

Rules of Procedure

summary



ATUMUN, October 2024

Introduction

For delegates who are new to the practice of Model United Nations (MUN), it is very normal to find the rules of procedure confusing, and so merely reading them may not necessarily lead to understanding them. It may look like gibberish, or some foreign language, and no matter how many times they are read over, they still cannot be placed in context. If that is the case for you, worry not, for MUN is like a sport: the best way to learn it is to practise it, and the rules will quickly become second nature.

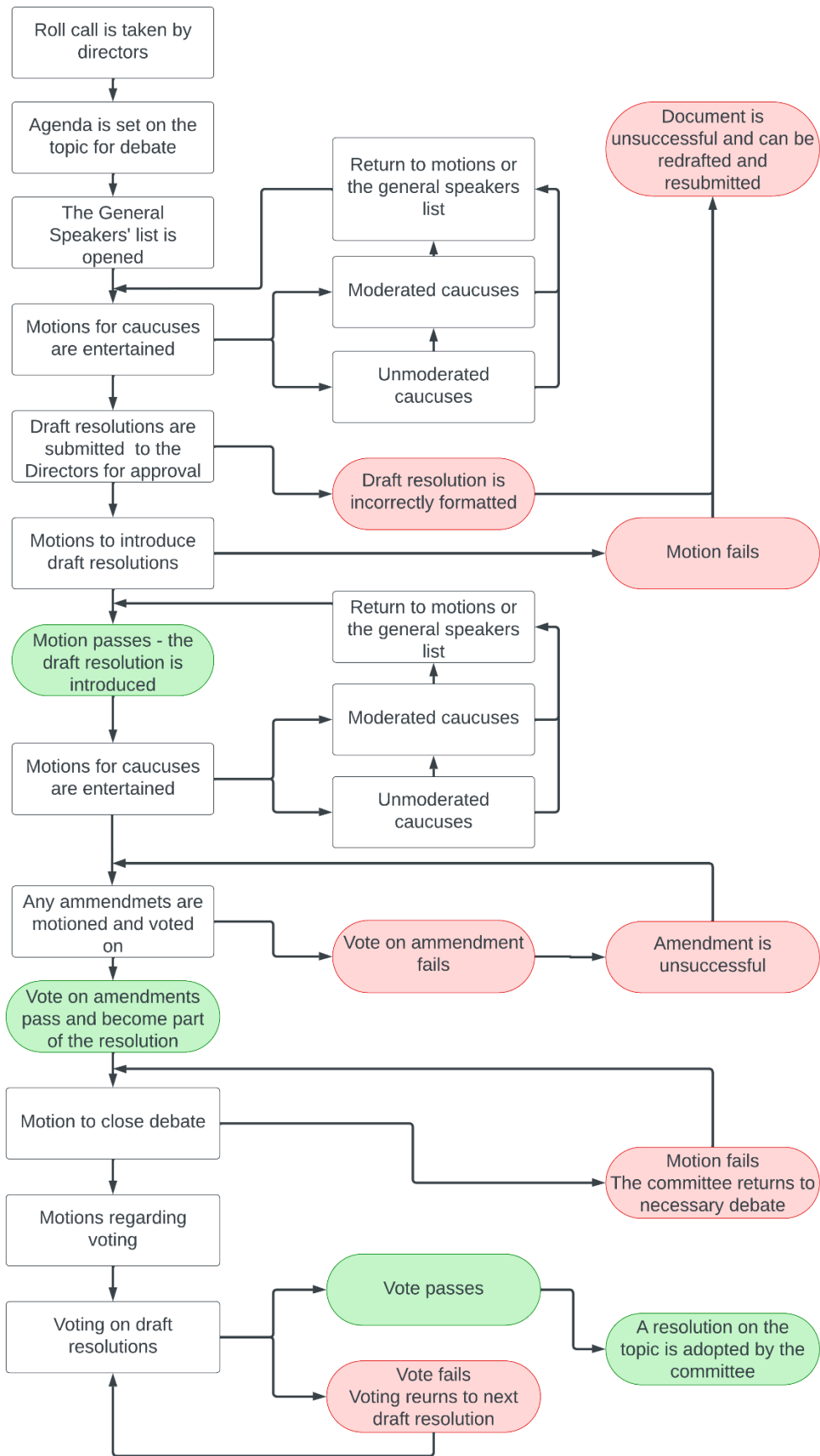
This guide will go through the jargon and show you the bigger picture, how you can expect debate to flow from start to end. The official ATUMUN Rules of Procedure document is of course the authoritative document on debate procedure, but for your convenience, you can keep this much shorter guide open during debate to help you keep track of what's going on. If you are reading the RoP for the first time, you can have this guide on the side to help you grasp some more difficult concepts.

