



**UNITED KINGDOM PARLIAMENTARY**  
**COMMITTEE**  
**Guide Book**



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## Committee Overview

Honorable Members of Parliament (MPs), welcome to the United Kingdom's Parliamentary Committee (UKPC)! This section should act as a primer for the basic concepts of the UKPC and how it deviates from typical MUNs you may have attended in the past.

The UKPC is a combination of Security Council and Historical Crisis Committees. It aims to replicate the debate and ongoing issues being considered in government and is a more action-focused type of MUN. It could be considered a form of introduction to HCC, due to the crises that members of the government have to respond to. If you are thorough in the knowledge of government procedure, you may notice some changes that have been made in the interests of debate.

The main objective of the UKPC is to, as an individual and as a committee, form bills on set topics, while also reacting to an ongoing series of events which will change based on the passage of time as well as your own decisions and actions. How you react will determine the events which follow.

As MPs, you will be representing the key people related to the government; the power and authority you wield will reflect those of these people. Information is asymmetrical, not everyone will be working with the same knowledge. This creates the opportunity for intrigue and espionage. The wider world as well as specific sections of government related to the specific committee are represented by the Crisis Directors and backroom.

Compared to typical MUN committees, as previously mentioned, the pace is greatly heightened. The debate would alternate between entertaining rounds of debate, and unmoderated caucus (where the speakers may choose to tighten the rules on certain aspects at certain times) when MPs will react to dynamic Crisis Updates.

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You will represent people in The UK Parliament, rather than countries. You will have to research your character and the power and authority or affiliations that character holds. You will also need to research your political party, your interest groups and your constituency, which influence your decision making.

Because you will be a member of a political party, there will be no opening speeches, as most party members will support, with slight variations or degrees of support, your party's policy.

Yes, this means that personal pronouns ARE allowed. The fact that you are characters in houses of government, rather than countries at the UN, means that there is a much greater focus on action. You don't have to 'recommend' or 'urge' in Crisis, you can take direct action - if you want something to happen, you can make it happen. Of course, this hinges upon two things: the action being realistic and being detailed.

As a political leader, your focus will be on maintaining not only your position in power but also the general happiness and welfare of your people by issuing specific statements and enacting specific policies to reinforce this.

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## Roles and Powers of the House of Commons

The House of Commons powers and duties are as follows:

- To pass laws.
- To debate important issues of international, national or local importance.
- To scrutinize the government.
- To check and approve government finance.
- To raise taxes.
- To express the views of constituents.

## Roles and Powers of the Speaker

In the UKPC, the Chairs take the role and character of the Speaker of the House of Commons, with their respective powers. The Speaker is perhaps best known as the person who keeps order and calls MPs to speak during Commons debates. The Speaker calls MPs in turn to give their opinion on an issue. For example, the Speaker of the house would currently represent John Bercow. The Speaker's powers include:

- Directing an MP to withdraw remarks if, for example, they use abusive language
- Suspending the sitting of the House due to serious threat or disorder
- Suspending MPs who are deliberately disobedient - known as naming (this is usually done by a vote in the commons, but will follow the normal MUN 3 warnings system)
- Asking MPs to be quiet so Members can be heard
- Voting on issues only in the case of a tie

An example of the Phraseology for asking MPs to withdraw remarks is here:

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=i9hrfc40Lko>

## Committee Structure

The committee is divided into two: The House of Commons (represented by Delegates) and The House of Lords and the Queen (represented by the backroom).

### The House of Commons

The House of Commons is composed of 650 members of parliament (MPs) elected by the public to represent their interests. The role of MPs include proposing new legislation and auditing

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government policies about current issues. The House of Commons is tasked with most legislative functions, and are often the primary initiator of bills.

