



**International Students' Group**  
**international lounge manager handbook**



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# table of contents

what is the ISG?	4
your position	5
general intro to the Simon Fraser Student Society	6
a guide to Lounge-keeping	8
notes	11
appendix	13

## what is the ISG?

The International Students' Group (ISG) is a constituency group under the rules and regulations of the Simon Fraser Student Society, born to protect the interests of a significant minority on campus.

The ISG represents and defends international students' interests by taking action against differential fees, and for hassle-free, need-based bursaries, lobbying for consideration of internationals' situation in allocating on-campus housing, and representing international students on the National Students Council and on the SFSS Forum, as well as in front of the university administration and the wider community.

We help out in welcoming and befriending new international students, monitoring the International Student Lounge, working closely with SFU International on International Student Orientation activities every semester and, last but not least, setting up social events: Pub Nights, karaoke nights, potlucks, dinners, etc.

## how does the ISG work?

The ISG works through meetings and, although we encourage consensus decision-making, we use a form of Robert's Rules of Order to conduct our meetings. As we seek the support of most meeting attendees for any decisions we take, participating in our general and committee meetings is the best way for you to be represented by the Group, and to bring your problems as an international student to our attention.

## membership

Membership in the ISG is automatic for international students at SFU, that is, visa students who have been in Canada for at most two consecutive years. Membership is also open to anyone who self-identifies as an international student (e.g. long-term international students and landed immigrants).

All members of the SFU community and beyond are welcome to attend our meetings and events, up to the discretion of the executive. There is no membership fee.

## ISG history

The International Students' Group was created in March 2003, in response to a significant tuition increase for international students at Simon Fraser University.

In September 2003, Bocar Dia, a Business and Computing Science Major from Senegal, became President of the Group. The ISG focused on registration issues, off-campus work for internationals, and starting lobbying Financial Assistance to work towards a more transparent treatment of bursary applications.

Giovanna Di Sauro, a Molecular Biology and Biochemistry student from Italy, became President of the Group in September 2004. In October, the Group presented the International Lounge Proposal to the SFU administration, and obtained the assignment of funds and a dedicated space for the Lounge. Follow-up work by Di Sauro, Dia, Shadmehr, and other volunteers made the opening of the Lounge possible.

Ramin Shadmehr, an Interactive Arts Iranian student with a strong focus on social events and Orientation, was elected President in September 2005. Di Sauro was re-elected in September 2006 to work on the introduction of new volunteer positions, a volunteer program, and a more decisive advocacy stand.

## your position

The International Lounge Manager is one of the ISG Staff Members. Staff Members are responsible for very important tasks, and they can be either appointed by the Executive or elected. Staff positions are subjected to change according to the organization's needs. The Staff need to be international students as defined by SFU, or self-identified international students in good standing and members of the SFSS.

The Manager must commit a minimum of 5 hours/week, and volunteer for at least 1 hour/week in the International Lounge on week days. The Manager must make sure that Lounge users abide by Lounge rules, monitor Lounge activities and Lounge volunteers. The Manager is in charge of recruiting volunteers for the International Lounge and setting up the volunteer schedule, and s/he is the main ISG contact with SFU International for all International Lounge issues. The Manager is a member of the Office and Lounge Committee and must attend all scheduled meetings.

The Office and Lounge Committee must include the President, the Office Administrator, the Lounge Manager, the Office Volunteers and the Lounge Volunteers. This Committee is responsible for office and Lounge volunteering, recruitment, schedule set-up, office and Lounge maintenance.

# general introduction to the Simon Fraser Student Society (SFSS)

*Extract from [www.sfss.ca](http://www.sfss.ca)*

The Simon Fraser Student Society is the student union at Simon Fraser University. Located on the second floor of the Maggie Benston Centre, the Student Society offers a wide range of advocacy and services to its members, the students of SFU.

## history

Registered in 1967, the Student Society has maintained a long tradition of students working together to improve quality of life for all students. Throughout its history, the Society has fought against tuition increases and fought for student rights.

## a democratic structure

The Student Society is governed by the Board of Directors, all of whom are democratically elected each year by the student body. The Board is comprised of the Society's Executive, a representative from each faculty, two at-large student representatives and an at-large graduate student representative. The Board's main task is to set priorities and policies for the Society, with the input of Forum and the standing committees of the Society.

