

# Bylaws of the Royal Academie d'Espee of Atlantia

## I. Introduction

The Academie d'Espee (Ad'E) is a guild within the Kingdom of Atlantia that is run by and for the fencers of the Kingdom. Membership in the Academie d'Espee is optional, and open to all fencers within the Kingdom of Atlantia regardless of race, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, able-ness, persona preference, time period(s) of choice, etc. The guild is based on the historic London Masters of Defense. From the Charter's Mission Statement:

“The Academie d'Espee is a guild devoted to the study and support of the Diverse Arts of Defense in Atlantia. The guild's core ideal is that through practice, scholarship, and camaraderie, we will enhance the experience of those in Atlantia who engage in the Noble Arts of Defense.”

The Academie exists to promote esprit de corps and technical proficiency within the Atlantian Rapier community. We support all forms of weapons play that are included within the SCA Fencing Marshal's Handbook including both youth and adult. It is intended to complement the activities of the Marshalate which is responsible for the safe and legal implementation of rapier activities. This ensures a holistic approach to the activities and sense of community.

SCA awards for rapier are the purview of the Crowns and Baronage. The Ad'E recognizes and celebrates but does not control these awards.

These bylaws define how the Academie functions, the roles of members, and a process for proposing and approving changes to the bylaws.

## II. Academie Officers

The Academie is led by the *executive council*. The council represents the interests of the full membership of the Ad'E by overseeing its operation and the actions of its appointed officers. The council is made up of members from each of the four Academie fencing ranks: two scholars, one free scholar, one provost, and one distinguished provost. The council will strive for councilors from diverse parts of the Kingdom. Council candidates self-nominate to the Polling Clerk at least two weeks prior to the annual Academie poll on July 1 with each term lasting two years. Academie members of each rank vote on who will represent them from among that rank's candidates. There is a limit of two consecutive terms before the councilor must take a break. Council members who are promoted in rank may continue to serve the remainder of their term but are expected to continue to communicate with and represent the rank that elected them or resign. The council may appoint replacements (who will complete the current term) for members who have resigned or otherwise cannot serve.

The council will meet in person or virtually at least twice a year: before Unevent and before the annual July polling. ~~The council is responsible for appointing the officers listed below and working with those officers to make corresponding decisions (e.g. bid approval).~~ The council ~~also~~ selects and awards the honorary “Companion of the Academie” rank. Individual council members are responsible for representing and communicating with their rank-peers. They will act as Ombudsmen. In this capacity they are responsible for ensuring issues raised to the Academie are taken for action and the resolution communicated to the applicant. This person is not responsible for resolving these issues. Not all issues raised will be either appropriate or possible to be resolved by the Academie but in those cases the applicant will be informed. Social media channels and email lists will be used for this communication. As social media applications evolve the council will announce the primary platforms that it will use for communication.

The Academie council has several tasks that it can either action directly or appoint officers to handle that are appointed by the council. These roles may be filled by council members but do not have to be. These officers may be replaced at will by the council and at minimum should be reviewed following each council election. When appropriate, all officers may appoint regional deputies to assist them or the council may specify regional officers itself. (e.g. there could be one ombudsman, one with a single regional deputy, one with multiple regional deputies, or there could just be regional ombudsmen. This will be decided by the council commensurate with the level of work.)

**Bylaws and Polling Clerk:** Maintains this document and oversees formulation of change proposals (see section V). They also run the annual Academie poll which will include:

1. Council selection vote
  1. On even (modern) years, one scholar and the provost representatives
  2. On odd years, the other scholar, the free scholar, and the distinguished provost representatives.
2. Accumulated bylaws change proposals
3. Feedback questions and open response opportunities on the state of the Academie and fencing in Atlantia. Responses to these questions will be optional.

The bylaws clerk may not oversee an election where they, themselves, are a candidate. That election must be run by a non-candidate deputy.

All bylaw/council polling questions will have an abstain option which will not benefit or hinder the corresponding proposal or candidate; the yeses just need to exceed the noes for the proposal to pass. A yes/no tie will result in a failure of the proposal. In case of a council selection tie, the highest ranking non-pollied council member will flip a coin to determine the winner.

