



Bylaws
of the
[Sample] American Inn of Court

Article I
General

Section 1. Purpose.

The purposes of the [sample] American Inn of Court are set forth in its Operational Charter issued by the American Inns of Court Foundation.

Section 2. Principal Location.

The [sample] American Inn of Court shall be located in the city of _____, county of _____, state of _____.

Article II
Organization

Section 1. The Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee is composed of the officers and the chairs of the various committees formed by the Executive Committee and such other members as are determined by the Masters of the Bench (Benchers). The duties of the Executive Committee, and its members, are set forth in the Operational Charter, and as set forth herein.

Section 2. The Officers.

The officers of the Inn shall be a president, a counselor, a secretary/treasurer or secretary and treasurer, and such other officers as the Benchers deem necessary. The officers serve a two-year term, or as otherwise directed by the Benchers, and may succeed themselves only once. The officers should be selected by the Benchers in accordance with the Operational Charter of the Inn.

Commented [WC1]: Two-year terms are recommend for officers, but each Inn may determine what works best for them. (Click [HERE](#) to learn more.)

Section 3. Committees.

The Executive Committee may establish standing and ad hoc committees from among the active members of the Inn and may change or discontinue committees.

Initially, the following standing committees shall be established: Membership Committee, Program Committee, Social Committee, Reporting Committee, and Liaison Committee.

Commented [WC2]: The establishment of these standing committees represents best practice, but Inns have flexibility to establish committees as they see fit

Among such other duties as may be assigned by the Benchers and the Executive Committee, the duties of each committee shall be as follows:

Membership Committee—The Membership Committee shall solicit and review applications and make recommendations to the Executive Committee for membership in the Inn; shall maintain records of attendance and oversee attendance in accordance with Article IV, Section 2 of these Bylaws; and shall assign members to Pupillage groups as per the Operational Charter.

Program Committee—The Program Committee shall oversee and approve program topics and shall be responsible for submitting programs for Continuing Legal Education credit when offered by the Inn.

Social Committee—The Social Committee shall be responsible for scheduling, arranging and collecting monies for approved social functions of the Inn within the parameters as set forth by the Executive Committee.

Reporting Committee—The Reporting Committee shall be responsible for the distribution of news, announcements, and other information among members of the Inn, and to the American Inns of Court Foundation; shall be responsible for submitting program reports to the American Inns of Court Foundation; and shall prepare articles for *The Bencher Magazine*.

Liaison Committee—The Liaison Committee shall maintain communication with local law schools, other legal organizations, and the local community in order to advise interested persons of Inn activities.

The officers shall appoint committee members and chairs of the committees, who shall serve two-year terms, or as otherwise directed by the Executive Committee, and may succeed themselves only once.

Committees may create ad hoc sub-committees, as appropriate.

Section 4. Pupillage Groups.

All active members will be assigned to a Pupillage Group by the Membership Committee and shall be approved by the Executive Committee. Each Pupillage Group shall be chaired by a Bencher appointed by the Executive Committee. The Benchers and Pupillage Groups shall be reassigned every two years.

Commented [WC3]: Like the Executive Committee terms, two-year pupillage team terms is effective practice. However, the Inn may choose to reassign teams on a different schedule. For more information about pupillage teams, see examples of Inn program development resources. (Click [HERE](#) to learn more.)

Article III. Membership.

Section 1. Active Members.

There are five classifications of members in an American Inn of Court, as defined in the bylaws of the American Inns of Court Foundation, and as set forth below:

- Master of the Bench (Benchers)—consisting of lawyers with at least 10 years of experience, judges and legal educators;
- Barristers—consisting of lawyers with at least five years of experience;
- Associates—consisting of lawyers with zero to five years of experience;
- Pupils—consisting of law students, and
- **Affiliated Professionals**—consisting of non-lawyer members in accordance with the Operational Charter.

Commented [WC4]: The years of experience for each membership category should be identified by the Benchers.

Commented [WC5]: This membership category is optional and may not be applicable to all Inns.

