



Scotland Act 1998

1998 CHAPTER 46

PART I

THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

The Scottish Parliament

1 The Scottish Parliament.

- (1) There shall be a Scottish Parliament.
- (2) One member of the Parliament shall be returned for each constituency (under the simple majority system) at an election held in the constituency.
- (3) Members of the Parliament for each region shall be returned at a general election under the additional member system of proportional representation provided for in this Part and vacancies among such members shall be filled in accordance with this Part.
- (4) The validity of any proceedings of the Parliament is not affected by any vacancy in its membership.
- (5) Schedule 1 (which makes provision for the constituencies and regions for the purposes of this Act and the number of regional members) shall have effect.

General elections

2 Ordinary general elections.

- (1) The day on which the poll at the first ordinary general election for membership of the Parliament shall be held, and the day, time and place for the meeting of the Parliament following that poll, shall be appointed by order made by the Secretary of State.
- (2) The poll at subsequent ordinary general elections shall be held on the first Thursday in May in the fourth calendar year following that in which the previous ordinary general election was held, unless

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- [^{F1}(a) subsection (2A) prevents the poll being held on that day, or
- (b) the day of the poll is determined by a proclamation under subsection (5).]

- [^{F2}(2A) The poll shall not be held on the same date as the date of the poll at—

 - (a) a parliamentary general election (other than an early parliamentary general election), or
 - (b) a European parliamentary general election.

(2B) Where subsection (2A) prevents the poll being held on the day specified in subsection (2), the poll shall be held on such day, subject to subsection (2A), as the Scottish Ministers may by order specify, unless the day of the poll is determined by a proclamation under subsection (5) as modified by subsection (5ZA).]

- (3) If the poll is to be held on the first Thursday in May^[F3], or on the day specified by an order under subsection (2B)] , the Parliament—

 - (a) is dissolved by virtue of this section at the beginning of the minimum period which ends with that day, and
 - (b) shall meet within the period of seven days beginning immediately after the day of the poll.

(4) In subsection (3), “the minimum period” means the period determined in accordance with an order under section 12(1).

- (5) [^{F4}Subject to subsection (2A),] if the Presiding Officer proposes a day for the holding of the poll which is not more than one month earlier, nor more than one month later, than the first Thursday in May, Her Majesty may by proclamation under the Scottish Seal—

 - (a) dissolve the Parliament,
 - (b) require the poll at the election to be held on the day proposed, and
 - (c) require the Parliament to meet within the period of seven days beginning immediately after the day of the poll.

[^{F5}(5ZA) Where a day is specified by order under subsection (2B), subsection (5) applies as if the reference to the first Thursday in May were a reference to that day.]

^{F6}(5A)

^{F6}(5B)

^{F6}(5C)

(6) In this Act “the Scottish Seal” means Her Majesty’s Seal appointed by the Treaty of Union to be kept and used in Scotland in place of the Great Seal of Scotland.

Textual Amendments

- F1** S. 2(2)(a)(b) substituted (18.5.2017) by [Scotland Act 2016 \(c. 11\)](#), **ss. 5(2)**, 72(4)(a); S.I. 2017/608, [reg. 2\(1\)\(c\)](#)
- F2** S. 2(2A)(2B) inserted (18.5.2017) by [Scotland Act 2016 \(c. 11\)](#), **ss. 5(3)**, 72(4)(a); S.I. 2017/608, [reg. 2\(1\)\(c\)](#)
- F3** Words in s. 2(3) inserted (18.5.2017) by [Scotland Act 2016 \(c. 11\)](#), **ss. 5(4)**, 72(4)(a); S.I. 2017/608, [reg. 2\(1\)\(c\)](#)
- F4** Words in s. 2(5) inserted (18.5.2017) by [Scotland Act 2016 \(c. 11\)](#), **ss. 5(5)**, 72(4)(a); S.I. 2017/608, [reg. 2\(1\)\(c\)](#)

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F5 S. 2(5ZA) inserted (18.5.2017) by Scotland Act 2016 (c. 11), ss. 5(6), 72(4)(a); S.I. 2017/608, reg. 2(1)(c)

F6 S. 2(5A)-(5C) omitted (18.5.2017) by virtue of Scotland Act 2016 (c. 11), ss. 5(7), 72(4)(a); S.I. 2017/608, reg. 2(1)(c)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C1 S. 2(2) modified (15.9.2011) by Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011 (c. 14), ss. 4(2), 7(2) (with s. 6)

C2 S. 2(2) modified (31.3.2016) by Scottish Elections (Dates) Act 2016 (asp 13), ss. 1(2), 3 (with s. 1(1))

C3 S. 2(5) excluded (11.3.1999) by S.I. 1999/787, arts. 1, 96

3 Extraordinary general elections.

- (1) The Presiding Officer shall propose a day for the holding of a poll if—
 - (a) the Parliament resolves that it should be dissolved and, if the resolution is passed on a division, the number of members voting in favour of it is not less than two-thirds of the total number of seats for members of the Parliament, or
 - (b) any period during which the Parliament is required under section 46 to nominate one of its members for appointment as First Minister ends without such a nomination being made.
- (2) If the Presiding Officer makes such a proposal, Her Majesty may by proclamation under the Scottish Seal—
 - (a) dissolve the Parliament and require an extraordinary general election to be held,
 - (b) require the poll at the election to be held on the day proposed, and
 - (c) require the Parliament to meet within the period of seven days beginning immediately after the day of the poll.
- (3) If a poll is held under this section within the period of six months ending with the day on which the poll at the next ordinary general election would be held (disregarding section 2(5)), that ordinary general election shall not be held.
- (4) Subsection (3) does not affect the year in which the subsequent ordinary general election is to be held.

4 Calculating time for meeting of the Parliament.

In calculating any period of days for the purposes of section 2(3)(b) or (5)(c) or section 3(2)(c), Saturday, Sunday, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Good Friday, a bank holiday in Scotland or a day appointed for public thanksgiving or mourning shall be disregarded.

5 Candidates.

- (1) At a general election, the candidates may stand for return as constituency members or regional members.
- (2) A person may not be a candidate to be a constituency member for more than one constituency.
- (3) The candidates to be regional members shall be those included in a list submitted under subsection (4) or individual candidates.

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- (4) Any registered political party may submit to the regional returning officer a list of candidates to be regional members for a particular region (referred to in this Act, in relation to the region, as the party’s “regional list”).
- (5) A registered political party’s regional list has effect in relation to the general election and any vacancy occurring among the regional members after that election and before the next general election.
- (6) Not more than twelve persons may be included in the list (but the list may include only one person).
- (7) A registered political party’s regional list must not include a person—
- (a) who is included in any other list submitted under subsection (4) for the region or any list submitted under that subsection for another region,
 - (b) who is an individual candidate to be a regional member for the region or another region,
 - (c) who is a candidate to be a constituency member for a constituency not included in the region, or
 - (d) who is a candidate to be a constituency member for a constituency included in the region but is not a candidate of that party.
- (8) A person may not be an individual candidate to be a regional member for a particular region if he is—
- (a) included in a list submitted under subsection (4) for the region or another region,
 - (b) an individual candidate to be a regional member for another region,
 - (c) a candidate to be a constituency member for a constituency not included in the region, or
 - (d) a candidate of any registered political party to be a constituency member for a constituency included in the region.
- (9) In this Act, “registered political party” means a party registered under [F7Part II of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000] .

Textual Amendments

F7 Words in s. 5(9) substituted (16.2.2001) by 2000 c. 41, s. 158(1), **Sch. 21 para. 13(2)** (with s. 156(6)); S.I. 2001/222, art. 2, **Sch. 1 Pt. I**

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C4 S. 5(2) extended (11.3.1999) by S.I. 1999/787, arts. 1, 6, **Sch. 2 Pt. II para. 9(4)(b)(iii)**
C5 S. 5(7) extended (11.3.1999) by S.I. 1999/787, arts. 1, 6, **Sch. 2 Pt. II para. 9(4)(b)(iv)**
C6 S. 5(8) extended (11.3.1999) by S.I. 1999/787, arts. 1, 6, **Sch. 2 Pt. II para. 9(4)(b)(v)**

6 Poll for regional members.

- (1) This section and sections 7 and 8 are about the return of regional members at a general election.
- (2) In each of the constituencies for the Parliament, a poll shall be held at which each person entitled to vote as elector may give a vote (referred to in this Act as a “regional vote”) for—

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- (a) a registered political party which has submitted a regional list, or
 - (b) an individual candidate to be a regional member for the region.
- (3) The right conferred on a person by subsection (2) is in addition to any right the person may have to vote in any poll for the return of a constituency member.