With approval of the council, a mid-year polling may be held in January to adjudicate bylaw change proposals if the council feels there are enough to warrant the additional polling.

**Activities Coordinator:** This officer coordinates activities sponsored by the Academie. These activities may include:

1. Formal Training events through the Atlantian Academie of Fence (AAoF) which could include sessions at Atlantian University.
2. Prizes: A prize is a ceremonial demonstration of fencing skill where the candidate fights a representative from each Academie rank plus all interested fencers that hold their new rank. A prize is a celebration and cannot be failed. Members are encouraged to contribute to the pageantry of prizes and the celebration of the achievement recognized by the prize.
3. Informal training events such as a focus session at a particular group's practice. This officer is not responsible for executing these events but ensuring that a point of contact is appointed and facilitates communication about the events to the Academie at large. The Academie is dependent on volunteers from its membership to initiate, plan, and run these events.

~~**Ombudsman:** Point of contact for anyone needing assistance with Rapier activities or issues within Atlantia that fall outside the purview of the Marshallate. Academie members may also contact their rank's representative on the council or any other council member. The Ombudsman can be viewed as the Ad'E's help desk. Members can contact them with issues and the Ombudsman will assist in finding the appropriate contacts to address those issues. This officer is responsible for ensuring issues raised to the Academie are taken for action and the resolution communicated to the applicant. This person is not responsible for resolving these issues. Not all issues raised will be either appropriate or possible to be resolved by the Academie but in those cases the applicant will be informed.~~

**Information Officer:** Maintains and updates Academie records, documents, and website including curricula, reading lists, rosters and prizes. Maintains roster of teachers and areas of expertise.

### III. Membership Ranks

There are five ranks within the Academie d'Espee. Each has its own requirements, regalia, oath, and ceremony. Oaths and prizes take place in front of the other members of the Academie who are present. All members of the Academie are allowed open usage of the Academie's registered badge: Or, two rapiers crossed in saltire sable between four roses azure.

- [The oath for each rank can be found on the Academie website](#)
- Rank *regalia* is most often unique to its recipient and is made by a friend or loved one. Sometimes a piece of regalia may be handed down from an older fencer to a newer one to whom it would be meaningful.

Anyone may resign from the Ad'E at any time for any reason by contacting the Information Officer to remove them from any rosters that they are on. Forgetting or choosing not to wear regalia with a particular outfit is not in and of itself a resignation. Resigned members may rejoin by retaking the appropriate oath.

The council may, by unanimous vote, revoke a person's membership in the Ad'E. Persons who have been permanently banished from the SCA will also have their Ad'E membership revoked without requiring a council vote.

To vote in any official Ad'E poll a person must be on the Ad'E membership roster and reside in Atlantia or be considered a resident by treaty.

## **A. Scholar**

The rank of *Scholar* is denoted by a blue scarf worn on the upper arm. A Scholar is an authorized fencer in Atlantia who has not achieved a higher Academie rank. To be eligible to become a scholar one must be an authorized fencer in Atlantia and take the Academie's Scholar's Oath. An authorized fencer may join the Academie at any event, not just the one where they became authorized. Indeed, they are encouraged to have a reasonable understanding of the Academie before joining which they may not have at the time of their authorization. Having just fought their authorization bouts, moved into the kingdom as an authorized fencer, or joined the Academie, they do not fight an additional prize, although they do take the oath and receive their scarf as described in the section on prizes below.

## **B. Free Scholar**

The rank of *Free Scholar* is denoted by a yellow or gold scarf worn on the upper arm. The rank recognizes fencers who have made significant progress in skill and contributions to fencing. It marks people who are emerging leaders and teachers and are worthy of being emulated. The Free Scholar candidate may fight a prize and will take the Academie's Free Scholar Oath. Free Scholars are expected to support the advancement of Scholars and fencing activities in their local area, as well as work on their own development.