Throughout this summary guide, you'll find a series of text boxes; these give you definitions of key MUN terms and can be helpful to keep on hand during committee.

Contents

Introduction	2
Contents	3
The ATUMUN Debate Flow	4
1. The Start of Debate: Setting the Agenda	5
2. Backbone of Debate: The General Speakers' List	5
3. Caucuses	6
4. Draft Resolutions and Amendments	7
5. Closure of Debate and Resolutions	8
Summary of Motions	10
The Language of MUN	11

The ATUMUN Debate Flow



1. The Start of Debate: Setting the Agenda

Upon the opening of debate, after the Dais¹ will have performed Roll Call and established quorum, the first motion to be entertained is that of setting the agenda.

At ATUMUN, most committees will have one topic to consider and some might have two. In the case where the committee has only one topic, there can be no objections to the Motion to Set the Agenda. Once this motion is raised, the chairs shall automatically entertain it, announcing the topic and declaring debate open. Committees with two topics however shall entertain objections to the Motion to Set the Agenda and move into necessary procedural voting if needed. By no means must a committee cover both topics over the course of the conference weekend.

Quorum:

The minimum amount of delegates that need to be present for the session to proceed. At ATUMUN, that is one-third (1/3) of the house.

Seconds:

Vocal expressions of support, from one or more delegates, in favour of another delegate's motion. An objection is the reverse.

2. Backbone of Debate: The General Speakers' List

Once the agenda is set, debate on a specific topic may commence. The Dais will proceed with establishing the General Speakers' List, which is the order in which delegates may speak about the topic in general – that is, they may discuss anything related to the topic, not being bound to any specific aspect of it. The time-limit for speeches is at the discretion of the Dais (but usually 60 seconds long), and delegates may place themselves on the List by raising their placards when asked to, or by subsequent notes to the Dais.

If one finishes their speech before their time has elapsed, they may yield their time to points of information, to another delegate, or back to the dais. The General Speakers' List is, essentially, the backbone of debate upon which the whole of deliberation in committee-sessions is based.

This is the case for two reasons. First, it is through such general debate that delegates share initial ideas on the topic, enabling the committee to identify its key aspects and primary areas of contention. These are subsequently discussed in more depth through caucuses (see below) and

ought to be addressed in successful resolutions. Second, the List is kept throughout debate on the agenda item, being only disposed of when a resolution on the item is adopted; hence any other

¹ Dais, in this case, refers to the directors/chairs of a committee as a collective

types of debate, whether caucuses or on amendments, are considered temporary departures from the List, and the List is reverted back to whenever there are no motions.

Yield:

The act of one delegate giving their remaining speaking time up for points of information, to another delegate, or back to the committee Directors

Point of Information:

A question a delegate can ask a speaker on the General Speakers' List (if time allows it and upon designation of the Director) for the purpose of clarification.

3. Caucuses

Even though the General Speakers' List is the backbone of the debate, it often gives way to motions for caucuses which form a big part of debate. There are two kinds of caucuses: moderated and unmoderated, where the former is topic-specific debate under constraints, like under the General Speakers' List (however not to be confused with the General Speakers List), and the latter is informal, free debate.

