American Institute of Parliamentarians
Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure

A quick reference

WWU Faculty Senate Office
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# Guide to Parliamentary Motions

**Motions** are listed in order of precedence. New motions can be introduced if they are higher on the chart than any pending motions.

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<thead>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRIVILEGED MOTIONS</strong></td>
<td>End the meeting (78)</td>
<td>I move that we <strong>adjourn</strong></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes - Restricted(^1)</td>
<td>Yes - Restricted(^2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Take a break (76)</td>
<td>I move to <strong>recess</strong> for…</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes - Restricted(^3)</td>
<td>Yes - Restricted(^4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Make a request affecting the health, safety, security, comfort or integrity of members (73)</td>
<td>I rise to a <strong>question of privilege</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS</strong></td>
<td>Postpone consideration of a pending motion until an indefinite time (70)</td>
<td>I move to <strong>table</strong> the motion</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Close debate upon a pending motion and vote (67)</td>
<td>I move to <strong>close debate</strong></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Limit or extend time for debate upon a pending motion (65)</td>
<td>I move to <strong>limit debate</strong> to… OR I move to <strong>extend debate</strong> by…</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes - Restricted(^5)</td>
<td>Yes - Restricted(^6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Postpone consideration of a pending motion until a specific future time or meeting (61)</td>
<td>I move to <strong>postpone</strong> the motion until…</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes - Restricted(^5)</td>
<td>Yes - Restricted(^6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transfer a motion to a subordinate committee for consideration (58)</td>
<td>I move to <strong>refer</strong> the motion to [Standing Cte] with instructions to…</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes - Restricted(^5)</td>
<td>Yes - Restricted(^6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Modify the language or content of a pending motion (50)</td>
<td>I move to <strong>amend</strong> the motion by…</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>If original motion is debatable</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MAIN MOTIONS</strong></td>
<td>Bring business (a new main motion) before the assembly (35)</td>
<td>I move that…</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduce a motion as a specific alternative to one or more motions known to be coming before the assembly (39)</td>
<td>I move to <strong>adopt</strong> the following motion in lieu of [motion(s) to be disposed of]…</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Modify or amend a motion that has already been adopted (36)</td>
<td>I move to <strong>amend</strong> the motion that was adopted on…, to…, by…</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Validate an emergency action or affirm the action of another body (41)</td>
<td>I move to <strong>ratify</strong> an action taken by… to… on…</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Remove a referred subject or motion from a subordinate committee for reconsideration by the assembly (43)</td>
<td>I move to <strong>recall</strong> the [motion to/matter of… from [Standing Cte].</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes - Restricted(^8)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reconsider a motion after a vote has been taken (44)</td>
<td>I move to <strong>reconsider</strong> the vote on the motion that was adopted [when] to…</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes - Restricted(^8)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To repeal or nullify a main motion that has already been approved (48)</td>
<td>I move to <strong>repeal</strong> the motion that was adopted [when] to…</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) Debate restricted to the advisability of amendment stipulating continuation of meeting at a later time.
\(^2\) Amendments restricted to changing the time of adjournment and setting a time for continuation of meeting.
\(^3\) Debate restricted to brief discussion of time and advisability of recess or postponement.
\(^4\) Motion may be amended with regard to time.
\(^5\) Debate restricted to need for limitation and the type and time of limitation.
\(^6\) Debate restricted to advisability of referral and name of and instructions to the committee.
\(^7\) Amendments restricted to details such as name of committee, instructions to it, and timeline for reporting back on the matter.
\(^8\) Debate restricted to reasons for removal or reconsideration.
Incidental Motions have no order of precedence. These motions can be introduced at any time.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have the committee review and then vote upon sustaining or overruling an action taken by its chair (83)</td>
<td>I appeal the decision of the chair. <em>(Stated immediately after the chair announces a decision that a member believes is mistaken or unfair)</em></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Majority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take an action that would otherwise be prevented by a procedural rule or another action already taken (85)*</td>
<td>I move to suspend the rule requiring …</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relax the rules of debate while discussing a pending motion or subject (89)</td>
<td>I move that this [motion/subject] be considered informally.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Majority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MOTIONS

REQUESTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call attention to a violation of the rules or a procedural error (90)</th>
<th>Point of order!</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ask a question related to parliamentary procedure (93)</td>
<td>I rise to a parliamentary inquiry.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request substantive information about a pending motion (93)</td>
<td>I rise to a factual inquiry.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdraw a motion (96)</td>
<td>I wish to withdraw my motion.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To divide a motion into two or more individual motions to be considered and voted on (98)</td>
<td>I request that the motion be divided into [x] motions: …</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To verify an indecisive voice vote or show of hands by having members rise to be counted (102)</td>
<td>I call for a standing vote. <em>(Stated immediately after vote has been taken)</em></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Rule suspensions cannot deprive members of any fundamental right. For example, rules stated in bylaws or charges and basic rules of common parliamentary procedure, such as those governing notice, quorum, vote requirements, and voting methods, cannot be suspended.
### Main Purpose of Motions

<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>IF YOU WANT TO:</strong></th>
<th><strong>USE THIS MOTION</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Present an idea to the committee or board for discussion and/or action | ° Main motion  
° Resolution  
° Consider informally |
| Modify a pending motion | ° Amend  
° Division of motion  
° Adopt in-lieu-of |
| End or regulate debate | ° Close debate  
° Limit or extend debate |
| Delay a decision | ° Refer to a committee  
° Table  
° Postpone to a certain time  
° Recess  
° Adjourn |
| Remove a motion from consideration | ° Table  
° Withdraw a motion |
| Address an emergency situation | ° Question of privilege  
° Suspend rules |
| Get more information about a pending motion | ° Parliamentary inquiry  
° Factual inquiry  
° Question of privilege |

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<thead>
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<th><strong>IF YOU WANT TO:</strong></th>
<th><strong>USE THIS MOTION</strong></th>
</tr>
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</table>
| Question the decision of the chair | ° Point of order  
° Appeal decision of chair |
| Enforce meeting rights and privileges | ° Standing vote  
° Division of motion  
° Parliamentary inquiry  
° Point of order  
° Appeal decision of chair |
| Bring a motion back for consideration | ° Resume consideration  
° Recall from committee  
° Reconsider  
° Amend a previous action |
| Validate an action taken without quorum | ° Ratify |
| Change an action already taken | ° Recall from committee  
° Reconsider  
° Rescind  
° Amend a previous action |
| End a meeting | ° Adjourn  
° Recess |
### Parliamentary Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>IF YOU WANT TO SUPPORT A MOTION:</strong></th>
<th><strong>IF YOU WANT TO OPPOSE A MOTION</strong></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Second it.</td>
<td>Speak against it and raise questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak in favor as soon as possible.</td>
<td>Move to amend the motion to make it less objectionable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know your facts and provide reference materials as necessary.</td>
<td>Draft a more acceptable version and offer an amendment as a substitution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If necessary, amend the motion to make it more acceptable to other members.</td>
<td>To delay the motion you may move to table it, move to postpone it or refer it to a committee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote against motions to table or delay your motion.</td>
<td>Move to recess if you need time to gather more facts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move to recess or postpone if you need more time to strengthen your proposal or get additional information.</td>
<td>Move to adjourn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you fear your motion will be rejected, you can move to divide the question for a partial victory or you may refer it to a committee.</td>
<td>If the motion is adopted, move to reconsider it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If a motion is defeated, you may move to reconsider it or you can reintroduce it at a future meeting.</td>
<td>If the motion is adopted, consider trying to rescind it at the next meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the event of a procedural dispute, refer to Committee Bylaws and the Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Voting Methods:

Voting on motions can be conducted in five ways:

1. General consent (no formal vote taken)
2. Voice vote
3. Standing vote or show of hands
4. Roll call
5. Secret ballot

The chair announces the vote according to the facts. Members can change their vote up until the moment when the chair announces it. All votes taken during a meeting are binding.
Role of the Committee:

The powers, rights and duties of a committee must be delegated to it by its governing body. Each committee is under the direction and authority of its governing body. Thus, unless otherwise stated in the handbook and constitution, any subject, motion or piece of work given to a committee can be reassigned or withdrawn by its governing body. A committee may create its own sub-committees as needed. Sub-committees report to their direct parent committee. Committees acting under the authority of another body may not amend their own charges or membership.

