

RULES OF PROCEDURE AT SENATE MEETINGS

Approval Authority: Senate

Established On: February 16, 2023

Amendments: 2025 06 12

Category: Senate - Academic

1.0 Purpose

Rules of Procedure adopted by the Senate in support of By-Law, sections 9 and 10.

2.0 Recognition

After the Speaker and or Deputy Speaker (herein referred to as Speaker) has called the meeting to order, only one member should speak at a time, and only after being recognized by the Speaker.

3.0 Submission Requirements

All documents submitted for Senate consideration must have undergone the University's consultation process and be accompanied by a complete briefing note. Each submission must be supported by Senators, as mover and seconder.

To ensure a thorough and effective consultation process, the following guidelines should be considered:

- **Consultation** – Engage with relevant interest holders, solicit input, and address concerns to ensure a well-informed proposal.
- **Key Groups to Consult** – Depending on the nature of the submission, consultation may include Unions, Senate or Board committees, University Secretary, Senior Leadership Groups (EG/SLG), Provost and VP Academic, Student bodies, administrative units, Indigenous groups (AIHEC/IRG), Francophone groups (FRG/AFHEC), and community partners.
- **Purpose of Consultation** – Ensure alignment with university policies, assess feasibility, and build broad institutional support.
- **Key Documents to Align With** – Strategic Plan, Academic Principles, Quality Assurance Framework, Framework for New Programs, Academic Plan (when available), NOSM U's Statement on Academic Freedom and Guidelines for the Use of Generative AI in Teaching and Learning and AI.
- **Documentation of Consultation** – A summary of feedback and engagement efforts should be included in the briefing note accompanying the submission.

All documentation submitted to the Senate must be accompanied by a **Briefing Note** that clearly outlines the recommendations being brought forward. Submissions should include:

- A clean (untracked) version of the document intended for presentation and approval.
- A track-changes version of the document if changes are being shared for information; and
- Any relevant supporting material that provides context or background – which may be linked or attached.

For the purposes of Senate approval, only the clean (untracked) version of the document will be considered the official version recommended for approval.

3.1 Agenda Categories

a) Consent Agenda

A consent agenda will allow the Senate to approve routine, procedural or non-controversial items together without needing to vote repeatedly on individual motions. Consent agenda items usually do not require discussion or explanation prior to taking action, or they have already been discussed at a previous meeting and are being brought forward again for formal approval.

Any Senator may request in the meeting that a consent agenda item be removed from the consent agenda and if so, requested it shall be removed. Items removed from the consent agenda will be considered in the normal sequence of the agenda or as noted by the Speaker.

Items that are often seen on consent agendas include (not an exhaustive list):

- Approval of the minutes
- Housekeeping amendments to previously approved policies or previously approved committee terms of reference.
- Committee reports that are presented for information.
- Routine reports provided for placing them on record.
- Non-controversial appointments and renewal

Consent agendas are intended to assist with time management at meetings and ensure that there is sufficient opportunity for the consideration and discussion of policy and strategy matters. Consent agendas also help pivot the focus of meetings from process to discussion, which helps better leverage the expertise of the Council and strengthens the quality of governance.

All Members are supplied with the appropriate documentation for each item, and all items on the Consent Agenda will be approved by means of one motion.

b) Items Requiring First & Second Reading

Generally, Senate accomplishes the passage of new proposals, policies, and other documents through a two-reading process. At the first reading, the proposed item is introduced and discussed. At the second (or future) meeting, further discussion may occur, and a vote may be held. Any deviation from this process is at the discretion of the Speaker and/or Senate.

c) **Major changes**—defined as substantial revisions, new scope, new policies, or entirely new concepts—require two readings for full consideration before approval. These items must be introduced at one meeting (first reading) and then considered for final approval at a subsequent meeting (second reading).

Examples include:

- Major revisions to Senate Bylaws, policies or governing documents (notice is also required)
- Introduction of new policies or academic programs
- Significant changes to institutional strategy or structures

d) **Items for Action**

These items involve moderate changes to previously presented documents or proposals. While time is allotted on the agenda for discussion, the item is primarily presented for approval.

Examples include:

- Items that have undergone first reading
- Revisions to existing policies or documents that do not alter their fundamental intent
- Modifications to academic regulations that have been reviewed by relevant interest holders

For further clarification on agenda categorization or submission requirements, please contact the Senate Office – University Secretary at governance@nosm.ca

3.2 Agenda and General Discussion

The Speaker should follow the agenda, which should provide an opportunity to correct the minutes of the previous meeting and approve them, approve the consent agenda (addressed under item 3.1), which shall become the order of business unless a motion to amend the agenda is made and adopted.