7 Calculation of regional figures.

- (1) The persons who are to be returned as constituency members for constituencies included in the region must be determined before the persons who are to be returned as the regional members for the region.
- (2) For each registered political party which has submitted a regional list, the regional figure for the purposes of section 8 is—
 - (a) the total number of regional votes given for the party in all the constituencies included in the region,
divided by
 - (b) the aggregate of one plus the number of candidates of the party returned as constituency members for any of those constituencies.
- (3) Each time a seat is allocated to the party under section 8, that figure shall be recalculated by increasing (or further increasing) the aggregate in subsection (2)(b) by one.
- (4) For each individual candidate to be a regional member for the region, the regional figure for the purposes of section 8 is the total number of regional votes given for him in all the constituencies included in the region.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C7** S. 7(1) applied (with modifications) (30.12.2010 with effect as mentioned in art. 1(2)(3) of the modifying S.I.) by [The Scottish Parliament \(Elections etc.\) Order 2010 \(S.I. 2010/2999\)](#), arts. 1(1), 6(4), [Sch. 2 rule 76\(3\)](#)

8 Allocation of seats to regional members.

- (1) The first regional member seat shall be allocated to the registered political party or individual candidate with the highest regional figure.
- (2) The second and subsequent regional member seats shall be allocated to the registered political party or individual candidate with the highest regional figure, after any recalculation required by section 7(3) has been carried out.
- (3) An individual candidate already returned as a constituency or regional member shall be disregarded.
- (4) Seats for the region which are allocated to a registered political party shall be filled by the persons in the party's regional list in the order in which they appear in the list.
- (5) For the purposes of this section and section 10, a person in a registered political party's regional list who is returned as a member of the Parliament shall be treated as ceasing to be in the list (even if his return is void).

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- (6) Once a party's regional list has been exhausted (by the return of persons included in it as constituency members or by the previous application of subsection (1) or (2)) the party shall be disregarded.
- (7) If (on the application of subsection (1) or any application of subsection (2)) the highest regional figure is the regional figure of two or more parties or individual candidates,^{F8}
- (a) the subsection in question shall apply to each of them; or
 - (b) if paragraph (a) would result in more than the correct number of seats for the region being allocated, the subsection in question shall apply as if the regional figure for each of those parties or candidates had been adjusted in accordance with subsection (8).
- (8) The regional figure for a party or candidate is adjusted in accordance with this subsection by—
- (a) adding one vote to the total number of regional votes given for the party or candidate in all the constituencies included in the region; and
 - (b) (in the case of a party) recalculating the regional figure accordingly.
- (9) If, on the application of the subsection in question in accordance with subsection (7) (b), seats would be allocated to two or more parties or individual candidates and that would result in more than the correct number of seats for the region being allocated, the regional returning officer shall decide between them by lot.]

Textual Amendments

- F8** S. 8(7)(a)(b)(8)(9) substituted (11.3.1999) for words by [S.I. 1999/787, art. 6, Sch. 2 rule 63](#) (which S.I. was revoked (20.11.2002 except for specified purposes) by [S.I. 2002/2779, arts. 1, 2](#)); and those same sub-provisions substituted (20.11.2002 except for specified purposes) for words by virtue of [S.I. 2002/2779, arts. 1, 7\(4\), Sch. 2 rule 64](#) (which S.I. was revoked (15.3.2007 except for specified purposes) by [S.I. 2007/937, arts. 1, 2](#)); and those same sub-provisions substituted (15.3.2007 except for specified purposes) for words by virtue of [S.I. 2007/937, arts. 1, 7\(4\), Sch. 2 rule 65](#) (which S.I. was revoked (30.12.2010 except for specified purposes) by [S.I. 2010/2999, art. 97, Sch. 9](#)); and those same sub-provisions substituted (30.12.2010 except for specified purposes) for words by virtue of [S.I. 2010/2999, arts. 1, 6\(4\), Sch. 2 rule 65](#)

Vacancies

9 Constituency vacancies.

- (1) Where the seat of a constituency member is vacant, an election shall be held to fill the vacancy (subject to subsection (4)).
- (2) The date of the poll shall be fixed by the Presiding Officer.
- (3) The date shall fall within the period of three months—
 - (a) beginning with the occurrence of the vacancy, or
 - (b) if the vacancy does not come to the notice of the Presiding Officer within the period of one month beginning with its occurrence, beginning when it does come to his notice.

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- (4) The election shall not be held if the latest date for holding the poll would fall within the period of three months ending with the day on which the poll at the next ordinary general election would be held (disregarding section 2(5)).
- (5) For the purposes of this section, the date on which a vacancy is to be treated as occurring shall be determined under standing orders.
- (6) A person may not be a candidate at such an election if he is a member of the Parliament or a candidate in another election to fill a vacancy.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C8 S. 9 applied (11.3.1999) by S.I. 1999/787, arts. 1, 86

C9 S. 9(6) extended (11.3.1999) by S.I. 1999/787, arts. 1, 6, Sch. 2 Pt. II para. 9(4)(b)(iii)

10 Regional vacancies.

- (1) This section applies where the seat of a regional member is vacant.
 - (2) If the regional member was returned as an individual candidate, or the vacancy is not filled in accordance with the following provisions, the seat shall remain vacant until the next general election.
 - (3) If the regional member was returned (under section 8 or this section) from a registered political party's regional list, the regional returning officer shall notify the Presiding Officer of the name of the person who is to fill the vacancy.
 - ^{F9}(4) The regional returning officer shall ascertain from that party's regional list the name and address of the person whose name appears highest on that list ("the first choice") and shall take such steps as appear to him to be reasonable to contact the first choice to ask whether he will—
 - (a) state in writing that he is willing and able to serve as a regional member for that region; and
 - (b) deliver a certificate signed by or on behalf of the nominating officer of the registered party which submitted that regional list stating that the first choice may be returned as a regional member from that list.
- (4A) Where—
- (a) within such period as the regional returning officer considers reasonable—
 - (i) he decides that the steps he has taken to contact the first choice have been unsuccessful; or
 - (ii) he has not received from that person the statement and certificate referred to in subsection (4); or
 - (b) the first choice has—
 - (i) stated in writing that he is not willing to serve as a regional member for that region; or
 - (ii) failed to deliver the certificate referred to in subsection (4)(b),
- the regional returning officer shall repeat the procedure required by subsection (4) in respect of the person (if any) whose name appears next in that list ("the second choice") or, where paragraph (a) or (b) of this subsection applies in respect of that person, in respect of the person (if any) whose name appears next highest after the second choice in that list; and the regional returning officer shall continue to repeat the procedure

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until the regional returning officer has notified the Presiding Officer of the name of the person who is to fill the vacancy or the names in the list are exhausted.

- (5) Where a person whose name appears on that list provides the statement and certificate referred to in subsection (4), the regional returning officer shall notify to the Presiding Officer the name of that person.

(5A) Where—

- (a) under subsection (4A), the regional returning officer has asked the second choice or a subsequent choice the questions referred to in subsection (4); and
(b) the person who was asked those questions on an earlier occasion then provides the statement and certificate referred to in that subsection,

that statement and certificate shall have no effect unless and until the circumstances described in paragraph (a) or (b) of subsection (4A) apply in respect of the second choice or, as the case may be, of the subsequent choice.]

- (6) Where a person's name has been notified under subsection (3), this Act shall apply as if he had been declared to be returned as a regional member for the region on the day on which notification of his name was received by the Presiding Officer.
- (7) For the purposes of this section, the date on which a vacancy is to be treated as occurring shall be determined under standing orders.

Textual Amendments

- F9** S. 10(4)-(5A) substituted (30.12.2010 except for specified purposes) for s. 10(4)(5) as originally enacted by virtue of [The Scottish Parliament \(Elections etc.\) Order 2010 \(S.I. 2010/2999\)](#), arts. 1, **87**

Franchise and conduct of elections

11 Electors.

- (1) The persons entitled to vote as electors at an election for membership of the Parliament held in any constituency are those who on the day of the poll—
- (a) would be entitled to vote as electors at a local government election in an electoral area falling wholly or partly within the constituency, and
- (b) are registered in the register of local government electors at an address within the constituency.
- (2) A person is not entitled to vote as elector in any constituency—
- (a) more than once at a poll for the return of a constituency member, or
- (b) more than once at a poll for the return of regional members,
- or to vote as elector in more than one constituency at a general election.

[^{F10}12 Power of the Scottish Ministers to make provision about elections

- (1) The Scottish Ministers may by order make any provision that would be within the legislative competence of the Parliament, if included in an Act of the Scottish Parliament, as to—
- (a) the conduct of elections for membership of the Parliament,
- (b) the questioning of such an election and the consequences of irregularities, and

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- (c) the return of members of the Parliament otherwise than at an election.
- (2) The provision that may be made under subsection (1)(a) includes, in particular, provision—
 - (a) about the registration of electors,
 - (b) for disregarding alterations in a register of electors,
 - (c) about the limitation of the election expenses of candidates,
 - (d) for the combination of polls,
 - (e) for modifying the application of section 7(1) where the poll at an election for the return of a constituency member is abandoned (or notice of it is countermanded), and
 - (f) for modifying section 8(7) to ensure the allocation of the correct number of seats for the region.
- (3) The provision that may be made under subsection (1)(c) includes, in particular, provision modifying section 10(4) to (5A).
- (4) An order under subsection (1) may—
 - (a) apply, with or without modifications or exceptions, any provision made by or under the Representation of the People Acts or the European Parliamentary Elections Act 2002 or by any other enactment relating to parliamentary elections, European Parliamentary elections or local government elections, and
 - (b) so far as may be necessary in consequence of any provision made by an order under subsection (1), modify any provision made by any enactment relating to the registration of parliamentary electors or local government electors.
- (5) The return of a member of the Parliament at an election may be questioned only under Part 3 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 as applied by an order under subsection (1).
- (6) For the purposes of this Act, the regional returning officer for any region is the person designated as such in accordance with an order made by the Scottish Ministers under this subsection.

