



Committee Structure

Formal debate in a Model United Nations committee is structured around an explicit set of rules and procedures. You must know these rules and the general organization of the committee in order to effectively play the part of a delegate. From voting on resolutions to asking questions of the Chair, this structure plays a fundamental role in how order and efficiency are maintained in a committee setting. To start, let's examine the overall setup of a committee.

Basic Organization

Every committee has Chairs and Delegations. There is usually one “Head Chair” who is in charge of the committee as a whole and several Vice-Chairs who assist in the moderation of the proceedings. Chairs are responsible for regulating the use of rules as well as ensuring that committee is moving in an orderly and positive manner. As a delegate, your task is to discuss the topics assigned by the Chair. Ultimately, through speeches, comments, and direct interaction with other delegates your purpose is to come up with resolutions that will hopefully resolve the topic at hand.

The Rules

As of the 50th session the rules of committee have been revised and updated. The goal of this revision has been to improve the clarity and the practicality of the written procedures. The new rules are organized into three sections: (1) The Committee, (2) The Chair, and (3) The Delegations. Under each section you will find a description of who the actor is and what powers she or he possesses. There is no special code or language for you to memorize in order to function as a delegate. (For a complete version of these rules reference Appendix 4.)



Committee Flow

For the most part, each committee goes through three phases per topic.

1. Set the Agenda

The first order of business is always to set the topic that the committee will be discussing. This process might include a short caucus to briefly discuss which topic different delegations wish to begin debate on.

2. Speaker's List & Caucusing

3. Voting Bloc

Once a sufficient amount of debate has taken place on a topic and there are several proposed resolutions on the floor, the next move is to go into Voting Bloc. The committee as a whole will decide to either adopt or reject the proposals that have been submitted as possible solutions to the issues at hand. Prior to voting, however, changes can be made to each resolution by amendments and by other means specified in the rules. After voting has concluded on all resolutions on the floor for that topic, the process starts all over again with substantive debate on the next topic.

Of course if you feel intimidated, please keep in mind that the best way to learn is to attend a MUN conference.