UNITED KINGDOM PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE

Rules of Procedure

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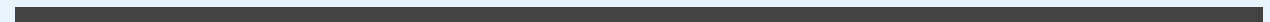
General Procedures and Mechanics of the UKPC

This paper will cover the general rules and mechanics of UKPC as this committee will not be run by the standard THAIMUN rules of procedure.

1. **Roll Call**
   a. The roll call is used to ascertain which MPs are present and their voting status in the committee. When their nation is called by the speaker, MPs are required to raise their placards and declare their voting status as either "present" or "present and voting".
   b. Delegates who declare "present and voting" will not be able to abstain from substantive voting (draft resolutions and amendments). Those who declared "present" can, on the other hand, abstain from substantive voting.
   c. There will be no abstentions or vetoes entertained for procedural voting (motions and other procedures), and only a simple majority is needed for a motion to pass.
   d. Observers can only say "present".

2. **Open Debate**
   a. Delegates need to propose the motion to open debate in order to officially commence a debate session.
   b. Opening the debate requires a simple majority from procedural voting, abstentions will not be in order.

3. **Agenda Setting**
   a. If there is more than one topic in the committee, setting the agenda will decide the order in which the topics will be discussed. If the committee has only one topic, this procedure can be skipped.
   b. The speaker will entertain a motion to set the agenda. Delegates should say, for example, "This MP would like to motion to set the agenda to topic B." After the motion is passed by the house, the speaker will call for speaker(s) to speak for and against setting the agenda to the topic called in the motion. Then, there will be procedural voting on whether this topic will be set as the agenda.
   c. For example, if topic B is voted as the agenda item by a simple majority of MPs, topic A will fail immediately. If topic B does not garner enough votes, another motion will be required to establish topic A as the agenda, and the entire procedure will be repeated.

4. **General Speaking List (GSL)**

a. GSL provides a forum for MPs to present speeches outlining their countries' stances on the committee's topic. Typically, at the start of the committee session, the speakers will entertain a motion to open the GSL, which will be voted on and passed by simple majority.
b. When motioning to open the GSL, MPs can specify the time allotted for each speech. If no time per speaker is specified, then the default time is set to 60 seconds. Motions to extend the speaking time will be subject to a procedural vote.
c. Once the GSL has been opened, MPs wishing to speak must raise their placards until recognized by the speaker.
d. Delegates can propose motions to open the GSL at any point during the committee session. If there are no motions passed by the house, the debate would revert to the GSL.
    i. Yielding System– After MPs finish their speeches they are required to yield the floor to someone else in order to leave the podium. There are 3 types of yielding:
        1. Yield to the speaker: Used when the MP wishes to end the speech and allow the speaker to continue facilitating the committee.
        2. Yield to points of information: Used when the MP wishes to use the remaining time to answer questions from other MPs.
            a. However, because direct interaction between MPs is not permitted in the GSL, MPs must ask and answer questions through the speaker.
            b. For example, "The MP of A would like to ask the MP of B through the speaker ..." or "The MP of B wants to answer through the speaker to the MP of A."
        3. Yield to other MPs: Used when the MP on the podium wishes to yield the remaining time to another MP who will deliver their speech. The remaining time will be added on to the speaking time of the other MP who has been yielded to. If the receiving MP does not wish to entertain the yield, the speakers will then ask the MP on the podium how they wish to yield.

5. **Motions**
    a. Motions are proposals for advancing the committee forward. The speaker will periodically open the floor to MPs to propose points and motions during the committee session. This section will cover the different types of motions.
        i. Proposing moderated and unmoderated caucuses can only be done through motioning.
        ii. Motions go through procedural voting to determine if they pass or fail. If multiple motions are proposed in one round, then they will be voted on from the most to least disruptive. This means that motions which are longer in duration will be voted on first.

      iii.   Once a motion acquires a simple majority of votes from the MPs, all other motions in that round automatically fail. Delegates may propose failed motions again when the speaker opens the floor for another round of points and motions.

  b. Moderated Caucus

      i.   The moderated caucus is a formal debate on a specific topic proposed by the MPs. The MP proposing the motion must concisely explain the topic, set the time limit for the entire caucus, and the time limit per speaker. The speaker would then add the caucus to the voting list.

      ii.   Once a moderated caucus has passed, the speaker will ask the MP who proposed the motion whether they wish to speak first or last. Then, other MPs wishing to speak in this caucus must raise their placards until recognized by the speaker.

      iii.   There is no yielding in a moderated caucus. Once a MP has finished their speech, the speaker will immediately invite the next MP up to the podium.

  c. Unmoderated Caucus

      i.   The unmoderated caucus is an informal debate session in which MPs can move around freely as well as engage in direct conversations with other MPs. Delegates who motion for an unmoderated caucus must state the session's time limit.

