VMUN 2024

Delegate Guide

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DELEGATE GUIDE

About VMUN

Vancouver Model United Nations (VMUN) is Canada's premier educational simulation. A three-day Model United Nations conference located in the heart of Vancouver, VMUN is the world's largest high school student-organized Model United Nations conference. Welcoming over 1,400 participants yearly, our conference provides attendees with high-quality debate, facilitated by experienced and dedicated committee staff.

VMUN aims to expose students to complex challenges and inspire them to approach the world from new perspectives. As a delegate at VMUN, you will have the opportunity to engage in realistic debate about the issues confronting modern-day society in one of our twenty diverse and distinct committees.

RULES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF A DELEGATE

At VMUN, logistics is primarily taken care of by the staff and your Sponsor Teacher(s). With that being said, every delegate has a distinct set of responsibilities to ensure their experience is as enriching and informative as possible.

Firstly, delegates are responsible for maintaining communication with their Dais, Sponsor Teachers, and the Secretariat about potential absences during the conference weekend. While absences are discouraged to ensure that all delegates have the best possible experience, we recognize that there may be exceptional circumstances where an absence is unavoidable. Please communicate with your Dais and the Delegate Affairs team with advance notice if you must miss a committee session.

During the conference, all delegates are responsible for participating in committee sessions in a professional manner. Please adhere to the guidelines and rules set forth by the Dais along with the VMUN Delegate Code of Conduct, and ensure that your conduct with other delegates remains respectful. Delegates are expected to maintain professionalism at all times to uphold the integrity of a Model UN simulation. As representatives of real countries/people, you should adhere to realistic foreign policy; please do not drastically deviate from your country's stance to ensure that debate remains as authentic as possible.

One of the cornerstones of the Model UN experience is working collaboratively with fellow delegates—you will have the opportunity to engage in debate and negotiations with other delegates in your committee. Compromise is one of the most important aspects of MUN that many delegates often overlook. Try and challenge yourself to bridge the gap between different viewpoints in your committee.

How to Research

Committees at VMUN will be discussing urgent and consequential issues that currently challenge world leaders, politicians, and diplomats across the globe. As such, conducting research may seem like a daunting task for delegates at any experience level. However, once research is broken down into smaller parts, the process is much more manageable than it may originally appear.

RESEARCHING FOR STANDARD COMMITTEES

Research for Standard Committees differs from that for Crisis Committees. Since Standard Committees generally deal with contemporary topics, research can be done primarily through modern news sites, government websites, and academic literature.

Reading the Background Guide

Once you receive your position assignment, the first step you should take is to read the backgrounder in its entirety. The Director of your committee will have taken time to do in-depth research on important sub-topics pertaining to the broader issue, showing you what the Dais would like to see debated during committee sessions. The backgrounder will give you an important understanding of the modern-day implications of the topics being discussed in your committee.

When you are reading the backgrounder, make note of any mention of your position and your allies' stances; this information can be incredibly useful during the conference to show that you have a nuanced understanding of the topic when discussing with fellow delegates. Furthermore, mentions of your position in the backgrounder can give you insight into your country's history with this topic, any solutions you may be willing to implement, and any other delegations you would be willing to work with.

After fully reading the backgrounder, it is important to understand your country or position in greater depth. It is vital that you understand your country because this will help you during debate to inform other delegates of your stance on the topic. For example, if you were in SOCHUM and the topic was *Freedom of the Press*, it would be pivotal to have an understanding of historical governmental attitudes toward freedom of speech and journalism.

Basic questions encompassed by this process include:

- » How large is your country?
- » Where is your country situated?
- » Who are the main allies of your nation?
- » What is the structure of your government?
- » Do you have any historical treaties or agreements surrounding this topic?
- » Who are some major trading partners?

All of this information will enhance your knowledge of your country and give you a more solid comprehension of why the topics at hand are important to your nation.

Further Research

After you have fully read through the background guide, you should begin researching your country, its history, and current attitudes towards the issues your committee will be discussing. A good way to begin this is by researching what the topic is exactly. Be sure to be able to answer basic questions, such as:

- » Who/what countries does this topic most dramatically impact?
- » When did this issue become widespread?
- » Why does this topic affect your nation?

