



GRAY'S
INN

GUIDANCE FOR THE SENIOR-IN-HALL

(revised May 2019)

In general

1. Seniors-in Hall shall be responsible to the Bench for:
 - Maintaining good order in Hall at all Qualifying Sessions (QS), e.g. mixed messes, moots, lectures, as well as Member Dining, e.g. Guest Night, Grand Night, Sunday Lunch, and such other occasions as the Bench shall identify. This includes preserving the fabric of Hall and its furniture.
 - Dealing discretely with any complaints that may be made privately (by note or orally), and asking any member attempting to complain publicly to desist;
 - Encouraging good fellowship and, member participation in Hall life;
 - Representing Hall as appropriate, and
 - Constituting the Panel of Seniors-in-Hall responsible to the Bench for discussion of matters concerned with activities in Hall and elsewhere as the Bench shall identify.
 - The Panel shall also keep under review the 'Customs of Hall' and shall liaise, as appropriate, with the Barristers' Committee.
2. The Seniors shall be appointed by the Bench according to an agreed procedure.
3. The Duty Senior should always address Hall through Mr/Madam Junior and should warn the Junior in advance, through the Head Porter/Deputy Head Porter or Hall Butler, when a response is expected.
4. The Duty Senior his or her deputy when on duty, the Head Porter/Deputy Head Porter and the Butler should maintain liaison in Hall over all matters including members' behaviour, the appropriateness of their dress and ensuring that gowns are worn when required.
5. The Duty Senior and his deputy should be familiar with the current Customs of Hall to ensure, as far as possible, that they are observed. Seniors have been chosen as those who can exercise authority with good humour and discretion to ensure that Qualifying Sessions and Member dining remain pleasant experiences while also ensuring the formalities, traditions and courtesies are maintained.

In particular

Before dinner

6. The Duty Senior and the Deputy Duty Senior should attend Hall (or the designated venue) at least twenty minutes before the start of a Qualifying Session, member lunch or dinner, or any other event. For lunches and dinners, the Seniors shall sit in a designated place and shall remain in Hall (or another assigned venue) to ensure that all members leave by the pre-determined closing time. This is an important responsibility of the Duty Seniors and, if one must leave earlier for such reason as travelling, the other must fulfil it.

7. Normally, on lunch or dining occasions before the Bench enters Hall, the Head Porter/Deputy Head Porter reminds members of the restrictions on leaving Hall during the meal service and then invites the Duty Senior to address Hall. Duty Seniors may take this opportunity to welcome Barristers, students and guests and to remind them of the tradition of hospitality of this Inn and of the importance of the custom of toasting to ensure that members of each mess know each other and the members of the adjacent messes.

8. The Duty Seniors will both dine free of charge on the occasions for which they have been scheduled. A Deputy is always planned in part to ensure that there is always a senior Barrister on duty in the event the Duty Senior must be absent and in part to provide support for the Duty Senior. Normally, both are expected to attend but, should that prove difficult on any occasion, they are required to arrange cover between them. When there is an alteration in the rota for example a swap of duty then it is the responsibility of the senior who has arranged the swap to notify the Registrar.

During dinner

9. The Duty Seniors should:
 - be aware of any disturbance or other matter which deserves their discrete attention, and of any concern of the presiding Bench;
 - given that these are formal occasions and not informal restaurant meals, the custom is that members of Hall and their Guests should not ordinarily leave their places between the arrival of the Bench and the final toast of Domus. If necessary, a member or guest may leave temporarily but should return as soon as possible. The Duty Seniors should have an awareness, in liaison with the Hall Butler, of any such withdrawal and return;
 - ensure that toasting is honoured in the Senior mess and, at least, in those other messes within sight.

After dinner

10. After the Bench has withdrawn, the Head Porter/Deputy Head Porter shall present the gavel to the Duty Senior who shall respond to the Junior's request to propose the toast of 'Domus':
 - Before making that response, the Duty Senior shall make such announcements as are necessary about activities taking place in Hall that evening and invite members of Hall to toast the health of the guests.