## committees

The Student Society has a number of committees that allow members direct input into the decisions of the Society.

## student unions and graduate caucuses

Each department, faculty or school has a student union, which all students who study a course in that department, faculty or school is a part of. Each student union elects a representative to Forum, the advisory body of the Society. This member acts as a liaison between the Board and their student union.

## canadian federation of students

Students at Simon Fraser University are members of Local 23 of the Canadian Federation of Students, a partnership of more than 70 student associations across the country. Through the Canadian Federation of Students, SFU students receive benefits such as the International Student Identity Card (ISIC), the Studentsaver discount card, and strong representation for student rights at both the Federal and Provincial levels. For more information about the Canadian Federation of Students, visit [www.cfs-fcee.ca](http://www.cfs-fcee.ca).

## constitution of the Simon Fraser Student Society

PDF document is available on [www.sfss.ca](http://www.sfss.ca)

## constituency groups as part of the Simon Fraser Student Society

Administrative Policy 17 (AP-17), PDF document is available on [www.sfss.ca](http://www.sfss.ca)

## contacting the Student Society

### ISG Forum Representative

The ISG Forum Representative is the member of the ISG Executive who will be attending the SFSS Forum Meetings. Only constituencies, departments and Departmental Student Union (DSU) Representatives have the privilege to sit on Forum. No student club has such a direct access to the Board of the Student Society. The aim of the Forum Rep is to represent and voice ISG interests and problems through the Forum meetings. S/he will therefore be one of your direct contacts to the SFSS.

### SFSS Organiser

The SFSS Student Union Organiser's job is to provide support to DSUs and constituencies of the SFSS in a variety of ways. The Organiser keeps track of the active groups, releases their core budget, can approve grants for up to \$1000, and also provides additional training to active DSU/constituency members. One of the ISG Staff or Exec members should always be in touch with the Organiser Office – usually the President and the Treasurer – whose aim is to promote the existence of vibrant and active DSUs and constituencies on campus.

### the SFSS Board of Directors (BoD)

International students do not have, up to this date, a dedicated representative in the SFSS Board of Directors. They elect, together with local students, a Representative At-Large. The SFSS BoD is responsible for directing the Society and promoting a firm respect of its bylaws and policies. The Board is also involved with advocating for student issues – such as high tuition, U-Pass, etc. – and providing collective services – such as the Health Plan. The Board can be contacted through e-mail (all contacts are available on [www.sfss.ca/contacts](http://www.sfss.ca/contacts)) or in person.

# a guide to Lounge-keeping

## the International Lounge

The International Lounge is located next to Simon C's, in the James Douglas Safe Study Area at the west entrance of the Academic Quadrangle. The management of the Lounge is completely volunteer-run.; it is therefore up to the Lounge volunteers to maintain the space clean and comfortable, for themselves and for other visitors.

The aim of the International Lounge is to provide a welcoming environment for international students to hang around, organize activities, study and socialize. As SFU does not have an International House, obtaining the opening of the Lounge was the ISG's and possibly SFU's first step towards achieving that goal.

The Lounge is open on weekdays from 9AM to 9PM. On weekends, it can be open only if it has been booked by SFU International or a student organization.

Volunteering and maintaining the International Lounge is one of the easiest volunteer jobs in the International Students' Group. Lounge volunteering is usually reserved for less experienced ISG members who want to volunteer while learning more about the constituency, and possibly preparing to assume more important ISG volunteer positions in the future.

## Lounge semester schedule

### Previous Semester

- Recruit Lounge volunteers
- Make sure that recruited Lounge volunteers are added to the executive and to the Office and Lounge committee mailing list
- Make sure the new volunteers are aware of what their responsibilities will be – go over their contracts and time availability, etc.