Textual Amendments

F10 Ss. 12, 12A substituted (18.5.2017) by [Scotland Act 2016 \(c. 11\)](#), ss. 4(1), 72(4)(a); S.I. 2017/608, reg. 2(1)(b)

12A Power of the Secretary of State to make provision about the combination of polls

- (1) The Secretary of State may by regulations make provision for—
 - (a) the combination of polls at ordinary general elections for membership of the Parliament with polls at the elections listed in subsection (2), and
 - (b) the combination of polls at extraordinary general elections for membership of the Parliament, and by-elections for membership of the Parliament, with polls at the elections listed in subsections (2) and (3).
- (2) The elections are—
 - (a) early parliamentary general elections,
 - (b) parliamentary by-elections, and

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- (c) European parliamentary by-elections.
- (3) The elections are—
 - (a) parliamentary general elections, and
 - (b) European parliamentary general elections.
- (4) The Secretary of State may not make regulations under this section without the agreement of the Scottish Ministers.
- (5) Regulations under subsection (1) may—
 - (a) apply, with or without modifications or exceptions, any provision made by or under the Representation of the People Acts or the European Parliamentary Elections Act 2002 or by any other enactment relating to parliamentary elections, European Parliamentary elections or local government elections, and
 - (b) modify any form contained in, or in regulations or rules made under, the Representation of the People Acts so far as may be necessary to enable it to be used both for the original purpose and in relation to elections for membership of the Parliament.]

Textual Amendments

F10 Ss. 12, 12A substituted (18.5.2017) by [Scotland Act 2016 \(c. 11\)](#), ss. [4\(1\)](#), [72\(4\)\(a\)](#); S.I. 2017/608, reg. [2\(1\)\(b\)](#)

Duration of membership

13 Term of office of members.

The term of office of a member of the Parliament begins on the day on which the member is declared to be returned and ends with the dissolution of the Parliament.

14 Resignation of members.

A member of the Parliament may at any time resign his seat by giving notice in writing to the Presiding Officer.

Disqualification

15 Disqualification from membership of the Parliament.

- (1) A person is disqualified from being a member of the Parliament (subject to section 16) if—
 - (a) he is disqualified from being a member of the House of Commons under paragraphs (a) to (e) of section 1(1) of the ^{M1}House of Commons Disqualification Act 1975 (judges, civil servants, members of the armed forces, members of police forces and members of foreign legislatures),
 - (b) he is disqualified otherwise than under that Act (either generally or in relation to a particular parliamentary constituency) from being a member of the House of Commons or from sitting and voting in it,

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- (c) ^{F11}
- (d) he is an office-holder of a description specified in an Order in Council made by Her Majesty under this subsection.
- (2) An office-holder of a description specified in an Order in Council made by Her Majesty under this subsection is disqualified from being a member of the Parliament for any constituency or region of a description specified in the Order in relation to the office-holder.
- (3) In this section “office-holder” includes employee or other post-holder.

Textual Amendments

F11 S. 15(1)(c) repealed (1.10.2009) by [Constitutional Reform Act 2005 \(c. 4\)](#), ss. 40(4), 146, 148(1), Sch. 9 para. 94, [Sch. 18 Pt. 5](#); S.I. 2009/1604, [art. 2](#)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C10 S. 15 extended (11.3.1999) by [S.I. 1999/787](#), arts. 1, 6, [Sch. 2 Pt. II para. 9\(4\)\(b\)\(i\)](#)
S. 15 applied (S.) (1.4.2000) by [S.S.I. 2000/47](#), art. 5, [Sch. Pt. II](#)

Marginal Citations

M1 [1975 c. 24](#).

16 Exceptions and relief from disqualification.

- (1) A person is not disqualified from being a member of the Parliament merely because—
- (a) he is a peer (whether of the United Kingdom, Great Britain, England or Scotland), or
- [^{F12}(b) he is a Lord Spiritual.]
- (2) A citizen of the European Union who is resident in the United Kingdom is not disqualified from being a member of the Parliament merely because of section 3 of the ^{M2}Act of Settlement (disqualification of persons born outside the United Kingdom other than [^{F13}certain] Commonwealth citizens and citizens of the Republic of Ireland).
- (3) Subsection (4) applies where a person was, or is alleged to have been, disqualified from being a member of the Parliament (either generally or in relation to a particular constituency or region) on any ground other than one falling within section 15(1)(b).
- (4) The Parliament may resolve to disregard any disqualification incurred by that person on the ground in question if it considers that—
- (a) the ground has been removed, and
- (b) it is proper to disregard any disqualification so incurred.
- (5) A resolution under this section shall not—
- (a) affect any proceedings under Part III of the Representation of the ^{M3}People Act 1983 as applied by an order under section 12, or
- (b) enable the Parliament to disregard any disqualification which has been established in such proceedings or in proceedings under section 18.

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Textual Amendments

- F12** S. 16(1)(b) substituted (11.5.2001) by 2001 c. 13, s. 1, **Sch. 1 para. 4**
- F13** Word in s. 16(2) inserted (1.1.2007 for E.W.S. and 1.7.2008 for N.I.) by **Electoral Administration Act 2006 (c. 22)**, ss. 18(6), 77(2), **Sch. 1 para. 45**; S.I. 2006/3412, **art. 3**, Sch. 1 para. 14(aa)(bb) (subject to art. 6, Sch. 2); S.I. 2006/1316, **arts. 2(2)**, 4(y)(z)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C11** S. 16 extended (11.3.1999) by S.I. 1999/787, arts. 1, 6, **Sch. 2 Pt. II para. 9(4)(b)(i)**

Marginal Citations

- M2** 1700 c. 2.
M3 1983 c. 2.

17 Effect of disqualification.

- (1) If a person who is disqualified from being a member of the Parliament or from being a member for a particular constituency or region is returned as a member of the Parliament or (as the case may be) as a member for the constituency or region, his return shall be void and his seat vacant.
- (2) If a member of the Parliament becomes disqualified from being a member of the Parliament or from being a member for the particular constituency or region for which he is sitting, he shall cease to be a member of the Parliament (so that his seat is vacant).
- (3) Subsections (1) and (2) have effect subject to any resolution of the Parliament under section 16.
- (4) Subsection (2) also has effect subject to ^{F14}... section 427 of the ^{M4}Insolvency Act 1986 (sequestration etc); and where, in consequence of [^{F15}that section], the seat of a disqualified member of the Parliament is not vacant he shall not cease to be a member of the Parliament until his seat becomes vacant but—
 - (a) he shall not participate in any proceedings of the Parliament, and
 - (b) any of his other rights and privileges as a member of the Parliament may be withdrawn by a resolution of the Parliament.
- (5) The validity of any proceedings of the Parliament is not affected by the disqualification of any person from being a member of the Parliament or from being a member for the constituency or region for which he purports to sit.

Textual Amendments

- F14** Words in s. 17(4) omitted (28.4.2013) by virtue of **Mental Health (Discrimination) Act 2013 (c. 8)**, s. 4(1), **Sch. para. 2(1)(a)**
- F15** Words in s. 17(4) substituted (28.4.2013) by **Mental Health (Discrimination) Act 2013 (c. 8)**, s. 4(1), **Sch. para. 2(1)(b)**

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C12** S. 17 extended (11.3.1999) by S.I. 1997/787, arts. 1, 6, **Sch. 2 Pt. II para. 9(4)(b)(i)**

Status: Point in time view as at 01/07/2018.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Scotland Act 1998, Part 1. (See end of Document for details)

Marginal Citations

M4 1986 c. 45.

18 Judicial proceedings as to disqualification.

- (1) Any person who claims that a person purporting to be a member of the Parliament is disqualified or has been disqualified at any time since being returned may apply to the Court of Session for a declarator to that effect.
- (2) An application in respect of any person may be made whether the grounds on which it is made are alleged to have subsisted when the person was returned or to have arisen subsequently.
- (3) No declarator shall be made—
 - (a) on grounds which subsisted when the person was returned, if an election petition is pending or has been tried in which the disqualification on those grounds of the person concerned is or was in issue, or
 - (b) on any ground, if a resolution under section 16 requires that any disqualification incurred on that ground by the person concerned is to be disregarded.
- (4) The person in respect of whom an application is made shall be the defender.
- (5) The applicant shall give such caution for the expenses of the proceedings as the Court of Session may direct; but any such caution shall not exceed £5,000 or such other sum as the Scottish Ministers may by order specify.
- (6) The decision of the court on an application under this section shall be final.
- (7) In this section “disqualified” means disqualified from being a member of the Parliament or from being a member for the constituency or region for which the person concerned purports to sit.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C13 S. 18 extended (11.3.1999) by *S.I. 1999/787*, arts. 1, 6, **Sch. 2 Pt. II para. 9(4)(b)(i)**

Presiding Officer and administration

19 Presiding Officer.

- (1) The Parliament shall, ^{F16}... following a general election, elect from among its members a Presiding Officer and two deputies.