      ii.   During the unmoderated caucus, MPs may form blocs with other MPs who hold similar views, lobby other MPs, and work on their working papers and draft resolutions. Delegates may also use first person singular pronouns during this session.

  d. Consultation of the Whole

      i.   This motion incorporates features of both the moderated and unmoderated caucuses. Consultation as a whole is still a formal debate format as MPs must take turns making speeches and remain seated throughout the session. The overall period for the consultation will be determined by the MP who proposed the motion. They will also have the opportunity to speak first, and once finished, the MPs can yield the floor to another MP of their choice without having to refer back to the speaker. There is no time limit for each speaker during the consultation of the whole.

  e. Motion to divide the question

      i.   A motion to split a topic into distinct segments of debate or debating a voting. E.g: An amendment calling for lower criminal penalties and increased enforcement may be divided into two amendments, each of which calls for one of these proposals.

6. Point System

i. Unlike the motion system, which is utilized for the committee's collective progress, the point system is used when an MP wishes to address an issue.

ii. When the speaker opens the floor to points and motions, all points can be raised. However, points of order and personal privilege can also be raised whilst another MP is speaking.

iii. 4 Types of Points:

1. Point of Order: Used when a MP believes that the speaker's behavior is seriously incorrect and detrimental to the committee and wishes to correct them. To raise a point of order the MP must raise their placard and state "point of order", followed by stating the wrongful conduct of the speakers. If the speaker recognizes their conduct as improper, the speaker will state "the speaker remains corrected" and then proceed to amend their conduct.

2. Point of Personal Privilege: Used to address personal discomfort of the MP, such as regarding the room temperature or use of the lavatory. MPs are urged to communicate points of personal privilege in note form to the speakers without disrupting the committee. However, if the issue is an emergency or interferes with the MP's ability to participate in the committee session (e.g., audio difficulties), the MP may raise their placard and announce "point of personal privilege," followed by stating their difficulty.

3. Point of Information: To ask the speaker or other MPs questions concerning the committee's topic, working papers, and draft resolutions. This point may only be raised when the speaker opens the floor to points and motions. As verbal communication between MPs is not permitted except during an unmoderated caucus, MPs must ask and answer "through the speaker". For example,

   a. Speaker of the house: The floor is now open to requests for information. Are there any on the floor at this time. MP a, you have been recognised.

   b. MP a : May the Speaker please ask the honorable gentleman/lady/member MP b

   c. MP b : May the Speaker please thank honorable gentleman/lady/member MP a for their question and respond 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.

4. Point of Parliamentary Inquiry: Used when a MP wants to ask the speaker a question regarding the rules of procedure.

iv. Right to Reply

1. Used when the integrity of the MP's is impugned by another MP.

2. The MP may ask the speaker for the right to reply to defend their nation if the MP's nation's name is mentioned directly in the speech.
3. Indirect mentions do not invoke the right to reply.
4. The MP who attacked another nation cannot answer the right to reply speech.
5. The right of reply is also stringent on the speaker's discretion. Appeals to the speaker's decision will not be entertained in the case of a right to reply.

7. **Crisis Updates**
   a. Crisis Updates are the means through which the backroom translates the directives submitted by the MPs into actions, and then how those actions affect the outside world.
   b. The backroom can choose whether to accept directives and respond to them.
      i. Directives considered unrealistic, will not be responded to, and therefore the action outlined in the directive will not occur.
      ii. For example: Nuking the entire world or starting an alien invasion
   c. Global Crisis Updates will be delivered to all MPs (of both cabinets if applicable); up this represents the information reported on by the news, and is assumed to be known by the general public. The updates also represent events taking place in other relevant sections of government.
      i. For example, the UKPC would have the House of Representatives being represented by the backroom.
   d. Crisis Updates can also be on the individual level - if a personal directive is submitted in secret, the results of this will become known only to those it affects. Similarly, if a cabinet directive is submitted detailing a secret operation, the results will only become known to the respective cabinet.

8. **Actions**
   a. Delegates can take a variety of actions such personal directives, press releases, and communiqués
      i. For Personal Directives, Press Releases and Communiqués, you are not limited to simply taking individual action. If multiple characters (but not the entire cabinet, as in that case a cabinet directive would be appropriate) wish to undertake an action, this should be performed under the title of a "Personal Directive", "Press Release" or "Communiqué."
   b. Personal Directives
      i. A Personal Directive is an action that you take as your character or group of characters e.g policies pursued on a State level, such as increasing the number of homeless shelters.

    ii.   All directives must be held to a high level of specificity. Given that action, rather than a recommendation, is taking place, this specificity is important so that the MP(s) submitting the directive is on the same page as the backroom staff. This is relevant whether the directive is military (specific instructions for movement of troops, for example) or political (laws, policies or even public speeches must be carefully crafted) in order to ensure consistency.

