

Castle Middle Common Room Formal Rules

Castle Formals are an incredibly fun social event that you should definitely make the most of during your time here in the Middle Common Room (MCR). They can, however, seem bizarre before you get used to them, but don't let this put you off! Hopefully this document will clarify the rules and customs so that you can fully enjoy this tradition.

Basics

- Two-course dinner held during term in the great hall, to which academic dress is worn (see dress code below)
- Almost formals start at 19:45 - do not be late! If you arrive after the doors to the Great Hall have been shut, you won't be allowed in.
- Usually, the Junior Common Room (JCR) sit at *Low Table* (the first three rows of tables as you enter the great hall through the main entrance) and the Senior Common Room (SCR) sit at *High Table* towards the back of the hall. The MCR sits at *Low-High Table* (the three tables positioned between *Low Table* and *High Table*). Almost formals are MCR only, the JCR and SCR will not be present.
- No phones! Any texting or photography could get you fined!
- You must remain seated until either the first break (after the main course has been finished) or after dessert when the JCR and MCR executives have bowed out. It is advisable to go to the toilet before dinner!

Academic Dress Code

- Dark suit with tie, or dress, or equivalent suitably smart attire.
- Academic Gowns must be worn by everyone in attendance, including guests. A very small number of gowns are available to borrow for guests before formal in the MCR. Gowns entitled from previous degrees or membership at a different university are encouraged!
- Keep to the code: anyone not dressed suitably can be refused entry by the serving staff, and/or fined. Absolutely no trainers, hoodies, or other casual clothing is allowed!

Wine & Drinking

- Wine brought into formal must be bought from either the Undercroft or MCR bar, and must be a half-bottle size. Attempting to sneak in other wine will result in a fine and potential ban from formals.
- Water and juice will be provided on the table.
- For those drinking wine, drunk and disorderly behaviour will not be tolerated

Procedure during “normal times” (not applicable to Almost formals)

1. Meet in the MCR (Maurice Tucker Room) from 18:30-18:45 to borrow gowns for guests or purchase wine.
2. A member of the MCR Executive Committee will lead everyone up to the Great Hall together at around 18:50, via the main entrance. Don't go there before everyone else, even if you're in a group.
3. The MCR Exec member will lead everyone to the table reserved for the MCR, and sit at the Exec seat. Once you've found a seat at this table, you may sit down to await the SCR to enter - do not start pouring your drinks yet.
4. The SCR will enter at around 19:00. We stand up with everyone at Low Table as they do so, and remain standing until the college grace has been said. You may then sit and pour your drinks.
5. When each food course arrives, wait until the three people across from you and the two people next to you have also been served before starting to eat.
6. After the main course has been cleared up, there will be a comfort-break of 15 minutes. You can go to the toilet, catch some fresh air, or head to the bar!
7. After dessert (around 20:25) the JCR and MCR Exec members will stand to 'bow out'. When they do, stand up with everyone else and remain silent until they have bowed to the Master or their substitute and left the Hall. You are then free to leave at any time.
8. Wine glasses should not be removed from the Great Hall, but any wine remaining in a bottle can be taken to the Undercroft or MCR to finish. Take any empty bottles with you and deposit them in the glass bin that will be waiting in the Courtyard.