### Beginning of current semester

- The Lounge Manager will be responsible for sending out a sign-up schedule to all Lounge volunteers. The Manager should emphasize that volunteers should be providing name and surname, contact information, and student number when they sign up. The Manager should sign up for at least 1 hr/week to be in the Lounge
- The Lounge volunteers will be responsible for signing up for at least 2 hours/week for volunteering. They are allowed to sign up in pairs.
- Once the schedule is ready, the Lounge Manager should send it out to SFU International. Please ask the current AMPR Coordinator or the President who is the current SFUi staff contact for Lounge matters. This schedule should also be sent out to the Office and Lounge committee mailing list.
- Once the schedule has been sent out, the volunteers should start their regular office hours
- One copy of the schedule should be posted in the International Lounge on the ISG notice board by the Lounge Manager
- The Lounge Manager should make an inventory of whatever is in the Lounge, and in what state, and post it in the Lounge, as well as send it to the committee; the same should be done for a short paragraph with the history of the Lounge – which would document and justify ISG involvement to unaware Lounge visitors.

## Lounge keys

There is currently one Lounge key the ISG can access: the keys are held by SFU International, and they are given out to students who wish to book the Lounge or the adjacent board room for club meetings or activities. The ISG has booking priority, but it is good practice to book the Lounge in advance when needed. When accessing the Lounge, the volunteers and the manager should borrow the key from SFU International, and then return it in the end of their shift, if no other volunteer is there already, or if they are the last volunteer of the day. Never forget to return the keys – you or whoever signed it out first might be asked to pay for the key and the substitution of the lock!

## Lounge maintenance

In the end of every day, the last office volunteer and/or the manager should check that:

- The Lounge is clean and in order. If this is not the case, the Manager can make a call-out for a clean-up session
- Make sure that nothing is missing. Use the Lounge inventory compiled in the beginning of the semester. If new things have been bought, update such inventory, and always use the most recent one for Lounge checks.
- Make sure you and the other users of the Lounge do not leave behind personal things. If this happens, send a warning to SFU International and intl-group-events@sfu.ca and if people still persist...dispose of the materials!
- Make sure the posting board is not overcrowded. Dispose of expired notices, etc, in the appropriate bin.
- Make sure you have enough brochures with you to give out to new visitors.
- Make sure you have enough cleaning supplies in the Lounge.
- If you think the Lounge is in need of more brochures, etc, report this to the Exec, and make sure this is discussed at the next committee meeting, and that spending for such materials is approved during a quorum meeting (10 people minimum). Ask the Treasurer for help with budget issues.

## relationship with SFU International for Lounge matters

It is important to keep a good relationship with SFU International, and that any misunderstandings are dealt with promptly and kindly. The Lounge Manger should organize, with the aid of the AMPR Coordinator, a semesterly meeting between SFU International and the ISG to discuss any issues we might have with the Lounge, and/or support we might be seeking from them at the moment. Please refer to the AMPR Coordinator (or the AMPR handbook) for more information on ISG-SFU communication policies, or simply ask about it to the current AMPR Coordinator.

## frequently asked questions when a visitor comes into the Lounge...

### **Q.: Who are you and why do you have a volunteer badge?**

This is a question that will surely pop up if you ask a student to put the furniture back in place, or to throw the garbage in the bins provided. They might have a harsh reactions, but we cannot expect them to know who is in charge of getting the rules of the Lounge respected, and why. Be polite, and introduce yourself, stating your name and saying that you are a Lounge volunteer with the International Students' Group. Hand out a brochure to them, and explain to them that you are just making sure that the Lounge is used in a proper way. Direct them to the board where the rules and the history of the Lounge are posted, and offer your assistance in case s/he needs more information or assistance

### **Q.: Where do I get the ISIC (International Student Identity) Card?**

The ISIC card is a service of the Simon Fraser Student Society which allows full-time students to get discount prices on air-fares, trains, and travel packages. The place where to apply for the card is therefore the SFSS General Office – right next door to the ISG office.

### **Q.: What is this place?**

I think you know how to answer that by now...

### **Q.: Where can I find a microwave?**

Microwaves can be found at SFP!RG (Simon Fraser Public Interest Research Group) in the Rotunda, at Out On Campus and at the Women's Centre (both in the Rotunda area).

### **Q.: What is the ISG?**

Give them one of our brochures – stored in the lower desk drawer – and enunciate that 'ISG means etc etc', and encourage them to also read more about what we do and our history from our website.

### **Q.: Can I stay here and have lunch/study/chat?**

Yes! This is why the Lounge is there in the first place.