In the UK there are over 400 political parties that exist, of them, only 10 are represented in the Parliament and the House of Commons. Below you will find a list of these parties and a short description of them and their core beliefs:

## **The House of Lords**

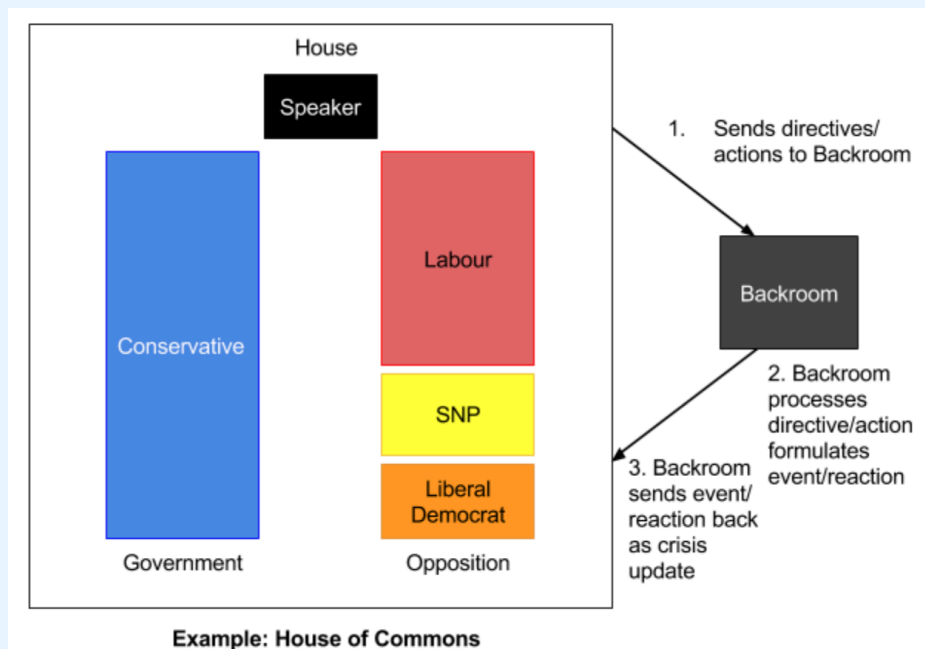
The second chamber of the UK Parliament includes the House of Lords. Unlike the House of Commons, members in the House of Lords are chosen either based on appointment, heredity or official function. The roles of the house of Lords include shaping and introducing legislation and scrutinizing the government.

Please note that in order for any bill to be passed as law, it has to be thoroughly vetted and approved by both the chambers of the UK parliament.

## **Committee Rooms**

The committee rooms are composed of the key politicians who make up the UKPC. You will have to take actions based on the interests of your committee as well as your personal interests - depending on your role and the strength of your views- such as supporting a hard or soft Brexit.

The UKPC is split into a committee and a backroom. The structure is as follows:



## **Backroom**

The backroom is the second ‘room’ of the UKPC and is occupied by the Crisis Director and Crisis Analysts, collectively referred to as ‘backroom staff’. If you consider the UKPC to be a game, the backroom represents the computer running the game, keeping track of all the information and responding to the players’ (i.e. MPs’) actions.

The backroom can represent all the countries, organizations, sections of government and individuals not included in the houses, so communication and action from within the house are not just limited to the characters represented within the UKPC.

For example, the UKPC has the House of Lords and the Queen being represented by the backroom. For example, a bill regarding the British Monarchy will have the House of Lords and the Queen review, revise and accept/deny the bill in the backroom. The backroom staff are, as previously mentioned, the occupants of the backroom and will be the ones deciding on how to respond to the actions taken in the house. How MPs communicate with the backroom and how the backroom translates these into actual events will be expanded on in the rules of procedure.

## **Crisis Staff**

“Crisis Staff” is a term that is used to encompass both the backroom staff and the speakers in the individual houses. Previous experience gives an ideal minimum of four GC staff in total; two speakers and two crisis directors. While it is theoretically possible to have speakers process directives and manage committees, they can quickly become overwhelmed during periods of high activity.

## **UKPC Terminology**

As in the real House of Commons, the MPs must address each other with: May the Speaker please ask/tell/respond to/inform the honorable gentleman/lady/member that (fill in here), instead of May the Chair please ask the delegate of.....that. If the MP is one in your own party, then you can refer to them as my honorable friend. If the person being referred to is a Privy Counsellor, then they are referred to as the right honorable gentleman/lady.

Privy Counselors are members of the Privy Council. Privy Council members include Cabinet members past and present, the Speaker, the Prime Minister, the Opposition Leader, Archbishops, various senior judges as well as other senior public figures.

