

University of Guelph

Model United Nations

Training Guide

Model UN Exec 2018-2019



Forward

Hello and welcome Delegates! This document is meant to serve as a tool for those new to Model United Nations (MUN) in understanding the procedure and structure of committees, as well as to ease the transition into the club. With so much information to absorb and etiquette to follow, this guide will help facilitate your understanding of what goes on and reduce any confusion you have entering this club.

This club is designed to simulate committees that are run by the real world United Nations. The United Nations holds conferences including all the world's members to discuss issues at hand. We as students run simulations of such to practice our debate skills, public speaking skills, and enhance our understanding of international law. As a club, we will endeavor to do so by going to conferences and participating in committees. We will host training sessions throughout the year to ready new-comers for what's to come, and also some social events to get to know everyone better and make some long-lasting friendships!

Conference set-ups

The conferences themselves usually run Thursday-Sunday. After checking in to where we stay, groups will venture to the venue for opening ceremonies. The opening ceremonies consist of introductions of the executives (The Secretariat) running the conference and will likely have a keynote speaker address the delegates! Following that, delegates will typically proceed to their first committee session. The rest of the committee sessions will run through Friday/Saturday, and on occasion a short one Sunday morning. Friday and Saturday nights usually contain cordial formal events and even pub crawls (or board game nights if you are under 19). The conference will then be topped off by a closing ceremony and departure Sunday afternoon. Conferences are typically attended by delegations from Universities and Colleges both around Ontario as well as internationally.

About Conferences

Within the Model United Nations, conferences consist of different types of committees, with General Assemblies and Crisis committees being the most common. General Assemblies are almost a direct simulation of what one might expect in the real United Nations General Assemblies, where members of the various nations around the world sit and discuss major issues. For example: World Health Organization may discuss global pandemics; discussions could arise in international gun treaties; or the delegates can postulate responses to humanitarian crises around the globe. These committees tend to be larger in size and slower in pace.

Crisis committees, on the other hand, tend to be more focused, smaller in size, and faster. Further to this, they tend to be a bit more creative. Some examples of committee topics include the Colombian drug trade, Abraham Lincoln's cabinet, and even Star Wars! Specialized agencies are committees that do not follow either of these guides specifically but run in their own format, but often involve elements from both General Assemblies and Crisis committees.

Preparation for Committee

Once you have signed up for a conference you will receive a country assignment, your committee and your topics which will be outlined in the background guide (make sure you read the whole background guide!!).

There are a few things to consider before conference:

I. Background guide

For each committee, a background guide will be provided by the MUN organization of whom is running the conference. It will include a foundation of information necessary for being in each committee, such as setting, members, topics, and history. Further research should be done on your part to further your understanding of the topic.

II. Position Paper

The position paper is essentially a one to two-page document summarizing your knowledge of the topic and the position your country plans to take when it enters committee. These are typically due before the conference. There are a few important sections to include:

- A. Background of topic
- B. Past International Actions
- C. Country Policy
- D. Possible Solutions

An example of a position paper can be found [here](#).

III. Opening Statement

Your opening statement is what you plan to say during the primary speakers list (explained below). This should include what topic you wish to discuss first and why your country believes that topic is most important. Preparing this beforehand can help you to feel more confident to voice your opinions during committee session.

IV. Research Binder

A research binder is optional but can be very beneficial for being prepared during debate. It holds all the information you think that could help your country during a debate session. Laptops are usually not allowed during committees so having your notes with you can be crucial!

General Assembly

These committees are typically the largest and are meant to simulate the what a typical United Nations session would be like.

I. Roll Call and Quorum

At the beginning of each committee session, the Chair will do a role call to see which delegates are present. Members will formally reply with “present”, “present and voting”, and if they are not present will be marked absent. If you reply as “present and voting”, you will be required to vote on all draft resolutions, whereas if you reply with “present”, you are able to abstain your vote. Quorum is having one half of the voting members of the forum. If this threshold is not met, substantive business cannot be dealt with and thus proceedings cannot be continued. Roll call is done at the beginning of every new committee session.

