



UNITED STATES CONGRESSIONAL
COMMITTEE
Rules of Procedure



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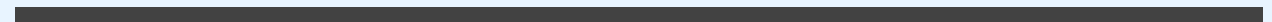
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General Procedures and Mechanics of the USCC

This paper will cover the general rules and mechanics of USCC 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 senators are present and their voting status in the committee. When their nation is called by the president, senators 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 bills 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 president will entertain a motion to set the agenda. Delegates should say, for example, "This senator would like to motion to set the agenda to topic B." After the motion is passed by the house, the president 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 senators, 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)

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- a. GSL provides a forum for senators to present speeches outlining their countries' stances on the committee's topic. Typically, at the start of the committee session, the presidents 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, senators 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, senators wishing to speak must raise their placards until recognized by the president.
 - 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 senators 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 president: Used when the senator wishes to end the speech and allow the president to continue facilitating the committee.
 2. Yield to points of information: Used when the senator wishes to use the remaining time to answer questions from other senators.
 - a. However, because direct interaction between senators is not permitted in the GSL, senators must ask and answer questions through the president.
 - b. For example, "The senator of A would like to ask the senator of B through the president ..." or "The senator of B wants to answer through the president to the senator of A."
 3. Yield to other senators: Used when the senator on the podium wishes to yield the remaining time to another senator who will deliver their speech. The remaining time will be added on to the speaking time of the other senator who has been yielded to. If the receiving senator does not wish to entertain the yield, the presidents will then ask the senator on the podium how they wish to yield.

5. Motions

- a. Motions are proposals for advancing the committee forward. The president will periodically open the floor to senators 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
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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 senators, all other motions in that round automatically fail. Delegates may propose failed motions again when the president 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 senators. The senator proposing the motion must concisely explain the topic, set the time limit for the entire caucus, and the time limit per speaker. The president would then add the caucus to the voting list.
 - ii. Once a moderated caucus has passed, the president will ask the senator who proposed the motion whether they wish to speak first or last. Then, other senators wishing to speak in this caucus must raise their placards until recognized by the president.
 - iii. There is no yielding in a moderated caucus. Once a senator has finished their speech, the president will immediately invite the next senator up to the podium.
- c. Unmoderated Caucus
- i. The unmoderated caucus is an informal debate session in which senators can move around freely as well as engage in direct conversations with other senators. Delegates who motion for an unmoderated caucus must state the session's time limit.
 - ii. During the unmoderated caucus, senators may form blocs with other senators who hold similar views, lobby other senators, and work on their working papers and draft bills. 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 senators must take turns making speeches and remain seated throughout the session. The overall period for the consultation will be determined by the senator who proposed the motion. They will also have the opportunity to speak first, and once finished, the senators can yield the floor to another senator of their choice without having to refer back to the president. There is no time limit for each speaker during the consultation of the whole.
- e. Cloture (motion to previous question)
- i. A motion to end debate on a bill and vote. Requires a two thirds majority vote.
- f. Motion to lay on the table
- i. A motion to temporarily hold off on discussing a bill or amendment
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- g. Motion to take from the table
 - i. A restoratory motion to bring back to the floor a measure (bill) previously laid on the table.
- h. Motion to reconsider
 - i. A restoratory motion to bring back to the floor a measure (usually a bill or amendment) previously disposed of. Only a delegate on the “winning” side of an original vote can move to reconsider. Only a majority vote can bring a bill or amendment back from defeat. E.g. a representative who has cast an against vote on a defeated bill can move to reconsider the bill.
- i. 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 a senator wishes to address an issue.
 - ii. When the president 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 senator is speaking.
 - iii. 4 Types of Points:
 1. Point of Order: Used when a senator believes that the president's behavior is seriously incorrect and detrimental to the committee and wishes to correct them. To raise a point of order the senator must raise their placard and state "point of order", followed by stating the wrongful conduct of the presidents. If the president recognizes their conduct as improper, the president will state "the president remains corrected" and then proceed to amend their conduct.
 2. Point of Personal Privilege: Used to address personal discomfort of the senator, such as regarding the room temperature or use of the lavatory. Delegates are urged to communicate points of personal privilege in note form to the presidents without disrupting the committee. However, if the issue is an emergency or interferes with the senator's ability to participate in the committee session (e.g., audio difficulties), the senator may raise their placard and announce "point of personal privilege," followed by stating their difficulty.
 3. Point of Information: To ask the president or other senators questions concerning the committee's topic, working papers, and draft bills. This point
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may only be raised when the president opens the floor to points and motions. As verbal communication between senators is not permitted except during an unmoderated caucus, senators must ask and answer "through the president".

