

# American Institute of Parliamentarians Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure

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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 only if they are higher on the chart than any pending motions.

IF YOU WANT TO:	SAY:	Interrupt speaker?	Second required?	Debatable?	Amendable?	Margin required
<b>PRIVILEGED MOTIONS</b>						
End the meeting (78)	I move that we <b>adjourn</b> .	No	Yes	Yes – Restricted <sup>1</sup>	Yes – Restricted <sup>1</sup>	Majority
Take a break (76)	I move to <b>recess</b> for...	No	Yes	Yes – Restricted <sup>2</sup>	Yes – Restricted <sup>3</sup>	Majority
Make a request affecting the health, safety, security, comfort or integrity of members (73)	I rise to a <b>question of privilege</b>	Yes	No	No	No	None
<b>SUBSIDIARY MOTIONS</b>						
Postpone consideration of a pending motion until an indefinite time (70)	I move to <b>table</b> the motion.	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Close debate on a pending motion and vote (67)	I move to <b>close debate</b> .	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
Limit or extend time for debate on a pending motion (65)	I move to <b>limit debate</b> to... OR I move to <b>extend debate</b> by...	No	Yes	Yes – Restricted <sup>4</sup>	Yes – Restricted <sup>3</sup>	2/3
Postpone consideration of a pending motion until a specific future time or meeting (61)	I move to <b>postpone</b> the motion until...	No	Yes	Yes – Restricted <sup>2</sup>	Yes – Restricted <sup>3</sup>	Majority
Transfer a motion to a subordinate committee for consideration (58)	I move to <b>refer</b> the motion to [Standing Cte] with instructions to...	No	Yes	Yes – Restricted <sup>5</sup>	Yes – Restricted <sup>5</sup>	Majority
Modify the language or content of a pending motion (50)	I move to <b>amend</b> the motion by...	No	Yes	If original motion is debatable	Yes	Majority
<b>MAIN MOTIONS</b>						
Bring business (a new main motion) before the assembly (35)	I <b>move</b> that...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Introduce a motion as a specific alternative to a motion known to be coming before the assembly (39)	I move to <b>adopt</b> the following motion <b>in lieu of</b> [scheduled motion(s)]: ...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Modify or amend a motion that has already been adopted (36)	I move to <b>amend</b> the motion that was approved on [date] to... , by...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Validate an emergency action taken without quorum or affirm the action of another body (41)	I move to <b>ratify</b> an action taken by... to... on [date of action being ratified].	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Remove a referred subject or motion from a subordinate committee for reconsideration by the assembly (43)	I move to <b>recall</b> [motion to/matter of]... from [Standing Cte].	No	Yes	Yes – Restricted <sup>8</sup>	No	Majority
Reconsider a motion <u>after</u> a vote has been taken (44)	I move to <b>reconsider</b> the vote on the motion that was adopted [when] to...	No	Yes	Yes – Restricted <sup>8</sup>	No	Majority
Repeal or nullify a main motion that has already been approved (48)	I move to <b>rescind</b> the motion that was adopted [when] to...	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority

<sup>1</sup> Motion to adjourn: Debate restricted to advisability of amendment stipulating continuation of meeting at a later time. Amendments restricted to changing the time of adjournment and setting a time for continuation of meeting.

<sup>2</sup> Debate restricted to brief discussion of time and advisability of recess or postponement.

<sup>3</sup> Motion may be amended with regard to time.

<sup>4</sup> Debate restricted to need for limitation/extension and the type and time of limitation/extension.

<sup>5</sup> Motion to refer: Debate restricted to advisability of amendment stipulating continuation of meeting at a later time. Amendments restricted to changing the time of adjournment and setting a time for continuation of meeting.

