



A Guide to JCR Meetings and Submitting Motions

This is your introduction to JCR Meetings at St Catherine's College! How these Meetings – and the JCR more widely – work is quite different from the kinds of school Student Councils which you might be used to. Hopefully this answers all your questions but if you still have any doubts, don't hesitate to get in touch with the JCR President, Secretary or any other member of the Committee.

What are JCR Meetings?

JCR meetings are where the undergraduate student body of St Catherine's come together to discuss issues that directly affect students and instruct the JCR Committee how to act accordingly. Open Meetings generally take place fortnightly during term time, at the end of weeks 0, 2, 4 and 6, and in the JCR. Less frequently and in more exceptional circumstances, Extraordinary Open Meetings can be called by the President, the majority of the JCR Committee or through a petition signed by at least 60 members of the JCR. Overall, the President generally chairs all Meetings and the 'quorum' must be 25, which is the fancy Latin way of saying that 25 people must be in attendance for any vote to take place.

Why should I attend JCR Meetings?

Apart from the *strong* motivation of free pizza, JCR Meetings are one of the main spaces where any undergraduate Catz student can express their views on how the JCR, College or even University is run, and propose the changes they want to see. By getting involved in the debate (less scary than it sounds), you have the chance to potentially raise points that other JCR members may not have considered. Moreover, if you would like JCR funding for any project or initiative, you will need to apply through an Open Meeting so it's great a way to find out what's going on in College and any exciting, upcoming events. And of course, it's where you'll see all the friendly faces of the Committee!

How do I submit a motion?

All JCR members can write and submit motions to the JCR Secretary and each motion will need a Proposer and Seconder (two people who support the motion). All motions have to be emailed to the Secretary and must follow this template:



An example from Trinity Term 2020:

Motion title
Proposer:
Secunder:

This JCR notes:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

This JCR believes:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

This JCR resolves:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

This JCR notes:

1. The Identities 101 workshop happens in Freshers' week and is run by the BAME rep(s), LBGTQ+ rep, womens* rep, disabilities rep, and class rep. Its purpose is to educate freshers about the inequalities faced by these groups and to direct them to further resources.
2. In the past these workshops have been attended by fewer than 10 people.
3. College have previously refused to allow the Identities 101 workshop to be compulsory in freshers' week.

This JCR believes:

1. The JCR must do more to educate about the experiences of all its members.
2. Attending a one-hour session (giving each rep approx. 12 minutes) should be the bare minimum requirement to begin this education.

This JCR resolves:

1. To mandate the JCR president and freshers' rep to encourage college to allow compulsory attendance to Identities 101 workshops for first-years.

If you are unsure about this structure or have any questions about your motion, it's always worth consulting the Secretary or any appropriate JCR Representative, who will be happy to help!

What actually happens at a Meeting?

Ok so now we can talk about what actually happens during these Meetings! The description below might seem quite complicated, so coming to the Meetings themselves is the best way of understanding it all and this can always be used for reference, if needed.

The Chair of the Meeting (who is generally the President) opens the meeting by welcoming everyone, making any apologies for Committee members not there and giving out the order of the motions and any notices

- ⇒ The Chair also gives a summary of the progress of motions passed in previous Open Meetings

Then, we move on to the first motion

- ⇒ The Secretary reads out **the resolves of the motion** (the aims of what the motion is seeking to address or change)
- ⇒ The Proposer makes **a speech in proposition** (a chance for the person proposing the motion to explain its importance and elaborate on the resolves)
- ⇒ The Chair asks for **Short Factual Questions** to the proposer (these are questions asked by the audience that are purely factual in nature, and are referred to as 'SFQs')
- ⇒ After SFQs, the Chair calls for any **amendments**. These can be proposed by anyone provided the exact wording is given to the Secretary.



- The amendment can either be **taken as friendly** or not (meaning the proposer does or does not accept the change to their motion).
- If it is taken as friendly, it is simply incorporated into the motion without a vote
- ⇒ If the amendment is **not** taken as friendly, we **move to debate** the amendment
 - One *short* speech is given in proposition, the same in opposition and it is debated
 - Then we move to vote on the amendment and **a simple majority** is needed for it to pass
- ⇒ If there are no more SFQs or amendments, the Chair asks if there is **opposition** (this is where someone or a number of people are opposed to the motion and want it to be debated)
 - If there is no opposition, **the motion passes** (meaning it was successful and the JCR Committee must now act on it)
 - If there is opposition, this is where things usually get interesting! The Chair asks for **a speech in opposition** (a chance for the person opposing the motion/amendment to further explain their reasoning and challenge the motion further)
- ⇒ Then, we are again **in debate** (meaning anyone can be chosen by the Chair to make a speech either in proposition or opposition, for 1 minute)
- ⇒ Once there are no more questions or points of debate, we **move to vote**.
 - The proposer and opposer each make a 30 second speech in summary
 - The JCR Secretary reads the resolves of the motion and any amendments
- ⇒ Finally, the voting takes place!
 - Normal motions need a simple majority to pass
 - Motions relating to the Constitution or Processes Handbook need **a 2/3 majority** to pass (at least twice as many people voting for the motion as those voting against it)
 - Two members of the Committee **count the votes** (done by a show of hands, unless a secret ballot is requested – in which case votes are written onto pieces of paper)

This process repeats itself for every motion but it's not as complex as it seems, and most motions don't take that long to get through – and there's always a break in the middle for pizza!

At the end of the Meeting, the Chair asks for **Any Other Business** (which can be anything from notices to reminders about upcoming events)

Then we all go home, and the Secretary writes up and sends out **the minutes** of the Meeting (notes containing all the details of the Meeting, the debates and which motions did/did not pass)

Hopefully see you at a JCR Meeting soon!