

THAILAND MODEL UNITED NATIONS



THAIMUN X

**STUDENT OFFICERS'
MANUAL**

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INTRODUCTION

Being a student officer in a Model United Nations conference can be one of the most challenging, and rewarding, experiences any MUN participant can have. It provides a unique perspective on how MUN works, as well as allowing one to develop his or her own leadership abilities. However, it is important to note that this also comes with a heavy responsibility.

For any MUN conference, it is the student officers that set the tone for that conference. Too strict a chair, and a forum will feel constricted, creating an environment in which delegates are unwilling to speak, or even feel resentful of the students in charge. Too loose a chair, and the forum will lose all sense of order, with less dedicated and more frivolous delegates dominating the environment, and the more focused delegates feeling disillusioned.

Chairing a forum, whether it is the General Assembly, individual committees, or the Security Council, requires balance. It requires the student officer to balance an exhaustive knowledge of procedure with the flexibility to deal with individual situations as they arise. It requires the student officer to balance firm, focused leadership with the open-mindedness to allow delegates to pursue their own direction and achievement where appropriate.

None of these tasks are necessarily easy. Even more difficult is the need for various officers in the same conference to be as consistent with each other as possible. Hence, this manual. It is hoped that this manual will help prospective chairs prepare for their roles, provide a framework for consistency between chairs, and finally serve as a means of support for chairs in various situations.

HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

This manual focuses on the two most important factors in chairing – procedure and leadership. The manual is NOT intended to replace the IASAS MUN Rules of Procedure. Instead, it is intended to supplement that document in terms of implementation, and to illustrate the duties of chairs during the course of the conference. It also deals with some of the less clearly-defined aspects of being a chair, including a few “worst-case” scenarios.

It is strongly recommended that you read this manual thoroughly if you have been selected to chair, in preparation for that role. Then, you should keep the manual handy throughout the conference as a reference guide, as different types of situations arise in which you might need added support.

Remember, the chairs set the tone for the entire conference. Good luck, and enjoy!

DAY-BY-DAY OVERVIEW OF DUTIES DURING THE CONFERENCE

Although it is assumed all chairs will have attended at least one MUN conference, the following is provided as a general framework for what a chair does during that time.

FRIDAY

All student officers will attend an officers' orientation meeting on Friday. During this meeting, the Secretary Generals and THAIMUN Director will go over the upcoming conference with the new officers, and field their questions.

SATURDAY

1. After opening ceremonies and delegation photos, in every forum all represented delegations are expected to present a **policy statement/opening speech** not exceeding **1 minute**. These will begin immediately after the chair has called the roll. For the enforcement of the time limit, gavel the speaker once with 10 seconds remaining, and twice at the end of his/her time. It is strongly recommended to hold speakers to the time limits.
2. The first delegation to speak is picked by the student officers. The speaking order will follow alphabetically from there on. To save time, call up the next four delegations to line up behind the podium as well. Once those five delegates have spoken, have the entire group return to their seats and call up the next five, or allow rights to reply and then the next five, as per chair's discretion and the IASAS Rules of Procedure.
3. Once the forum has moved into caucusing time, it is important for the chairs to be active facilitators in the lobbying process. Help groups of delegates towards achieving consensus in creating their resolutions, and **keep an eye out for any school vs. school competition**. If this is cut short in the lobbying process, it may help prevent it from arising during debate.
4. As resolutions are drafted, examine them for accuracy on the issue and accurate reflections of national positions, before allowing delegates to submit them to the Vetting Panel.
5. Use careful judgment in selecting the order of resolutions for debate, taking into account the content of the resolution, submitting nations, length and strength of the resolution, and timing of interruptions such as breaks. Once debate begins, supervise and facilitate it according to the IASAS Rules of Procedure and this manual. One point to remember here is that speeches in debate are 2 minutes, unless otherwise stated in the rules.
6. During all of the above steps, the co-Secretary Generals and Parliamentarians are expected to be circulating among the various committees **to supervise adherence to procedure and a general consistency in tone and approach among the chairs**.
7. At the end of the day's debate, it is expected that all student officers will meet to debrief and address any issues or inconsistencies in preparation for the following day.

SUNDAY

1. During the morning session, debate will continue as in the latter half of Saturday. It will be critical for chairs to maintain or improve upon the tone of the previous day, in order to keep delegates focused. Some delegates may occasionally grow a bit rowdier as they are now more comfortable, so chairs will need to be watchful for this, and halt it as soon as possible.
2. Chairs also need to be sure that speaking opportunities are spread as widely as possible (see Overall Responsibilities below). This is also a good opportunity to identify key speakers that should be recognized when the resolutions move to the General Assembly.