For example,

- a. President of the Senate: The floor is now open to requests for information. Are there any on the floor at this time. Senator from Virginia, you have been recognised.
 - b. Senator from Virginia: May the President please ask the Senator from California.....
 - c. Senator from California: May the President please thank the Senator for their question and respond that.....
4. Point of Parliamentary Inquiry: Used when a senator wants to ask the president a question regarding the rules of procedure.
- iv. Right to Reply
 1. Used when the integrity of the senator's nation is impugned by another senator.
 2. The senator may ask the president for the right to reply to defend their nation if the senator's nation's name is mentioned directly in the speech.
 3. Indirect mentions do not invoke the right to reply.
 4. The senator who attacked another nation cannot answer the right to reply speech.
 5. The right of reply is also stringent on the president's discretion. Appeals to the president's decision will not be entertained in the case of a right to reply.

7. Funding

- a. Usually, only the House of Representatives has the power to introduce revenue-related bills or legislation governing the use of federal money; however, in the interests of debate, some of these rules will be modified. Furthermore, the question of source/methods of funding can be raised in the Senate as opposed to traditional Model United Nations committees.
 - i. Taxes and Budgets
 1. As only the House of Representatives has the power to create legislation to raise taxes and set fiscal budgets, Senators must send a personal directive to the backroom to ask specific Representatives of the House to put forward legislation, which specifies as to which tax and how much it will be increased or decreased. If this passes, this will then naturally pass into the Senate, where it can be agreed upon and then the new funds can be used in a separate bill. The Senate can pull out funds from specific agencies or simply state that it
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will be funded on the *House Committee on Appropriations*. *The House (only contains House of Representatives) Committee on Appropriations works with the Senate to regulate and allocate spending across all branches of government.*

ii. Grants

1. The National/Federal government can give grants and aid to the State government as incentives to follow certain policies. These can be mentioned in the Funding section of the bill. There are different types aid given through grants:
 - a. Formula grants: When the amount of funding for the State is determined by a mathematical formula. E.g. for every person classified as poor, a State gets a certain amount of money to help them.
 - b. Project grants: When States submit proposals to the Federal Government to obtain aid. The States then compete for the grant.
 - c. Block grants: When the Federal Government gives a State a large grant for general development in a sector e.g. Infrastructure. The State can then determine how to spend the grant.

8. Crisis Updates

- a. Crisis Updates are the means through which the backroom translates the directives submitted by the senators 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 senators (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 USCC 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.

9. Actions

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- 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 senator(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 USCC
 - 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 senator; the backroom can respond on the behalf of any non-senator entity.
 - iii. For example: communications to the President or an influential figure
 - e. Cabinet Directives
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- 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. When directing military action, you need to be specific about what forces you use, their compositions, tactics and how this relates to your overall operational and strategic objectives.

10. Drafting Bills

A Bill should contain:

TITLE: This tells people how to refer to the bill.

ENACTMENT CLAUSE: “Be it enacted by the United States Senate.” This clause gives a bill the full legal authority of the body passing it.

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

CONTENT: This section of a bill 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 bill, should be defined and included in the section. Any ambiguous phrases should also be explained further in the definitions sections.

ENFORCEMENT: The legislation must also explain who in the government (e.g. department, agency) or international community (e.g. UN, non-governmental organization) will be responsible for the implementation of the bill. If any monitoring or supervision is required, the party or parties responsible for doing so should also be listed in this section.

ENACTMENT: This sets the number of days until the law or action goes into effect.

FUNDING: If the legislation requires funds for certain projects, creates a new agency, or calls for any kind of reorganization that would require money to be spent, the bill must specify the amount and source of the funds.

