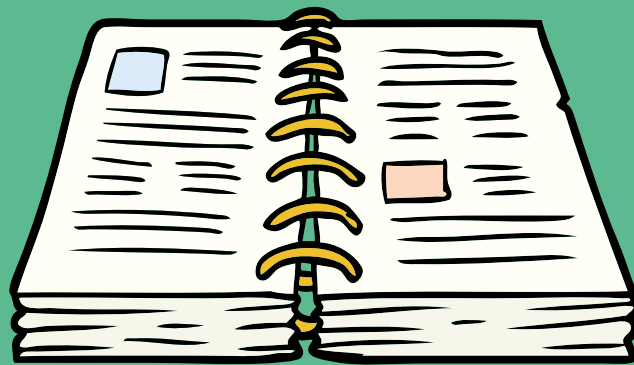




# quick guide to Union Council



# definitions

## Articles of Association

The Articles of Association are our foundational governing document. This document lays out our legal obligations under the Education Act and the Charity Commission. These can be changed and amended by Union Council, but all changes have to be approved by the Trustee Board and the University. Motions to change the Articles must state that they are amendments to the Articles and may require legal checks. You can find the Articles of Association [here](#).

## Bye-Laws

Bye-Laws are the other part of what we call our 'constitution' along with the Articles. The Bye-Laws outline more of the day-to-day running of the Union. This is where you can find out about our democratic procedures, the remit of the elected officers, and rules that govern our clubs and societies. Bye-Laws can be changed by Union Council alone. If you think the Bye-Laws should be different, you can propose a motion to amend them. In order to amend either the Articles of Association or the Bye-Laws, two-thirds of councillors need to vote in favour. You can find the Bye-Laws [here](#).

## Union Policy

Union Policy refers to any motions which are passed at Union Council. Policy sets out what stance the Union takes on a position, and also sets out what work the Union should do in order to address an issue. Policies that are passed at Union Council remain 'live' for three years, and after this time, Union Council can vote to either get rid of them, or adopt them as 'policy precedent'. You can find a list of all Union Policy [here](#).

# definitions

## Motion

A motion is the name for a proposed policy before it is passed by Union Council. You propose a 'motion' at Union Council, and if students vote to adopt it, it is then called 'policy'. Motions can be proposed by councillors at any meeting. A motion is laid out in a specific way - you can find examples at the end of this guide. Motions need to be submitted to [su.governance@uea.ac.uk](mailto:su.governance@uea.ac.uk) before the deadline. Further guidance on writing a motion and a template can be found [here](#).

## Agenda

An agenda is a document outlining everything that will be discussed at a meeting. It will be sent to all councillors no less than three days before a meeting and councillors are encouraged to read the agenda. Agendas can be found [here](#), and will be published in the Teams channel..