MONDAY

1. As the General Assembly is convened, committee chairs now become delegates in the GA, while the co-Secretary Generals assume chairing responsibilities, again, following IASAS Rules of Procedure and this manual. Former committee chairs need to recognize that they are still models for the other delegates, and should therefore be positive and active members of debate in the GA (although not attempting to dominate the debate in any way). Chairs of the GA will need to pay particular notice that former committee chairs are not given speaking opportunities disproportionate to the rest of the assembly.
2. This is the day that often presents the greatest challenges for those officers chairing the GA. It is at this time that less focused delegates may most likely attempt to disrupt proceedings, so again, **a firm but fair tone is absolutely critical.**
3. As with caucusing at the beginning of the conference, it is a good idea during the crisis situation for the GA chairs to be active facilitators for delegates trying to draft emergency resolutions. It is also important to have a quick look at these emergency resolutions before they are sent to the Vetting Panel.
4. As Monday's session draws to a close, it may be tempting for the GA chairs to ease off a bit, and allow a bit more "un-parliamentary" behavior. This is never recommended, as it is easy for the entire proceeding to dissolve very quickly. GA chairs must remember balance as they sustain the debate through to its conclusion.

IMPLEMENTING RULES AND PROCEDURES

While most of the IASAS Rules of Procedure are fairly straightforward, the following points give some further explanation on implementing some of the more complicated rules for chairs. While you should always work within the framework of these rules (*never make up your own rules*), bear in mind that the purpose behind the rules of procedure is to facilitate a **fair and democratic debate**. Try to be a flexible chair, but when in doubt, always refer back to the IASAS Rules of Procedure.

PARLIAMENTARY BEHAVIOR BY DELEGATES:

1. Speakers need to address each other in the **Third Person** at all times. Always “honorable speaker” or “fellow delegates”, never “You” or “I” (but don’t correct every slip of the tongue).
2. Delegates should **stand** when speaking and should not sit down until after the speaker has finished answering the delegate’s question.
3. Delegates must avoid the use of insulting or abusive language.
4. Delegates must **yield** the floor when required to do so by the Chair
5. Delegates should address the chair and the house before presenting their speech
Example: “Honorable Chair, fellow delegates...”

RISING TO POINTS:

General: Points during debate may **NOT** interrupt a speaker except for a Point of Personal Privilege, which refers to audibility. All other points will be dealt with only when there is a debating pause, i.e. when the speaker having the floor yields to points of information, to another delegation, or to the Chair.

Delegates may not just immediately state their point, they must wait until the chair recognizes a Point, example:
“Point of Information to the Chair;
There has been a point of information on the floor, could the delegate please rise and state his point.
Is the chair not aware...”

Delegates may rise to silently stand if, and only if, their delegation/country has been substantially insulted by the speaker. The chair will need to carefully judge whether the point has indeed been insulting before “recognizing the grievances” of the standing delegation. **Simply recognizing grievances on points that were not in fact insulting will result in a rash of standing delegates, and a disruption of debate.**

Finally, be careful that delegates do not use rising to a point as an opportunity to make a speech!

Point of Personal Privilege:

- Refers to the comfort and well-being of the delegate
- May **only** interrupt a speaker if it refers to audibility
- May not refer to the content of a speech
- Is not debatable
- Does not require a second

- Example: “Could the windows please be opened? It is very hot in here.”

Point of Order:

- Refers to procedural matters only, i.e. if the chair makes an error in the order of debate or in the setting/observing of debate time
- May **NOT** interrupt a speaker
- Can only refer to something that just happened, direct referral, otherwise out of order
- If used by delegate simply to cause disorder, call it out of order

Point of Information:

- A question directed to the delegate having the floor, and who has indicated that he/she is willing to yield to points of information
- Speaker asking the Point of Information may only speak if recognized by chair
- Must be formulated in the form of a question, i.e. “Is the speaker aware that...” A short introductory statement may precede the question.
- Only ONE question by the same questioner. There will be no dialogue between speaker and questioner on the floor. **The opportunity for a follow-up is at the chair’s discretion, but generally should only be allowed if the chair feels it will enhance debate**, i.e. the speaker has not answered the delegate’s point, or the chair sees that the first question was a lead-in to a “killer” second question.
- Be fair and treat all delegates equally when recognizing points of information to a speaker
- Remember, **leading questions are encouraged in IASAS rules** (Rule 36) ONLY if the chair believes it will enhance debate. An example might be a leading question that lays a trap for the speaker to contradict his/her policy or an earlier statement.