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

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

For more information, please visit: <http://congress.org/advocacy-101/the-legislative-process/>

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

11. Amendments

- a. After the draft bill presentation has ended and all points of information have been addressed, the president will open the floor to motions to amend the presented bill. An amendment to the Constitution must be proposed as a joint bill, which means the bill must be approved by a two-thirds majority vote in both the House of Representatives and the Senate. In this specific case, as the President of the United States has no constitutional role in the amendment process, the joint bill, if approved by Congress, does not go to the White House for signature or approval.
 - b. Delegates motioning for an amendment must specify which parts of the bill, usually a clause or subclause, they wish to modify, and what changes they would like to see. Then, the president will ask the sponsors of the presented draft bill to determine whether the proposed amendment is a friendly or unfriendly amendment.
 - c. Friendly and Unfriendly Amendments
 - i. If the sponsors conclude that the amendment is friendly, changes to the bill can be implemented immediately and without debate.
 - ii. If the sponsors conclude that the amendment is unfriendly, the president 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 senators in the committee is necessary.
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12. Close Debate

- a. After the draft bill process is complete, a senator may propose a motion to end the debate. The president may also request speakers in support and opposition to this bill.
- b. A motion to close the debate will require a two-thirds majority to pass.
- c. Following the conclusion of the debate, the committee will proceed to the voting procedure.

13. Voting Procedure

- a. Pre-vote Motions
 - i. Motion to reorder: By default, draft bills will be voted on in numerical order, assigned by the presidents based on the order of submission. A motion to reorder allows senators to change the voting order of the draft bills.
 - ii. Motion to divide the question: This motion allows senators to divide a draft bill 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 bill is to be divided. Such proposals may divide the question into two or more parts.
 2. Once blocs have submitted their proposals, the presidents 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 bill is divided accordingly. Each divided part of the draft bill will be voted upon separately, and needs a supermajority (or a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority) to pass. After all parts have been voted upon, those that were voted to be included will be compiled into the final bill, which would then be considered ‘Passed’ by the committee.
 - iii. Means of Voting
 1. Once the motion to begin voting procedure passes, the president will conduct voting in 3 possible means;
 - a. *Voice vote*: The primary voting method, the presiding officers first ask those in favor to say “aye”, and then opposed say “no”. A voice vote is not counted individually but rather judgment by the presiding officers, whether the officers see more senators in favor or opposed. In a scenario where the voice vote is doubtful, they could use other voting methods which can be called by the senators or the chair.
 - b. *Division vote*: In a scenario where voice vote does not work, the presiding officers ask those in favor to stand up from their seats followed by those

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- opposed to stand up after those in favor sat down. However, this rarely happens and this method is only used after the voice vote is doubtful.
- c. *Recorded vote*: The presiding officers will ask the pages to call the senators by name in alphabetical order, and each of the called out senators responds in ayes or noes. This method is only used after the voice vote is doubtful.
2. Delegates who voted either "Yes with rights" or "No with rights" have the right to explain the justification behind their vote. Delegates will only be allowed to explain an affirmative or negative vote. The explanation is made after all senators have voted.
 - iv. Once the votes have been counted, the presiding officers will say: "The ayes are number of votes. The nays are number of votes. Therefore, the bill passes/fails."
 - b. Usually, a draft bill will pass if a two-thirds majority of senators vote "Yes" or "Yes with rights". In a scenario where the vote is tied in the committee, the Vice President or in this case the chair will cast the tie-breaking vote on the merits of the Vice President's interest. As the parliamentary procedure allows Senators to question other Senator's vote or to reintroduce a bill, the chair can if necessary record the vote.
 - c. 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 president can use discretion to entertain this motion or entertain its proposal from the senators, 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 senators who voted against a draft bill. This motion's success depends on the president's discretion.

14. Passing Bills

- a. Once a bill has received a majority vote and passes through the Senate, it must pass through the Secretary of the relevant Department who will review, revise and accept/deny the bill in the backroom. It will then pass through the House of Representatives (Backroom) and then to the President (Backroom) for his signature. If it is sent back to the Senate, it will be sent back with suggestions and criticisms on certain sections. If it is passed by the Secretary of Department and the House, but not by the President and is vetoed by the President, then the veto can be overridden by a two-thirds vote in both chambers. It should be noted that just because the House and President are represented by the backroom, it does not mean that they will have the same views. Replicating reality, the House and President will have their separate and contrasting views represented.
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15. Suspend Debate

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

16. 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 senators will not be returning for further deliberation.

Creditories:

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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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