- On those occasions when the Bench does not retire, the Junior shall invite the Treasurer or other Presiding Bencher to propose 'Domus'.

(Note that when the Bench is not present, this toast is drunk with all members of Hall standing)

11. **Formal guest night** is the night on which Hall entertains itself and, after 'Domus', the Duty Senior shall fulfil the role of Master of Revels (or appoint another Barrister to fulfil that role) encouraging **voluntary** contributions {such as singing, playing the piano, reading, reciting telling stories or jokes) from members accordingly. Arrangements may be made to provide to the Senior a list of those **volunteering** to participate but the practice of one member rising to challenge another, the defendant responding, and the Senior adjudicating, has been abolished by Pension and must not be allowed to take place on any occasion. Lectures or debates may be arranged for the period before dinner in the Bingham Room. **No-one is to stand on the furniture including chairs and tables.**
12. **Grand Day.** Benchers, with guests, will gather on the LPR Landing as normal for pre-dinner drinks. At 18.50, the Head Porter/Deputy Head Porter will gavel to lead Seniors, Bar, and students in procession through the Bridge Bar and down the internal staircase into Hall. Benchers to be called from LPR Landing – all to stand.
13. Guests will proceed from the LPR to the undercroft to the Armada Screen end of Hall where they they will be announced by the HeadPorter/Deputy Head Porter and process to High Table to be introduced as customarily.
14. The Duty Senior must be aware of the extra after dinner duties that he has on Grand Nights (see Custome of Hall).
15. Normally **Hall should close** by 22.00 hours (16.00 on a Sunday) at the latest and it is the Duty Senior's responsibility to ensure that members leave by this time (so that staff will be able to clear the tables). When announcing that Hall is closing, the Duty Senior should encourage those who wish to adjourn to the Bridge Bar (via the internal staircase – although gowns should firstly be returned to the Robing Room) and to allow them to take with them any remaining wine or port on their tables.
16. In respect of **Sunday Chapel services**, when there several students attending, Duty Seniors are expected to attend Chapel, gowned, and assist the Chapel Keeper should he need assistance. They are asked to supervise members leaving after the service encouraging students to go by the main door to avoid congestion in the Chapel corridor although Barristers and their guests may normally leave by the Benchers' door.

Qualifying Sessions

17. QSs may precede member dining nights or stand alone. Most will include a collegiate element involving a reception or dinner to which the Seniors will exercise their normal duties.
18. **Moots.** Two Duty Seniors will be present and gowned on a Practice Moot night which shall include a wine and canape receptions. The Duty Senior shall encourage good fellowship, the maintenance of good order, and the mixing of Benchers, members of Hall and students.
19. **Mixed messes** are preceded by a reception hosted by benchers and members of Hall. The Butler first will call students to Hall for dinner followed by Benchers and other

members. The Treasurer will introduce his/her guest speaker who will give a short, 30 minute talk in Hall before dinner. Following the talk, the Treasurer will offer a vote of thanks and dinner will commence. The Duty Senior may be invited to second this vote on behalf of Hall at the discretion of the Treasurer (or Presiding Bencher). Seniors shall be responsible to carry out their duties as established for all other formal member dining nights.

20. The custom of messes toasting will stand as will Grace before and after the meal, and a toast to Domus. Normally, sober dress requirements will be maintained to mark the residual formality, and gowns will be worn. Duty Seniors, as always, shall be the Treasurer's agent for any purpose.
21. Normally, there will be a pre-determined closing time for all Qualifying Sessions (8:30 for receptions and 9:30 for dinners) and it is the Duty Senior's responsibility to ensure that members leave by this time and return their gowns to the robing room. This is to allow staff to clear the room and prepare for the next day.
22. At the close of the reception or meal, the Duty Senior shall announce that Hall (or any other designated room) is closing and encourage those who wish to adjourn to the Bridge Bar. On certain evenings, the Senior may allow students to take with them to the Bridge any remaining wine from the reception or dinner. Gowns must be returned, and personal items collected from the robing room beforehand.