To be recognized as a *Free Scholar* one must be sponsored by three higher ranking members (i.e., *Provosts* or *Distinguished Provosts*) of the Academie who have obtained the good will of the other Provosts/Distinguished Provosts for this recognition.

## **C. Provost**

The rank of *Provost* may wear the badge of the Ad'E to indicate their membership. The rank recognizes those who have substantial accomplishments in fencing skill, instruction, and leadership. Provosts are expected to support the instruction and recognition of Scholars and Free Scholars, and fencing activities in their region, as well work on their own development. It marks established leaders who are worthy of being sought out for instruction. They may fight a prize.

To be eligible to become a *Provost* the fencer must have received a Grant level fencing award from any Kingdom, must live in Atlantia and choose to take the Academie's Provost oath. This rank is separate from the Order of the White Scarf which is granted by the Crown.

## **D. Distinguished Provost**

The rank of *Distinguished Provost* may wear the badge of the Academie to indicate membership. The rank recognizes those with certain expertise in fencing skill, instruction, and leadership. It marks renowned leaders who are worthy of steering the instruction and advancement of cohorts, or whose contributions to fencing knowledge and activity in Atlantia are singular in depth,

novelty, or scope. Distinguished Provosts are expected to be able to support the instruction and recognition of Scholars, Free Scholars, and Provosts, and support fencing activities throughout the Kingdom. They may fight a prize. They may also serve as a sponsor for a Free Scholar.

To be eligible to be a Distinguished Provost the fencer must have been recognized as a member of the Order of Defense by an SCA Crown in any Kingdom, live in Atlantia, and choose to take the Academie's Provost Oath (until a Distinguished Provost's Oath is written).

## **E. Companion**

The rank of *Companion* is an honorary rank given to those who have provided significant support to the fencers of Atlantia and who do not hold another Academie rank. Companions may choose to wear a blue scarf just as non-fencing supporters of fencing did at the founding of the Academie. Companions do not hold a seat on the council or vote in its pollings. The selection of Companions is at the discretion of the council. Anyone can nominate a candidate for this recognition by contacting a council member and providing information on the candidate's contributions.

# **IV. Activities of the Academie**

## **A. Prizes**

A senior member of the Academie is responsible for organizing a prize fight. For a new Free Scholar, that organizer should be one of their sponsors. For other ranks, it will be someone from the new rank or higher. The sponsor makes arrangements with the candidate, the Academie, and the rapier marshal in charge of the designated SCA event to schedule time and space. They will also ensure that appropriate regalia, decorations, and a prize box (to collect small gifts, the actual "prize", for the candidate) will be present. Anyone may contribute to the prize box.

The sponsor announces the prize in advance of the ceremony so that interested friends may travel for the celebration. At the designated time and place, the sponsor will announce the start of the prize, invite all members of the Academie to gather, introduce the candidate and explain the prize process.

The candidate will fight a succession of opponents. In increasing rank, they will face one opponent of each rank other than the one they are advancing to. When possible, these opponents should be selected by the candidate or be chosen to be meaningful to them. Then, the candidate will face all interested fencers who hold the new rank. If time permits and the candidate agrees, additional challengers may fight including proxy-fighters who fight in place of fighters who want to help celebrate without personally fighting.

Once the fighting is concluded, the sponsor will again request the attention of the Academie and other interested gentles. Any royalty who are present may be invited at this stage as well. The sponsor administers the oath of the new rank to the candidate. An appropriate friend, loved one, or Royal may then, with approval of the candidate, remove any previous rank scarf and replace it

with the new rank's regalia. Cheers are requested and then the candidate's new rank-peers are invited to welcome their new member.

## **B. Academy of Fence**

The Atlantian Academy of Fence (AAoF) is an event focused on fencing instruction in all its forms. Ideally, it is annual and moves regularly around the Kingdom. Due to its wandering nature, interested hosts shall submit a proposal to the Academie Activities Coordinator for consideration on any available date on the Atlantian Kingdom calendar. The AAoF does not have to be a new, standalone, event; it can be added to an existing event if the fencing instruction content is of sufficient scope. The bid should indicate the site and date of the proposed event. The Academie Activities Coordinator and executive council will review and approve/disapprove the bid. This approval/disapproval only affects the use of the title "Atlantian Academy of Fence" for the event. The financial responsibility and benefit for the event will be entirely held by the sponsoring group; the Ad'E holds no funds.