When completing this process, the committee's backgrounder will be helpful as it will strive to answer many of these questions. Throughout the entire research process, make sure that you are using a variety of reliable sources—avoid an overreliance on news sources as these organizations may have an agenda or bias that will inform their reporting. UN websites, NGO websites, and academic literature regarding the topic can all be considered more trustworthy and informative resources. Some great sources to start with are the UN's website (or affiliate websites), the CIA World Factbook, and BBC Country Profiles.

Note-taking

While researching all of the aforementioned information, it is often helpful to begin a document that consolidates everything you have learned. This document can be a great resource during committee sessions as you can refer back to it before making a speech or interacting with other delegates to reinforce your stance. Make sure that the document is well-formatted and easy to read because you will not have an abundance of time to review it. In addition, you will not have access to the internet during committee sessions, so all of your relevant research should be on this document.

Possible Solutions

The next important step when researching is to begin discovering possible solutions for the topic. The committee backgrounder will be extremely useful in this regard as it will explicitly outline numerous viable solutions. However, remain open to other unique solutions—you should not be limited by the solutions that the backgrounder introduces. If you are able to find a creative solution to the topic, do not be afraid to debate it in committee sessions; it shows that you have done your research. Viable solutions to your topic should be informed by past actions that the international community has taken. For instance, if you are in UNODC and the topic is *International Drug Control in the 21st Century*, you would probably not want to propose another prohibitory solution akin to the War on Drugs. Reiterating an ineffectual solution would not progress debate in committee unless your nation is steadfast in its belief of the benefits of prohibition.

Once you feel that your research has been done to a satisfactory extent, you will want to begin drafting your position paper. For more information on how to write a position paper, please refer to the Position Paper Guide on the VMUN website.

RESEARCHING FOR CRISIS COMMITTEES

Research for crisis committees is very similar to that of General Assemblies, Specialized Agencies, and Regional Bodies. However, unlike those committees, crisis committee topics differ in that they are historical topics. Please ensure that your research is based on historical information occurring prior to the beginning of the crisis, as your committee will quickly diverge from the history. Research for crises can primarily be done on academic sites such as Britannica or JSTOR. When conducting research for crisis committees, be especially careful of the credibility of your sources. Although sources such as Wikipedia can provide a good introduction to the topic alongside your committee backgrounder, it is not the most credible source to cite your research from. Instead, we recommend you use its many sources and references as a segue for your research.

Reading the Background Guide

Once you receive your position, it is very crucial to read the entire backgrounder. Backgrounders for crisis committees contain comprehensive information on both your topic and your own position. While you read through the backgrounder, make sure to note down any important information relating to your topic. Before you research your position, it is imperative to have a thorough understanding of the topic to help you write your position paper, research your position, and prepare speeches and ideas in committee sessions. Although the backgrounder contains comprehensive information about the topic, you may also find reading about your topic on another source helpful. Websites such as Britannica contain very informative, general information about historical events. The backgrounder will also contain additional resources and articles that can be used to further your research and understanding of the topic.

While reading about the topic, you should be able to answer the following questions:

  » How did the event start?
  » Which countries/forces/powers fought on which side?
  » Which country/forces/power won the war?
  » Why was the war fought?
  » What were the events that led up to the war?"

You can also use these questions to guide your research, though the committee's backgrounder will help you answer most of these questions. While researching the event, it is important to be aware of potential biases, particularly because authors of sources will tend to portray a certain country/power in a certain light, either glorifying or vilifying them.