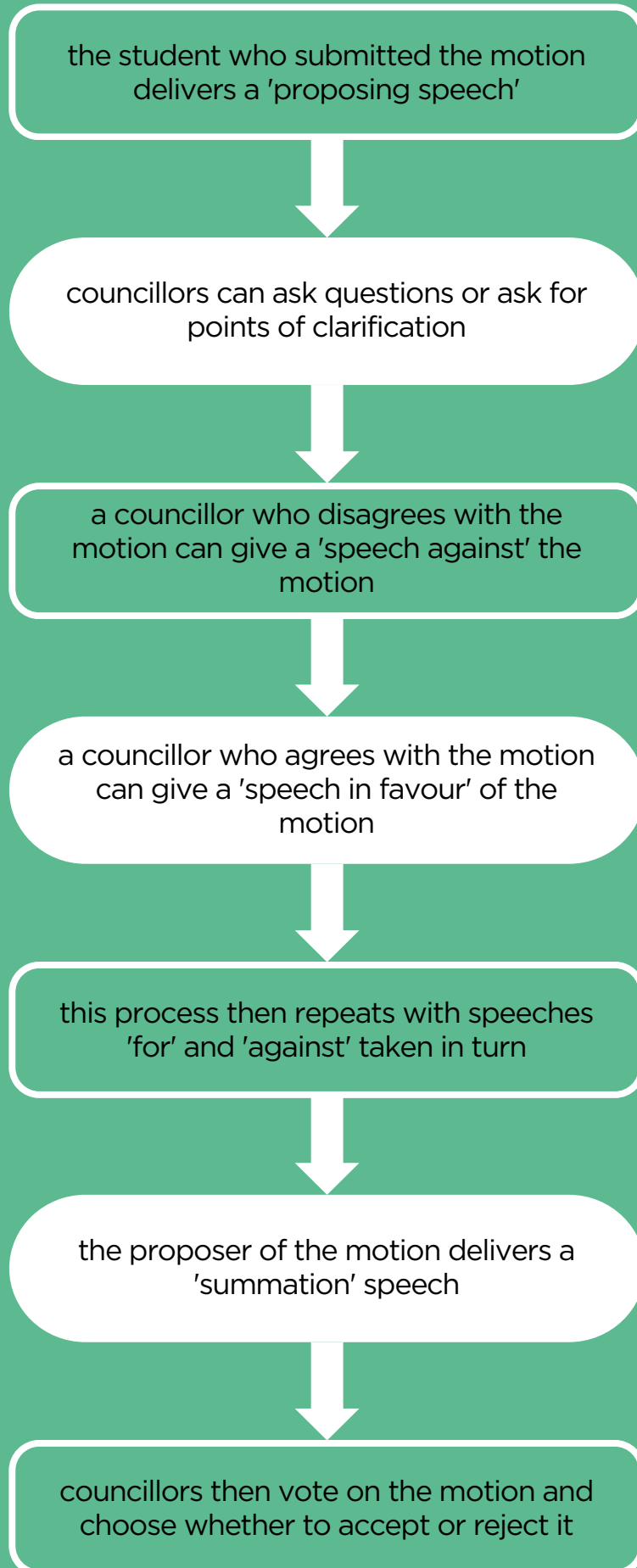
## Minutes

Minutes are the official record of what was said and decided during a meeting. At the start of a meeting, councillors will vote to approve the minutes of the previous meeting. If you have an issues with the accuracy of the minutes, it can be discussed prior to the vote. You can [view previous minutes here](#).

## Amendments

An amendment (change) to a motion can be submitted up to 48 hours before a meeting. If it is agreed by the motion proposer, it doesn't need to be debated. If the proposer doesn't agree to the amendment, then it will be debated and voted on by councillors. If you only disagree with a small part of a motion but agree with the rest, submitting an amendment is the best way to go.

# how are the debates structured?

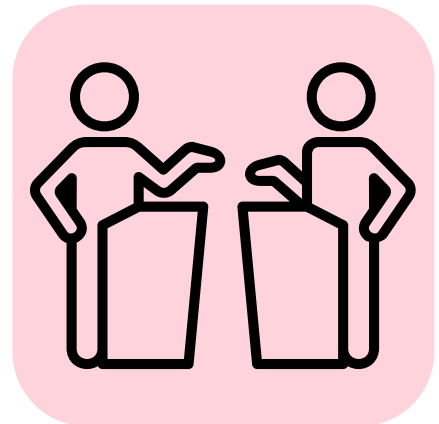


# what can i do at union council?



As a council rep, you have a lot of power to vote on important issues. You can vote to approve or reject policy proposals, new society and club applications and to accept reports from the officers and trustee board.

You can debate and discuss all issues raised at union council. All policies submitted to council can be debated before being voted on. You can also ask questions to elected reps and officers and hold them to account in this meeting.



You can also propose your own policies! If there is something you think uea(su) should be doing that it isn't, you can propose your own policy to change this!

# what can i do during the meeting?

## **Call for a quorum count**

'quorum' is the minimum number of councillors who need to be present before a vote take place. If quorum is not met motions cannot be decided on

## **Call for a break**

if you think there should be an additional break, you can request this by asking the chair directly, or asking councillors to vote on whether there should be a break

## **Call for a 'guillotine' time**

a guillotine is a time limit set on a meeting. you can request a vote on implementing a 'guillotine' so the meeting will end at the specified time regardless of proceedings

## **Challenge the Chair's ruling**

if you disagree with a decision made by the Chair, you can request a challenge. at this point, councillors will vote on whether to uphold or overturn the Chair's ruling

## **Seek clarification from the Chair**

if you are unsure about any part of a meeting, you can always ask the Chair to clarify. a 'point of clarification' is different to a speech for or against a motion, so double check that your question doesn't come across as a speech in favour or against.

# guide to 'procedural motions'



procedural motions are requests to change the way a meeting or a vote is being run. they are not about the substance of a motion (whether a motion should be passed or rejected), but about procedure. you may want to call for a procedural motion for any of the following reasons:

## **reduce the number or duration of speeches**

you can move to request the amount of speeches is decreased, or the time allotted for speeches is reduced. you might want to call for this if you think enough debate or discussion has been had on the motion already. similarly, if the Chair moves to a vote but you think more debate is needed, you can request an additional round of speeches

## **move straight to a vote without speeches**

at any point, you can call to move straight to a vote on the motion. if you don't think any debate is needed, you can call to move straight to a vote. the Chair will ask councillors to vote on whether to accept your procedural motion. if it succeeds, the motion will go straight to a vote. if it fails, or 'falls', then the debate will continue as planned

## **consider the motion in 'parts'**

if you agree with most of a motion, but think one of the resolves should be voted on separately, you can take the motion 'in parts'. for example, if you agreed with resolves 1-3 but not 4, you could vote on whether to accept resolve 4 separately. this is a good way to accept the majority of a motion but take out the smaller parts that you don't agree with

## **move for the item to not be considered or voted on**

you can move to have no debate or vote on a motion by requesting that the item not be considered. if this succeeds, the motion will not be considered at all and the rest of the agenda will follow. the proposer of the motion can choose whether to re-submit the motion to a following meeting. similarly, you also can move to change the order of the motions on the agenda.

