How to Write Motions

Introduction

A motion is a formal proposal put to JCR that usually changes the way the JCR works. They may, for example, change the Standing Orders or the Job Description of a certain officer, create a new elected position or allow the JCR to resolve a specific issue. Anyone in the JCR (apart from the Chair or the Chair-elect) can propose motions. All motions must be seconded by a different member of the JCR.

Motions will be put at a JCR meeting for discussion, followed by a vote. As motions are formal proposals, it is important to get the format and writing style correct to avoid any confusion or discrepancies. For example, motions cannot add new clauses that conflict with existing clauses in the Governing Documents. Wording should be clear and concise and avoid ambiguity.

All motions must be sent to the JCR Chair before the published deadline or they will not be accepted until the next JCR meeting.

The structure and format of all motions is the following:

* Title

The name says it all – the Title sums up the entire motion in a few words.

* Summary

The summary of the motion, which can be in a paragraph or two, summarises the motion in a less formal tone and gives everyone a brief idea what you what to achieve/change through the motion. Because it is less formal and less restricted, it is recommended to start writing this section first.

* “This JCR notes”

This section discusses the background of the current issue. What is currently happening and why we need to change? It is recommended to keep this clear and concise to convince the JCR that the current status quo is not ideal and has to be changed as soon as possible.

* “This JCR believes”

This section tells the JCR why they should implement the changes you have proposed. This is an opportunity to convince the JCR that this motion should be supported.

* “This JCR resolves”

This section details the exact changes you want to implement. For changes involving the Standing Orders or Job Descriptions, it is highly recommended to consult the JCR Chair to ensure the terminologies are correct. For example, when creating a new position, it must say which member of the Exec they would be accountable to.

Attached are two motions that have been passed in the past (excluding some amendments). They should give you an idea of how a motion should be written (credits to Adam Jarvis, updated by Jacob Kalnins).

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the JCR Chair.

Prepared by:

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JCR Chair, 2022-23

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Example I
Handover Notes Motion

Summary

All members of the Exec receive handover notes when they take over the role from the previous position holder and this is also commonplace within societies. As a Tier 2 position holder this year, I have taken over the role after the graduation of the previous holder and believe I would have benefitted from their knowledge and experience. This motion aims to formally obligate Tier 2 and 3 position holders to compile a set of handover notes to be given to their successor to enable smooth running and hopefully improvement of the roles. It also aims to provide clarification for JCR members taking on newly created positions within college.

This JCR notes

* The current members of the executive committee have to provide a set of handover notes for the incoming executive committee.
* This is also common practice within societies.
* These handover notes provide vital support and information for those taking on these roles.
* Tier 2 and 3 position holders hold positions of great importance to the running of college life.
* Finalists are able to run for these positions and are usually unable to offer support and guidance to the incoming position holders after graduation.
* It would be completely unfair to stop finalists running for these positions considering the enthusiasm they may have shown and experience they may have gained during their time at the college.

This JCR believes

* Tier 2 and 3 position holders would benefit from being given notes from the previous position holder.
* Important and useful knowledge which may not be conveyed in the JCR Job Description would be beneficial to be passed on to help improve college life and make it easier for the people entering these roles.
* These notes would not need to be as extensive as those for Tier 1 position holders but would still help to pass on knowledge and information.

This JCR resolves

* Add to the Job Description of all Tier 2 and Tier 3 position holders:
“Must create a set of handover notes for their successor, to be given to the successful candidate shortly after their election.”
* For new positions, the first set of notes is expected to be written by the JCR member(s) that proposed the creation of the position in question.

**Proposed by:** Joe Blogg
**Seconded by:** Jane Smith

Example II
JCR Art Rep Motion

Summary

Within in the JCR, Music and Sport are well represented at a Tier 2 level with the Music Rep and the Sports and Fitness Rep whilst Art (excluding Music) has no representation at any tier. Trevelyan College also has a number of dedicated art societies which are not receiving official representation within the JCR. Additionally, there is very little communication between these societies, the JCR and the Fine Art Committee and recently, student participation in art events has been poor.

This motion aims to introduce the role of Art Representative, similar to that of the Music Rep and Sports and Fitness Rep, in order to resolve these issues and make art more valued within college. The role would be to communicate between the various societies and committees, assist with the running of the Trevelyan Art Prize, organise art exhibitions within college, storage for societies who require it and an annual Artist’s dinner and to generally promote art within college.

This JCR notes

* With the exception of Music, Art is not represented by a JCR position at any Tier.
* Currently, there is limited communication between the ratified art societies, the joint SCR-Student Fine Art Committee and the JCR.
* Student participation in college art events has been poor in recent times.

This JCR believes

* Trevelyan College is well regarded as an artistic college and this reputation for art should not be allowed to diminish.
* There are many talented artists within the College who have not had the full opportunity to showcase their ability and the College building, with its high-quality artworks, is a wonderful showcase for their endeavours.
* Within the JCR structure, art deserves the same level of representation as sports and music.
* A JCR Art Representative would make art more valued in college and would increase participation in college art events, societies and may encourage the formation/re-ratification of art-based societies.

This JCR resolves

* Amend the JCR Job Descriptions to include the Tier 2 position of Art Representative as detailed in the attached Job Description with immediate effect.

**Proposed by:** Joe Blogg
**Seconded by:** Jane Smith