Researching Your Position

After you have conducted thorough research on your topic, you should start researching your position, what stance your position has, and what powers they have in the committee. Unlike regular committees, delegates in crisis committees represent specific individuals rather than countries or organizations. Thus, it is imperative to spend more attention on the Bloc Positions/Portfolio Overviews in the backgrounder, especially those that pertain to your position. The Bloc Positions/Portfolio Overviews will give you insight into your position's stances, their goals, and the certain powers they may have in the committee. This may entail the construction of new ships, funding towards sailors, and or the drafting of new troops into the navy. You can also research your position using other sources, though it is always best to start off with reading a biography of your individual/position, which can usually be found on Britannica or Wikipedia. Although Wikipedia may not be the most accurate source, it does offer a gateway into many other sources, including journal articles, diary and letter entries, and digital archives, which may aid in your research.
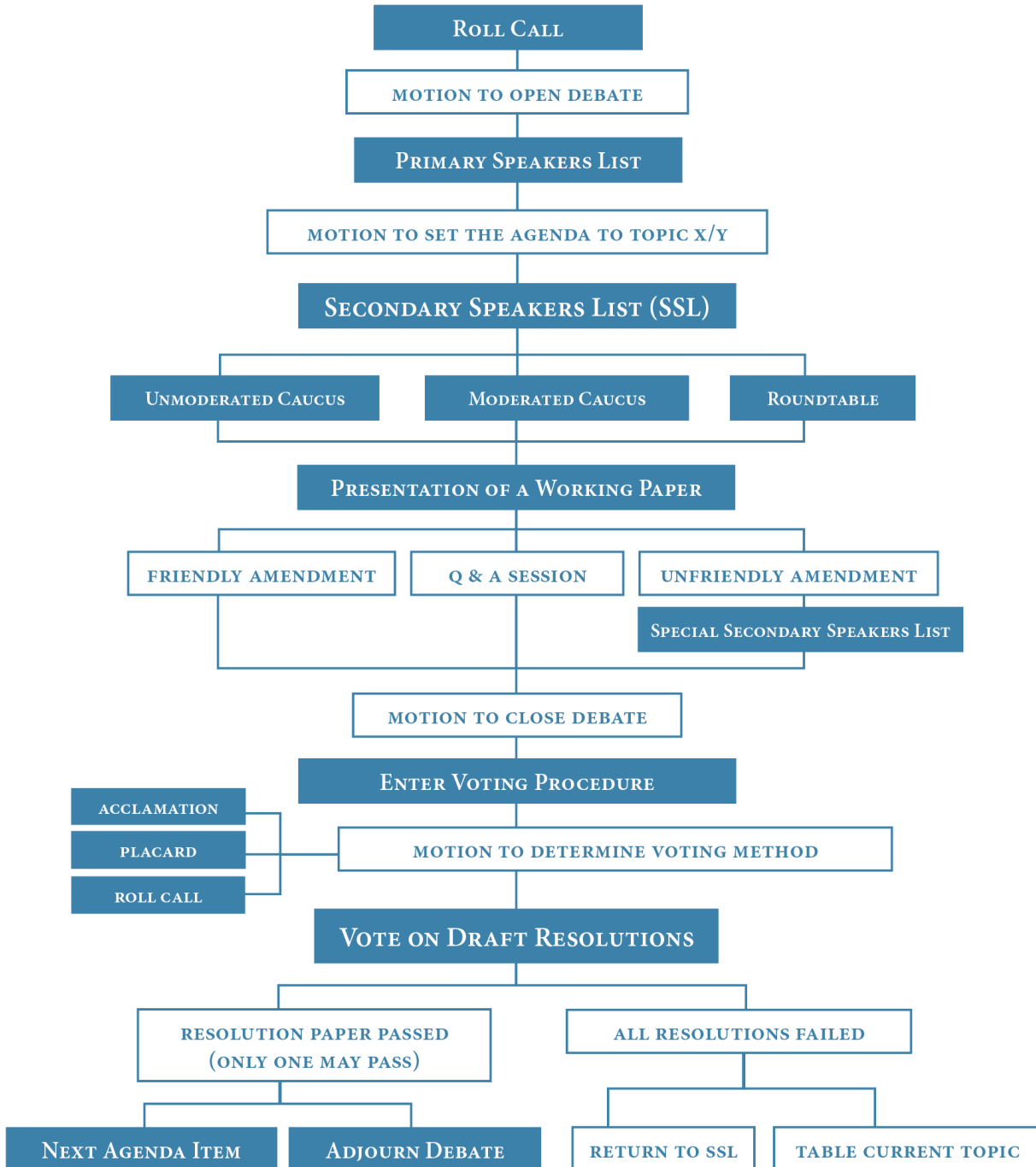
Note-taking

While reading your sources and conducting research, it is often helpful to begin a document that consolidates everything you have learnt, and any additional information that you think may be important. This document is important to help collect information that can be used in writing your position paper. You can also record your notes on note-taking platforms such as NoodleTools, and record all the sources you have used either on the document or on citation programs such as Zotero.

