

Model UN Rules of Procedure

Model UN conferences adopt rules of procedure to help maintain order and get through their lengthy agendas. A few conferences adapt their rules of procedure directly from the United Nations rules while most use variations of the Roberts Rules of Order. Before going to a conference, make sure you know the basic rules.

Model UN delegates, just like international delegates to the UN, participate in formal debate as well as informal debate, or caucusing.

During formal debate, the staff maintains a speakers list and delegates speak in the order they are listed, answer questions, and introduce and debate resolutions and amendments.

During a caucus the rules of procedure are suspended. To go to a moderated caucus, a delegate makes a motion to suspend debate and the committee votes. A moderated caucus is a mixture of both formal and informal debate. Anyone may speak if they raise their placard and are called on by the Chair.

In an unmoderated caucus, delegates meet informally with one another and the committee staff to discuss and negotiate draft resolutions, amendments and other issues. □

1. Administrative

1.1 The Secretariat. The Secretariat consists of the volunteer staff members of the George Mason University Model United Nations (GMUMUN).

1.2 Credentials.

The Secretariat has sole authority to decide all questions concerning credentials, Representatives must wear approved credentials at all times while on the conference premises.

1.3 Quorum/Majority. A quorum will be one-fourth of the member delegations in attendance at the conference,

A quorum must be present at all times during Committee and Council sessions,

A simple majority is required for a substantive question to be put to vote,

Questions concerning quorum or majority should be directed to the Chair,

It is the responsibility of the Chair to ensure that a quorum is present at all times.

1.4 Committee and Council Officers. The Secretariat of the GMUMUN shall select persons to serve as Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and Rapporteur for each Committee

and Council, and shall select any other persons necessary to help conduct the sessions of GMUMUN.

1.5 General Authority of the Chairperson. In addition to exercising such authority conferred upon the Chair elsewhere in these rules, the Chair shall;

Declare the opening and closing of each session,

Ensure the observance of the rules,

Direct the discussions of the Committee or Council, and accord the right to speak,

Advise the Committee or Council on methods of procedure that will enable the body to accomplish its goals,

Rule on Points of Order and Procedure, and subject to these rules, shall have complete control of the proceedings of the Committee or Council and the maintenance of order at its meetings, During the course of the session, the Chair may propose;

Limits on Debate, Closure of Debate, and Suspension and Adjournment of the

Meeting, The Chairperson is under the direct authority of the Rules Committee.

During an absence of an assigned Chairperson the Vice Chairperson will perform his or her duties with the same authority. At no time will the Chair be accorded the right to vote.

1.6 Number of Accredited Representatives. Each delegation is allowed two representatives per Committee/Council on which it is a member.

1.7 Selection of Agenda Items. The agenda shall be set by the Secretariat prior to the start of the conference.

1.8 Observer Status. Those delegations recognized as having Observer Status by GMUMUN shall be accorded all rights in the Committee or Council except for the following:

They may not vote on any substantive questions,

They may not make or second or vote on the following motions:

Adjournment of the Meeting (rule 7.2)

Adjournment of Debate (rule 7.3)

Closure of Debate (rule 7.4)

2. General Rules

2.1 Statements by the Secretariat. The Secretary General or any member of the Secretariat may make verbal or written statements to a Committee or Council at any time during the conference.

2.2 Diplomatic Courtesy. Representatives must accord diplomatic courtesy to all other Representatives and Secretariat members at all times,

Representatives who persist in obvious attempts to disrupt the session shall be subject to expulsion their Committee or Council by the Chair,

The Secretariat reserves the right to expel any Representative or delegation from the conference,

Decisions of the Chair on diplomatic courtesy are not appealable.

