

RULES AND REGULATIONS

Given that the Vancouver Youth Model United Nations is designed for inexperienced delegates, the committee staff will be reviewing all rules and regulations prior to the first committee session. Additionally staff will be guiding delegates over the course of the conference.

These rules are provisional and are subject to change before conference. They apply to all General Assembly Committees and all Specialized Agencies. These rules have been annotated to help delegates and advisors understand them.

Rule 1: Language

English shall be the only working language of the conference.

By working language, we mean the language that delegates use in committee sessions and caucuses. We allow delegates to use phrases from languages other than English in speeches, but the content of the speech must be understandable to all delegates. We strongly oppose the use of affected accents, which are found by many to be wholly unnecessary and often insulting.

Rule 2: Courtesy

Delegates shall show courtesy and respect to all staff and delegates. Delegates shall be attentive to those who hold the floor and shall maintain decorum during all sessions of the committee. The Moderator shall call to order immediately all delegates who fail to comply with this rule.

Rule 3: Credentials

Every registered delegation has had its credentials reviewed and accepted by the Secretary-General. Challenges to the credentials of any member should be addressed in writing to the Secretariat.

We do not allow delegates to challenge each other's credentials in committee, as it causes unnecessary disruption and is impolite. When a delegate is out of policy, he will be corrected by the Chair, the Information Staff, or the Undersecretaries-General for Committees, but never publicly in front of the entire committee. Complaints about the delegates being out of policy should be made directly to the Secretariat.

Rule 4: Non-Members

Representatives of Accredited Observers shall have all the rights of Member States, except those of voting on resolutions or amendments. A representative of a state or organization which is neither an Accredited Observer nor a Member of the United Nations may address the committee only with the approval of the chair.

Rule 5: Statements by the Secretariat

The Secretary-General or any representative of the Secretariat may address the committee at any time, superseding all other rules of procedure.

Rule 6: Staff

The Secretary-General shall appoint the Undersecretaries-General, Chairs, Moderators, Assistant Chairs, Information Staff, and Administrative staff, who shall hold office until the close of the conference.

Rule 7: Duties and Powers of the Committee Staff

The committee staff takes responsibility for the duties of a Chair, a Moderator, and/or Assistant Chairs.

The Chair shall open and close each session, and may limit speaking time; limit the speakers' list; and decide the propriety of any procedural motion. The Chair also has the final word on all substantive matters of the committee.

The Moderator shall direct debate; grant the right to speak; put questions; announce decisions on points of order; and insure and enforce observance of these rules of procedure.

The Chair and Assistant Chairs may advise delegates on courses of debate.

If the Chair is absent, the Moderator shall assume all duties of the Chair. If the Moderator is absent, the Chair, or a designated member of the committee staff shall assume all functions of the Moderator. The Moderator may also temporarily transfer moderating duties to another member of the committee staff at any time.

Rule 8: Voting

Only delegates who have been recorded as present in the latest roll call may vote. A motion which requires a "simple majority" passes only if the number of delegates voting in favour of the motion exceeds the number voting against. If equal numbers vote for and against, the motion fails. A motion which requires a "two-thirds majority" passes only if the number of delegates voting in favour of the motion equals or exceeds twice the number voting against. The number of abstentions shall not be considered in determining the results of the vote. Member States may vote on both procedural and substantive issues, while Accredited Observers may vote only on procedural issues; all eligible delegations have an equal vote. Proxy votes are not allowed.

Placard votes shall be taken on substantive matters unless there is a motion made for a roll call vote. Roll call votes are not in order when deciding a procedural motion. Once the committee enters voting procedure, only points of order concerning the conduct of voting will be accepted. During voting on amendments and resolutions absolute decorum will be maintained: the chamber will be secured, and no one but a member of the Secretariat may enter or exit the room except in cases of emergency.

Depending on the motion, a simple majority or two-thirds majority may be required. The rules clearly define which majority is required to pass each motion. Two-thirds majorities are required on some motions to allow the minority to retain a voice in proceedings.

The method of calculating majorities is conventional, and is taken from Robert's Rules of Order. Unlike some older variants of parliamentary procedure, abstentions are not counted for determining a two-thirds majority on a question.