### **Q.: Can I become a volunteer/sign up for your mailing list?**

Rare question, but miracles happen...you can take direct them to our website ([www.sfu.ca/~isgroup](http://www.sfu.ca/~isgroup)) and tell them that they can send an e-mail to [intl-exec@sfu.ca](mailto:intl-exec@sfu.ca) and ask to be subscribed. If they also want to become volunteers, still direct them to our website, where all the info is, and again ask them to send an e-mail to the Exec list with all their information.

notes



# appendix

<b>appendix 1</b>	<b>14</b>
ISG constitution	
<b>appendix 2</b>	<b>18</b>
making time to get involved	
<b>appendix 3</b>	<b>20</b>
Robert's Rules of Order and parliamentary procedure	
<b>appendix 4</b>	<b>23</b>
Robert's Rules cheat sheet	

# appendix 1: ISG constitution

## I. Purposes and Aims

The name of the Constituency group shall be the International Students' Group (ISG). Purpose of the group shall be:

- to protect and promote the rights of the International Students
- to represent and advocate for the interests of all international students
- to coordinate and promote international student activities
- to work towards support of international students in Simon Fraser University
- to promote and work towards the enhancement of services for International Students
- to contribute the unique cultural values and backgrounds of International Students to the campus community at large.

Constituency Group Rules of Operation

## II. Membership

All students self-identifying as international student (unless the Executive rejects based on insufficient evidence to support their claim, which can be appealed through SFSS) shall be members of the International Student Group.

Membership shall also be open to others than those listed above, such as staff, faculty, alumni or community members. If any restrictions are to be placed on these associate members, they must be noted, and must first be approved by the executive. Decision could be appealed through SFSS.

Membership expires when the person is no longer an SFU student or no longer self-identifies as an international student.

A member may be expelled from the group by a vote of at least 2/3 of quorum of fifty (50) members. The duration of the penalty must be determined before the expulsion vote is conducted. An expelled member has the right to appeal, and may rejoin the ISG if 2/3 of quorum of fifty (50) vote permit this.

## III. Executive

The Executive shall include a President, a Secretary, a Treasurer and a Forum Representative. Forum Representative and the President shall be the same person, unless refused by the elected president. (In which case a separate Forum Representative shall be elected). Other positions can be included as required, by an amendment to this constitution.

All members of the Executive must be either visa students (i.e. students studying on a Study Permit) or recently arrived landed immigrants (who have been in Canada for a total of no more than two years) and be registered full-time or part-time at Simon Fraser University for at least two-third of an academic year.

Members of the Executive shall be voted into their positions via an election or by-election, as specified in Section VI. No member can be appointed to an executive position for any reason other than specified in Section VI, Paragraph 3.

Responsibilities of the Executive members are as follows:

**President:** shall conduct all staff or general meetings; is ex-officio member of all committees within the ISG; is responsible for promoting the ISG to the campus community.

**Forum Representative:** shall act as a liaison between the SFSS and ISG and vote in the interest of ISG on Forum.

**Secretary:** shall record minutes of all meetings; is responsible for ISG's correspondence, including checking the mailbox and surveillance of the ISG e-mail list. The secretary's duties may be delegated in part to appointed ISG staff members.

**Treasurer:** keeps a record of allocation of ISG funds; periodically checks and updates the ISG's asset list; shall give an account of the ISG's financial standing and record books.

Members of the Executive shall make all efforts to attend all General Meetings, as well as all Staff meetings.

If an Executive member graduates or withdraws from Simon Fraser University, or goes on leave for more than one third of an academic year, he or she is considered resigned.

Any Executive member may resign from his or her position at any time.

Any Executive member may be impeached by a vote of at least 2/3 of quorum of fifty (50) or more. Reinstating an Executive member can be done by a similar vote.

## IV. ISG Staff

The ISG Staff consists of:

- the members of the Executive
- the Volunteers.

Volunteers are active ISG members or associate members who serve specific tasks of the ISG.

Volunteers may be elected by simple yes/no vote, at any General meeting, or they may be appointed by the Executive. Notice of appointment shall be given to the ISG body.

Staff meetings shall be held at least once per month. Notice of these meetings, with a preliminary agenda, shall be given to the Executive and the elected volunteers. Attendance at the meetings is open to all ISG members and associate members; however, voting rights are restricted to Staff members. Simple majority vote, with a minimum of three votes, wins.