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When the Speaker rises to speak, all other Members, including the Member who has the floor, must resume their seats immediately.

Unlike in usual MUN debate, banter (as mentioned in the U.K. Parliament's website) witty comments at an MP's expense are in order at the Speaker's discretion.

Members may not: accuse other Members of deliberate misrepresentation, or lying, to the House; use abusive or insulting language likely to create disorder; criticize the personal conduct of individual Members or Peers, refer to the alleged views of members of the Royal Family; or refer to matters awaiting adjudication by a court of law (except when discussing legislation).

Accusing a Member of the House of one of the following unparliamentary phrases is out of order, and doing so will result in the MP being asked to withdraw the word or allegation, and if the MP refuses, a warning.

The phrases are as follows: Bastard, Blackguard, Coward, Deceptive Dodgy (But as used without consequence by Ed Miliband, can be used at the discretion of the chair), Drunk, Falsehoods, Git, Guttersnipe, Hooligan, Hypocrite, Idiot, Ignoramus, Liar (Specifically lying to the House of Commons, as would be assumed without any context placed by the MP. Accusing a member of lying to other government bodies, groups or individuals is in order), Pipsqueak, Rat, Swine, Stool, Pigeon, Tart, Traitor, Sod, Slimy, Wart.

In addition, accusations of 'crooked deals' or insinuation of the use of banned substances by a member are considered unparliamentary language

An example of a MP being asked to withdraw his remarks can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XXNb3j2ZZEM>.

Please see an example of debate here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QnKKPwEX\\_ac](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QnKKPwEX_ac),

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uUqhqsFE0YQ>.

## **Key Procedural Differences**

### **Characters and Research**

One of the key differences between the UKPC and regular MUN is that you are representing a character, not a country. You have specific roles, power and responsibilities related to your character. Your research should contain biographical information as well as information about

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the character's current and former positions and experiences. It should include any affiliations your character has and this will influence your actions. For example, an MP who is lobbied by those who support Brexit would not vote for a bill against Brexit.

This is the simplest but most fundamental difference between the UKPC and regular MUN. You will have noticed that you are not a country's delegation to the UN, but a person in a specific cabinet. What this means is that, unlike what you would normally do as a delegation to the UN, you are able to take direct action as your character. This ability to have a direct effect on the crisis means that a much greater standard of specificity is required in the actions than in normal bills. This will be covered in a later section.

### **Requesting POCs, POIs**

MPs signal that they want to speak by standing up from their seat (a custom known as 'catching the Speaker's eye') and holding their placard or they can notify the Speaker in advance by writing.

### **Requesting Emergency Debates**

An Emergency debate is a debate called at short notice in the House of Commons on an important and specific matter that should have urgent consideration. Emergency debates cannot be called in response to an ongoing crisis that requires immediate action, for example, a war or imminent terrorist plot. They can only be called in response to a crisis that is not of the highest degree of urgency, for example, a travel ban or contaminated blood in the NHS. Whether an Emergency debate can be held will be at the discretion of the Speaker.

An MP can call for an Emergency debate by sending a request in note form to make an application to the house. If they are given permission, they will then need to prepare a 1-minute speech in order to obtain the satisfaction of the Speaker on the matter and then permission from the House to debate the matter.

After the MP has given the speech, if the Speaker is satisfied that the matter is proper to be debated, the House will then vote by standing in their seats in support of the MP or sitting down in opposition.

If the application is successful, the Speaker shall announce the length of the debate and the time at which it is to be held.

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Standing Orders, which are referred to below, are the written rules which regulate the proceedings of each House.

***For example:***

*Speaker: I would now like to call \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of MP) to make an application for leave to propose a debate on a specific and important matter that should have urgent consideration under the terms of standing order number 24. The Honourable Member has up to 2-minutes in which to make such an application. \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of MP).*

*\*MP gives their 2 minute speech\**

*Speaker: I am satisfied/ not satisfied that the matter raised by him/her is proper to be discussed under the terms of the standing order number 24. (If the Speaker is satisfied) Has the Honourable Member the leave of the house?*

*\*Members stand in support, or sit in opposition\**

*The Honourable Member has obtained/ has not obtained the leave of the House. (If the MP has obtained the leave of the House)*

*Speaker: I can inform the House that the debate will be held \_\_\_\_\_ (when it will be held- e.g. after lunch or in 10 minutes). The debate will last for/up to \_\_\_\_\_ minutes/hours.*

If the matter is to be debated immediately, or in a short while, the Speaker can also motion to enter into unmoderated caucus to write resolutions.