[^{F17}(1A) The Parliament must do so—

- (a) before it conducts any other proceedings, except the taking by its members of the oath of allegiance (see section 84), and
- (b) in any event, within the period of 14 days beginning immediately after the day of the poll at the election.

(1B) The Parliament may, at any time, elect from among its members one or more additional deputies.]

Status: Point in time view as at 01/07/2018.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Scotland Act 1998, Part I. (See end of Document for details)

- (2) A person elected Presiding Officer or deputy shall hold office until the conclusion of the next election for Presiding Officer under subsection (1) unless he previously resigns, ceases to be a member of the Parliament otherwise than by virtue of a dissolution or is removed from office by resolution of the Parliament.
- [^{F18}(2A) But standing orders may make provision for additional deputies to hold office for a shorter time than provided by subsection (2).]
- (3) If the Presiding Officer or a deputy [^{F19}elected under subsection (1)] ceases to hold office before the Parliament is dissolved, the Parliament shall elect another from among its members to fill his place.
- (4) The Presiding Officer's functions may be exercised by a deputy if the office of Presiding Officer is vacant or the Presiding Officer is for any reason unable to act.
- (5) The Presiding Officer may (subject to standing orders) authorise any deputy to exercise functions on his behalf.
- (6) Standing orders may include provision as to the participation (including voting) of the Presiding Officer and deputies in the proceedings of the Parliament.
- (7) The validity of any act of the Presiding Officer or a deputy is not affected by any defect in his election.

Textual Amendments

- F16** Words in s. 19(1) omitted (3.7.2012) by virtue of [Scotland Act 2012 \(c. 11\), ss. 4\(2\), 44\(5\)](#); S.I. 2012/1710, art. 2(a)
- F17** S. 19(1A)(1B) inserted (3.7.2012) by [Scotland Act 2012 \(c. 11\), ss. 4\(3\), 44\(5\)](#); S.I. 2012/1710, art. 2(a)
- F18** S. 19(2A) inserted (3.7.2012) by [Scotland Act 2012 \(c. 11\), ss. 4\(4\), 44\(5\)](#); S.I. 2012/1710, art. 2(a)
- F19** Words in s. 19(3) inserted (3.7.2012) by [Scotland Act 2012 \(c. 11\), ss. 4\(5\), 44\(5\)](#); S.I. 2012/1710, art. 2(a)

20 Clerk of the Parliament.

- (1) There shall be a Clerk of the Parliament.
- (2) The Clerk shall be appointed by the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body (established under section 21).
- (3) The Clerk's functions may be exercised by any Assistant Clerk if the office of Clerk is vacant or the Clerk is for any reason unable to act.
- (4) The Clerk may authorise any Assistant Clerk or other member of the staff of the Parliament to exercise functions on his behalf.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C14** S. 20(3) amended (6.5.1999)(temp.) by [S.I. 1999/1098, art. 2\(3\)](#)

Status: Point in time view as at 01/07/2018.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Scotland Act 1998, Part 1. (See end of Document for details)

21 Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body.

- (1) There shall be a body corporate to be known as “The Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body” (referred to in this Act as the Parliamentary corporation) to perform the functions conferred on the corporation by virtue of this Act or any other enactment.
- (2) The members of the corporation shall be—
 - (a) the Presiding Officer, and
 - (b) [^{F20}at least] four members of the Parliament appointed in accordance with standing orders.
- (3) The corporation shall provide the Parliament, or ensure that the Parliament is provided, with the property, staff and services required for the Parliament’s purposes.
- (4) The Parliament may give special or general directions to the corporation for the purpose of or in connection with the exercise of the corporation’s functions.
- (5) Any property or liabilities acquired or incurred in relation to matters within the general responsibility of the corporation to which (apart from this subsection) the Parliament would be entitled or subject shall be treated for all purposes as property or (as the case may be) liabilities of the corporation.
- (6) Any expenses of the corporation shall be payable out of the Scottish Consolidated Fund.
- (7) Any sums received by the corporation shall be paid into that Fund, subject to any provision made by or under an Act of the Scottish Parliament for the disposal of or accounting for such sums.
- (8) Schedule 2 (which makes further provision about the corporation) shall have effect.

Textual Amendments

F20 Words in s. 21(2)(b) inserted (3.7.2012) by [Scotland Act 2012 \(c. 11\)](#), [ss. 5, 44\(5\)](#); [S.I. 2012/1710](#), [art. 2\(b\)](#)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C15 S. 21(6) restricted (6.5.1999) by [S.I. 1999/1082](#), [art. B2](#), [Sch. 1 para. 8](#)
S. 21(6) restricted (6.5.1999) by [S.I. 1999/1082](#), [art. R1](#), [Sch. 6 para. 14\(2\)](#)

C16 S. 21(7) modified (6.5.1999) (temp.) by [S.I. 1999/441](#), [arts. 1\(5\), 6](#)

Commencement Information

I1 S. 21 wholly in force at 6.5.1999: S. 21 not in force at Royal Assent, see s. 130; S. 21(1)–(7) in force at 6.5.1999 by [S.I. 1998/3178](#), [art. 2\(2\)](#); s. 21(8) in force for certain purposes at 25.1.1999 and for all remaining purposes at 6.5.1998 by [S.I. 1998/3178](#), [art. 2\(2\)](#)

Proceedings etc.

22 Standing orders.

- (1) The proceedings of the Parliament shall be regulated by standing orders.
- (2) Schedule 3 (which makes provision as to how certain matters are to be dealt with by standing orders) shall have effect.

Status: Point in time view as at 01/07/2018.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Scotland Act 1998, Part I. (See end of Document for details)

23 Power to call for witnesses and documents.

- (1) The Parliament may require any person—
 - (a) to attend its proceedings for the purpose of giving evidence, or
 - (b) to produce documents in his custody or under his control,
 concerning any subject for which any member of the [^{F21}Scottish Government] has general responsibility.
- (2) Subject to subsection (3), the Parliament may impose such a requirement on a person outside Scotland only in connection with the discharge by him of—
 - (a) functions of the Scottish Administration, or
 - (b) functions of a Scottish public authority or cross-border public authority, or Border rivers functions (within the meaning of section 111(4)), which concern a subject for which any member of the [^{F21}Scottish Government] has general responsibility.
- (3) In relation to the exercise of functions of a Minister of the Crown, the Parliament may not impose such a requirement on—
 - (a) him (whether or not he continues to be a Minister of the Crown), or
 - (b) a person who is or has been in Crown employment, within the meaning of section 191(3) of the ^{M5}Employment Rights Act 1996,
 unless the exercise concerns a subject for which any member of the [^{F21}Scottish Government] has general responsibility.
- (4) But the Parliament may not impose such a requirement in pursuance of subsection (3) in connection with the exercise of functions which are exercisable—
 - (a) by the Scottish Ministers as well as by a Minister of the Crown, or
 - (b) by a Minister of the Crown only with the agreement of, or after consultation with, the Scottish Ministers.
- (5) Subsection (4)(b) does not prevent the Parliament imposing such a requirement in connection with the exercise of functions which do not relate to reserved matters.
- (6) Where all the functions of a body relate to reserved matters, the Parliament may not impose such a requirement on any person in connection with the discharge by him of those functions.
- (7) The Parliament may not impose such a requirement on—
 - (a) a judge of any court, or
 - (b) a member of any tribunal in connection with the discharge by him of his functions as such.
- (8) Such a requirement may be imposed by a committee or sub-committee of the Parliament only if the committee or sub-committee is expressly authorised to do so (whether by standing orders or otherwise).
- (9) A person is not obliged under this section to answer any question or produce any document which he would be entitled to refuse to answer or produce in proceedings in a court in Scotland.
- (10) A procurator fiscal is not obliged under this section to answer any question or produce any document concerning the operation of the system of criminal prosecution in any particular case if the Lord Advocate—

Status: Point in time view as at 01/07/2018.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Scotland Act 1998, Part 1. (See end of Document for details)

- (a) considers that answering the question or producing the document might prejudice criminal proceedings in that case or would otherwise be contrary to the public interest, and
- (b) has authorised the procurator fiscal to decline to answer the question or produce the document on that ground.