Point of Parliamentary Enquiry:

- Point of information to the chair concerning Rules of Procedure or the conduct of debate.
- May **NOT** interrupt a speaker

MOTIONS:

General: Most motions are fairly straightforward, such as “Motion to move directly to voting procedures,” and are well-explained in the Rules of Procedure. However, there are a few motions to be aware of as having possible pitfalls.

Motion to Table for Incompetence:

- Rule 24 in IASAS Rules
- This is generally considered a direct insult to the delegate(s) submitting the resolution, so chairs will need to handle this carefully. Should such a motion arise, the chair will have to consider if the resolution is indeed incompetent, or to not entertain the motion and strongly caution delegates about its use

Motion for Explanation of Vote:

- Rule 48 in IASAS Rules
- This motion may be useful if a delegate has clearly voted off policy, however chairs need to be aware that some delegates may use this as a time-wasting measure

Motion for a Roll Call Vote:

- Rule 46 in IASAS Rules
- A useful motion if the result of a placard vote is unclear (such as within 5 votes, as explained in the rule).

- However, it is another motion sometimes used as a time-waster, so chairs must be careful to enforce the need for 12 seconds before entertaining the motion.

NOTE-PASSING:

1. Note-passing between delegations is allowed, although no personal messages
2. Chair has possibility to suspend note-passing if it gets too noisy in the house
3. Chair to use discretion and common-sense
4. Absolutely **NO** note-passing during speeches or voting

FUNDING:

1. Often creates confusion among delegates. Funding may be discussed and included in resolutions, but resolutions should not include either financial amounts or names of specific financial resources.
Example: **in order**: "Asks the IMF to fund above mentioned proposal", **not in order**: "Asks the UN to pay \$ 50 million out of their Rapid Reaction Fund, and the IMF to sponsor the remaining \$ 35,45623 million out of their developing nations fund"
2. You can assume that the UN or other payers will find the money to fund the proposal
3. Keep it general and do not go into specifics, and stop endless debates about funding immediately.

MISCELLANEOUS:

1. Mobile phones must be switched off at all times. Cameras are permitted, as long as they do not disrupt debate. Similarly, laptops are permitted as long as the chairs and admin staff do not determine that the privilege is being abused for non-debate purposes.
2. Men should always wear jackets and ties, only in exceptional circumstances can jackets be taken off (*hot room*); delegates **MUST** wear jackets when speaking.
3. When adjourning, always calculate about 5-10 min for the delegates to get seated and settled and ready. Therefore, adjourn for shorter than would be necessary.
4. Eating and drinking during debate is not in order, Chairs should set an example! Water is an exception.
5. Delegates should not raise their placards before the chair has asked them to do so
6. Moderate clapping is allowed if resolution passes, or after an exceptionally good speech, but Chair must call house to order soon thereafter. Clapping if a resolution fails is out of order.

OVERALL RESPONSIBILITIES

WORKING WITH THE DELEGATES:

1. Pay close attention to the substance of the debate, and interfere as soon as a delegate uses un-parliamentary language.
2. Speak loudly and firmly.
3. Take your time to explain the procedures. Do not rush through the debate but make your decisions clear to all delegates in the forum.
4. NEVER yell at delegates when they get rowdy or disruptive; stay calm, but warn them if they continue to be disruptive.
5. If in doubt on a question, then take your time and consult with co-chair, and if necessary, the parliamentarian or Secretaries General.
6. **Admit errors!** Say: “The Chair stands corrected” and proceed with further business. Do not extensively discuss decisions or errors with delegates, explain them clearly, and move on.
7. Start with a strict and extremely serious chairing-style to set the right debating tone. If everything runs well, then start loosening up. However, stay serious at all times, **you are the role-model for the delegates.**
8. Be polite, friendly, helpful, serious, clear, co-operative, committed, involved, un-biased, fair and diplomatic at all times!
9. Recognize delegates from all over the room, the back corners tend to be overseen, if a chair prefers one half of the room, delegates tend to get upset. **The co-chair should assist in keeping a record of speakers to assist in spreading recognition.**
10. Prioritise amendments according to their value to the resolution.
11. Be consistent during the debate

WORKING WITH THE CO-CHAIR:

1. Always TWO people chairing.
2. One person chairs, other one does administrative business (*amendments, notes, etc.*). It is critical that the co-chair play an active role in screening notes and amendments, keeping track of speaking time, and assisting in keeping a record of speakers. This allows the chair to focus much more on the debate.
3. **Never contradict** each other in public, **complement each other**, and help each other when necessary
4. Divide chairing time fairly between co-chairs. Switch Chairs only at clear points. A resolution should most preferably be chaired in its entirety by ONE Chair.

