

Dining Customs

Arrival in Hall: You are expected to arrive promptly for dinner. If you are late, you will usually not be allowed into Hall and will, therefore, forfeit dinner and not be credited with a qualifying session. It is customary that no-one enters or leaves Hall while the Benchers are present, except by permission of the Treasurer or Senior Bencher, the request to be conveyed by the Butler.

Wearing of Gowns: The Inn provides student gowns, which must be worn in Hall during dinner in term. These must be returned to the appropriate cloakroom at the end of the dinner.

Dress code: The dress code for dining is basically what you would be permitted to wear in Court. Male students and guests are requested to wear dark lounge suits, with jackets, collars and ties. Female students are asked to wear dark suits, with a white blouse, or dresses. Smart trouser suits are allowed. Genuine ethnic dress is welcome. Dress for guests is informal but gentleman guests must wear jacket, collar and tie. Please note students do not wear Black Tie for any of the Guest Nights unless specifically stated when booking. Black Tie dress for male students is a black dinner suit with a black bow tie: for female students it is either evening dress or a suit.

Entrance of Benchers to Hall: Barristers and Student Barristers stand while the Benchers enter and leave the Hall, and it is customary to bow to each Bencher as he/she enters and leaves.

Seating: Student Barristers are seated in groups or messes of four. The Student Barrister nearest the top of the table on the right hand side of each mess is the Captain. The Captain serves himself first and then passes the food anti-clockwise. The Junior, who sits besides the Captain, serves himself last.

Loyal Toast: On occasions when the Loyal Toast is proposed in the Inn, it is by tradition proposed and drunk seated. This is a privilege which has been enjoyed since the days of Charles II.

Serving of Alcohol: Those students who do not wish to be served alcohol during dinner should turn over one of the glasses at their place setting. This will indicate to the waiting staff that they do not wish to be served wine or port etc.

Conversation at Table: It is customary and polite for conversations within messes to be carried out in a language which is understood by all members of the mess.

The Role of Captain: The Captain of each mess is under an obligation to see that the customs are observed by the members of the mess.

Post and Pre-dinner Events: Functions are arranged before and after dinner on some nights. Notice of these occasions is posted at the beginning of Dining Term and information may be obtained from the Treasury Office. Students are encouraged to take advantage of these functions, which are arranged for their benefit.

Students will not be seated at the Bar Table unless by special invitation or when dining with their Sponsor.