Only delegates' present at the most recent roll call may vote. This encourages promptness! Are you prompt? It also adds an incentive for tardy delegations to register with the dais when they arrive, allowing for accurate attendance reports. There are no proxy votes.

Because of their speed, placard votes are encouraged on all matters except resolutions. Securing the chamber implies that no one – and I mean no one, Honey! – is allowed to enter or leave the committee room including, but not limited to, delegates, advisors, and visitors. The only exceptions are members of the Secretariat or Facility Management. An attempt is usually made to warn all delegates outside the chamber caucusing when a move to close debate is imminent, but is not always possible. Therefore, it behooves the individual delegate to keep up with the formal debate and not lose voting privileges on an important issue by ignoring parliamentary proceedings. We request the assistance of advisors in keeping voting procedures solemn and dignified by obeying these procedures and encouraging your students to do so as well.

Rule 9: Quorum

The Chair may declare the committees open when a quorum (at least one quarter of its members) is present. The presence of a quorum shall be assumed unless specifically challenged. Any delegate may call for quorum if its presence is in doubt, at which point, a placard count of delegates is taken. Roll call is not required to determine the presence of a quorum.

The most common failure in achieving quorum is immediately following the expiration of a caucus, at which time the caucus will either be extended (if the Chair deems it productive) or an attempt will be made to gather delegates back into the chambers. VYMUN will never dismiss a committee for the remainder of a session, or even part of a session because quorum could not be maintained.

Rule 10: Agenda

The first task of the committee shall be the determination of the order of topics on the agenda. The only motion in order when the committee is first called to session is a motion to set the agenda, in the form, "I move that topic X be placed first on the agenda".

The motion to set the agenda requires a second and is debatable. Debate may proceed until it is formally closed. The Chair may limit the speakers' list at his discretion, but a minimum of two speakers for and two against must be heard before a motion to close debate is in order. When debate is closed, the committee will move to an immediate vote on the motion. A simple majority is necessary for passage. Since it is a procedural motion, abstentions are not in order. If the motion passes, the topic area named in the motion will be placed first on the agenda, and debate on this topic begins immediately. If there are more than two topics, a motion to set the agenda to another topic is acceptable; if all but one topic has been moved and failed, the remaining topic is automatically placed first on the agenda.

Please be aware that a motion to set the agenda simply determines which topic the committee will debate first; it does not omit a topic from a committee's consideration entirely.

Rule 11: Debate and Speakers' List

After the agenda has been determined, a single continuously opened speakers' list shall be established for the purposes of general debate on substantive issues. Speakers on this list speak on the topic area being considered and any resolution currently on the floor. This speakers' list may be followed for all procedural motions and amendments. A delegation may add its name to the speakers' list at any time when it is not already on the list by submitting a written request to the dais. The top of the speakers' list shall always be posted for the convenience of the committee.

Keeping a speakers' list has a number of purposes: the speakers' list serves to inform delegates of when speaking time is approaching, thereby giving speakers time to prepare and polish their remarks before taking the floor; it guarantees all committee members an opportunity to address the committee if they so wish; finally, it lets the dais take its time in drawing up the list rather than responding to a sea of placards every time a speech ends, the dais is able to choose delegates at once sitting in all parts of the room and from all blocs, disabling any biases that might creep into a speech-by-speech procedure. Delegations may hand their names to the dais as soon as they have finished a speech to immediately be placed again on the list; however, no delegate may appear on the list twice.

Rule 12: Speeches

No representative may address a session without having been recognized by the Moderator or Chair. The Moderator or Chair may call a speaker to order if his remarks are not relevant to the topic or the issue under discussion.

Speakers not being germane to the topic at hand will be called to order, usually by the dais, but sometimes by a delegate rising to a point of order on the floor. The dais will reprimand delegates who persistently interrupt speeches as being non-germane without apparent basis.

Delegations, not delegates, are recognized to speak. Hence a two person delegation may approach the microphone at one time if they desire. This modus operandi is not often effective, but it is an allowed practice.

Rule 13: Speaking Time

The time allowed for speeches will be set by the Chair at his sole discretion. If a speaker speaks past his allotted time, the Moderator shall immediately call him to order.

Speaking time begins as soon as the speaker is recognized so that the committee's time is not lost to long approaches to the front of the chamber. Delegates who continue to speak past the allotted time will not be tolerated. A delegate may rise to a Point of Parliamentary Inquiry and ask the Chair to change the speaking time, but this remains at the Chairs' sole discretion.