In addition to the AAoF the Academie will encourage and facilitate classes at the University of Atlantia and other events.

## **C. Support to local groups**

The Academie shall facilitate informal sessions where experienced fencers travel or virtually meet with other groups to support their development. This effort is intended to primarily support groups away from major population centers who do not have a sufficient pool of experienced fencers of their own. Requests and volunteers for these sessions may self-coordinate or work through the Ad'E's activities coordinator. The Academie shall maintain and publish a list of experienced fencers who are available to share their knowledge and skills either in person or virtually.

## **D. Curricula Resources**

The Academie d'Espee Council will facilitate provide access to Rapier related resources through its website. These resources range from information on a minimum a Rapier 101 Core Curriculum- to more advanced topics such as period fencing techniques and information on local practices. that every student of the art of defense is encouraged to learn over the course of their early studies and deepen their understanding of throughout their fencing career. Classes- Material on these topics and other related topics will be provided by volunteers common at AAoF events and local practices. Advanced curricula lists-Additional material may be submitted to the Information Officer for the Ad'E website for publication posting, allowing for a clearing house of other curricula. Areas of particular interest include a curriculum for instructors and recommended reading lists.

## **V. Process for amending the bylaws**

Proposals to change these bylaws may be made by any member of the Academie. They are voted on by the members of the Academie and adopted by majority vote of those voting. All change proposals are accumulated and voted upon simultaneously in an annual polling that occurs in July with an optional polling day in January at the discretion of the council. The process is detailed below.

1. Informal discussion: Ideas for changes can take place at any time and in any forum. It is recommended that public notification of the discussion be made on the Academie's chosen social media channels.
2. Draft Proposal: A draft of the change must be submitted to the Bylaw Clerk no later than 2 months prior to the polling. If the proposal is a change from existing policy it will specify what text is being replaced ("from") and what the new text will be ("to"). New sections may also be proposed.
3. Proposal editing: The Bylaw Clerk and the Executive Council may suggest wording changes to a proposal with the final wording still up to the proposer within reason. In the event of conflicting proposals (e.g. one that changes A to B and one that changes A to C) the executive council may adjust the structure of the polling elements to ensure a sane result (e.g. not both B and C). In this case, the polling would likely be: pick A, B, or C with the choice receiving the most votes winning.
4. Final proposal text: The final proposal text will be locked at 1 month prior to the polling and will be published and announced for membership consideration. Notice will be made on the Ad'E social media channels with short text proposals also being posted there or links provided to the location of longer proposals.
5. Polling: All proposals will be voted upon simultaneously via an electronic ballot with the polling open for one week open to all Academie members. If a majority of the votes cast support the change, it will be adopted. "Yes" votes must exceed "No" votes with "Abstain" votes having no effect on the result. A tie results in failure of the proposal.
6. Updating: The Bylaw Clerk will report on the polling results and update the official posted bylaws to reflect all approved changes. Changes will be in effect one month after the closing of the poll that approved them.

## **VI. Initial Ratification of these Bylaws**

This proposal will go through review, feedback, and updating by an increasingly large pool of people: the bylaws team, the full process team, the royals, and then the full Academie membership. Once the bylaw proposal is complete, it will be locked to further change and published for final review and discussion. A polling will be scheduled for one week after that publication to ratify or not that baseline set of bylaws.

These bylaws will be deemed ratified once supported by a majority of the Academie members who voted in a one week long electronic polling. Initial council members will be elected on a separate polling shortly after ratification and will be replaced on the even/odd year schedule specified in section II, meaning that some will serve for one year before their seat is re-pollled. It is expected that mid-year pollings to possibly modify these bylaws may be warranted during their first year or two.