II. Note Passing

An effective way for members to communicate with each other is through note passing. The hosting organization will provide ‘pages’ at each committee session; these people are responsible for passing notes the delegates write to each other. After writing “to: *country or the delegate of country*”, “from: *your country or delegate of -*” on a note, you raise your note in the air and they will come by, check the note, and then give it to your intended receiver. Do **NOT** write anything inappropriate or unrelated to the topic in these notes. They will decline the note or sometimes even read it aloud to the entire committee to make an example of people who decide to write inappropriate notes!

This being said, talk to people! If you find someone who shares your delegate’s viewpoint or if you think they can help you out in anyway, send them as many notes as you’d like to establish a relationship!

III. Primary Speakers List

The primary speakers list will kick off the committee session. This is used to decide which topics should first be discussed at this meeting of delegates. Often times an entire weekend may be spent on one topic, so if your country has a strong desire to pursue one topic, this is your opportunity to voice your goals and convince others of the importance of attaining these goals. This is also an important opportunity to assert a strong presence in your committee and for potential allies (and enemies!) to understand your position and to either collaborate or oppose you (so be firm!).

IV. Secondary Speakers List

After you decide a topic, the committee moves onto secondary speakers list. This is where general discussion takes place on the topic that has been decided. If you didn’t speak in the primary speakers list, now is the time to voice your stance and say what you need to say. A time setting will be established for a certain number of speakers, and after a certain amount of people have spoken, the Dias can hear various motions such as a moderated caucus or an unmoderated caucus.

V. Moderated Caucus

The moderated (mod) caucus is where the chosen topic is discussed in even greater specifics and detail (for example, if the discussion is on gun trade between middle eastern nations, a mod caucus could be called to discuss the actions of a specific rebel group and how to respond). This is where you will need to really do your research, as the more informed you are on the topics discussed, the more valuable insight and input into policy making you can provide.

If it is your topic that is decided on by the committee, you must consider the following;

A. Time Setting

Time setting is the act of setting the speaking time for a debate topic. The amount of time you motion to allocate to the topic should reflect that, such as 15 minutes or 5 minutes respectively. Additionally, if you want to hear more perspectives in less depth, you should recommend a short speaking time (such as 30 seconds each). If you want to hear more in-depth contribution from fewer people, you should recommend longer speaking times (such as 1 minute each). Also, for simplicity sake, the time should be evenly divided. For example, if you recommend 45 second speaking time, choose six, nine, or twelve minutes for the mod.

B. Topic Setting

This is simply the process of selecting a topic that has been brought up. For the most part, committees will start with more pressing topics. This being said, it is important to keep in mind the important topics you have already established, and do your best to get those topics into debate as soon as you can. When placing a motion such as this, you should choose something you are informed on, since you will be asked to speak either first or last in the mod; setting the tone or being the final say on the topic can be invaluable to accomplishing your goals.

C. Speaking tips

It is a good idea to have your voice heard to let everyone know your position. However, no one wants to hear useless information, so if you are going to speak, ensure anything you're contributing has some substance or value to the overall discussion, and that you're not providing foundationless information, something that will guide discussion in the wrong direction, or information that has already been provided (tediousness can be annoying and counterproductive!).

VI. Unmoderated Caucus

Unmoderated (unmod) caucuses are informal debate situations for delegates to take time to get things figured out. These typically come after at least a few moderated caucuses; after different perspectives have been established and new points of contention or interest arise. Members at this point are free to get up and wander the room. You can approach people freely and discuss whatever you want. This can be an invaluable time to sort out discrepancies with other members (and try to get them on your side), and establish alliances to collaborate with on topics you agree on. You are totally free from formal debate structure, so it is important to have a preconceived idea of what you need to discuss during these times as they only last so long. By the time you get to 2nd, 3rd or greater unmods, you should have established alliances and have begun working on policies or resolutions to push forward your agenda.

If you want to use this time for a break (coffee, bathroom etc.) that is fine, however it is wise to wait until the very last minute to do so. You don't want to miss out on other deals being made and getting initial introductions, and this way you ensure you get the maximum amount of time to speak your views to those you need to.