Textual Amendments

F21 Words in Act substituted (3.7.2012) by [Scotland Act 2012 \(c. 11\)](#), **ss. 12(2)(a)**, 44(5) (with s. 12(3)); [S.I. 2012/1710](#), **art. 2(f)**

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C17** S. 23(2)(b) extended (1.4.2000) by [1999 c. 28](#), **s. 35(1)(a)** (with s. 38); [S.I. 2000/1066](#), **art. 2**
- C18** S. 23(2)(b) modified (1.12.2002) by [National Health Service Reform and Health Care Professions Act 2002 \(c. 17\)](#), s. 25(4), **Sch. 7 para. 2**; [S.I. 2002/2202](#), **art. 2(2)**
- C19** S. 23(2)(b) modified (27.7.2004) by [Energy Act 2004 \(c. 20\)](#), ss. 2(10), 198(2), **Sch. 1 para. 17(a)**; [S.I. 2004/1973](#), **art. 2**
- C20** S. 23(2)(b) modified by [Private Security Industry Act 2001 \(c. 12\)](#), s. 2A (as inserted (E.W.S) (30.6.2006 for S. and 6.7.2006 for E.W.) by [Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 \(c. 15\)](#), ss. 171(1), 178(6), **Sch. 15 para. 3**; [S.S.I. 2006/381](#), **art. 2**)
- C21** S. 23(2)(b) extended (26.11.2008) by [Climate Change Act 2008 \(c. 27\)](#), ss. 32(2), 100(1), **Sch. 1 para. 27(2)(a)**

Commencement Information

I2 S. 23 wholly in force; s. 23 not in force at Royal Assent see s. 130; s. 23 in force for certain purposes at 6.5.1999 and for all remaining purposes at 1.7.1999 by [S.I. 1998/3178](#), **arts. 2(2)**, 3

Marginal Citations

M5 [1996 c. 18](#).

[^{F22}23A Power to impose requirements on specific bodies

- (1) Section 23 applies in relation to requirements imposed on a person in connection with the discharge of the functions of a body mentioned in subsection (2) in relation to Scotland with the omission of—
- (a) the words after paragraph (b) in subsection (1), and
 - (b) subsections (2) and (6).
- (2) The bodies are—
- (a) the Commissioners of Northern Lighthouses,
 - (b) the Office of Communications, and
 - (c) the Gas and Electricity Markets Authority.]

Textual Amendments

F22 [S. 23A](#) inserted (23.5.2016) by [Scotland Act 2016 \(c. 11\)](#), **ss. 66(2)**, 72(7)

Status: Point in time view as at 01/07/2018.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Scotland Act 1998, Part I. (See end of Document for details)

24 Witnesses and documents: notice.

- (1) A requirement under section 23 shall be imposed by the Clerk giving the person in question notice in writing specifying—
 - (a) the time and place at which the person is to attend and the particular subjects concerning which he is required to give evidence, or
 - (b) the documents, or types of documents, which he is to produce, the date by which he is to produce them and the particular subjects concerning which they are required.
- (2) Such notice shall be given—
 - (a) in the case of an individual, by sending it, by registered post or the recorded delivery service, addressed to him at his usual or last known address or, where he has given an address for service, at that address,
 - (b) in any other case, by sending it, by registered post or the recorded delivery service, addressed to the person at the person's registered or principal office.

25 Witnesses and documents: offences.

- (1) Any person to whom a notice under section 24(1) has been given who—
 - (a) refuses or fails to attend proceedings as required by the notice,
 - (b) refuses or fails, when attending proceedings as required by the notice, to answer any question concerning the subjects specified in the notice,
 - (c) deliberately alters, suppresses, conceals or destroys any document which he is required to produce by the notice, or
 - (d) refuses or fails to produce any such document,is guilty of an offence.
- (2) Subsection (1) is subject to sections 23(9) and (10) and 27(3).
- (3) It is a defence for a person charged with an offence under subsection (1)(a), (b) or (d) to prove that he had a reasonable excuse for the refusal or failure.
- (4) A person guilty of an offence under this section is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding three months.
- (5) Where an offence under this section which has been committed by a body corporate is proved to have been committed with the consent or connivance of, or to be attributable to any neglect on the part of—
 - (a) a director, manager, secretary or other similar officer of the body corporate, or
 - (b) any person who was purporting to act in any such capacity,he, as well as the body corporate, is guilty of that offence and liable to be proceeded against accordingly.

26 Witnesses and documents: general.

- (1) The Presiding Officer or such other person as may be authorised by standing orders may—
 - (a) administer an oath to any person giving evidence in proceedings of the Parliament, and
 - (b) require him to take the oath.

Status: Point in time view as at 01/07/2018.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Scotland Act 1998, Part 1. (See end of Document for details)

- (2) Any person who refuses to take an oath when required to do so under subsection (1) (b) is guilty of an offence.
- (3) Subsection (4) of section 25 applies to an offence under subsection (2) as it applies to an offence under that section.
- (4) Standing orders may provide for the payment of allowances and expenses to persons—
 - (a) attending proceedings of the Parliament to give evidence, or
 - (b) producing documents which they have been required or requested to produce, whether or not in pursuance of a notice under section 24(1).
- (5) For the purposes of sections 23 to 25 and this section, a person shall be taken to comply with a requirement to produce a document if he produces a copy of, or an extract of the relevant part of, the document.

27 Participation of the Scottish Law Officers.

- (1) If the Lord Advocate or the Solicitor General for Scotland is not a member of the Parliament—
 - (a) he may participate in the proceedings of the Parliament to the extent permitted by standing orders, but may not vote, and
 - (b) standing orders may in other respects provide that they are to apply to him as if he were such a member.
- (2) Subsection (1) is without prejudice to section 39.
- (3) The Lord Advocate or the Solicitor General for Scotland may, in any proceedings of the Parliament, decline to answer any question or produce any document relating to the operation of the system of criminal prosecution in any particular case if he considers that answering the question or producing the document—
 - (a) might prejudice criminal proceedings in that case, or
 - (b) would otherwise be contrary to the public interest.

Legislation

28 Acts of the Scottish Parliament.

- (1) Subject to section 29, the Parliament may make laws, to be known as Acts of the Scottish Parliament.
- (2) Proposed Acts of the Scottish Parliament shall be known as Bills; and a Bill shall become an Act of the Scottish Parliament when it has been passed by the Parliament and has received Royal Assent.
- (3) A Bill receives Royal Assent at the beginning of the day on which Letters Patent under the Scottish Seal signed with Her Majesty's own hand signifying Her Assent are recorded in the Register of the Great Seal.
- (4) The date of Royal Assent shall be written on the Act of the Scottish Parliament by the Clerk, and shall form part of the Act.
- (5) The validity of an Act of the Scottish Parliament is not affected by any invalidity in the proceedings of the Parliament leading to its enactment.

Status: Point in time view as at 01/07/2018.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Scotland Act 1998, Part I. (See end of Document for details)

- (6) Every Act of the Scottish Parliament shall be judicially noticed.
- (7) This section does not affect the power of the Parliament of the United Kingdom to make laws for Scotland.
- [^{F23}(8) But it is recognised that the Parliament of the United Kingdom will not normally legislate with regard to devolved matters without the consent of the Scottish Parliament.]

Textual Amendments

F23 S. 28(8) added (23.5.2016) by [Scotland Act 2016 \(c. 11\)](#), **ss. 2, 72(7)**

29 Legislative competence.

- (1) An Act of the Scottish Parliament is not law so far as any provision of the Act is outside the legislative competence of the Parliament.
- (2) A provision is outside that competence so far as any of the following paragraphs apply—
- it would form part of the law of a country or territory other than Scotland, or confer or remove functions exercisable otherwise than in or as regards Scotland,
 - it relates to reserved matters,
 - it is in breach of the restrictions in Schedule 4,
 - it is incompatible with any of the Convention rights or with [^{F24}EU] law,
 - it would remove the Lord Advocate from his position as head of the systems of criminal prosecution and investigation of deaths in Scotland.
- (3) For the purposes of this section, the question whether a provision of an Act of the Scottish Parliament relates to a reserved matter is to be determined, subject to subsection (4), by reference to the purpose of the provision, having regard (among other things) to its effect in all the circumstances.
- (4) A provision which—
- would otherwise not relate to reserved matters, but
 - makes modifications of Scots private law, or Scots criminal law, as it applies to reserved matters,
- is to be treated as relating to reserved matters unless the purpose of the provision is to make the law in question apply consistently to reserved matters and otherwise.
- [^{F25}(5) Subsection (1) is subject to section 30(6).]