    iii.   Military directives can also be issued in the UKPC

    iv.   Depending on the extent of the directive, the corresponding Crisis Update can be global, cabinet specific or individual. Personal Directives are the most versatile and most commonly-used directive, which should be used to shape the crisis at hand.

c. Press Releases

    i.   A Press Release is a statement released by a character (acting on his own or on behalf of his government) which is available to the public.

    ii.   All press releases must be submitted verbatim (i.e. it must be written in the way you mean it to be published) with a title, and will be released as a Global Crisis Update.

d. Communiqués

    i.   Similar to a Press Release, a Communiqué must be submitted to the form verbatim, as the backroom will pass the message on as it is sent to them. This type of directive is used when an individual or group wishes to communicate privately with another individual or group.

    ii.   The recipient of the message does not necessarily have to be someone represented by a MP; the backroom can respond on the behalf of any non-MP entity.

    iii.   For example: communications to the President or an influential figure

e. Cabinet Directives

    i.   Cabinet Directives are actions taken by the entire cabinet. These can result in global crisis updates.

    ii.   For example with a joint press conference, policy change or a major operations or crisis updates delivered specifically to the committee for example, secret operations and internal affairs changes.

f. Military Directives

    i.   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.

    ii.   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.

g. Emergency Debates

    i.   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.

    ii.   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.

    iii.   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.

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

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

        1.   *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).*

        2.   *MP gives their 2 minute speech*

        3.   *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?*

        4.   *Members stand in support, or sit in opposition*

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

        6.   *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.*

     vi.   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.

     vii.   Please refer to the video below as an example:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MT4JNQ5MivU.

9. Drafting Resolutions

A resolution should contain:

TITLE: This tells people how to refer to the resolution

AUTHORS: Requires 2 or more authors for the resolutions to be debated in the chamber

SIGNATORIES: Requires 6 signatories or more for the resolutions to be debated in the chamber

PREAMBLE: The preamble should be a one or two sentence statement of purpose- it should briefly state what the resolution states to accomplish and how it would do so.

ENACTMENT CLAUSE: "Be it enacted by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:" This clause gives the resolution the full legal authority of the body passing it.

CONTENT: This section of a resolution enumerates the specific actions that the document will mandate. Content clauses should be positive and not normative in nature: that is, they should accomplish something definitive (i.e. allocations, authorisations, etc.). Normative language should be kept in the preamble.

DEFINITIONS: Any technical terms, as well as the abbreviations of any organizations or departments referred to in the text of the resolution, should be defined and included in the section. Any ambiguous phrases should also be explained further in the definitions sections.

COMMENCEMENT ORDER (optional): A commencement order is designed to bring into force the whole or part of an Act of Parliament at a date later than the date of the royal assent.

If there is no commencement order, the Act will come into force from midnight at the start of the day of the royal assent.

Please see the below links for an example of a resolution:
Title, preamble, enactment clause: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/30/introduction.
Content: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/30/part/1.
Definitions: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/30/section/3.

Resolutions will be vetted by the advisors for content (grammar, structure etc.) and the crisis staff for resolution format.

10. Amendments
   a. After the draft resolution presentation has ended and all points of information have been addressed, the speaker will open the floor to motions to amend the presented resolution. MPs motioning for an amendment must specify which parts of the resolution, usually a clause or subclause, they wish to modify, and what changes they would like to see. Then, the speaker will ask the sponsors of the presented draft resolution to determine whether the proposed amendment is a friendly or unfriendly amendment.
   b. Friendly and Unfriendly Amendments
      i. If the sponsors conclude that the amendment is friendly, changes to the resolution can be implemented immediately and without debate.
      ii. If the sponsors conclude that the amendment is unfriendly, the speaker will invite speakers in support and opposition to the amendment. Each speaker will have 60 seconds to deliver their remarks on the amendment. Following the conclusion of the debate period, the committee will vote on whether the amendment passes or fails. To enact an unfriendly amendment, a supermajority of two-thirds of the total number of MPs in the committee is necessary.

11. Close Debate
   a. Voting in the House of Commons is referred to as division, therefore a delegate would say if they wish to move to voting procedures: motion to move to division procedures, or a chair would say: we will now be moving onto division, following the debate of a draft resolution.

12. Voting Procedure
   a. Pre-vote Motions
      i. Motion to reorder: By default, draft resolutions will be voted on in numerical order, assigned by the speakers based on the order of submission. A motion to reorder allows MPs to change the voting order of the draft resolutions.

ii. Motion to divide the question: This motion allows MPs to divide a draft resolution into parts and vote on those parts separately. Preambulatory clauses will not be subject to division.

1. Each bloc in the committee can submit up to one interpretation of 'dividing the question', or how the draft resolution is to be divided. Such proposals may divide the question into two or more parts.

