



## **List of Committees of the Privy Council**

### **1. Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (JCPC)**

The JCPC originated as the highest court of civil and criminal appeal for the British Empire. It now fulfils the same purpose for many current and former Commonwealth countries that have chosen to retain it, as well as the United Kingdom's overseas territories, crown dependencies, and military sovereign base areas. The Judicial Committee also hears very occasional appeals from a number of ancient and ecclesiastical courts. These include the Church Commissioners, the Arches Court of Canterbury, the Chancery Court of York, prize courts and the Court of Admiralty of the Cinque Ports.

Five judges normally sit to hear Commonwealth appeals, and three for other matters. These judges are usually Justices of The Supreme Court, with which the JCPC shares a building, and many administrative functions.

### **2. Committee for the Affairs of Jersey and Guernsey**

The Committee for the Affairs of Jersey and Guernsey is the body which recommends approval of Channel Islands legislation. The Committee comprises the Secretary of State for Justice and the Lord President of the Council. Business is normally conducted in correspondence.

Some Channel Island Laws receive Royal Assent by being approved by His Majesty The King at a meeting of the Privy Council (The King in Council). When an Island Law is first submitted for assent, it is considered by the Committee.

If, after consideration of the Law and any other related representations, the Committee reports that it is content for the proposed Law to be approved, the Law will be included in the business to be considered at the next meeting of The King in Council, with a recommendation for formal approval.

### **3. Scottish Universities Committee**

The Scottish Universities Committee regularly considers proposed amendments to the statutes of the four ancient Scottish universities. Its members are specified in the [Universities \(Scotland\) Act 1889](#). The quorum is three and in practice consists of the First Minister of Scotland, the Lord President of the Court of Session and the Lord Advocate. Business is conducted in correspondence.

### **4. Committee for the purposes of the Crown Office Act 1877**

The Committee for the purposes of the [Crown Office Act 1877](#) comprises the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Privy Seal and a Secretary of State. It is concerned with the design of wafer seals and their use; and last met in 1988.

### **5. Universities Committee**

The Universities Committee, which considers Petitions against statutes made by Oxford and Cambridge Universities and their colleges, was last convened in 2023. Its members are prescribed in the [Universities of Oxford and Cambridge Act 1877](#). The quorum is three, one of whom must be the Lord Chancellor or a member of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.

### **6. Baronetage Committee**

The Baronetage Committee was established by Order in Council in 1910 to examine doubtful claims to be placed on the Roll of Baronets. There are several ex-officio members, including the President of the Council and the Home Secretary, plus members appointed in their own right. In 2015 the Committee met for the first time since 1927.

### **7. Ad hoc Committees**

In addition to the standing committees, ad hoc Committees are notionally set up to consider and report on Petitions for Royal Charters of Incorporation and also to approve changes to the Bye-laws of Chartered bodies. The normal quorum is two save when, in the case of statutory bodies, the relevant legislation prescribes a quorum of three. This business is normally conducted in correspondence.

### **8. Committees of Privy Counsellors**

Committees of Privy Counsellors are occasionally established to examine specific issues. These Committees are entirely independent of the Privy Council Office and do not report to the Lord President. Examples include the Butler Committee (operation of the intelligence services in the run-up to military intervention in Iraq), the Chilcot Committee

(use of intercept materials) and a committee of inquiry established in 2010 to consider whether British Intelligence Officers were complicit in torture of detainees. These ad hoc committees comprise members of the Privy Council as this permits them to be briefed on 'Privy Council Terms'; a recognised convention that allows parties to be briefed on confidential terms, on the understanding the information will remain confidential.