A motion for either caucus must specify a time limit. For moderated caucuses delegates must additionally specify a particular subject of debate – one aspect of the agenda item to focus discussion on – and the time allocated to each individual speaker.

In a moderated caucus the Dais establish another speakers' list, delegates remain at their seats, are allocated limited speaking time, all have to await their turn, and must keep their speeches relevant to the subject specified by the motion. In an unmoderated caucus such regulations do not exist – delegates may freely leave their seats and conduct discussion as they wish.

A motion for a caucus requires a second, and can be made whenever the Dais call upon motions, which they will do, for the first time, at their discretion after a number of speeches from the General Speakers' List, and subsequently whenever the floor is open again (unless they propose other motions, like a suspension of the meeting for lunch). They shall accept a certain number of motions at their discretion (usually three or four), which will be voted upon according to the order of precedence specified in chapter III in the Rules of Procedure.

Unmoderated caucuses have precedence over moderated caucuses. This is the case because of the level of disruptiveness, where unmoderated caucuses are deemed more disruptive than moderated ones. If two or more motions for moderated caucuses have the same specified length, voting order is up to the discretion of the Dais.

In sessions, caucuses bring debate forward in two ways. First, moderated caucuses serve to concentrate discussion of the committee on particular aspects of the broader topic, which the proposer deems important.

Such aspects will have generally been identified by the proposers earlier under general debate, and discussion focused thereon allows delegates to look more deeply into the matters and begin to formulate potential solutions. This gradually results in draft resolutions, and ultimately to the adoption of a resolution.

Second, unmoderated caucuses are usually entertained after a series of moderated ones, leading delegates to desire (a) identify in blocs what matters to them most and how they intend to put forth their views and (b) start generating draft resolutions.

Thus, in order to have a fruitful unmoderated caucus, you must put in the political and diplomatic work in the formal debate, as to create the grounds of your unmoderated negotiations; as a delegate, you do not have long to get your point across and thus you must focus on using not only one tool available to you.

Precedence:

The state of one motion or point having priority over another or others. A motion that has precedence over another is to be voted upon sooner than the other.

Disruptiveness:

The condition and extent to which a motion interrupts debate of the General Speakers' List.

4. Draft Resolutions and Amendments

Debate ultimately flows towards solving the problem at hand – or, more realistically, towards a partial solution that has filtered through layers of compromise. Before a resolution² can be adopted, two steps need be gone through: 1) generating draft resolutions, and 2) amending draft resolutions. They usually start coming into being after a series of moderated caucuses and one unmoderated caucus, as they are the products of many ideas being wound together by multiple delegates.

A draft resolution needs sponsors and signatories, amounting to one-fifth (1/5) of the quorum. Meaning at least one-fifth of those present has been part of writing the resolution or has chosen to sign it, in support of seeing the draft resolution debated. Furthermore, the dais needs to review and approve any draft resolutions.

² A resolution is a documents on an agenda item which makes an attempt at solving – or, at least, at alleviating – the problem at hand

Once a draft resolution has gathered support from one-fifth of the quorum, and has been approved by the dais, one of the sponsors can motion to introduce a draft resolution. A motion to introduce a draft resolution can be made whenever the floor is open and a delegate has been recognised by the Dais

Such moves for introduction need a simple majority to pass, after which the draft is distributed to all delegates. Before the vote, its operative clauses are read out by one or more of the sponsors. Note that a motion to introduce a draft resolution is only about whether the draft in question is worth discussing, not about whether it should be adopted by the committee; thus, multiple drafts may be introduced but only one can be adopted in the end. It should also be remembered that delegates are appearing as *diplomats*, and refusing to entertain other Draft Resolutions than your own is undiplomatic.