5. Discuss chairing style before debate. Try to be as consistent as possible between both chairs.

SOME STANDARD CHAIRING PHRASES

1. The House will now come to order.
2. The next resolution to be debated will be on the question of.....
3. Would the main-submitter please take the floor and read out the operative clauses?
4. The chair sets the debate time at 40 minutes open debate.
5. The floor is now open.
6. Does anyone request the floor?
7., you have been recognized.
8., you have the floor.
9. The speaker will refrain from using unparliamentary language.
10. The speaker will refrain from insulting other delegates.
11. Would the speaker please keep to the content of the resolution?
12. An amendment has been proposed by This is in order. I will read it out.
13. We will now vote on the amendment.
14. We will now resume debate on the resolution with minutes left.
15. In the interest of debate, would the speaker please yield to points of information?
16. The speaker has opened himself to points of information. Are there any points in the assembly?
17. Please rise and state your point.
18. Please state your point in the form of a question.
19. Please ask only one question.
20. Would the delegate please repeat / rephrase the question?
21. There will be no dialogue between the delegates.
22. I'm sorry, but there is no more time for points of information. Would the speaker please yield the floor?
23. I'm sorry, but, in the interest of debate, would the delegate please yield the floor?
24. There is a point of order on the floor.
25. Please rise and state your point.
26. Your point is well/not well taken.
27. There is a point of personal privilege on the floor.
28. The floor has been yielded to the chair / the delegate of.....
29. Could the house please come to order and show the speaker the respect he/she deserves.
30. Debate time on this resolution has elapsed.
31. We will now move into voting procedures on this resolution.
32. Would the administrative staff please close all doors and take their voting positions ?
33. All those in favour of this resolution please raise your placards high.
34. All those against.....
35. All those abstaining.....
36. By a vote of in favour, against, with abstentions, this resolution passes / fails.

DEALING WITH DISRUPTIVE DELEGATES

Chairs will occasionally have to deal with “disruptive” delegates, who are usually simply seeking attention. Chairs should not take their remarks or behavior as a personal insult, but deal with them quietly and calmly.

The following are some suggested steps for dealing with such a situation.

First step: Take them aside privately and explain clearly, seriously and sharply that their behavior is disrupting the forum, and that it is unacceptable. Try to do this without making it public in front of the whole forum. If the infraction is during the course of debate, another good first step is to communicate with the delegate by note.

Second step: If delegates continue to be disruptive despite your requests to change their behavior, **warn them** that they may face a series of sanctions. These can escalate from the suspension of note-passing privileges to the suspension of speaking privileges. If the confrontation is public keep it cool. Do not call a recess unless a situation runs really out of hand

Third step: If the delegate continues to be a problem, notify the Secretary General or other member of the secretariat immediately. At this point, the chairs and the secretariat should decide on the immediate temporary removal of the delegate from the forum, and notification of the delegate’s MUN director. The delegate may be permitted to rejoin the forum after a member of the secretariat and the delegate have met with the delegate’s MUN director.

Fourth step: In extreme cases, if the re-admitted delegate once again begins causing problems, then the delegate should be permanently removed from the forum to face whatever sanctions his/her school will administer.

DEALING WITH MUN DIRECTORS (ADVISERS)

1. MUN Directors should always be treated **very politely and in a friendly way. Avoid any confrontation** with MUN Directors, and report any problems directly to the Secretary Generals who will deal with them discreetly
2. MUN Directors are allowed to enter the forum (*except during voting procedures*); don’t throw them out or prevent them from taking pictures.

SOME POSSIBLE SCENARIOS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR DEALING WITH THEM

WHAT IF A REVOLUTION BREAKS OUT?