At least two members of the Executive shall attend each staff meeting.

The Staff meetings serve in planning and coordinating the ISG's events, and in preparing the General Meetings.

## V. General Meetings

At least one General Meeting shall be called per month.

A quorum of at least 10 people is required with a General Meeting.

Notice of General meetings shall be given the previous meeting, or be advertised in at least two of:

The ISG e-mail list, The Peak, the Campus TVs, posters and/or banners, at least one week prior to the meeting.

Decisions of the ISG, except those stated otherwise in this constitution, are passed whenever a simple majority is attained within the meeting attendance.

All decisions voted upon in staff meetings must be reported at the next General Meeting.

Minutes shall be recorded for all General Meetings.

## VI. Elections and By-Elections

An election shall be held at least once per year. The ISG's General Elections shall take place at the end of each Spring semester.

Votes may be cast by secret ballot or show of hands, as decided prior to conduction of the election. Simple majority vote wins. In case of a tie, votes are recast between all tying candidates. The candidate with the second-most votes shall be considered the substitute for the given position. If only one candidate applies for a given position, a yes/no vote shall be held.

If an executive resigns or is impeached for one of the reasons stated in Section III, the elected substitute shall fill the position. If the substitute is not available, or no substitute has been elected, a by-election for that position shall be held at most one month after resignation. If less than one month is left before the next scheduled election, no by-election is necessary. In the interim, a full ISG member may be appointed to the position by the Executive, or the position may remain vacant.

The results of any election shall be forwarded to the SFSS in order to secure continued funding.

## VII. Amendments

Any amendments to this constitution shall be discussed and ratified by the ISG body on a General meeting.

Notice of the proposed amendments must be given through the ISG e-mail list or by any other appropriate means at least one month before the meeting in which they are to be discussed.

Amendments to this constitution require a 2/3 majority vote of at least 50 people who are present in the meeting.

All amendments must be in line with SFSS policies and guidelines, and require the approval of SFSS.

## VIII. Special ISG Policies

The Executive reserves the right to restrict admission to any of its events to full ISG members, or to open it to the SFU community or the general public.

Reimbursement of expenses for any event or other activity requires prior authorization by the Executive. Reimbursements shall only be made if an original receipt is presented.

## appendix 2: making time to get involved

### This Leadership Resource Sheet will help you:

- assess how you currently use your time
- develop a strategy for prioritizing and scheduling your commitments

Time management is important to most people, but particularly to students who choose to be involved on campus. Participation in co-curricular activities means that in addition to classes, homework, meals, jobs, and socializing, significant time will be taken up with organizational obligations. This resource sheet is designed to provide you with some suggestions on how to more effectively manage your time. For additional help and strategies, visit [leap.ubc.ca/get\\_started](http://leap.ubc.ca/get_started) to register for a Time Management Learning Skills Workshop.

It's important to note that time management is a personal skill; only you know your peak work hours, your attention span, and your eating and sleeping needs – all of which must be considered. Finding a time-management strategy that best fits your needs is important. The following steps can help you determine your best approach.

### The big five

The five steps to effective time management are:

1. Plan
2. Assess
3. Organize
4. Prioritize
5. Schedule

How do some people manage to have a decent social life, hold a job, participate in campus clubs, play intramurals, and at the same time go to all of their classes and complete assignments, reports, essays, and labs? On the other hand, how is it that some people find it hard to simply do their readings?

You have probably asked yourself how some people are able to work so many different activities into their schedules while others barely have time to attend classes. Are they smarter? Doubtful. More organized? Probably. Better at managing time? Likely.

### Plan

Research and personal experiences have shown that individuals who set personal goals have a greater chance of success.

These individuals have determined, and set down on paper, what they would like to achieve and a process for doing so. Their goals are realistic, believable, and achievable. People who set goals also evaluate their progress and make appropriate adjustments on a regular basis. So, if you want to better manage your time, your first step is to set the goals you would like to achieve for the semester, the year, and throughout your university career.

### Assess

Your next step is to assess how you are currently using your time. You cannot make productive changes unless you know what areas need to be changed. Keep a time log for three days from the time you get up until the time you go to bed. Describe your specific activities in 15-minute blocks.