Textual Amendments

F24 Words in s. 29(2)(d) substituted (22.4.2011) by [The Treaty of Lisbon \(Changes in Terminology\) Order 2011 \(S.I. 2011/1043\)](#), **arts. 3, 6**

F25 S. 29(5) inserted (3.7.2012) by [Scotland Act 2012 \(c. 11\)](#), **ss. 9(2), 44(5)**; [S.I. 2012/1710](#), **art. 2(d)**

Status: Point in time view as at 01/07/2018.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Scotland Act 1998, Part 1. (See end of Document for details)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C22 S. 29(2)(b)(c) excluded by 1974 c. 53, Sch. 3 para. 9(1) (as inserted (13.4.2015) by [Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 \(c. 2\)](#), **ss. 19, 95(1)**; S.I. 2015/778, art. 3, Sch. 1 para. 15)

30 Legislative competence: supplementary.

- (1) Schedule 5 (which defines reserved matters) shall have effect.
- (2) Her Majesty may by Order in Council make any modifications of Schedule 4 or 5 which She considers necessary or expedient.
- (3) Her Majesty may by Order in Council specify functions which are to be treated, for such purposes of this Act as may be specified, as being, or as not being, functions which are exercisable in or as regards Scotland.
- (4) An Order in Council under this section may also make such modifications of—
 - (a) any enactment or prerogative instrument (including any enactment comprised in or made under this Act), or
 - (b) any other instrument or document,as Her Majesty considers necessary or expedient in connection with other provision made by the Order.
- [^{F26}(5) Subsection (6) applies where any alteration is made—
 - (a) to the matters which are reserved matters, or
 - (b) to Schedule 4,(whether by virtue of the making, revocation or expiry of an Order in Council under this section or otherwise).
- (6) Where the effect of the alteration is that a provision of an Act of the Scottish Parliament ceases to be within the legislative competence of the Parliament, the provision does not for that reason cease to have effect (unless an enactment provides otherwise).]

Textual Amendments

F26 S. 30(5)(6) inserted (3.7.2012) by [Scotland Act 2012 \(c. 11\)](#), **ss. 9(1), 44(5)**; S.I. 2012/1710, art. 2(d)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C23 S. 30(3) power extended (17.5.2017 for specified purposes, 1.4.2024 in so far as not already in force) by 1992 c. 4, **s. 138(4C)** (as inserted by [Scotland Act 2016 \(c. 11\)](#), **ss. 23(5), 72(4)(b)**; S.I. 2017/455, regs. 2(b)(iii), 3)

[^{F27}**30A Legislative competence: restriction relating to retained EU law**

- (1) An Act of the Scottish Parliament cannot modify, or confer power by subordinate legislation to modify, retained EU law so far as the modification is of a description specified in regulations made by a Minister of the Crown.
- (2) But subsection (1) does not apply to any modification so far as it would, immediately before exit day, have been within the legislative competence of the Parliament.

Status: Point in time view as at 01/07/2018.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Scotland Act 1998, Part I. (See end of Document for details)

- (3) A Minister of the Crown must not lay for approval before each House of the Parliament of the United Kingdom a draft of a statutory instrument containing regulations under this section unless—
- (a) the Scottish Parliament has made a consent decision in relation to the laying of the draft, or
 - (b) the 40 day period has ended without the Parliament having made such a decision.
- (4) For the purposes of subsection (3) a consent decision is—
- (a) a decision to agree a motion consenting to the laying of the draft,
 - (b) a decision not to agree a motion consenting to the laying of the draft, or
 - (c) a decision to agree a motion refusing to consent to the laying of the draft;
- and a consent decision is made when the Parliament first makes a decision falling within any of paragraphs (a) to (c) (whether or not it subsequently makes another such decision).
- (5) A Minister of the Crown who is proposing to lay a draft as mentioned in subsection (3) must—
- (a) provide a copy of the draft to the Scottish Ministers, and
 - (b) inform the Presiding Officer that a copy has been so provided.
- (6) See also paragraph 6 of Schedule 7 (duty to make explanatory statement about regulations under this section including a duty to explain any decision to lay a draft without the consent of the Parliament).
- (7) No regulations may be made under this section after the end of the period of two years beginning with exit day.
- (8) Subsection (7) does not affect the continuation in force of regulations made under this section at or before the end of the period mentioned in that subsection.
- (9) Any regulations under this section which are in force at the end of the period of five years beginning with the time at which they came into force are revoked in their application to any Act of the Scottish Parliament which receives Royal Assent after the end of that period.
- (10) Subsections (3) to (8) do not apply in relation to regulations which only relate to a revocation of a specification.
- (11) In this section—
- “the 40 day period” means the period of 40 days beginning with the day on which a copy of the draft instrument is provided to the Scottish Ministers, and, in calculating that period, no account is to be taken of any time during which the Parliament is dissolved or during which it is in recess for more than four days.]

Textual Amendments

F27 S. 30A inserted (26.6.2018 for specified purposes) by [European Union \(Withdrawal\) Act 2018 \(c. 16\)](#), ss. 12(2), 25(2)(a) (with s. 19, Sch. 2 paras. 3(5), 14(5), Sch. 8 para. 37, Sch. 8 para. 41)

Status: Point in time view as at 01/07/2018.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Scotland Act 1998, Part 1. (See end of Document for details)

31 Scrutiny of Bills [^{F28}for legislative competence and protected subject-matter] .

- (1) [^{F29}A person] in charge of a Bill shall, on or before introduction of the Bill in the Parliament, state that in his view the provisions of the Bill would be within the legislative competence of the Parliament.
- (2) The Presiding Officer shall, on or before the introduction of a Bill in the Parliament, decide whether or not in his view the provisions of the Bill would be within the legislative competence of the Parliament and state his decision.
- [^{F30}(2A) The Presiding Officer shall, after the last time when a Bill may be amended but before the decision whether to pass or reject it, decide whether or not in his view any provision of the Bill relates to a protected subject-matter and state his decision.]
- (3) The form of any statement, and the manner in which it is to be made, shall be determined under standing orders, and standing orders may provide for any statement to be published.
- [^{F31}(4) For the purposes of this Part a provision of a Bill relates to a protected subject-matter if it would modify, or confer power to modify, any of the matters listed in subsection (5) (but not if the provision is incidental to or consequential on another provision of the Bill).
- (5) The matters are—
 - (a) the persons entitled to vote as electors at an election for membership of the Parliament,
 - (b) the system by which members of the Parliament are returned,
 - (c) the number of constituencies, regions or any equivalent electoral area, and
 - (d) the number of members to be returned for each constituency, region or equivalent electoral area.]

Textual Amendments

- F28** Words in s. 31 heading substituted (18.5.2017) by [Scotland Act 2016 \(c. 11\)](#), **ss. 11(3)**, 72(4)(a); S.I. 2017/608, reg. 2(1)(i)
- F29** Words in s. 31(1) substituted (15.10.2012) by [Scotland Act 2012 \(c. 11\)](#), **ss. 6**, 44(5); S.I. 2012/1710, art. 3
- F30** S. 31(2A) inserted (18.5.2017) by [Scotland Act 2016 \(c. 11\)](#), **ss. 11(4)**, 72(4)(a); S.I. 2017/608, reg. 2(1)(i)
- F31** S. 31(4)(5) inserted (18.5.2017) by [Scotland Act 2016 \(c. 11\)](#), **ss. 11(5)**, 72(4)(a); S.I. 2017/608, reg. 2(1)(i)

[^{F32}31A Two-thirds majority for Bills relating to a protected subject-matter

If the Presiding Officer states under section 31(2A) that in his view any provision of a Bill relates to a protected subject-matter, the Bill is not passed unless the number of members voting in favour of it at the final stage is at least two-thirds of the total number of seats for members of the Parliament.]

Status: Point in time view as at 01/07/2018.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Scotland Act 1998, Part I. (See end of Document for details)

Textual Amendments

F32 S. 31A inserted (18.5.2017) by [Scotland Act 2016 \(c. 11\)](#), **ss. 11(6)**, 72(4)(a); S.I. 2017/608, reg. 2(1)(i)

32 Submission of Bills for Royal Assent.

- (1) It is for the Presiding Officer to submit Bills for Royal Assent.
- (2) The Presiding Officer shall not submit a Bill for Royal Assent at any time when—
- the Advocate General, the Lord Advocate or the Attorney General is entitled to make a reference in relation to the Bill under section [^{F33}32A or] 33,
 - any such reference has been made but has not been decided or otherwise disposed of by the [^{F34}Supreme Court], or
 - an order may be made in relation to the Bill under section 35.
- [^{F35}(2A) The Presiding Officer shall not submit a Bill for Royal Assent if the Supreme Court has decided on a reference made in relation to the Bill under section 32A(2)(b) that any provision of the Bill relates to a protected subject-matter, unless since the decision the Bill has been approved in accordance with standing orders made by virtue of section 36(5).]
- (3) The Presiding Officer shall not submit a Bill in its unamended form for Royal Assent if—
- the [^{F36}Supreme Court has] decided that the Bill or any provision of it would not be within the legislative competence of the Parliament, or
 - a reference made in relation to the Bill under section 33 has been withdrawn following a request for withdrawal of the reference under section 34(2)(b).
- (4) In this Act—
- “Advocate General” means the Advocate General for Scotland,
^{F37}

Textual Amendments

- F33** Words in s. 32(2)(a) inserted (18.5.2017) by [Scotland Act 2016 \(c. 11\)](#), **ss. 11(8)**, 72(4)(a); S.I. 2017/608, reg. 2(1)(i)
- F34** Words in s. 32(2)(b) substituted (1.10.2009) by [Constitutional Reform Act 2005 \(c. 4\)](#), ss. 40(4), 148(1), **Sch. 9 para. 95(a)**; S.I. 2009/1604, **art. 2**
- F35** S. 32(2A) inserted (18.5.2017) by [Scotland Act 2016 \(c. 11\)](#), **ss. 11(9)**, 72(4)(a); S.I. 2017/608, reg. 2(1)(i)
- F36** Words in s. 32(3)(a) substituted (1.10.2009) by [Constitutional Reform Act 2005 \(c. 4\)](#), ss. 40(4), 148(1), **Sch. 9 para. 95(b)**; S.I. 2009/1604, **art. 2**
- F37** S. 32(4): definition of "Judicial Committee" repealed (1.10.2009) by [Constitutional Reform Act 2005 \(c. 4\)](#), ss. 40(4), 146, 148(1), **Sch. 9 para. 95(c)**, **Sch. 18 Pt. 5**; S.I. 2009/1604, **art. 2**

[^{F38}32A Scrutiny of Bills by the Supreme Court (protected subject-matter)

- (1) The Advocate General, the Lord Advocate or the Attorney General may refer the question of whether a Bill or any provision of a Bill relates to a protected subject-matter to the Supreme Court for decision.