Rule 14: Yields

A delegate who has been granted the right to speak on a substantive issue (a topic area or amendment) may yield the remainder of his time to another delegate, to question, or to the chair. Delegate speaking on procedural matters may not yield. If a speaker yields, comments on his speech are not in order. There are three types of yields.

1. Yielding to another delegate. The delegate who is yielded to may speak for the remaining time, but may not make any yields.
2. Yielding to questions. Delegates who wish to ask questions of the speaker will raise their placards, and questioners shall be selected by the Moderator. Only the speaker's responses shall be deducted from the speaking time.
3. Yielding to the chair. The speaker's time will simply end.

A delegate may yield at any point during his speech, but yielding at the beginning of the speech is preferred.

Yields cannot be made on procedural speeches. Yields made to another delegate or to questions are considered an extension of the substantive speech; thus, only Points of Personal Privilege or Points of Order can interrupt them (see Order of Precedence at the end of this manual). Delegates and staff alike must be watchful during the questioning process to make sure that proper precedence is followed. Once yielded to, a delegate cannot yield again. Only the speaker's responses to questions are deducted from the remaining speaking time. There is no limit on the number of questions asked, and a delegate, if he chooses to do so, may spend his entire allotted speaking time answering questions asked, and a delegate, if chooses to do so, may spend his entire allotted speaking time answering questions. A delegate may ignore a question at his prerogative. Questioners who try to make speeches while questioning will be called to order, as will questions put that are not germane. Rhetorical questions are allowed as long as the question does not grow lengthy. No dialogue is allowed during the questioning process. The best place to carry out lengthy discussions is in caucus and not in formal session.

Rule 15: Point of Personal Privilege

If at any time a delegate experiences personal discomforts which impair his ability to participate in the proceedings, he may rise to a Point of Personal Privilege to request that the discomfort be corrected.

A Point of Personal Privilege may interrupt a speech. However, the delegates are urged to exercise this ability with extreme discretion.

The reason that a Point of Personal Privilege is highest in precedent among all other points and motions is because it can be used to notify the body of emergencies threatening the safety of the assembly, and to inform the dais if the speaker cannot be heard. Only with these two purposes in mind should a delegate use a Point of Personal Privilege to interrupt a speech.

Rule 16: Point of Order

If at any time a delegate feels that parliamentary procedure is not being followed properly, he may rise to a Point of Order. The Moderator shall immediately decide upon Points of Order according to these rules of procedure. The Moderator may rule out of order those points that are dilatory or improper.

A Point of Order may interrupt a speaker only when the speech itself is not following proper parliamentary procedure. Delegates are urged to exercise this ability with extreme discretion.

Both delegates and staff will accept corrections procedural errors eagerly when offered in a Point of Order with graciousness.

Rule 17: Comments

The Moderator may recognize two delegates other than the speaker to comment on any substantive speech. Comments are only in order after substantive speeches without yields, and are considered part of a substantive speech for purposes of precedence. Commentators may not yield and must keep their comments germane to the speech they are commenting upon.

Comments take precedence over a Point of Parliamentary Inquiry.

Comments are treated as a continuation of the speech for a precedence purposes; thus, only Points of Personal Privilege and Points of Order can interrupt them. One of the most common failures of delegates to follow procedure is not directly addressing the speech upon which they are supposed to be commenting. Delegates and staff should be particularly watchful to ensure that all comments made are germane to the substantive speech they follow. It is not possible to comment on a comment.

Rule 18: Point of Parliamentary Inquiry

If the floor is open and a delegate has question regarding parliamentary procedure, he may rise to a Point of Parliamentary Inquiry. The question will be answered immediately by the Moderator.

A Point of Parliamentary Inquiry may never interrupt a speaker.

Delegates uncertain of the validity of a motion should inquire using a Point of Parliamentary Inquiry prior to making the motion.

Rule 19: Right of Reply

A delegate whose personal or national integrity has been seriously impugned by the speech of another delegate may request a Right of Reply. The Chair's decision to grant this right is at his sole discretion and is not appealable. The length of the reply is also at the Chair's discretion. A request for a Right of Reply cannot interrupt a substantive speech.

A motion for a Right of Reply to a reply is out of order.