The activity should be detailed and can include comments. Prioritize your activities: A – important to you, B – important to others, and C – maintenance (basic human needs). Maintenance items may become

A-priority items. For example, exercising may be maintenance once it becomes a habit but could be an A-priority until then.

Next, analyze your time log. Answer the following questions:

1. Were there any surprises?
2. Would you judge this to be a typical week?
3. What patterns could you identify in your time wasters? Your interruptions?
4. What part of the week would you consider most productive? Least productive?
5. What time of day do you feel was most productive? Least productive?
6. What activities would you like to eliminate totally? What would be the cost of doing so? What is the cost of not eliminating these?
7. Which activities during the week do you deem most rewarding? Would you like to spend more time doing them in the future? What is your plan for doing so?

Have someone review your time log. An objective observer may be able to point out discrepancies or patterns you didn't see.

## Organize

Ideally, you should make a list each morning of everything you want or need to do for that day. Do not plan out every minute and don't even think yet about which task is most important, just write them all down. Some people find it more helpful to list their "things to do" in 5 to 7 day groupings. This way they can plan for longer projects and get a better sense of their week. Whichever method you choose, keep in mind that everyone has good and bad days. Don't abandon your "to-do" list if you don't accomplish everything, just add the uncompleted tasks to your next day's list and get them done. One effective technique is to begin each day with the tasks you put off the day before.

## Prioritize

After you have recorded these "things to do," go over the list and rewrite in priority order which things you need to do at the top and less important/pressing tasks at the bottom. Keep in mind due dates, commitments you have made, and whether or not these tasks involve other people. If the items are for class, it is important to consider how much of the final grade they are worth. How you choose to prioritize is a very personal matter. What is important is that your priorities reflect your goals. As you work through your list, keep your goals in mind – often this strategy makes prioritization a whole lot easier!

## Schedule

The last thing to do is to take this list and begin to work these "things to do" into your schedule. You cannot plan

every minute of your day. Remember to leave room for breaks, socializing, and those unexpected things that pop up. There's no use making a schedule that is impossible to follow.

Many students find it helpful to keep a day planner or PDA to keep track of commitments. At the beginning of the semester, write down your classes, assignment due dates, exams, and involvement obligations. This is a good place for "to do" lists as well; of course, if you write your "to do" list in your day planner, you'll need to carry it with you!

Try these suggestions, see what works for you best, and then be sure to integrate them into your learning lifestyle. Learning effective time management now will help you throughout your personal life and professional career.

Content adapted with permission of UBC Leadership & Involvement [www.students.ubc.ca/leadership](http://www.students.ubc.ca/leadership)

# appendix 3: robert's rules of order and parliamentary procedure

## Background

Parliamentary procedure (or law) originally referred to the customs and rules for conducting business in the British Parliament and later referred to deliberative assemblies in general. In Great Britain, these procedures form a part of the unwritten law of the land, and in our own legislative bodies they are the authority in all cases where they do not conflict with existing rules or precedents.

Henry Martyn Robert was an engineering officer in the regular U.S. Army in the late 1800s. Without warning he was asked to preside over a church meeting, and to his embarrassment he realized that he did not know how. This situation, familiar to many of us who have been in heated or disorderly union meetings, left him determined never to attend another meeting until he knew something of parliamentary law.

Ultimately, he discovered and studied the few books then available on the subject. As he was transferred to various parts of the United States during his military service, he found virtual parliamentary anarchy, since people from different parts of the country had differing ideas about correct procedure.

In 1876, General Robert set out to bring the rules of parliamentary law (by then adopted by the U.S. Congress) to members of ordinary societies and organizations with the publication of the *Pocket Manual of Rules of Order*. It sold half a million copies before it was completely reworked in 1915 and published as *Robert's Rules of Order Revised* and made Robert's name synonymous with the orderly rules in deliberative societies. In 1970 it was substantially expanded and became *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*.

The rules of parliamentary law are constructed upon a careful balance of the rights of the majority, of the minority (especially a strong minority greater than one-third), of individual members and of absentees. Fundamentally, under the rules of parliamentary law, a deliberative body is a free agent-- free to do what it wants to do with the greatest measure of protection to itself and of consideration for the rights of its members.