2.3 Speeches. No delegation may address the Committee or Council without obtaining the permission of the Chair,

Delegations are called upon in the order in which they signify their desire to speak or the order on the speakers' list,

Delegations, not Representatives, are recognized to speak; more than one Representative assigned to that one Committee or Counsel from the same delegation may speak when the delegation is recognized,

Speakers must keep their remarks germane to the subject under discussion,

A time limit may be established for speeches to be determined at the same time a Speakers' List is created. (rule 7.9),

Speakers are allowed to yield to the floor, to questions, and to other delegations;

Representatives, at the conclusion of a substantive speech, will be allowed, if they yield their time, to answer questions concerning their speech,

A delegation that desires to ask a question should signify by raising a Point of Inquiry (rule 6.3),

All questions and replies are directed through the Chair,

A speaker who desires to make a motion may do so after his or her speech or questioning, but prior to yielding the floor,

By making a motion, the speaker yields the floor,

Motions may not be made from: Points of Order (rule 6.1), Information (rule 6.2), Inquiry (rule 6.3), or from any procedural speeches.

If a delegate does not yield at the conclusion of his or her remarks, it is assumed that they yield to the floor.

2.4 Recognition of Speakers. Delegations wishing to speak on an item before the body will signify by raising their placards,

A motion to open the Speakers' List will be entertained at the start of debate on a topic and requires a second. There will be one Speakers' List per topic, and once the Speakers' List has been exhausted, debate shall close on the topic and the body will move into voting procedure. A motion to close the Speakers' List will be entertained at the Chair's discretion. This motion requires a second and is debatable by up to two speakers against the motion. It requires a majority vote to pass.

2.5 Right of Reply. The Chair may accord a Right of Reply to any Representative if a speech by another Representative contains unusual or extraordinary language clearly insulting to personal or national dignity,

Requests for a Right of Reply shall be made in writing to the Chair,

The request shall contain the specific language found to be insulting to personal or national dignity,

The Chair's decision is not subject to appeal,

There shall be no reply to a reply,

The Chair may limit the time allowed for a reply.

2.6 Withdrawal of Motions. A motion may be withdrawn by its proposer at any time before voting on it has begun, provided the motion has not been amended,

Seconds to a motion may also be withdrawn; if a withdrawn sponsorship or second brings the proposal below the required number the motion is withdrawn,

A withdrawn motion, sponsorship, or second may be reintroduced, either verbally or in writing, by any other delegation.

2.7 Dilatory Motions. The Chair may rule out of order any motion repeating or closely approximating a recent, previous motion on which the Committee or Council has already rendered an opinion,

This ruling is not subject to appeal.

2.8 Rule Priority and Procedure. The rules contained in this document are the official rules of procedure of the GMUMUN and will be used for all Committee and Council sessions,

2.9 Precedence of Rules. Proceedings in the Committee, Council, and General Assembly sessions of GMUMUN shall be conducted under the following precedence of rules;

GMUMUN Rules of Procedure,
GMUMUN GA Precedence Short Form,
Rulings by the Committee Chair,
Rulings by the Secretary General.

2.10 The Order of Precedence of Procedural Motions. The order of precedence of procedural motions is listed, in order of priority in both the GA and Security Council. Precedence Short Form and in these rules under Section 7. These motions, in the order given, have precedence over all other proposals or motions before a Committee, Council, or the General Assembly.

3. Draft Resolutions and Amendments

3.1 Definition of a Draft Resolution. A draft resolution is a proposal consisting of at least one preambular and one operative clause.

3.2 Draft Resolutions.

For a draft resolution to be considered for debate, it must have a minimum of twenty-five percent of the delegations in attendance listed as sponsors or signatories, Draft resolutions should be brought to and signed by the Chair or Vice Chair for acknowledgement upon receipt of the required amount of signatures, After acceptance by the Chair or Vice Chair, draft resolutions shall be processed in the order in which they are received and distributed to all delegations as soon as

feasible,

The Chair shall announce draft resolutions which are available for discussion on the floor as they are ready for distribution,

Once a draft resolution is on the floor for debate, additional sponsors may only be added to that draft resolution with the consent of the original sponsors,

See also 7.14.

3.3 Definition of an Amendment. An amendment is a motion that adds to, deletes from, or revises any part of a draft resolution. An amendment cannot change the nature of a draft resolution.

3.4 Amendments. All amendments must either be agreed upon by all sponsors of the resolution, making it a friendly amendment. It must have fifteen percent of the delegations in attendance listed as sponsors or signatories and not all of the sponsors of the draft resolution agree to the amendment, making it an unfriendly amendment.