By the time you finish your research, you should have a thorough understanding of the topic and your position in the committee. You should be able to confidently answer the discussion questions at the end of the backgrounder. If you feel you are ready, and you are satisfied with your research, you can now begin to draft your position paper. For more information on how to write a position paper, please refer to the Position Paper Guide on the VMUN website.

Rules of Procedure Overview

REGULAR RULES OF PROCEDURE

The following ROP is pertinent to General Assemblies, Intermediate Agencies, and Regional Councils. For Continuous Crisis ROP, refer to the section below. For a more extensive ROP guide, please navigate to the "Resources" page on VMUN's website where you can find the official VMUN 2024 Rules of Procedure Guide.

ROLL CALL

MOTION TO OPEN DEBATE

PRIMARY SPEAKERS LIST

MOTION TO SET THE AGENDA TO TOPIC X/Y

SECONDARY SPEAKERS LIST (SSL)

UNMODERATED CAUCUS — MODERATED CAUCUS — ROUNDTABLE

PRESENTATION OF A WORKING PAPER

FRIENDLY AMENDMENT — Q & A SESSION — UNFRIENDLY AMENDMENT

SPECIAL SECONDARY SPEAKERS LIST

MOTION TO CLOSE DEBATE

ENTER VOTING PROCEDURE

ACCLAMATION
PLACARD
ROLL CALL
— MOTION TO DETERMINE VOTING METHOD

VOTE ON DRAFT RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTION PAPER PASSED (ONLY ONE MAY PASS) — ALL RESOLUTIONS FAILED

NEXT AGENDA ITEM — ADJOURN DEBATE — RETURN TO SSL — TABLE CURRENT TOPIC

Roll Call and Introduction

Every committee session begins with Roll Call, where the Dais will alphabetically call out the country names of every delegate. There are two responses to this process—"present" or "present and voting"—and both of them entail different processes. When you raise your placard and respond with "present," this means that you are able to abstain from voting, or not vote, on substantive procedures, like voting on resolution papers, for the duration of the committee session. When you raise your placard and respond with "present and voting," this means that you are unable to abstain from voting and consequently, must vote on all matters presented to the committee. Since Roll Call is taken at the beginning of every session, you are able to change your response if desired.

In the first committee session after Roll Call is completed, the Dais will entertain a motion to open debate. In MUN, all debate (outside of Primary and Secondary Speakers Lists) begins with a motion. Delegates propose a motion by saying *"The delegate of [position] motions for a [speaking time] [type of debate] on [subject]."* To open debate, a delegate would say *"The delegate of [position] motions to open debate."*

Once the committee votes on this, the Dais would open the Primary Speakers List. During the Primary Speakers List, members of the committee will debate which topic to begin with, since most committees at VMUN will debate two over the course of the weekend. The Dais will entertain a motion to set the Agenda. In this case, a delegate would say, *"The delegate of [position] motions to set the Agenda to Topic A/B."*

Then, the Dais would call upon four speakers—two in favour and two against—and these Speakers would give their one-minute speeches. Following this process, the Dais would hold a vote on the original motion. If it passes, the motion is adopted and that topic is debated first. If it fails, the committee will immediately begin debating the second topic.

After this process has been completed, the committee will enter the Secondary Speakers List. This is the time when delegates can introduce their stance to the committee. If you raise your placard to speak during this time, you can give a brief overview of why this topic is important and the relevance of it to your nation. Every speaker has a maximum of one minute to speak, and the Dais will call upon 5–12 delegates depending on the size of the committee. After your speech in the Primary Speakers List or Secondary Speakers List, make sure you yield your time.

At VMUN, there are four types of yields: to the Chair, to comments, to questions, or to another delegate. The most common yield is to the Chair, which dissolves your remaining speaking time. When a delegate yields to comments, other delegates, when called upon by the Dais, will have the opportunity to make a comment on the delegate's speech. Similar to yielding to comments, yielding to questions means that other delegates have the opportunity to question the delegate on their stance. Finally, yielding to another delegate means that a new delegate has the opportunity to make a speech with the original delegate's remaining time. No matter which one you choose, make sure to yield your time during the Primary and Secondary Speakers Lists.