**Incidental Motions** have no order of precedence and **can be introduced at any time.**

IF YOU WANT TO:	SAY:	Can interrupt speaker?	Second required?	Is the motion debatable?	Is the motion amendable?	Vote required?
Have the committee review and then vote upon sustaining or overruling an action taken by its chair (82)	<b>I appeal from the decision of the chair.</b> <i>(Stated immediately after the chair announces a decision that a member believes is mistaken or unfair)</i>	Yes	Yes	No	No	Majority
Take an action that would otherwise be prevented by a procedural rule or another action already taken (84)*	I move to <b>suspend the rule</b> requiring ...	No	Yes	No	No	2/3
To talk informally so that agreement may be reached on the type and wording of the motion that is needed (128)	I move we <b>consider informally</b> ...	Yes	No	No	No	Majority
To call attention to a violation of the rules or an error in procedure (87)	<b>Point of order!</b>	Yes	No	No	No	None
To ask a question related to parliamentary procedure or to ask a question about the motion (90)	<b>Parliamentary inquiry.</b>	Yes	No	No	No	None
Withdraw a motion (94)	I wish to <b>withdraw</b> my motion	Yes	No	No	No	None
To divide a motion into two or more individual motions to be considered and voted on (96)	I request that the motion <b>be divided into [x] motions:</b> ...	No	No	No	No	No
To verify an indecisive vote or hand count by having members rise to be counted (99)	<b>I call for a standing vote.</b> <i>State immediately after vote has been taken</i>	Yes	No	No	No	No

\* 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

IF YOU WANT TO:	USE THIS MOTION
Present an idea to the committee or board for discussion and/or action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Main motion</li> <li>◦ Resolution</li> <li>◦ Consider informally</li> </ul>
Modify a pending motion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Amend</li> <li>◦ Division of question</li> </ul>
End or regulate debate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Close debate</li> <li>◦ Limit debate</li> <li>◦ Extend debate</li> </ul>
Delay a decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Refer to a committee</li> <li>◦ Postpone to a certain time</li> <li>◦ Postpone temporarily</li> <li>◦ Recess</li> <li>◦ Adjourn</li> </ul>
Remove a motion from consideration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Table</li> <li>◦ Withdraw a motion</li> </ul>
Address an emergency situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Question of privilege</li> <li>◦ Suspend rules</li> </ul>
Get more information about a pending motion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Parliamentary inquiry</li> <li>◦ Request for information</li> <li>◦ Request to ask member a question</li> <li>◦ Question of privilege</li> </ul>

IF YOU WANT TO:	USE THIS MOTION
Question the decision of the chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Point of order</li> <li>◦ Appeal from decision of chair</li> </ul>
Enforce meeting rights and privileges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Division of assembly</li> <li>◦ Division of question</li> <li>◦ Parliamentary inquiry</li> <li>◦ Point of order</li> <li>◦ Appeal from decision of chair</li> </ul>
Bring a motion back on the table for consideration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Resume consideration</li> <li>◦ Reconsider</li> <li>◦ Renew a motion</li> <li>◦ Amend a previous action</li> </ul>
Validate an action taken without quorum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Ratify</li> </ul>
Change an action already taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Reconsider</li> <li>◦ Rescind</li> <li>◦ Amend a previous action</li> </ul>
End a meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Adjourn</li> <li>◦ Recess</li> </ul>

Parliamentary Strategy

<b>IF YOU WANT TO <u>SUPPORT</u> A MOTION:</b>	<b>IF YOU WANT TO <u>OPPOSE</u> A MOTION</b>
Second it.	Speak against it and raise questions.
Speak in favor as soon as possible.	Move to amend the motion to make it less objectionable.
Know your facts and provide reference materials as necessary.	Draft a more acceptable version and offer an amendment as a substitution.
If necessary, amend the motion to make it more acceptable to other members.	To delay the motion you may move to table it, move to postpone it or refer it to a committee.
Vote against motions to table or delay your motion.	Move to recess if you need time to gather more facts.
Move to recess or postpone if you need more time to strengthen your proposal or get additional information.	Move to adjourn
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.	If the motion is adopted, move to reconsider it.
If a motion is defeated, you may move to reconsider it or you can reintroduce it at a future meeting.	If the motion is adopted, consider trying to rescind it at the next meeting.
In the event of a procedural dispute, have the Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure and committees standing rules and bylaws handy.	

**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 are delegated to it by its governing body, and each committee is under the direction and authority of its governing body. Thus, unless otherwise stated in the constitution or bylaws, 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.

## **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 AIP Standard Code and Handbook or Constitution:** If the parliamentary procedure 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 the first person to stand or address the chair should be recognized. If however, several people attempt to gain the floor at the same time, the member who has 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 make sure 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 there is one person who objects, then a formal vote must be taken.
7. **When there is no quorum:** In the event that a committee or board does not have quorum they may discuss items or hear reports, but they 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 a time that 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 to either 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:** It should be noted that audiotapes and verbatim transcripts cannot be substituted for formal meeting minutes. Although they are undoubtedly 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.