Status: Point in time view as at 01/07/2018.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Scotland Act 1998, Part 1. (See end of Document for details)

- (2) Subject to subsection (3), he may make a reference in relation to a Bill—
- (a) at any time during the period of four weeks beginning with the rejection of the Bill, if the Presiding Officer has made a statement under section 31(2A) that in his view any provision of the Bill relates to a protected subject-matter, and
 - (b) at any time during the period of four weeks beginning with the passing of the Bill, if the Presiding Officer has made a statement under section 31(2A) that in his view no provision of the Bill relates to a protected subject-matter, unless the number of members voting in favour of the Bill at its passing is at least two-thirds of the total number of seats for members of the Parliament.
- (3) He shall not make a reference in relation to a Bill if he has notified the Presiding Officer that he does not intend to make a reference in relation to the Bill, unless since the notification the Bill has been approved or rejected in accordance with standing orders made by virtue of section 36(5).]

Textual Amendments

- F38** S. 32A inserted (18.5.2017) by [Scotland Act 2016 \(c. 11\)](#), **ss. 11(10)**, 72(4)(a); S.I. 2017/608, reg. 2(1)(i)

33 Scrutiny of Bills by the [^{F39}Supreme Court][^{F40}(legislative competence)] .

- (1) The Advocate General, the Lord Advocate or the Attorney General may refer the question of whether a Bill or any provision of a Bill would be within the legislative competence of the Parliament to the [^{F41}Supreme Court] for decision.
- (2) Subject to subsection (3), he may make a reference in relation to a Bill at any time during—
- (a) the period of four weeks beginning with the passing of the Bill, and
 - (b) any period of four weeks beginning with any ^{F42}... approval of the Bill in accordance with standing orders made by virtue of section 36(5).
- (3) He shall not make a reference in relation to a Bill if he has notified the Presiding Officer that he does not intend to make a reference in relation to the Bill, unless the Bill has been approved as mentioned in subsection (2)(b) since the notification.

Textual Amendments

- F39** S. 33: words in sidenote substituted (1.10.2009) by [Constitutional Reform Act 2005 \(c. 4\)](#), ss. 40(4), 148(1), **Sch. 9 para. 96(1)**; S.I. 2009/1604, **art. 2**
- F40** Words in s. 33 heading inserted (18.5.2017) by [Scotland Act 2016 \(c. 11\)](#), **ss. 11(12)**, 72(4)(a); S.I. 2017/608, reg. 2(1)(i)
- F41** Words in s. 33(1) substituted (1.10.2009) by [Constitutional Reform Act 2005 \(c. 4\)](#), ss. 40(4), 148(1), **Sch. 9 para. 96(2)**; S.I. 2009/1604, **art. 2**
- F42** Word in s. 33(2)(b) omitted (18.5.2017) by virtue of [Scotland Act 2016 \(c. 11\)](#), **ss. 11(13)**, 72(4)(a); S.I. 2017/608, reg. 2(1)(i)

34 ECJ references.

- (1) This section applies where—

Status: Point in time view as at 01/07/2018.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Scotland Act 1998, Part I. (See end of Document for details)

- (a) a reference has been made in relation to a Bill under section 33,
 - (b) a reference for a preliminary ruling has been made by the [^{F43}Supreme Court] in connection with that reference, and
 - (c) neither of those references has been decided or otherwise disposed of.
- (2) If the Parliament resolves that it wishes to reconsider the Bill—
- (a) the Presiding Officer shall notify the Advocate General, the Lord Advocate and the Attorney General of that fact, and
 - (b) the person who made the reference in relation to the Bill under section 33 shall request the withdrawal of the reference.
- (3) In this section “a reference for a preliminary ruling” means a reference of a question to the European Court under [^{F44}Article 267 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union] or Article 150 of the Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community.

Textual Amendments

F43 Words in s. 34(1)(b) substituted (1.10.2009) by [Constitutional Reform Act 2005 \(c. 4\), ss. 40\(4\), 148\(1\), Sch. 9 para. 97; S.I. 2009/1604, art. 2](#)

F44 Words in s. 34(3) substituted (1.8.2012) by [The Treaty of Lisbon \(Changes in Terminology or Numbering\) Order 2012 \(S.I. 2012/1809\), art. 2\(1\), Sch. Pt. 1 \(with art. 2\(2\)\)](#)

35 Power to intervene in certain cases.

- (1) If a Bill contains provisions—
- (a) which the Secretary of State has reasonable grounds to believe would be incompatible with any international obligations or the interests of defence or national security, or
 - (b) which make modifications of the law as it applies to reserved matters and which the Secretary of State has reasonable grounds to believe would have an adverse effect on the operation of the law as it applies to reserved matters,
- he may make an order prohibiting the Presiding Officer from submitting the Bill for Royal Assent.
- (2) The order must identify the Bill and the provisions in question and state the reasons for making the order.
- (3) The order may be made at any time during—
- (a) the period of four weeks beginning with the passing of the Bill,
 - (b) any period of four weeks beginning with any ^{F45}... approval of the Bill in accordance with standing orders made by virtue of section 36(5),
 - (c) if a reference is made in relation to the Bill under section [^{F46}32A(2)(b) or] 33, the period of four weeks beginning with the reference being decided or otherwise disposed of by the [^{F47}Supreme Court].
- (4) The Secretary of State shall not make an order in relation to a Bill if he has notified the Presiding Officer that he does not intend to do so, unless the Bill has been approved as mentioned in subsection (3)(b) since the notification.
- (5) An order in force under this section at a time when such approval is given shall cease to have effect.

Status: Point in time view as at 01/07/2018.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Scotland Act 1998, Part 1. (See end of Document for details)

Textual Amendments

- F45** Word in s. 35(3)(b) omitted (18.5.2017) by virtue of [Scotland Act 2016 \(c. 11\)](#), **ss. 11(14)(a)**, 72(4)(a); [S.I. 2017/608](#), **reg. 2(1)(i)**
- F46** Words in s. 35(3)(c) inserted (18.5.2017) by [Scotland Act 2016 \(c. 11\)](#), **ss. 11(14)(b)**, 72(4)(a); [S.I. 2017/608](#), **reg. 2(1)(i)**
- F47** Words in s. 35(3)(c) substituted (1.10.2009) by [Constitutional Reform Act 2005 \(c. 4\)](#), **ss. 40(4)**, 148(1), **Sch. 9 para. 98**; [S.I. 2009/1604](#), **art. 2**

36 Stages of Bills.

- (1) Standing orders shall include provision—
- for general debate on a Bill with an opportunity for members to vote on its general principles,
 - for the consideration of, and an opportunity for members to vote on, the details of a Bill, and
 - for a final stage at which a Bill can be passed or rejected.
- (2) Subsection (1) does not prevent standing orders making provision to enable the Parliament to expedite proceedings in relation to a particular Bill.
- (3) Standing orders may make provision different from that required by subsection (1) for the procedure applicable to Bills of any of the following kinds—
- Bills which restate the law,
 - Bills which repeal spent enactments,
 - private Bills.
- (4) Standing orders shall provide for an opportunity for the reconsideration of a Bill after its passing if (and only if)—
- the [^{F48}Supreme Court decides] that the Bill or any provision of it would not be within the legislative competence of the Parliament,
 - [^{F49}(aa) the Supreme Court decides on a reference made in relation to the Bill under section 32A(2)(b) that any provision of the Bill relates to a protected subject-matter,]
 - a reference made in relation to the Bill under section 33 is withdrawn following a request for withdrawal of the reference under section 34(2)(b), or
 - an order is made in relation to the Bill under section 35.
- [^{F50}(4A) Standing orders shall provide for an opportunity for the reconsideration of a Bill after its rejection if (and only if), on a reference made in relation to the Bill under section 32A(2)(a), the Supreme Court decides that no provision that is subject to the reference relates to a protected subject-matter.]
- (5) Standing orders shall, in particular, ensure that [^{F51}—
- any Bill amended on reconsideration in accordance with standing orders made by virtue of subsection (4)(a), (b) or (c), and
 - any Bill reconsidered in accordance with standing orders made by virtue of subsection (4)(aa) or (4A),]
- is subject to a final stage at which it can be approved or rejected.