Once a draft resolution is introduced, it is likely that delegates will call upon moderated caucuses to consider the draft's content, and unmoderated caucuses so as to facilitate the writing of amendments. Amendments are changes to the draft resolution, which any and all delegates may propose to make. They need to be submitted to the Dais in writing, who must approve them. When the floor is open, a delegate may move to introduce their amendment, needing a simple majority, after which the Dais establish a speakers' list with at least one in favour and one against. Upon the closure of debate on that amendment, delegates will vote on whether to accept or reject the proposed change to the resolution – if over half the votes of the committee are in favour the amendment becomes an integral part of the draft resolution.

Sponsors:

The authors of a (draft) resolution. No more than five (5) countries can be sponsors on any single (draft) resolutions.

Signatories:

Supporters of a (draft) resolution

Operative clauses:

The clauses of a (draft) resolution that can bring engagements into effect.

5. Closure of Debate and Resolutions

After amendments have been discussed, it is likely that a delegate will call for a motion to close debate, which serves to end all debate on the agenda item considered - or, in other words, a motion to enter voting procedures.

A substantive vote is then taken for the motion to pass, it needs the support of two-thirds (2/3) of the delegates present (a supermajority). This is when voting takes place on draft resolutions. If

there is more than one draft, they will be voted on in order of introduction (from first to last) unless a motion to reorder draft resolutions is called upon. Voting on resolutions is special, called substantive votes whereas all other votes are merely procedural, for delegates may choose to vote in favour, against, or abstain from voting.

Summary of Motions

The following list of motions is in most to least superseding order.

Motion	Procedural vote with speakers	Majority required for motion to pass?
General debate		
Setting the agenda	Yes	1/2
Adjournment of the meeting	No	1/2
Suspension of the meeting	No	1/2
Closure of debate	Yes	2/3
Introduce a draft resolution	No	1/2
Introduce an amendment	No	1/2
Introduce a friendly amendment	No	1/2
Extension of a caucus	No	1/2
Unmoderated caucus	No	1/2
Moderated caucus	No	1/2
Voting procedure		
Divide the question	No	1/2
Reorder draft resolutions	No	1/2
Divide the house	No	2/3
Roll call vote	No	1/2
Appeals		
Question the competence of the committee	Yes	2/3
Appeal decision of the Dais	No	2/3

The Language of MUN

When you enter a ATUMUN Committee session, you will hear the Chairs and your fellow delegates using language forms that may sound too formal or even slightly awkward – welcome to the world of simulating formal discussions! It doesn't have to be that hard though. Below, you can find a table that lists the most popular MUN phrases and their use:

MUN stock phrase	Explanation
The House will now come to order.	Chair is calling the delegates to take their seats and quiet down.
The Chair calls upon X (the submitter/ speaker) to take the floor.	The chair asks X to make a speech.
X has the floor.	X has the right to speak.
All points are out of order until the speaker has concluded his/her speech.	No points can be raised until the speaker has finished.
X you have been recognised. Please rise and state your point.	X has the right to speak – they must stand up to deliver their speech.
Will you please rephrase your point?	Points have to be succinct – delegates will be asked to rephrase if their question is unclear or if it is a statement.
Are there any further points/motions on the floor?	Chair asks if delegates would like to propose anything else apart from those already raised.
There is a Point of Order on the floor. Please rise and state your point.	As with speeches, delegates must stand up when they are asked to raise a point.
Will the speaker please make their concluding remarks?	Chair asking a speaker running overtime to conclude their speech.
Time has now elapsed.	No more time remaining on the current caucus
Honourable chairs, fellow delegates, [...]	The best way to begin your speech.
All points are out of order.	No delegate can raise a point at the present time.
Will all those in favour/against of the resolution/amendment, please raise their placards.	Delegates always vote by raising their placard.
Will all those abstaining please raise their placards.	
With X votes for, Y votes against, and Z abstentions, this resolution passes. Clapping is in order.	In a session, clapping is considered disorderly! Only if a resolution passes is clapping allowed; if it fails, there's no clapping!

You may always direct questions on the rules of procedure to the sitting Secretariat at atumunsekretariat@gmail.com.