2. Once blocs have submitted their proposals, the speakers will then arrange them in order of most to least severe for the committee to vote upon, in that order. This vote is a substantive vote, and requires a simple majority to pass.

3. Once a proposal passes, all other proposals are discarded and the draft resolution is divided accordingly. Each divided part of the draft resolution will be voted upon separately, and needs a supermajority (or a ⅔ majority) to pass. After all parts have been voted upon, those that were voted to be included will be compiled into the final resolution, which would then be considered 'Passed' by the committee.

iii. Means of Voting

1. Once the motion to begin voting procedure passes, the speaker will conduct voting through the procedure listed below,

   a. *The Speaker will say: the question is as on the order papers, as many as of that opinion say aye.*

   b. *Those for the resolution say aye*

   c. *The Speaker will then say: of the contrary no.*

   d. *Those for the resolution say no*

   e. *If it cannot be determined how many agree or not, or if the Speaker's decision is challenged by further shouts of "aye" or "no" then the speaker calls for a division.*

   f. *If the decision is clear from the shouts, the Speaker will say: I think the ayes/nos have it, the ayes/nos have it.*

   g. *Upon this call, MPs go to either the left or right of the room, the right side being an aye side, the left side being a no side, and are counted by the pages.*

   h. *Upon receiving the result, the Speaker will then say: The ayes to the right number of votes, the nos to the left number of votes. So the ayes/nos have it, the ayes/nos have it.*

2. Please see this video for an example: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nl5JLohLWI4

b. Post-vote Motions

      i.   Motion to divide the house: This is a motion to revote with no abstentions allowed. It can only be entertained if the number of abstentions is enough to change the voting result. The speaker can use discretion to entertain this motion or entertain its proposal from the MPs, who will then vote to determine whether the house will be divided.

     ii.   Motion to reconsider: This is a motion to revote which can only be proposed by MPs who voted against a draft resolution. This motion's success depends on the speaker's discretion.

13. Passing Resolutions

a. Once a resolution has passed, it must go through the House of Lords (the Backroom) for Lords amendments. Lord Amendments are suggestions made by the House of Lords that have to be made in order to pass it through the house.

b. The Commons has to reach a decision on each Lords Amendment. Motions may be made

c. to agree or disagree with, amend or provide an alternative to individual Lords Amendments.

d. If necessary, the resolution passes backwards and forwards between the two Houses until all points of disagreement are resolved; the resolution is then ready for Royal Assent. This is when the Queen formally agrees to make the resolution into an Act of Parliament (law).

e. The legislation within the resolution may come into effect immediately, after a set period or only after a commencement order by a government minister.

14. Suspend Debate

a. Motions to suspend the debate are used for breaks in between committee sessions. This motion requires a simple majority to pass.

15. Adjourn Meeting

a. The motion to adjourn the meeting is used to end the committee following the announcement of the voting results. This would mean the committee has completed the agenda, and MPs will not be returning for further deliberation.

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

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https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8dPuuaLjXtOfse2ncvffeelTrqvhrz8H

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○ Gwen Needham (HIS)

○ Shane Thongdeelert (ISE)

○ Pun Pun Yongphiphatwong (SHB)

○ Mark Comer (BPS)

THAIMUN V USCC Staff:

○ Chittawan Boonsitanon (CIS)

○ Suyash Kothari (BPS)

 ○ Jira Trinetkamol (WIS)

○ Justin Potisit (ISE)

 Special Thanks To:

○ Mr. John Wood, THAIMUN Director

○ Punn Siwabutr for compiling the Military Handbook

The original HCC Handbook from which this was modified from:

● The THAIMUN IV Secretariat:

○ Secretaries General: Punn Siwabutr (SHB) and Smile Damrongmanee (RIS)

○ Parliamentarians: Putt Punyagupta (BPS) and Eliz de los Santos (CIS)

● THAIMUN IV HCC (Cuban Missile Crisis) Staff:

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○ Ploy Jantarasombat (RIS)

○ Alessandro Prügel (NIST)

○ Purvaansh Lohiya (WIS)

○ Jack Tye (BPS)

○ Thai Beckers Kasemsant (CIS)

● Special Thanks To:

○ Mr. John Wood, THAIMUN Director

○ Richard Sathirathaya (SHB), for compiling the military section

○ Jing Jing Piriyalertsak (HIS), for additional edits and checking

The modified rules of procedure and edits from Thai MUN X:

● Special Thanks To:

- ○ Thammasat University, for the modification of their rules of procedure
- The THAIMUN X Secretary-Geneals:
- ○ Sara Pimmada Landry (ISB)
- ○ Jeremy Kim (ICS)
- Special Thanks To:
- ○ Mr. John Wood, THAIMUN Director