

Rules of Procedure

A Delegate's Guide

9th Session | York Model United Nations



Rules of Procedure (ROP)

What are the ROP?

The ROP are the means by which delegates and chairs participate in their Model United Nations simulation. They provide a framework that all delegates and chairs must adhere to in order to debate correctly within their simulation. ROP's may differ from conference to conference and it is your responsibility to check the ROP of all conferences you attend.

Basic Terminology

Chair(s): The individual(s) chairing the debate

Speakers time: The allocated time given to an individual speaker

General speakers list (GSL): The foundation of the debate off of which the rest of the debate sprouts off of and relies on. Delegates will at the beginning of the conference be allowed to present their nations general belief and prior actions on the topic in the GSL. The hint is in the name 'general', more detailed discussion on particular sub-topics is done within moderated/unmoderated caucuses and similar motions. If the GSL elapses, then the debate is over. All delegates will be placed on the GSL in alphabetical order, once they have spoken, delegates must pass a note to the chair asking to be placed on the GSL once again.

Moderated Caucus: A debate on a particular topic as specified by the delegate proposing it. Only a single speaker is allowed to speak at any time, following which the chair will select the subsequent speaker.

Unmoderated Caucus: A debate where delegates are allowed to mingle and lobby amongst each other, the chair is not involved in the moderation of unmoderated caucuses.

Blocs: Blocs are teams of countries who share a particular viewpoint on how to deal or solve the issue at hand. Forming and managing blocs is key to being successful at Model UN, as the larger blocs hold more voting power.

Our tip: Pass notes to other delegates to build up alliances early on. The quicker you make a bloc, the more powerful you'll become in committee

Working Paper: A rough unformatted document that displays some of the working ideas of a delegate and or bloc within the debate. Use working papers as a way to get a general idea of what your bloc thinks about the topic at hand.

Resolutions: A resolution is the equivalent of a law at the UN level, it is the final product of a committee, and once a resolution has been passed, the topic ends. Passing a resolution is key therefore. A strictly formatted document which organises working paper ideas into clauses, they must include Authors and Signatories.

Procedural: A motion and vote is procedural if it moves debate forward within the framework of the ROP. It is a matter of procedure to open discussion on a topic without regard as to its content.

Our tip: Nearly all of the votes you will do are procedural. An easy way to distinguish procedural from substantive votes is that substantive votes tend to happen at the closing stages of a debate when voting on resolutions and amendments begin.

Substantive: A motion and vote is substantive if it concerns contents for the most part. Voting on whether to adopt a resolution is substantive as it defines the consensus of the committee.

Present/Present & Voting: Delegates at the beginning of the committee will be asked if they are present or present and voting. This question relates to substantive questions. If you are only present you reserve the right to abstain as well as voting for and against on substantive motions. If you are present and voting you cannot abstain you can only vote in favour or against.

Our tip: Always say you are Present, abstentions are powerful tools.

Motions

Delegates *motion* to do something in particular within the debate e.g. *motioning* to open debate. For example, if your debating topic is Regulating UN Peacekeepers, and you want to have a focused discussion on Peacekeepers in Haiti, you can motion for a moderated caucus on that topic.

Voting is separated into two stages; Seconds & Objections and Voting. Once a motion has

been accepted the chair will call for seconds and objections. Seconding/Objecting merely shows interest/disinterest and is not a vote. However, if there are no seconds, the motion fails, furthermore, if there are no objections then the motion is successful with no vote. You cannot second your own motion. Voting takes place if there are both seconds and objection. Votes are cast if there are both seconds and objections.

Some common motions are:

1. Set the agenda (Substantive): When there is more than one topic available, delegates must first motion to set the agenda. Once accepted the chair will take at least one speaker and at most two speakers for and against the setting of the topic. If the motion for that particular topic fails, then the committee immediately begins debate on the other topic.
2. Open the General Speakers List (Procedural): A delegate motions to open the GSL by simply raising their placard. The delegate that proposes the motion gets to speak first. It is successful on a simple majority. The time can also be set via motion however, by default it is 90 seconds.
3. Motion to enter a Moderated Caucus (Procedural): A delegate motions to enter a moderated caucus by stating a topic, the total duration of the moderated caucus and the individual speakers time. Moderated caucuses cannot exceed 20 minutes and there must be at least 2 speakers. A common moderated caucus will be 5 minutes with a 30 second individual speakers time.
4. Motion to enter an Unmoderated Caucus (Procedural): A delegate motions to enter an unmoderated caucus by only stating a duration. Unmoderated caucuses cannot exceed 20 minutes.
5. Extensions (Procedural): Delegates can extend previous motions up until their limit e.g. 20 and 20 for moderated and unmoderated caucuses respectively. For example, if you have just finished a 10 minute unmoderated caucus, you can extend it by another ten minutes.

Points

Points allow you to clarify issues. They are not voted on and must be instantly addressed by the chair.

Delegates can raise *points* to do many things, however the most basic are:

1. Points of personal privilege: A delegate can raise a point of personal privilege if they find something is inhibiting them from debating effectively e.g. opening a window if it's too hot.

2. Points of order: A delegate can raise a point of order when they believe some previous action by the chair was not in accordance with the rules.
3. Points of clarification/inquiry: Used for when a delegate has a question about anything, often the ROP. If you are unsure about anything in committee, raise this point, your chairs will be more than happy to explain things to you.

The flow of debate

A typical debate will take the following flow of debate:

1. Roll call, where the delegates state whether they are present or present and voting
2. Setting of the agenda.
3. Opening of the General Speakers list
4. General Speakers List (General debate)
5. Moderated Caucuses (Specific issues are raised and discussed)
6. Unmoderated Caucuses (Delegates begin to lobby and form alliances)
7. Working Papers (Delegates use their time in unmoderated caucuses to collaborate and write solutions).
8. Draft Resolutions (Delegates finalise and format their ideas into a draft resolution)
9. Voting (Delegates lobby to ensure they have enough votes to pass their draft resolution, and voting procedure begins).

Ideally, delegates should only be on the GSL at the beginning of the conference, delegates should aim to use moderated and unmoderated caucuses to further their countries position and lobby other delegates as often as possible.