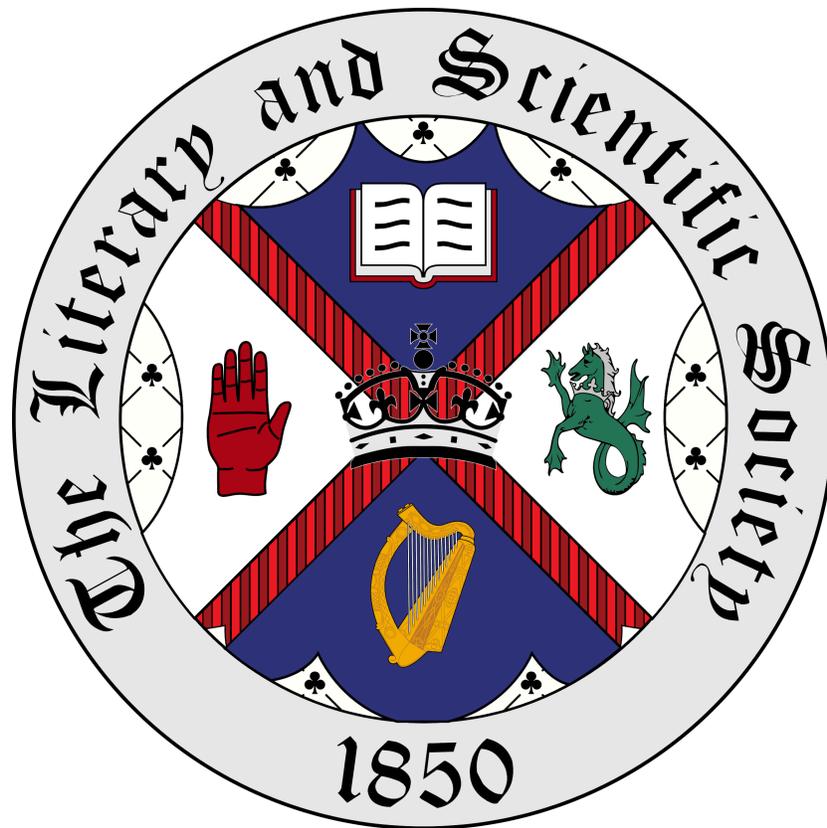


# 177<sup>th</sup> Session Standing Orders



THE LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY

THE QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY OF BELFAST

---

THE LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY  
THE QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY OF BELFAST

**Foreword - The History of the Literific..... 1**

**Section One - The Standing Orders.....2**

**Section Two - Ordinary Meetings..... 3**

**Section Three - All Meetings..... 5**

**Section Four - Council Meetings..... 7**

## Foreword - The History of the Literific

The Literary and Scientific Society was founded in 1850 in the first academic term of the then Queen's College Belfast by E. L. Godkin, whose contribution to the Society can be seen immortalised in the black and white hall of Queen's Lanyon Building.

It was the first Society at Queen's College and pre-dates the Students' Union itself by 47 years. By all accounts the Society went from strength to strength for over a century, transforming during that time from a paper-reading society into a more focused debating society, and changing its structure from a paid membership society to one where all students of the University were automatically considered members.

After 1897, when the new Students' Union was built, most debates took place in the McMordie Hall (now part of the School of Music) which was named after Hans McMordie, President of the Literific in 1868-69. The turn of the century saw the Literific hosting inter-varsity debates with societies from all over Great Britain and Ireland. After 117 sessions, with a political climate becoming less conducive to open debate and the Society falling into disarray, the Society adjourned in 1967. Much of the material, including minutes of the Society from 1863 – 1963 (the earlier minutes having been lost before 1900) are held in the University Archives, now in the McClay Library. After the Literific ceased to function, the baton of debating in Queen's was taken up by the Union Debating Society. This Society appeared in several guises throughout the next 40 years, including most recently and successfully as the Debating & Mooting Society. It was the members of the committee of this society that were instrumental in re-founding the Literific in the Autumn of 2011 for its 163rd Session.

## Section One - The Standing Orders

- 1) The Standing Orders, unlike the rest of the Constitution, may be amended at any time by a two thirds supermajority of the Council.
- 2) The Standing Orders shall have the full force of the Constitution.
- 3) A motion to ignore a Standing Order for the current meeting may be put to the House by any member. This must be ratified by a simple majority of the House.
- 4) It is the responsibility of the Chair to enforce these Standing Orders.
- 5) It is the responsibility of the President to clarify any points of ambiguity in these Standing Orders.

## Section Two - Ordinary Meetings

- 1) Ordinary Meetings shall be conducted in the following order:
  - a) President's Questions
  - b) Private Members' Business
  - c) Reading and approval of the minutes of the previous meeting
  - d) Main Business
  - e) Council Announcements
- 2) The President has the authority to modify the order of business during any Ordinary Meeting.
- 3) President's Questions is a time for any member to ask the President a question about the Society or about the President. The President has the right to refuse to answer any question which would infringe on their privacy, or any question which would be inappropriate to answer in public before the House. This will last no longer than ten minutes.
- 4) Private Members' Business is a time for any member of the House to ask a question to the House or put a motion before the House. This provides all members with a chance to engage with the Society and for the Society to engage with interesting discussions which do not warrant a full debate. No motion may be brought which brings the Society into disrepute. This will last no longer than fifteen minutes.
- 5) The Reading and approval of the minutes of the previous meeting consists of a reading of the previous meeting's minutes, followed by a motion to take those minutes as read. A simple majority of the House is necessary to carry this motion. Any objections should be noted by the Secretary and the minutes corrected accordingly.
- 6) Main Business consists of a single motion to be debated under the Literific's debating format:
  - a) There will be a Proposition and an Opposition side.
  - b) Each side will have between three and four speakers.
  - c) A Vote of Prior Opinion will be taken on the motion and recorded by the Secretary.