Status: Point in time view as at 01/07/2018.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Scotland Act 1998, Part I. (See end of Document for details)

- (6) References in subsection (4), sections 28(2)^{F52}, 31(2A), 31A, 32A(2)(b)] and 38(1)(a) and paragraph 7 of Schedule 3 to the passing of a Bill shall, in the case of a Bill ^{F53}to which subsection (5)(a) or (b) applies], be read as references to the approval of the Bill.

Textual Amendments

- F48** Words in s. 36(4) substituted (1.10.2009) by [Constitutional Reform Act 2005 \(c. 4\)](#), ss. 40(4), 148(1), [Sch. 9 para. 99](#); S.I. 2009/1604, [art. 2](#)
- F49** S. 36(4)(aa) inserted (18.5.2017) by [Scotland Act 2016 \(c. 11\)](#), [ss. 11\(16\)](#), 72(4)(a); S.I. 2017/608, [reg. 2\(1\)\(i\)](#)
- F50** S. 36(4A) inserted (18.5.2017) by [Scotland Act 2016 \(c. 11\)](#), [ss. 11\(17\)](#), 72(4)(a); S.I. 2017/608, [reg. 2\(1\)\(i\)](#)
- F51** S. 36(5)(a)(b) substituted (18.5.2017) for words by [Scotland Act 2016 \(c. 11\)](#), [ss. 11\(18\)](#), 72(4)(a); S.I. 2017/608, [reg. 2\(1\)\(i\)](#)
- F52** Words in s. 36(6) inserted (18.5.2017) by [Scotland Act 2016 \(c. 11\)](#), [ss. 11\(19\)\(a\)](#), 72(4)(a); S.I. 2017/608, [reg. 2\(1\)\(i\)](#)
- F53** Words in s. 36(6) substituted (18.5.2017) by [Scotland Act 2016 \(c. 11\)](#), [ss. 11\(19\)\(b\)](#), 72(4)(a); S.I. 2017/608, [reg. 2\(1\)\(i\)](#)

Other provisions

37 Acts of Union.

The ^{M6}Union with Scotland Act 1706 and the ^{M7}Union with England Act 1707 have effect subject to this Act.

Marginal Citations

- M6** [1706 c. 11](#).
- M7** [1707 c. 7\(S\)](#).

38 Letters Patent and proclamations.

- (1) The Keeper of the Registers of Scotland shall record in the Register of the Great Seal—
- (a) all Letters Patent signed with Her Majesty's own hand signifying Her Assent to a Bill passed by the Parliament, and
 - (b) all royal proclamations under sections 2(5) and 3(2), which have passed under the Scottish Seal.
- (2) On recording such Letters Patent he shall intimate the date of recording to the Clerk.
- (3) Her Majesty may by Order in Council make provision as to—
- (a) the form and manner of preparation, and
 - (b) the publication,
- of such Letters Patent and proclamations.
- (4) If the First Minister so directs, impressions with the same device as the Scottish Seal shall be taken in such manner, of such size and on such material as is specified in the direction.

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- (5) Each such impression—
 - (a) shall be known as a Wafer Scottish Seal, and
 - (b) shall be kept in accordance with directions of the First Minister.
- (6) If a Wafer Scottish Seal has been applied to Letters Patent or a proclamation mentioned in subsection (1), the document has the same validity as if it had passed under the Scottish Seal.

Commencement Information

- I3** S. 38 wholly in force at 6.5.1999; s. 38 not in force at Royal Assent see s. 130; s. 38(3) in force at 25.1.1999 by [S.I. 1998/3178, art. 2\(2\)](#), [Sch. 1](#); s. 32(1)(2)(4)-(6) in force at 6.5.1999 by [S.I. 1998/3178, art. 2\(2\)](#), [Sch. 3](#)

39 Members' interests.

- (1) Provision shall be made for a register of interests of members of the Parliament and for the register to be published and made available for public inspection.
- (2) Provision shall be made—
 - (a) requiring members of the Parliament to register in that register financial interests (including benefits in kind), as defined for the purposes of this paragraph,
 - (b) requiring that any member of the Parliament who has a financial interest (including benefits in kind), as defined for the purposes of this paragraph, in any matter declares that interest before taking part in any proceedings of the Parliament relating to that matter.
- (3) Provision made in pursuance of subsection (2) shall include any provision which the Parliament considers appropriate for preventing or restricting the participation in proceedings of the Parliament of a member with an interest defined for the purposes of subsection (2)(a) or (b) in a matter to which the proceedings relate.
- (4) Provision shall be made prohibiting a member of the Parliament from—
 - (a) advocating or initiating any cause or matter on behalf of any person, by any means specified in the provision, in consideration of any payment or benefit in kind of a description so specified, or
 - (b) urging, in consideration of any such payment or benefit in kind, any other member of the Parliament to advocate or initiate any cause or matter on behalf of any person by any such means.
- ^{F54}(4A) Any requirement or prohibition (however expressed) imposed by provision made in pursuance of subsections (2) to (4) may be subject to such exceptions as are specified in the provision.
- (5) Provision may be made for—
 - (a) excluding a member from the proceedings of the Parliament,
 - (b) imposing on a member such other sanctions as the Parliament considers appropriate,if the member fails to comply with, or contravenes, any provision made in pursuance of subsections (2) to (4) or this subsection.

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Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Scotland Act 1998, Part I. (See end of Document for details)

- (5A) Provision made under subsection (5) may include provision that a sanction is not to be imposed in such circumstances as are specified in the provision.
- (6) Provision made under subsection (5) may include provision that the member is guilty of an offence.
- (7) A person guilty of such an offence is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale.]
- (8) In this section—
- (a) “provision” means provision made by or under an Act of the Scottish Parliament,
 - (b) references to members of the Parliament include references to the Lord Advocate and the Solicitor General for Scotland, whether or not they are such members.

Textual Amendments

F54 S. 39(4A)-(7) substituted (3.7.2012) for s. 39(5)-(7) by [Scotland Act 2012 \(c. 11\)](#), **ss. 7(2), 44(5)** (with [s. 7\(3\)](#)); [S.I. 2012/1710](#), [art. 2\(c\)](#)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C24 S. 39(2)(b) modified (S.) by [Interests of Members of the Scottish Parliament Act 2006 \(asp 12\)](#), **s. 12(3)** (the modification coming into force on the day after the date of the first dissolution of the Parliament following the date of Royal Assent in accordance with s. 21(4) of the modifying Act, which first dissolution began at midnight on 2.4.2007)

Legal issues

40 Proceedings by or against the Parliament etc.

- (1) Proceedings by or against the Parliament shall be instituted by or (as the case may be) against the Parliamentary corporation on behalf of the Parliament.
- (2) Proceedings by or against—
 - (a) the Presiding Officer or a deputy, or
 - (b) any member of the staff of the Parliament,
 shall be instituted by or (as the case may be) against the corporation on his behalf.
- (3) In any proceedings against the Parliament, the court shall not make an order for suspension, interdict, reduction or specific performance (or other like order) but may instead make a declarator.
- (4) In any proceedings against—
 - (a) any member of the Parliament,
 - (b) the Presiding Officer or a deputy,
 - (c) any member of the staff of the Parliament, or
 - (d) the Parliamentary corporation,
 the court shall not make an order for suspension, interdict, reduction or specific performance (or other like order) if the effect of doing so would be to give any relief

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against the Parliament which could not have been given in proceedings against the Parliament.

(5) References in this section to an order include an interim order.

41 Defamatory statements.

(1) For the purposes of the law of defamation—

- (a) any statement made in proceedings of the Parliament, and
 - (b) the publication under the authority of the Parliament of any statement,
- shall be absolutely privileged.

(2) In subsection (1), “statement” has the same meaning as in the ^{M8}Defamation Act 1996.

Marginal Citations

M8 1996 c. 31.

42 Contempt of court.

(1) The strict liability rule shall not apply in relation to any publication—

- (a) made in proceedings of the Parliament in relation to a Bill or subordinate legislation, or
- (b) to the extent that it consists of a fair and accurate report of such proceedings made in good faith.

(2) In subsection (1), “the strict liability rule” and “publication” have the same meanings as in the ^{M9}Contempt of Court Act 1981.

Marginal Citations

M9 1981 c. 49.

43 Corrupt practices.

F55
.....

Textual Amendments

F55 S. 43 repealed (1.7.2011) by [Bribery Act 2010 \(c. 23\)](#), ss. 17(3), 19(1), [Sch. 2](#) (with ss. 16, 19(5)); S.I. 2011/1418, [art. 2](#)

Status:

Point in time view as at 01/07/2018.

Changes to legislation:

There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Scotland Act 1998, Part I.