Committee Reports and Recommendations:

Reports from committees generally include four key elements:

1. A statement of the work in question and specific instructions or parameters around the work
2. A description of how the work was carried out
3. A description of the work itself including any findings or conclusions
4. A motion, in the event that the committee recommends an action based on the work

The report itself should be clear and concise. All relevant contextual information should be included as long as it is germane to the topic at hand. Credit may be given to individuals who performed outstanding or unusual service to the committee.

Recommendations should be attached to the report, but not included in the report. Each recommendation should be in the form of a motion or a resolution that can be acted on accordingly. Important to note: if the recommendations are included in the report (not attached to it) and the report is approved, the recommendations are binding.

A report must be voted on and approved by the committee. Every member is required to have the opportunity to review the report and report any objections or modifications they would like to make to the report. Members who approve of the report can sign the report signifying their approval. Any member can withdraw approval up until the moment when it is presented. If members do not agree to the final report, they may create and submit a minority report. A minority report must be presented directly after the majority report.

Report Considerations:

- A report may be questioned or criticized; a committee member and their motives may not.
- Only committee members may amend a committee report.
- A report may be filed. In this event, it is not binding, but merely an information item.
- A report may be referred back to the committee for further clarification or modifications.
- Consideration of a committee report can be postponed to a later date.
- A report can be adopted or accepted where the assembly adopts all of the findings, opinions and conclusions therein. Recommendations that are attached, but not included in the report, are not adopted.
- A minority report may be substituted for the majority report where the majority report is filed for reference.
- A motion from the committee is handled in the same manner as any other motion brought forward to the assembly.
Fact Sheet

1. **Conflict between Parliamentary Code and Handbook or Constitution:** If parliamentary rules are in conflict with the handbook or constitution, the rules and bylaws laid out in the handbook and constitution take precedence.

2. **How to end discussion:** Minority viewpoints should always be given a fair hearing. If it becomes necessary to end a discussion when a determined minority wants to continue, a motion to close debate should be forwarded and voted on with a 2/3 majority winning the vote.

3. **No call for personal attacks:** There is never a reason to discuss the competence, character or motives of an individual in a meeting. If this ever happens, it should immediately be called “out of order.”

4. **Deciding who speaks first:** When a motion has been made, the maker of the motion is the first to speak and then assembly members should be recognized in the order in which they raise hands or address the chair. In the event that several people attempt to gain the floor simultaneously, members who have not yet spoken should be given preference.

5. **Committee chair takes an active role:** A committee chair, as opposed to an assembly chair, is free to make motions and enter freely in discussions, but they must also seek to ensure that all sides are treated fairly.

6. **General consent:** General consent does not require a formal vote. It happens when there is unanimous agreement. If one or more people object, a formal vote must be taken.

7. **Lack of quorum:** In the event that a committee or board does not have quorum, they may discuss items or hear reports but cannot vote on any actions. If there is an emergency situation, the committee members may take action knowing that they are individually responsible for the consequences until such time when the action has been ratified at a meeting with quorum.

8. **Making amendments to motions:** When an amendment has been formally proposed and stated by the chair, there should be no general discussion until the amendment has been voted on. The amendment can be modified up until it has been stated by the chair. An amendment to a motion can be amended, but this practice can become confusing, so it is best either to vote on amendments to amendments by general consent or to avoid this practice by revising the amendment before it has been stated by the chair.

9. **Audiotapes and transcripts are not meeting minutes:** Audiotapes and verbatim transcripts cannot be substituted for formal meeting minutes. Although they are valuable reference materials, they contain material that should not be included in meeting minutes.

10. **If the chair is uncertain how to proceed:** In the event that the chair is uncertain on how to proceed, they can ask someone who is knowledgeable about parliamentary procedure. If no such person is present at the meeting, the chair may ask if anyone has a suggestion on how to proceed. Alternatively the chair may take an action deemed most in accordance with fair play and common sense.