Delegates are severely cautioned against making remarks that warrant a Right of Reply to utter equally belligerent statements. However, we continue to include this right since it permits impugned individuals to reassert their dignity and gain catharsis in a civilized manner.

Rule 20: Informal Session

A delegate may move to recess to informal session, or caucus, at any time when the floor is open, prior to closure of debate. The motion to recess to informal session shall immediately be put to a vote; a simple majority is required for passage. The motioning delegate must specify a time limit for caucus and briefly explain its purpose. The time limit is subject to the Chair's approval. The Chair may rule the motion out of order.

Delegates are urged to remember to put forth the two necessary pieces of information when making a Motion for Informal Sessions:

1. The length of time that the proposed session will last;
2. The purpose of the session.

Rule 21: Working Papers

Working papers are a means of sharing ideas on the topic with other delegates in an organized manner. A Working Paper may be, but is not require to be, in resolution format. Working papers may be copied and distributed at the Chair's discretion; he may require any number of delegates' signatures for this purpose. Signing a working paper does not necessarily signify a delegates' support for the ideas within it; rather, it merely shows the delegates' desire to see the ideas discussed by the entire committee. Delegates may propose Working Papers for the Committee's consideration in any designated topic area. Because a Working Paper cannot be formally introduced to the committee, it may not be formally amended. Instead, caucusing sessions shall be used for the purpose of combining and amending Working Papers. Working Papers shall not be voted on by the Committee.

NO Working Papers written before the Conference will be accepted.

The Committee may pass no more than one resolution per topic area. NO resolutions written before the Conference will be accepted.

Rule 22: Introducing Resolutions

At any time when the floor is open, a delegate may introduce a resolution on the topic area under consideration. Delegates may introduce a resolution when it has the approval of the Chair and has been signed by any prescribed number of members. Signing a resolution does not indicate support of the resolution, only a desire to see its ideas discussed; a signatory to a resolution has no further rights or obligations with respect to the resolution. There are no sponsors of resolutions. No special substantive comments are in order when a resolution is introduced, but the resolution shall immediately become subject to debate.

Once a resolution has been introduced it remains on the floor and may be debated until the Committee closes debate on it, the Committee moves to the next topic area, or an amendment or procedural issue takes precedence.

A resolution is considered property of the committee. There are no individual owners or sponsors of substantive documents at VYMUN.

Rules 23 – 28: Amendments and Closure of Debate

Rules vary from committee to committee. Please check with your dais staff.

Rule 29: Procedure for Roll Call Votes

After debate is closed on any resolution or amendment, any delegate may request a roll call vote. This motion must be seconded by fifteen Members of the Committee. A roll call vote is in order for substantive votes. In a roll call vote, the Moderator shall call the roll in alphabetical order starting with a randomly selected Member of the Committee. A delegate may vote Yes, No, Abstain, or Pass. Delegates who vote Yes or No may request rights of explanation to explain their vote to the committee. Delegates who Pass will be

returned to during the second round of voting; these delegates must vote Yes, No, or Abstain during the second sequence, and may not request rights of explanation. After all votes have been cast, delegates who requested rights of explanation will be allowed to explain their votes. Finally, the Moderator shall announce the outcome of the vote. Roll call votes are not in order on procedural matters.

Rule 30: Suspension of the Rules

A delegate may move to suspend the rules at any time when the floor is open, after the general speakers list has been opened. The delegate must specify what specific rules will be modified or discarded, to what purpose, and for what period. This motion will be accepted at the discretion of the Chair. The Chair's decision is not appealable. If the Chair accepts the motion to suspend the rules, an immediate vote will be taken. This motion requires a two-thirds majority for passage. Delegates are urged to use this motion sparingly.

The rules may be suspended to facilitate debate or to deal with unexpected occurrences. Suspensions are often used to move into form of moderated informal session or to hear an address by an expert or eyewitness.

Rule 31: Adjournment of the Meeting

If the floor is open, it is the last session of the Conference, and there are less than thirty minutes remaining, a delegate may move to adjourn the meeting. This motion ends all committee functions until for the duration for the Conference. This motion is not debatable and, if in order, shall be put to an immediate placard votes. A simple majority is required for passage. The Chair may rule this motion out of order at his discretion; this decision is not appealable.