Points in Debate

I. Points

- A. **Point of Order** (aka point of parliamentary inquiry/procedure) - A question as to whether the proper procedure is being followed.
- B. **Point of Personal Privilege** - Meant for the delegate to ask a question to the chair that is not related to the committee (i.e. can we close the window?)
- C. **Right of Reply** - Not as common, a member can raise this point in response to another speaker when that member feels personally insulted by another's speech. Only used in very serious circumstances.

II. Motions

- A. **Enter Moderated Caucus** - Suspend formal rules in favour of a chair-moderated debate on a specific topic.
- B. **Enter Unmoderated caucus** - Suspend formal rules to enter an unregulated session for delegates to meet in smaller groups.
- C. **Suspend debate** (aka Recess)- Suspends debate to be discussed at a later time. Often used to provide a break between committee sessions.
- D. **Question and Answer Period** - Usually used after a draft resolution has been introduced to ask specific questions about the resolution to the makers of it.
- E. **Motion to close debate** - Chair selects two people to speak against, and if no speaker presents themselves, the motion will automatically pass.
- F. **Motion to move into voting procedure** - Any resolutions that have been introduced can now be voted on.

- G. **Vote clause by clause** - During voting procedure, requires each clause to be voted for in a draft resolution (as opposed to the resolution as a whole). Clauses that reach the proper vote threshold are then maintained in the resolution and those that don't are not.
- H. **Roll-call vote** - Each delegate called on to present their vote individually.
- I. **Adjourn** - Ends session.

The order of items will be voted on the basis of 'most destructive' versus 'least destructive' if there are multiple items to be voted on. This simply means that the members will first vote on the items that will have the greatest impact on the rest of the committee before moving on to less important items. For example, a motion to introduce and vote on a draft resolution is much more 'destructive' than a motion to enter unmoderated caucus for 5 minutes, and thus the first motion will be voted on first.

A list of motions from motions and points from most to least destructive may look as follows:

Points

1. Point of order
2. Point of personal privilege
3. Right of reply

Motions

1. Adjournment of the Meeting
2. Suspension of the meeting
3. Closure of debate
4. Introduction of Draft resolution
5. Introduction of an Amendment
6. Unmoderated Caucus
7. Moderated Caucus
8. Motion to change speaking time

Committee Documents

I. Working paper

Working papers are simply the informal loose papers that are making their way throughout the room. They are very informal in that they don't need to be grammatically correct, full sentences, or ready to bring forward what have you, but are just the beginning workings of draft resolutions.

II. Draft Resolution

Draft resolutions are the product of finalizing and formalizing working papers and are submitted to the Dias. They adhere to grammar, spelling and formatting guidelines, and make relevant concrete policy proposals for the committee.

The Dias has the power to impose conditions on anything submitted to them, and to reject it for reasons unrelated to the actual quality of the paper (such as time management). Unless otherwise specified, the resolution must have at least 15% of the present members of the forums signatories for the chair to consider

it for introduction. The Dias also has the power to change this number through verbal notice. Sponsors count as signatories.

Authors of Draft resolutions are referred to as sponsors. Those who wish to bring it to debate but do not necessarily support it are referred to as signatories.

III. Resolution

A resolution is a draft resolution that has achieved the required votes within a committee and has passed. It is hereto viewed as a **final** document, to which further action would typically be required of each country following the assembly (in the real world).

IV. Q & A session

The Dias may look favourably upon a question and answer period for a given resolution for members to ask on the specifics or implications of the resolution by those who drafted it, i.e. the sponsors. If you are going to be participating in creating a resolution, it is important to understand these things for if you are questioned on it; if you can't adequately defend or explain your resolution, the chances are much lower for the resolution to be successful. Ensure it isn't one or two people answering all the questions; the more of a group effort it seems as opposed to two power countries 'coercing' others, the more successful the resolution is likely to be. In addition, be concise. You aren't technically limited to the time in answering questions, but you can easily lose people's attention and consequently their support if you go on for too long (but usually they have 30-60s limits on time for answering questions, set when the motion is proposed).

V. Amendments

Sometimes after discussion of a topic, members will look to make amendments. These could be a result of compromise, misunderstanding, clarification, or other minor issues of clauses and sub-clauses in a resolution that need to be changed.

