society shall submit accounts and related material as a basis for a review of accounting procedures, the cost likewise to be borne by the Society.
  - (k) The Treasurer should also use the accompanying "Notes of Guidance for the Treasurer" in case of any doubt.
10. The Secretary - Information Management is in charge of designing and maintaining the website up to date with all the events of the Society. Any data that shall be uploaded to the website should have the written consent of the Executive Secretary. Email will be considered as a valid form of written communication.
  11. The Secretary - Public Relations will be in charge of publicity for events, liaising with the press and will act as the general spokesperson for the Society.
  12. The Secretary - Cultural Events is in charge of organising all cultural and entertainment related events.
  13. The Secretary - Seminars and Lectures is in charge if organising forums for general discussions, debates and seminars including those presented by eminent personalities.
  14. The Senior Member shall:
    - (a) hear appeals from removal from membership under Section 3, paragraph 4 above.
    - (b) following paragraph 10(i) above, consider the accounts of the Society and sign them if he or she considers them to be in order.
    - (c) ensure that adequate advice and assistance is available to the Executive Committee.

- (d) be available to represent and speak for the Society in the public forum, and before the Courts of the University and the University authorities.
- 15. If during the period between the annual elections to offices any vacancies occur amongst the members of Committee, the Committee shall have the power of filling the vacancy or vacancies up to the next Annual General Meeting by co-optation. If the Committee decides for some reason, at any point of time to opt for re-election earlier than a year, the Committee should take approval of two-thirds of the members of the Society.
- 16. Each Office Holder must, on relinquishing his or her appointment, promptly hand to his or her successor in Office (or to another member of the Society nominated by the Committee) all official documents and records belonging to the Society, together with (on request from the Committee) any other property of the Society which may be in his or her possession, and must complete any requirements to transfer authority relating to control of the Society's bank accounts, building society accounts, or other financial affairs.
- 17. Without derogating from its primary responsibility, the Committee may delegate its functions to finance and general purposes and other subcommittees which are made up exclusively of members of the Committee.
- 18. The Committee shall have power to make regulations and by-laws, in accordance with this Constitution, and to settle any disputed points not otherwise provided for in this Constitution. Any alteration to this Constitution shall require the approving vote of two-thirds of those present in person or by proxy at a General Meeting.

## **6 Indemnity**

- 1. So far as may be permitted by law, every member of the Committee and every officer of the Society shall be entitled to be indemnified by the Society against all costs, charges, losses, expenses and liabilities incurred by him or her in the execution or discharge of his or her duties

or the exercise of his or her powers, or otherwise properly in relation to or in connection with his or her duties. This indemnity extends to any liability incurred by him or her in defending any proceedings, civil or criminal, which relate to anything done or omitted or alleged to have been done or omitted by him or her as a member of the Committee or officer of the Society and in which judgement is given in his or her favour (or the proceedings are otherwise disposed of without any finding or admission of any material breach of duty on his or her part), or in which he or she is acquitted, or in connection with any application under any statute for relief from liability in respect of any such act or omission in which relief is granted to him or her by the Court.

2. So far as may be permitted by law, the Society may purchase and maintain for any member of the Committee or officer of the Society insurance cover against any liability which by virtue of any rule of law may attach to him or her in respect of any negligence, default, breach of duty or breach of trust of which he or she may be guilty in relation, to the Society and against all costs, charges, losses and expenses and liabilities incurred by him or her and for which he or she is entitled to be indemnified by the Society by virtue of last paragraph in Section 5.

## **7 Dissolution**

1. The Society may be dissolved at any time by the approving votes of two-thirds of those present in person or by proxy at a General Meeting. The Society may also be dissolved (without the need for any resolution of the members) by means of not less than thirty days notice from the Proctors to the Secretary of the Society if at any time the Society ceases to be registered with the Proctors.
2. In the event of the Society being dissolved, its assets shall not be distributed amongst the members, but shall be paid to or at the direction of the University.

## **8 Interpretation**

Any question about the interpretation of this Constitution shall be settled by the Proctors.

## **9 Schedule**

Code of Conduct on Safety Matters