Please see this video as an example: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MT4JNQ5MivU>.

## **Military Actions**

The Prime Minister and cabinet have the power to declare war and carry out military actions; however, unless there are circumstances that require an immediate military response due to the security of the country, permission is usually granted from the Commons and the Queen. In this case, the declaration and specific military actions must be outlined in detail in a cabinet directive.

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A simple majority from the House of Commons, and the agreement of the Queen (represented by the back room) is all that is required for military action and declaration of war.

### **Miscellaneous:**

Other **VITAL** key differences include; actions delegates can take, resolution drafting, crisis, voting, and amendments. More in depth step by step explanations are found in the UKPC rules of procedure document.

## **Crisis Staff and Secretariat**

This section is not meant for delegates, although those of you who are interested in the inner workings of the GC Committees are welcome to read it. Included are lists of things to consider on both the micro (for the Crisis Staff) and macro (for the Secretariat) level.

Please note that all backroom and front room staff for UKPC must go through preliminary training by the secretariat before they begin the committee session.

### **Organization: Crisis**

- Team organization:
  - The backroom should consist of two full-time members for each committee .
  - The committee requires two chairs
- In the lead-up to the conference, you must prepare the following:

- Placards:

The Placards must have the name of the Member of Parliament, the County or State name and any governmental role, for example Shadow Secretary or Treasurer.

- Crises scenarios and scope

You must work out not only which crises you are doing, but how long they are and when they will be implemented in normal debate. Will they be implemented regardless of the progress on the topics, or only if debate is slow or there are successful bipartisan efforts with no resistance? This also includes working out how much real time per in-crisis day you are allocating (for example, three crisis hours equals one real hour). It goes without saying that the committees should be decided here as well.

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- Directive submission method

Possibly the next most important aspect of Crisis is sending directives. The method for delegates submitting their directives to the backroom must be efficient and easy to track. American conferences favor a paper system, which can work but may result in lost directives. A proven method used in THAIMUN is Google forms, where delegates fill in the type of directive (a multiple choice option) and the content of their directive (a long form answer box). If using a Google form, remember to record the sender's username so you know who it came from

- An update presentation method

The crisis element of the UKPC would be pointless if the delegates could not see what effect their actions have on the world. The delivery of both global and cabinet-specific crisis updates must be considered. The most low-tech and usually most amusing option is for crisis staff to act out the crisis update to the cabinets, temporarily taking the role of some other character. Alternatively, an update can be written out by the backroom and read out to the cabinet by the chairs or, as the most high tech option, a web page set up where delegates can access the crisis updates. Tumblr has also been used in the past.

## **Creditories:**

*Much thanks must go to the following people, without which the development of this Handbook and the committees would not have been possible.*

### **Resources used:**

The HCC Rules of Procedure

The Harvard MUN Rules of Procedure

The Thammasat University MUN Rules of Procedure

<http://www.parliament.uk>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Standing\\_Rules\\_of\\_the\\_United\\_States\\_Senate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Standing_Rules_of_the_United_States_Senate)

<https://www.thoughtco.com/about-the-us-senate-3322271>

<http://congressbase.com/97/u-s-senate-powers-and-functions/>

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Senate-United-States-government>

<https://www.rules.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?p=RuleXIX>

<https://www.thoughtco.com/the-supermajority-vote-in-us-government-3322045>

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<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8dPuuaLjXtOfse2ncvfffeelTrqvhrz8H>

**The GCs Handbook:**

The THAIMUN V Secretariat:

- Secretaries General: Nafis Mahboob (BPS) and Jing Jing Piriyaalertsak (HIS)
- Parliamentarians: Dillon Rajakarier (BPS) and PunPun Leelamanthep (ICS)

THAIMUN V UKPC Staff:

- Gwen Needham (HIS)
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