A friendly amendment is a change to a resolution that has been discussed in advance with the sponsors and they agree with the changes. These are friendly because there aren't any surprises and therefore more likely to be accepted by parties involved.

An unfriendly amendment is one in which the sponsors do not agree upon as a change in their draft resolution. Unfriendly amendments can be submitted to the Dias, and upon introduction, will be voted on as to whether the committee would like that see that amendment implemented in that draft resolution.

Crisis Committees

I. Differences

As discussed previously, crisis committees differ greatly in the pace and size of the committees themselves in comparison to General Assemblies (GAs). They tend to be much smaller than a GA and move much quicker as a result of the crisis elements involved.

Furthermore, throughout each committee you will hear and need to acknowledge 'crisis updates'. This is when the person running the committee will update the members of important events occurring in relation

to the session (for example, a Star Wars committee may receive an update saying a rebel cruiser has allegedly been spotted around the planet Hoth, what will the committee decide to do about it?).

Another interesting aspect of crisis committees are ‘timed crises’. In these, the delegates will be tasked with a surprise crisis situation within their committee that they need to respond to in a certain amount of time. For example, if you are sitting on Lincoln’s Cabinet from the 1860’s you may get a crisis update describing a confederate attack on a fort, and you have 20 minutes to decide the next course of action or the fort will be destroyed!).

II. Directives

Directives are short verbal instructions by the forum to take specific action. They are governed by the same rules seen for resolutions in gaining the forum’s assent (for example, in a crisis of humanitarian nature, a directive may be approved to send troops to an area to extract civilians immediately). So, whereas in a General Assembly you may see a resolution for a country to reduce their carbon footprint by X amount by 2030; in a Crisis committee, you may see a directive to start increase the taxation of the people of Colombia starting immediately in order to increase revenue.

Personal directives are simply instructions for oneself for a specific action to be taken that is submitted to the dais. These do not need approval from the committee. Here an example may be that you decide to commit yourself to not invading a nearby rebel village in hopes of restoring peace in your country. You will more often than not see directives in crisis committees, given the quick reaction nature of crisis committees.

III. Structure

Aside from all that, crisis committees will have many similar elements to it as the general assembly. There may not be lengthy primary/secondary speakers lists, but instead a short decision on which topics to address first and then diving into moderated caucuses. Since it is rushed, the committee can’t take the same amount of time as a general assembly on which topic to discuss. Since there are less people, things can get passed much easier than gathering the approval of large assemblies. This is why it is crucial to keep up with things as they’re going on, as people will be moving on topic to topic very quickly and voting on directives as well.

Specialized Agencies

Some conferences will offer what are called *specialized agencies*, which don’t typically follow a standard model UN procedure. Those running the committee would almost definitely (and would be unwise not to) provide the actual structure for the committee in advance. They usually still involve debate structures within, but may not exactly follow the format of General Assemblies or Crises (for example, the North American Model United Nations Conference offered an ‘International Court of Justice’ committee, which still involved debate sessions but favoured a court structure as opposed to a General Assembly structure).

Ad hoc can be an exception to these (and sometimes most) rules. Ad hoc is a committee that is purposely without an information guide, and the delegates will be tasked with coming into the committee blind and dealing with the issues at hand. It will most likely resemble crisis committees the most but since information will be provided to members, it will not be exactly the same.