What do you do if all the delegates spontaneously erupt, break every rule in the book, or something else you can only dream of in your worst nightmares? Here are the simple steps to follow:

Before it breaks out:

If you sense that something is going to happen, because of a particular issue for instance, talk to the delegates beforehand and request that they stay focused throughout the debate. This will make breakouts less likely. Also see "Dealing with Disruptive Delegates".

After it breaks out:

Have a closed door recess: if you keep trying to suppress all the people in the room by shouting at them, chances are they are just going to get more rowdy. So allow a closed door recess, to try to calm things down. Walk around and talk to the delegates to figure out what the problem is, and how they would like to solve it.

Identify the one or two people who started it: revolutions seldom break out completely spontaneously, so single out the person(s) responsible for egging everyone on.

Talk to him/her in person: Take that person out of the room during the recess (*at all times avoid making a scene or embarrassing the delegate in question*) and talk to them. Remind them that they are here to conduct constructive debate, and they are certainly not doing that, ask them exactly what their motives are etc. Hopefully he/she will calm down, but otherwise *warn* them that you will talk to the MUN Director if it continues (don't actually call them yourself, leave this up to the Secretary General).

Call the Secretary General or other member of the Secretariat: if when you return from recess, the disorder continues, send admin staff for the Secretary General who will then handle the matter.

WHAT IF YOU GET A QUESTION AND YOU DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER?

Just be honest and say you don't know. Don't say something that you are not quite sure about just to answer; this will only complicate matters. If it is a question concerning rules of procedure, just look it up in the handbook. If it is something factual that neither you nor the delegates know, send admin staff to find out, but avoid wasting time looking for information that isn't directly relevant to the resolution.

WHAT IS THE BEST CHAIRING STYLE?

It's often hard to know whether to be strict or lax with the delegates, but there is only one simple answer: it depends. It depends on the group of delegates themselves, and what mood they are in, but generally one could safely stick to the following:

Start off quite firm and strict, and then get more relaxed.

When you introduce yourself, try to give off an air of calmness (*no need to be nervous, they won't bite!*) and ask them already at the beginning to stay quiet and respectful throughout debate.

When there is a joke, or humorous situation, there is not need to be extremely strict. You are allowed to smile.

WHAT IF I NEED TO REGAIN/MAINTAIN SILENCE?

Sometimes it feels like the more you say 'order in the house', the less order there is. It is important to listen to the delegates, and try to understand why they are being so rowdy, in order to understand the best way of keeping them calm.

When you call for order, do not proceed before there is order. Wait!

If they are talking while a speaker is speaking, remind them how important it is that they listen and *respect* the others.

If, at the end of the week/day, the delegates are tired, don't be afraid to be a bit light hearted.

There are a few things you should not do, under any circumstances:

- Don't keep saying that they need to be quiet, then it's better to have a recess/wait until there is silence.
- Don't expect there to be complete silence, only mention it if the murmur bothers the speaker.
- Don't lose your temper and don't raise your voice.
- **Don't suspend note passing if it isn't the source of commotion.**

WHAT IF SOMEONE CRITICIZES THE CHAIR?

The idea of having a mutiny amongst the delegates, or notes threatening to impeach the chair does seem quite daunting, but the most important thing is to stay in control and stay calm. The first thing to do is make sure it's not justified. If it is, then deal with the problem. If it isn't, then proceed with the following:

Don't pay too much attention to it, as in that way you will give it importance.

Remind them that they are not being constructive, nor is it relevant to the debate. Just say something along the lines of, "Thank you for your point, but it is hardly relevant to the debate, it is important that you all try to focus on a constructive debate."

If they say, "'motion to remove the chair,'" ask your co-chair to state that it is out of order.

Since it's hard to control the whole group, have a recess and talk to the individual who sent the note or made the point. But be careful with this since it draws attention to the action.

COMMON SENSE AND REMEMBERING WHAT IT IS TO BE A DELEGATE

A final point to this chair's manual is this: the two best rules of thumb in most chairing situations are to use common sense, and to remember what it was like to be a delegate. In most cases, reacting calmly and sensibly will get you through just about anything. Remember when you were a delegate, and the chairs that you thought were most effective, and emulate those same behaviors. Think about what works for you when you are a delegate, and you'll find the majority of delegates feel the same way.

Yes, there will occasionally be troublemakers who seem destined to make your life difficult. Overall, however, most delegates are there to enjoy the MUN experience for what it's meant to be, and if you start out with a firm, fair tone, you'll find those delegates on your side in dealing with said troublemakers.

Have fun with the experience, and enjoy helping to create a great conference!