The current edition of *Robert's Rules* has been developed through a process of updating the book with the growth of parliamentary procedure. All editions of the work issued after the death of the original author have been the work of persons who either knew and worked

with the original author or knew and worked with persons who did.

*Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* is designed to provide an answer to nearly any possible question of parliamentary law. It is, therefore, quite detailed. The average person may only occasionally be confronted with the small points that are necessarily dealt in the book, but if you attend many union meetings, you will probably want to own a copy (visit the official Robert's Rules of Order Web site, <http://www.robertsrules.com/>, for information and to order a hardback or paperback copy).

Parliamentary procedure is a time-tested method of conducting business at meetings and public gatherings. It can be adapted to fit the needs of any organization. Today, *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* is the basic handbook of operation for most unions, clubs, organizations and other groups, so it's important that everyone know these basic rules!

## The Basics of Parliamentary Procedure

1. The purpose of parliamentary procedure is to make it easier for people to work together effectively and to help groups accomplish their purposes. Rules of procedure should assist a meeting, not inhibit it.
2. A meeting can deal with only one matter at a time. The various kinds of motions have therefore been assigned an order of precedence.
3. All members have equal rights, privileges and obligations. One of the chairperson's main responsibilities is to use the authority of the chair to ensure that all people attending a meeting are treated equally--for example, not to permit a vocal few to dominate the debates.
4. A majority vote decides an issue. In any group, each member agrees to be governed by the vote of the majority. Parliamentary rules enable a meeting to determine the will of the majority of those attending a meeting.
5. The rights of the minority must be protected at all times. Although the ultimate decision rests with a majority, all members have such basic rights as the right to be heard and the right to oppose. The rights of all members--majority and minority--should be the concern of every member, for a person may be in

1. a majority on one question but in minority the on the next.
2. Every matter presented for decision should be discussed fully. The right of every member to speak on any issue is as important as each member's right to vote.
3. Every member has the right to understand the meaning of any question presented to a meeting and to know what effect a decision will have. A member always has the right to request information on any motion he or she does not thoroughly understand. Moreover, all meetings must be characterized by fairness and good faith. Parliamentary strategy is the art of using procedure legitimately to support or defeat a proposal.

## Conducting a Meeting

Members express themselves in a meeting by making motions. A motion is a proposal that the entire membership take action or a stand on an issue. Individual members can:

- Call to order
- Second motions
- Debate motions
- Vote on motions

## Four basic types of motions

### Main motions

The purpose of a main motion is to introduce items to the membership for their consideration. They cannot be made when any other motion is on the floor, and they yield to subsidiary, privileged and incidental motions.

### Subsidiary motions

Their purpose is to change or affect how a main motion is handled, and is voted on before a main motion.

### Privileged motions

Their purpose is to bring up items that are urgent or important matters unrelated to pending business.

### Incidental motions

Their purpose is to provide a means of questioning procedure concerning other motions and must be considered before the other motion.

## How motions are presented

### Obtain the floor

- Wait until the last speaker has finished.
- Rise and address the chairperson by saying, "Mr./Ms. Chairperson" or "Mr./Ms. President."
- Wait until the chairperson recognizes you.

### Make your motion

- Speak in a clear and concise manner.
- Always state a motion affirmatively. Say, "I move that we..." rather than "I move that we do not..."
- Avoid personalities and stay on your subject.

### Wait for someone to second your motion

- Another member will second your motion or the chairperson will call for a second.
- If there is no second to your motion, it is lost.

### The chairperson states your motion

- The chairperson will say, "It has been moved and seconded that we..." thus placing your motion before the membership for consideration and action.
- The membership either debates your motion, or may move directly to a vote.
- Once your motion is presented to the membership by the chairperson, it becomes "assembly property" and cannot be changed by you without the consent of the members.

### Expanding on your motion

- The time for you to speak in favor of your motion is at this point in time, rather than at the time you present it.
- The mover is always allowed to speak first.
- All comments and debate must be directed to the chairperson.
- Keep to the time limit for speaking that has been established.
- The mover may speak again only after other speakers are finished unless called upon by the chairperson.