General Tips

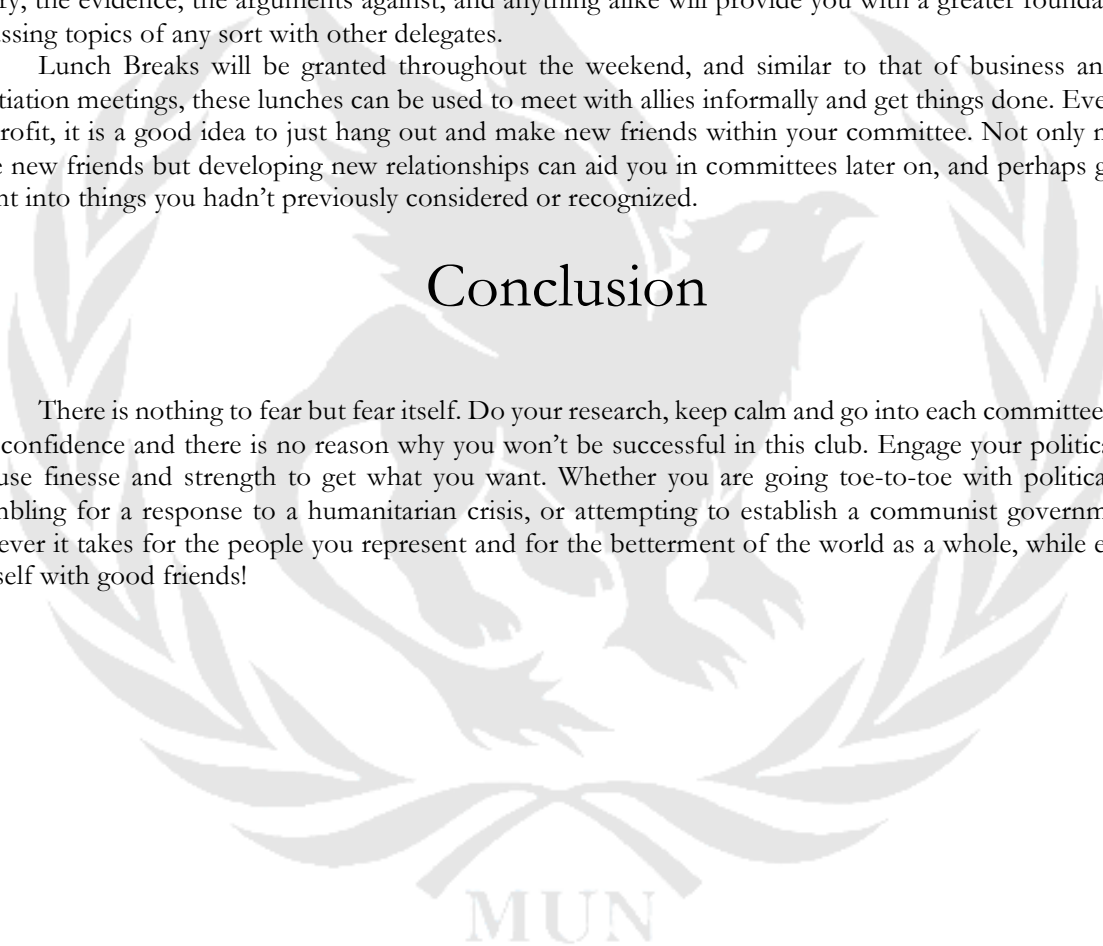
Public speaking can be very intimidating, especially in an environment where a lot of what you wish to support will be under constant scrutiny and opposition. The great thing about democracy is everyone gets to voice their views and perspectives, and the ridicule such views face will theoretically bring the truth or best solutions to light. The best thing you can do to be an effective speaker is to practice and to be prepared. You will have opportunities to work on your public speaking during the school year with our club, however we encourage you to practice outside as much as possible as well in order to fully maximize your skills. Simple pathos: the more confident and articulate you are at expressing your views, the more successful you will be in convincing others of the logic and strength behind your perspective.

The more you prepare for you to speak, the better. If you know what you're talking about, that is, the history, the evidence, the arguments against, and anything alike will provide you with a greater foundation for discussing topics of any sort with other delegates.

Lunch Breaks will be granted throughout the weekend, and similar to that of business and other negotiation meetings, these lunches can be used to meet with allies informally and get things done. Even if not for profit, it is a good idea to just hang out and make new friends within your committee. Not only may you make new friends but developing new relationships can aid you in committees later on, and perhaps give you insight into things you hadn't previously considered or recognized.

Conclusion

There is nothing to fear but fear itself. Do your research, keep calm and go into each committee session with confidence and there is no reason why you won't be successful in this club. Engage your political savvy and use finesse and strength to get what you want. Whether you are going toe-to-toe with political rivals, scrambling for a response to a humanitarian crisis, or attempting to establish a communist government, do whatever it takes for the people you represent and for the betterment of the world as a whole, while enjoying yourself with good friends!



Flow of Debate



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