Motions

Following the Secondary Speakers List, the Dais will open the floor to any points or motions. Moderated caucuses comprise the majority of debate and can be on any subject pertinent to the topic. A delegate can motion for a moderated caucus by saying, *"The delegate of [position] motions for a 10/1 moderated caucus on [topic]."*

In that example, 10/1 represents the duration of the moderated caucus—one minute speaking time with ten speakers. Please note that 10/1 could be filled with any duration. The Dais will entertain up to five motions on the floor at once and then the committee will vote on the motions. If one passes, it is immediately adopted by the committee; if all fail, the committee reverts back to the Secondary Speakers List. Delegates can also motion for an extension of the current topic; however, extensions must be half as long or shorter than the original motion and cannot be extended.

Caucuses

The committee will entertain various moderated caucuses, sometimes reverting back to the Secondary Speakers List, for about two sessions before entertaining motions for unmoderated caucuses. An unmoderated caucus is where blocs (groups with a shared stance working towards writing a working paper) are formed, negotiations occur, and delegates can interact with each other. Delegates motion for unmoderated caucuses in the same way that they do for moderated ones. If the motion passes, the committee enters an unmoderated caucus, typically around 10–15 minutes in length.

Although quite uncommon, the Dais will sometimes choose to entertain a Round Table motion. A Round Table involves the Dais calling out all of the delegates alphabetically, and giving all delegates the opportunity to speak one-by-one. This is typically called for when the committee becomes circuitous or too few delegates are involved in debate. Due to the sheer amount of time it takes to go through an entire committee, Round Table speaking times are generally limited to 30–45 seconds, and you do not need to yield your time upon completing your speech.

Resolutions

The ultimate goal of a MUN committee is to pass a draft resolution which acts as a conclusion to the debate that has occurred. During unmoderated caucuses and breaks, delegates work within their blocs to write a paper delineating the solutions that the bloc would like to implement. For an example resolution paper, please refer to the Rules of Procedure Guide on the VMUN website's "Resources" page. When all of the blocs have finished writing their papers, delegates can motion to present their working papers. If the motion passes, the sponsors of the paper will read its contents clause-by-clause. When they finish reading it out, the Dais will typically entertain a Q&A session where delegates can question the Sponsors on the content of the paper. Once the paper has been fully presented, the next bloc will motion to present theirs, and so on. Once all papers have been presented, wwwdelegates are able to propose amendments to papers.

Amendments

There are two types of amendments: friendly and unfriendly. Friendly amendments are unanimously agreed upon by all of the Sponsors and are adopted into the paper immediately.

Unfriendly amendments divide the Sponsors and cannot be agreed upon; in that case, the committee goes into a Special Secondary Speakers List, with two Speakers for and two against, and they debate whether or not to enact the amendment. After the Special Secondary Speakers List, the committee will vote upon the unfriendly amendment; if the vote passes, the amendment is added to the paper; conversely, if the vote fails, the amendment is discarded.

Voting

After completing this process and presenting all papers, the Dais will entertain a motion to close debate. If this passes, the committee enters voting procedure. The Chairs will bar the doors and external communications to preserve the integrity of the vote. Next, the Dais will entertain a motion on the method of voting.

There are four methods of voting in Model UN: placard, roll call, acclamation, and division of the question.

- » **Placard** is the most common method of voting and simply consists of every delegate raising their placard indicating whether or not they are in support of the motion.
- » **Roll call** voting is a method where the Dais will go through the committee alphabetically and record every delegate's vote.
- » **Acclamation** is a method of voting primarily used in committees like NATO and acts as a consensus vote—if any delegation is in opposition, the motion fails.
- » **Division of the question** can be used in conjunction with any of the aforementioned three methods of voting; however, the entire paper is voted upon after being divided clause-by-clause.

After a method of voting has been decided upon, the Dais will entertain a motion on which paper to vote upon first. Only one paper can pass, so delegates often want their paper to be presented first. The committee will then vote on the paper and, should it pass, the committee will move on to the Secondary Speakers List for the second topic. If all papers fail, the committee will revert to the Secondary Speakers List for the current topic.

For a more in-depth discussion of of Standard Rules of Procedure or Continuous Crisis Rules of Procedure, please refer to the VMUN website's Resources page.