### Putting the question to the membership

- The chairperson asks, "Are you ready to vote on the question?"
- If there is no more discussion, a vote is taken.
- On a motion to move the previous question may be adapted.

### Voting on a motion

The method of vote on any motion depends on the situation and the bylaws of your organization. There are five methods used to vote by most organizations, they are:

#### By voice

The chairperson asks those in favor to say "aye," those opposed to say "no." Any member may move for an exact count.

#### By roll call

Each member answers "yes" or "no" as his name is called. This method is used when a record of each person's vote is required.

#### By general consent

When a motion is not likely to be opposed, the chairperson says, "If there is no objection..." The membership shows agreement by their silence; however, if one member says, "I object," the item must be put to a vote.

#### By division

This is a slight verification of a voice vote. It does not require a count unless the chairman so desires. Members raise their hands or stand.

#### By ballot

Members write their vote on a slip of paper; this method is used when secrecy is desired.

There are two other motions that are commonly used that relate to voting.

#### Motion to table

This motion is often used in the attempt to "kill" a motion. The option is always present, however, to "take from the table," for reconsideration by the membership.

#### Motion to postpone indefinitely

This is often used as a means of parliamentary strategy and allows opponents of motion to test their strength without an actual vote being taken. Also, debate is once again open on the main motion.

Parliamentary procedure is the best way to get things done at your meetings. It will only work, however, if you use it properly. Remember to:

- Allow motions that are in order.
- Have members obtain the floor properly.
- Speak clearly and concisely.
- Obey the rules of debate.
- Most importantly, BE COURTEOUS.

Sources: AFT national rep Bob Brown, Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, Robert's Rules of Order Web site ([www.robertsrules.com](http://www.robertsrules.com))

## appendix 4: robert's rules cheat sheet

Based on Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised (10th Edition)

The motions below are listed in order of precedence. Any motion can be introduced if it is higher on the chart than the pending motion.

you want to:	you say	interrupt?	second?	debate?	amend?	vote?
<b>Incidental Motions: no order of precedence. Arise incidentally and decided immediately.</b>						
§21 Close meeting	I move to adjourn	N	Y	N	N	Majority
§20 Take break	I move to recess for	N	Y	N	Y	Majority
§19 Register complaint	I rise to a question of privilege	Y	N	N	N	None
§18 Make follow agenda	I call for the orders of the day	Y	N	N	N	None
§17 Lay aside temporarily	I move to lay the question on the table	N	Y	N	N	Majority
§16 Close debate	I move the previous question	N	Y	N	N	2/3
§15 Limit or extend debate	I move that debate be limited to ...	N	Y	N	Y	2/3
§14 Postpone to a certain time	I move to postpone the motion to ...	N	Y	Y	Y	Majority
§13 Refer to committee	I move to refer the motion to ...	N	Y	Y	Y	Majority
§12 Modify wording of motion	I move to amend the motion by ...	N	Y	Y	Y	Majority
§11 Kill main motion	I move that the motion be postponed indefinitely	N	Y	Y	N	Majority
§10 Bring business before assembly (a main motion)	I move that [or "to"] ...	N	Y	Y	Y	Majority
<b>Incidental Motions - no order of precedence. Arise incidentally and decided immediately.</b>						
§23 Enforce rules	Point of order	Y	N	N	N	None
§24 Submit matter to assembly	I appeal from the decision of the chair	Y	Y	Varies	N	Majority
§25 Suspend rules	I move to suspend the rules which ...	N	Y	N	N	2/3
§26 Avoid main motion altogether	I object to the consideration of the question	Y	N	N	N	2/3
§27 Divide motion	I move to divide the question	N	Y	N	Y	Majority
§29 Demand rising vote	I call for a division	Y	N	N	N	None
§33 Parliamentary law question	Parliamentary inquiry	Y	N	N	N	None
§33 Request for information	Point of information	Y	N	N	N	None
<b>Motions That Bring a Question Again Before the Assembly - no order of precedence. Introduce only when nothing else pending.</b>						
§34 Take matter from table	I move to take from the table ...	N	Y	N	N	Majority
§35 Cancel previous action	I move to rescind ...	N	Y	Y	Y	2/3 with notice
§37 Reconsider motion	I move to reconsider the vote ...	N	Y	Varies	N	Majority

# notes







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