---

# THE LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY

## THE QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY OF BELFAST

- d) The first speaker of the proposition will speak, then the first speaker for the opposition, then the second for the proposition, and so on until all speakers have spoken.
- e) Speeches will be a maximum of seven minutes in length.
- f) The first and last minutes of each speech will be protected time. Outside of protected time, any member may raise a Point of Information (PoI) to the speaker.
- g) To raise a PoI, the member must raise their hand and say "On that Point". The speaker may either accept or decline the point. If the point is accepted, the member will stand and make a brief point or question to the speaker, who may then respond.
- h) No back-and-forth on PoIs will be allowed.
- i) Once a PoI has been raised, the speaker must be allowed to continue onto their next point before another PoI may be raised. Barracking is forbidden.
- j) After all speakers have given their speeches, a number of rounds of questions may follow.
- k) Each round will consist of one question to the Proposition, followed by one question to the Opposition, followed by one question to both sides equally.
- l) Each side will have a chance to respond to a question directed to them, and the other side will then have a chance to respond to that answer.
- m) At the end of the debate, a Vote on Speaker Ability will be taken and the results will be announced and recorded by the Secretary.
- n) Council Announcements are a time for any Council member to make any announcement to the House relevant to their position.

### Section Three - All Meetings

- 1) Members of the House should refrain from swearing or using obscene language when speaking before the House, including in Private Member's Business and during Questions.
  - a) The President shall have the right to fine members of the Society for breaking this rule.
  - b) The fine shall be one bottle of port wine, to be presented during Private Members' Business at the next meeting.
- 2) Members must not use language which is racist, homophobic, sectarian, sexist, or which is likely to cause offence to a certain group. This includes the use of slurs.
- 3) Direct attacks against other members of the House are forbidden.
- 4) Party and religious polemic is forbidden during meetings, except where the motion requires it, or where the Chair decides to waive this rule. No motion may be put before the House which explicitly supports or opposes any political party, candidate, or religion.
- 5) Members should not be excessively drunk during meetings.
- 6) At any point during a speech, including during protected time, members may voice opinions on points made by speakers.
  - a) If members are in agreement with the point made by the speaker, they may say "here here", or words to that effect. If they are in disagreement, they may say "shame"
  - b) If the speaker in question is a current member of Council, the word 'shame' may either be replaced by or used in conjunction with the word 'resign'.
  - c) The Chair reserves the right to call for order if interjections by members interfere with a speaker.
- 7) At any point during a meeting, any member may raise a Point of Order to the Chair, who may then choose to accept or decline. Points of Order may only be raised to:
  - a) Point out a violation of the rules laid out in either the Constitution or the Standing Orders.
  - b) Request that a speaker be given additional time.

---

THE LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY  
THE QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY OF BELFAST

- c) Request that a ruling of the Chair be overturned.
- 8) The President and Secretary shall wear formal attire during all meetings. This will include the use of an academic gown equivalent to the level of degree studied.
- 9) At the Chair's discretion, the following sanctions can be levied against any member who violates the rules outlined in the Standing Orders:
  - a) For non-serious offences where this is the member's first offence in the meeting, the member will be verbally warned by the Chair. Examples include but are not limited to:
    - i) A member using language deemed by the Chair to be profane.
    - ii) A member raises a point of information which lasts for an excessive amount of time.
  - b) For serious offences, or for repeated minor offences, the member can be forbidden from speaking further before the House and from raising interventions to speakers. The member may also be required to apologise before the House or to anybody who they have offended. Examples include but are not limited to:
    - i) A member uses language which is offensive, as outlined in Rule Two of this Section.
    - ii) A member continues to use language as described in Rule Nine Part A of this Section, after having been warned by the chair.
  - c) For very serious offences or where a member is causing continuous disruption to the meeting, the member may be asked to leave the meeting. Examples include but are not limited to:
    - i) A member both repeatedly and intentionally uses language which is offensive, as outlined in Rule Two of this Section.
    - ii) A member repeatedly speaks out of turn during the meeting and refuses to stop, after having been warned by the Chair.

## Section Four - Council Meetings

- 1) The Council of The Society shall ordinarily meet once per week, although this is at the President's discretion. Here the members of Council shall have the chance to voice points on their respective role.
- 2) The order of speakers will be determined by their precedence on Council.
- 3) Any member of Council may put forward a motion for the consideration of Council.
  - a) The Council must be notified of any motion at least three days in advance, and be given the exact title of the motion.
  - b) Any guest speaker can be vetoed by the objection of two members of Council.
  - c) All motions put before Council will be voted on via secret ballot, with a nominated member of Council acting as Returning Officer, ordinarily the President of the Society.
- 4) All items covered in the meeting will remain confidential and may not be discussed with any persons outside of Council.