An amendment is submitted on an official amendment form to the Committee or Council Chair or Vice Chair for approval. Amendments will be approved if they are legible, organized in content and flow, and in the proper format,

The Chair shall announce the amendments that are available for debate.

Typographical errors will be corrected by the Chair and announced to the body,

One or more amendments may be considered on the floor at any given time,

See also 7.4 and 7.11.

A friendly amendment automatically becomes part of a draft resolution upon receipt by the Chair,

The Chair shall announce the acceptance of a friendly amendment on the first opportunity at which no speaker has the floor.

4. Voting

4.1 Voting Rights. Each member delegation shall have one vote in each Committee or Council on which it is represented,

No Representative or delegation may cast a vote on behalf of another country.

4.2 Simple Majority. Unless otherwise specified in these rules, decisions in Committees

and Councils shall be made by a majority vote of those nations present and voting. If there is an equal division between yes and no votes, the motion fails,

The phrase “present and voting” refers to members casting affirmative or negative votes. Members that cast a final abstention are not voting,

All Security Council votes must have a minimum of nine affirmative votes for passage.

4.4 Method of Voting. Committees and Councils shall normally vote by a show of raised placards. The Chair will grant a request by a delegation for a roll-call vote on any substantive matter.

Roll-call votes, when applicable, shall be called in English alphabetical order beginning with a nation selected at random by the Chair or Vice Chair.

Representatives shall reply “yes,” “no,” “abstain,” or “abstain from the order of voting”.

A nation may abstain from the order of voting once during a roll-call; a second abstention from the order of voting will be recorded as an abstention.

4.5 Conduct During Voting. Immediately prior to a vote, the Chair shall describe to the Committee or Council the item to be voted on, and shall explain the consequences of a “yes” or “no” vote. Voting shall begin upon the Chair’s declaration “we are in voting procedure,” and end when the results of the vote are announced,

Once in voting procedure, no Representative shall interrupt the voting except on a Point of Order or Information concerning the actual conduct of the vote,

Following Closure of Debate, and prior to entering voting procedure, the Chair shall pause briefly to allow delegations the opportunity to make any relevant motions,

Relevant motions prior to a vote include: Suspension of the meeting (7.1),

Adjournment of the Meeting (7.2), Decision of No Action (7.5), Decision of Competence (7.7), Division of the Question (7.10), Important Question (7.13), or Adoption by Consensus (5.3).

4.6 Changes of Votes. At the end of roll-call, but before rights of explanation and the subsequent announcement of the vote, the Chair or Vice Chair will ask for any vote changes. Any delegation that desires to change its recorded vote may do so at that time.

4.7 Rights of Explanation. Rights of explanation shall be granted when a country votes

in a matter not consistent with their foreign policy and are permitted on all substantive votes after voting. Rights of explanation may be limited in time by the Chair.

5. Points of Procedure in Order of Priority

5.1 Point of Order. During the discussion of any matter, a Representative may rise to a Point of Order if he or she believes that the Committee or Council is proceeding in a manner contrary to these rules,

The Representative will be immediately recognized by the Chair, and the point will be ruled on,

If a Representative's ability to participate in Committee or Council deliberations is impaired for any reason, the Representative may rise to a Point of Order,

A Point of Order is the only point that may interrupt a speaker.

5.2 Point of Information. A Point of Information is raised to the Chair if a Representative wishes to obtain a clarification of procedure or a statement of the matters before the Committee or Council,

Representatives may not interrupt a speaker on a Point of Information.

5.3 Point of Inquiry. During substantive debate, a Representative may question a speaker by rising to a Point of Inquiry,

Questions must be directed through the Chair and may be made only after the speaker has concluded his or her remarks, and has yielded to questions.

Representatives may not interrupt a speaker on a Point of Inquiry,

See also 2.3.

6. Procedural Motions in Order of Priority

6.1 Suspension of the Meeting. During the discussion of any matter, a Representative may move to suspend the meeting, except when such a motion would interrupt a speaker. Suspending a meeting recesses it for the time specified in the motion,

A second and a majority vote are required for this motion to pass,

The motion is not debatable,

The Chair may request the mover to modify the time of suspension,

If the motion passes, the Committee or Council, when it reconvenes, will continue its business from the point at which the suspension was moved.

