

By-law (14): Conduct of Meetings

This By-law sets out a set of guidelines for the conduct of Union meetings. Other committees may use these as an example of good practice though they are encouraged to create and approve a set of standing orders that fit their purpose, subject to requirements about transparency set out in other By-laws.

Scope of regulations

1. Meetings within the Union should be conducted in ways that are open, accessible and participative.
2. It is the responsibility of the designated chair of a meeting to direct its business in line with these principles and to ensure that all members have an opportunity to participate.
3. Meetings of Union bodies will be most productive if the members present are aware of and empowered by standing orders setting out how they can influence the course of the meeting.
4. Chairs of Union meetings, including Campaign Networks and Coordination Committees are encouraged to set out the principles of how they shall conduct their meeting to members present, which may be more or less formal.
5. This By-law sets out good practice for the regulation of meetings.

Agenda

6. The Agenda of meetings shall be determined by the Chair but items of business shall normally be taken in the following order:-
 - 6.1. Introduction and outline of the meeting;
 - 6.2. Agreeing the accuracy of the Minutes of the previous meeting;
 - 6.3. Update on progress of outstanding Action Points from previous meetings;
 - 6.4. Verbal reports from Officers, as required;
 - 6.5. Discussion of Ideas submitted by Members or other Union committees (voting, if required);
 - 6.6. Discussion of Ideas to be proposed for Referendum (voting, if required);
 - 6.7. Urgent Business;
 - 6.8. Date of Next Meeting.

Discussion of Ideas

7. In large meetings where many members wish to speak on an Idea under discussion it may be necessary to formalise the process of debate.
8. In such situations, the chair shall take contributions in the following way:
 - 8.1. The proposer of the Idea, if present, shall be entitled to speak first in its favour;
 - 8.2. It shall then be open for discussion and may be withdrawn only with the consent of the meeting;
 - 8.3. The chair shall invite and take speeches both for and against the changes, which may be limited in duration to allow the most number of members to have their say;
 - 8.4. The chair shall conclude discussion with any 'open contributions' that members wish to make that are not made directly for or against the Idea;
 - 8.5. The proposer of the Idea shall have the right to sum up on the Idea immediately before the vote is taken.

Procedural motions (Matters relating to the conduct of the meeting)

9. A procedural motion may be proposed at any time by gaining the permission of the Chair, except when a member is speaking or during a vote, unless it relates to the way the vote is being conducted.
10. Procedural motions allow a member to propose a change to the conduct of the meeting, which is followed by a brief debate and a vote on the change in which a simple majority is required.
11. Procedural motions include:
 - 11.1. **No confidence in the Chair** (the chair must be passed to a full-time officer during the debate and vote): if passed the no-confidenced appointee must not retake the Chair during the meeting;
 - 11.2. **Overturn a ruling by the Chair** (the chair must be passed to a full-time officer during the debate and vote): if passed the relevant ruling shall be overturned and immediately reversed;
 - 11.3. **Discussion moved straight to a vote:** if passed, the debate on a motion should be balanced and a vote taken if required;
 - 11.4. **Re-order the agenda** (the proposer must explain how): if passed, the items on the agenda shall be addressed in the order outlined by the proposer.

11.5. **Discussion to be dealt with by another body:** if passed, the discussion shall be suspended and no vote on it held, it shall instead be referred to the Officer Group, the Trustees, or another committee or Assembly specified by the proposer and voted upon in the meeting;

11.6. **Amendments**

11.6.1. **Delete part:** a section of the Idea under discussion may be removed, though parts that remain must still makes sense.

11.6.2. **Edit/add part:** a line or section of the Idea may be edited or added. If this is deemed to take too long, then members may refer discussion to another body using the procedural motion above, which must be voted upon.

11.7. **Exclude non-members:** if passed, anyone who is not a full member of the Union shall be asked to leave the meeting room for the duration of the agenda item;

11.8. **Move to a secret ballot** (prior to or during voting): if passed, the vote on the matter in hand will be conducted in secret using paper ballots and counted before the end of the meeting.

12. Procedural motions are debated as follows:

12.1. The proposer may speak in favour for not more than one minute;

12.2. A speech against is taken for not more than one minute;

12.3. Then a vote takes place. Procedural motions are passed by a simple majority of the members in the room at that time.

13. In event of any situation arising not being covered by meeting regulations then the Chair shall rule on the procedure to be adopted. Such ruling shall be subject to the right of challenge under the procedural motions above.

Points of Information

14. Points of information are a means for members present during a debate to seek clarification on a point made by the current speaker.

15. Points of information may be raised by any member providing that the speaker occupying the floor signifies their intention to give way to the member.

16. Members raising a point of information have no right of reply but may ask subsequent questions if the speaker gives way.

Voting

17. Where possible, voting shall be by show of hands or similar, and shall be determined by the Chairperson "looking for" the appropriate majority, after asking to see "those for," "those against" and any abstentions.
18. In the event of a dispute over the Chairperson's determination of the outcome of the vote, a recount shall be held, where the Chair of the meeting shall go around and accurately count all votes.
19. A secret ballot may be conducted if the chair deems it appropriate, or a point of order is approved to that effect.

Recording Meeting Business

20. For the sake of transparency and accountability, the Constitution and By-laws require that records of Union meetings are kept and made available to members.
21. Where available, YUSU pro forma templates shall be used to record meeting business and shall be uploaded to the relevant section of the YUSU website.
22. Records of meetings should clearly highlight Action Points that were decided during the meeting, and these should be summarised and prominently displayed.