# examples of using procedural motions

I think we have had enough debate on this item and the discussion is repetitive. I think council should just make its decision now

**move to a vote on the item**

**consider the item in parts**

I agree with resolve 1 to release a statement on the issue, but I don't agree with resolve 2 that we should spend money on a campaign

I think that the motion is pretty straightforward and only needs a short debate. The long rounds of speeches are taking time away from more controversial issues

**move for the number and duration of speeches to be reduced**

**call for a vote on considering the item via referendum**

I think this proposal is too big for just Union Council to consider. I think that all students should get a say in this.



# examples of using procedural motions

I don't think we've had enough time to think about this item and I need to collect more feedback. We should vote on this at the next meeting.

**call for the item to be deferred to a future meeting**

**call for the item to not be considered**

I don't think this is an appropriate item for Union Council to be discussing or voting on.

We've had a lot of speeches on this motion and there's still more to discuss. I'm getting tired and could do with a small break.

**call for the meeting to be adjourned temporarily**

**call for the item to be moved to the top of the agenda**

The final motion on the agenda is important and I'd like to cast my vote, but I have to leave at 7pm.

# frequently asked questions



## why are there so many rules at council?

Union Council agenda's can get a bit long, as Council is the 'highest' decision making body for students. This means that almost all important decisions made in the SU are made by Council. This means that meetings must be run properly and in line with our bye-laws. There are also strict rules for debate, as its important that debate remains balanced and all students can have their say. Debates are conducted in an 'argument for' followed by 'argument against' style. This is to ensure that all sides of the debate are given equal time to be heard. If you want to challenge the way that the Chair is running the meeting, you can make this request either before or during the meeting. There is also plenty of support available to help you throughout.

## who can attend union council?

All students can attend union council, but only union council reps get a vote. All clubs and societies can elect a union council rep, and all convenors get a vote too.

## how can i cast my vote?

All voting is done via Microsoft Teams. When the Chair calls for a vote, a poll will appear in the Union Council Teams channel. If you are not in the group but are entitled to vote, please contact [a.mulcairn@uea.ac.uk](mailto:a.mulcairn@uea.ac.uk).

## how can i find out more about a motion?

When motions come up in Union Council, the proposer of the motion will deliver a proposing speech. They will often talk about where the idea for the motion came from, and why they think its important. There may also be additional speeches in favour of a motion. Listening to the debate about the item is a great way to learn more, however you can also contact the proposer in advance of the meeting and ask your questions directly.

# frequently asked questions



## who is the Chair and what do they do?

The Chair of Council is elected at the very first meeting of the year, along with a Deputy Chair. The Chair is responsible for taking the meeting through the agenda, explaining the items and for calling on councillors to contribute during the debates/discussion. They will enforce the rules of council throughout. You can nominate yourself to be the Chair of Council at the first meeting of the year. If you'd like to learn more about this, please contact [su.voice@uea.ac.uk](mailto:su.voice@uea.ac.uk).

## how can i write a motion?

There is lots of information on our website about how you can write and submit a motion.

Visit the [writing policy section of the website](#) and download the motion template. All motions follow the same standard format which you can see below. Once your motion is written, you need to email it to [su.voice@uea.ac.uk](mailto:su.voice@uea.ac.uk) at least one week before the date of

Union Council. If your issue is urgent and you have missed the deadline but want it considered at the next meeting, you can submit it as an 'emergency motion' and the Chair will decide whether the item should be included on the agenda.

Council motions should be structured as follows:

- Title - Should be concise and comprehensible
- Proposed by - (name of the member of the Union proposing the paper)
- Seconded by - (name of the member member of the Union in support of the proposed paper)
- Union Notes (Facts) - establishing factual information on the topic.
- Union Believes (Opinion) - What you believe consider to be true. This is where debate will come in. What you believe may not be what other councillors hold true.
- Union Resolves (Actions) - What do you want to happen. Tell the Union what actions you would like to be taken by the organisation. Such as mandate officers to speak to college/external or what resources (time or physical) allocated.