6.2 Adjournment of the Meeting. The motion of adjournment means that all business of the Committee or Council has been completed, and that the Committee or Council will not reconvene until the next annual session,

A second and a majority vote are required for this motion to pass,

This motion is only in order if the Chair entertains the motion;

A motion to adjourn the meeting is not debatable, and will be put to an immediate vote.

6.3 Closure of the Debate. A Representative may move to close debate on an issue before the Committee or Council at any time, except when such a motion would interrupt a speaker,

If closure passes, the item upon which debate was closed will be put to a vote,

A second and a majority vote are required for this motion to pass

Two delegations may speak against closure, and the motion will then be put to a vote,

When discussing an amendment, Representatives should specify whether the motion for closure applies to the amendment in question or to the draft resolution,

If closure passes on the draft resolution, all amendments on the floor will be voted on in the reverse order from which they were moved to the floor,

After voting on all amendments is completed, the draft resolution shall be voted upon in accordance with these rules.

6.4 Appealing a Decision of the Chair. Rulings of the Chair are appealable unless otherwise specified in these rules,

An appeal must be made immediately following the ruling in question,

If the Chair entertains the motion, the Chair shall step down and allow an alternate to handle the proceedings of the motion;

A second and a majority vote are required for this motion to pass

Two delegations may speak in favor of the motion and two in opposition to it,

A “yes” vote supports the Chair’s decision, a “no” vote signifies objection,

The decision of the Chair shall be sustained by a tie,

Rulings by the Chair on the following rules or motions are not appealable: Diplomatic

Courtesy (2.2), Right of Reply (2.5), Dilatory Motions (2.7), granting of a roll-call vote (5.4), Adjournment of the Meeting (7.2), and any time a ruling by the Chair is a direct quote from these rules of procedure.

6.5 Consideration of Agenda Items. Agenda items will be considered in the order in which they appear on the Committees and Topics list, unless that order is altered by the passage of a motion to Change the Order of Consideration of the Agenda Items,

A second and a majority vote are required for this motion to pass,

The motion is not debatable.

6.6 Limits on Debate. A motion to limit or extend the time allotted to each delegation is in order at any time. It may also be moved to limit the time allowed for debate on an agenda topic, a draft resolution, or an amendment. This motion may be proposed by the Chair or a delegation,

A second and a majority vote are required for this motion to pass,

Two delegations may speak in favor of the motion and two in opposition to it.

6.7 Division of the Question. A motion to divide the question, proposing that clauses of an amendment or draft resolution be voted on separately, is in order at any time prior to entering in to voting procedure on it,

A second and a majority vote are required for this motion to pass,

Two delegations may speak in favor of the motion and two in opposition to it,

The first motion for division to receive a majority vote shall determine the order in which the amendment or draft resolution parts are to be voted on. Those clauses of the amendment or draft resolution which are approved shall then be put to a vote as a whole,

If division causes the draft resolution to no longer be in the proper format (see 4.1), the proposal as a whole is rejected.

6.8 Consideration of Amendments. To bring an amendment to the floor for discussion, a delegation must first be recognized by the Chair,

No second is required,

The Chair will present the amendment to the body,

The delegation (s) moving consideration will be allowed to speak first on the

amendment, if it so desires. The delegation(s) will have one minute to present and speak about the amendment.

6.9 Consideration of Draft Resolutions. Draft resolutions with at least twenty-five percent of the signatures of present delegations may be considered on the floor. A draft resolution may be moved to the floor by a Motion for Consideration of a Draft Resolution. More than one draft resolution may be considered on the floor at one time,

A second is required for this motion to pass,

This motion is not debatable,

If the motion passes, the delegation moving consideration will be allowed to speak first on the draft resolution and accept questions for the current speaker's time, if they so desire, they may entertain non-substantive questions from the body.

6.10 Speakers' List A motion to open a speakers' list is in order when a new agenda item is before the body. A second to the motion is required.

6.11 Caucus. A motion for a caucus can be made at any time there is a call for main motions. The motion should include if it is a moderated or unmoderated caucus, the time of the caucus, and the reason for the caucus.