Membership in this American Inn of Court shall consist of Benchers, Barristers, Associates, and Affiliated Professionals in accordance with the Operational Charter of the Inn. Pupils may participate in all activities of the Inn but will not be voting members. Associates shall serve a term of two years, running from July 1 through June 30, or as otherwise directed by the Executive Committee.

Section 2. Inactive Members.

The Executive Committee may confer Emeritus, Honorary, and Alumni memberships as set forth in the Operational Charter.

Article IV Meetings and Attendance

Section 1. Meetings.

Programmatic meetings shall be held at least six times per year at such times as the Executive Committee may determine. The Inn shall endeavor to have at least one social event per year wherein members may invite guests.

Section 2. Attendance.

Each active member will be allowed three absences from the monthly meetings in a year. The Membership Committee shall monitor attendance at meetings and shall submit the names of those who have three absences to the Executive Committee. The non-participating member will be contacted by the Membership Chair in order to determine if he/she wishes to remain in this American Inn of Court, and in the event another absence occurs, this member will be dropped from the rolls and all dues will be forfeited.

Article V Voting and Elections.

Section 1. Benchers.

With the exception of inactive Benchers, each Bencher shall be entitled to one vote on all matters submitted to the Benchers. A majority of voting Benchers shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Every act done or decision made by a majority of the Benchers in attendance at a meeting shall be regarded as the act of all the Benchers.

Section 2. Executive Committee.

Each member of the Executive Committee shall be entitled to one vote on all matters submitted to the Committee. In the event of a tie, the President shall have the deciding vote. A majority of the members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Every act or decision made by a majority of the members in attendance at the meeting called for that purpose shall be regarded as the act of the entire Committee.

Section 3. Elections.

The Inn shall call a special meeting of the active Benchers in April of each year to nominate and elect a President and a Counselor. All other officers shall be selected from any category of membership and shall be elected by majority vote of all members present at the last meeting of the Inn year. All terms shall be from July 1 to June 30 and these selections shall be in accordance with the Operational Charter.

Commented [WC6]: The Inn may choose a different frequency.

Section 4. Vacancies.

When a position as an officer, committee chair or Bencher chair becomes vacant, the procedures for election and selection of officers and chairs shall be followed when the vacancy occurs; however, the duration of the vacant position shall not be counted against the new officer or chair in regard to any maximum term of service.

Commented [WC7]: The Inn's fiscal year must coincide with the Foundation's fiscal year to qualify for group exemption. (Click [HERE](#) to learn more.) This requirement is for tax filing purposes and does not apply to insurance coverage provided by the national office.

Article VI Fiscal Matters

Section 1. Fiscal Year.

The fiscal year of the [sample] American Inn of Court shall be the same as the fiscal year of the American Inns of Court Foundation, which is from July 1 to June 30 of each year.

Section 2. Dues.

Dues shall be in an amount consistent with the Operational Charter and shall be levied by the Treasurer during the month of September of each year. Failure to pay assessments and dues prior to the third meeting of the Inn year and after reasonable notice may be considered by the Executive Committee as grounds to terminate membership of the person in default.

Section 3. Expenses.

This American Inn of Court shall pay all reasonable expenses incurred by members of the Executive Committee for such things as attendance at state, regional or national events of the American Inns of Court Foundation and payment to an administrator.

Article VII

Adoption and Amendments.

Section 1. Adoption.

These Bylaws will be adopted by this American Inn of Court upon approval by a majority of the Benchers of this American Inn of Court and after being submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Board of Trustees of the American Inns of Court Foundation. The Benchers may make valid decisions by voting by mail, facsimile, electronic mail, or other means when deemed necessary by the Executive Committee or the President.

Section 2. Amendments.

Amendments to these Bylaws may be made by a majority of the Benchers of this American Inn of Court and must be submitted to and approved, in writing, by the Board of Trustees of the American Inns of Court Foundation. The Benchers may make valid decisions by voting by mail, facsimile, electronic mail, or other means when deemed necessary by the Executive Committee or the President.