Unless otherwise specified in rules of procedure or By-laws, Bourinot's Rules of Order, in its most recent edition, shall govern. These exist to ensure that meetings proceed smoothly and democratically. The rules of order are intended to facilitate equitable participation, not limit it.

Bourinot's Rules of Order¹ are relied on by the Senate and Board of Governors at NOSM University. In matters of dispute not covered by these rules, the Speaker's decision will prevail unless overturned by a motion properly put and passed.

3.3 Motions and Items for Action

All motions and resolutions shall be preceded by a report and/or briefing note, that is to be submitted to the University Secretary in time to be included in the agenda circulated before the next meeting. Each submission must be supported by Senators, as mover and seconder.

¹ https://www.nosm.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Bourinots_at_a_glance.pdf

A member who wishes a definite decision may secure recognition from the Speaker and make a motion specifying the proposal. The Speaker may request motions as required to aid the discussion.

A motion must be seconded before the subject matter of the motion is open for debate, and all discussion must apply to it until disposed of, except as provided below. When every member who wishes to speak has done so, the Speaker shall call for a vote.

The Senate's general custom permits the withdrawal of a motion by consent of the mover and seconder, but if either object the motion must be put to a vote. This applies to substantive motions and amendments.

Motions dealing with procedures should have priority over other motions. Motions to adjourn if the time for the next meeting has been set, to postpone a decision of a subject to a definite time, or to open or close nominations must be voted upon without debate or amendment.

The Speaker may summarize discussions and present alternatives for consideration when no motion is pending.

During debate the motion may be amended in various ways, or action may be taken to delay or defer its effect, but it must remain before the meeting until it is finally disposed of in one way or another.

When a vote has been taken and the motion declared either carried or lost, that decision becomes formally the decision of the body in question and is so recorded. A question once decided cannot be brought up again at the same meeting.

a) Amendments

An amendment to a motion must fall within one of the following categories:

- a. The deletion of certain words
- b. The addition of certain words
- c. The deletion of certain words and the substitution of others in their place.

An amending motion which would nullify the main motion is not an amendment and cannot be introduced. There cannot be more than two amendments before the meeting at one time, but when one of these has been accepted or rejected, another amendment may be introduced but only if it is different in purpose from one previously defeated.

Voting is in the following order:

- a. On the amendment to the amendment, or the second amendment
- b. On the amendment

- c. On the motion if amendments have been defeated or on the motion as amended if an amendment has carried.

Ordinarily, no member shall speak more than once to the same question (and then not longer than 3 minutes unless permitted by the Speaker/Chair), but the mover shall have the right of replying after all the members who choose to speak have spoken. A member may, at any time, with the permission of the Speaker, explain a material part of the speech which may have been misunderstood.

At meetings of the Senate only Senators may move and second motions, propose amendments and vote on amendments and motions.

b) Point of Order

Only on a point of order or privilege can a member interrupt another member who is speaking, except that with the consent of the Speaker questions may be asked. If a Senator feels that improper language has been used, an irrelevant argument introduced, or a rule of procedure broken, the member is entitled to "rise to a point of order", interrupting the speaker. The point of order must be stated and concisely, and the Speaker shall decide without debate, although the Speaker may ask opinions. The Speaker's ruling may be appealed to by the member who has risen to a point of order and, if so, the Speaker states the decision and the point of appeal. The Speaker then puts the question which is not debatable: "Shall the decision of the Speaker stand?". A simple majority decides the issue. This merely settles a point of procedure and is not a vote of confidence in the Speaker.

c) Question of Privilege

If a Senator feels that a statement reflects their reputation or that of the Senate, the Committee, or the University, the member is entitled to raise a "question of privilege". The procedure is the same as for a point of order.

d) General

On special motions, the following procedure shall prevail:

- a. Voting To adjourn before business is complete must be seconded (debatable as to time only)
- b. To take a recess (not debatable)
- c. To raise a question of privilege (personal - not debatable)
- d. To lay on the table (not debatable)
- e. To limit or extend the limits of debate (not debatable)
- f. To postpone to a definite time (debatable as to time only)
- g. To amend (debatable).

e) Voting

All Senators, including Ex Officio members, have full voting rights. Voting rights are limited to those Senators present at the time of the vote.

When a vote is taken in the Senate, due to the hybrid nature of virtual meetings, the Speaker may ask for any opposition to the motions or any abstentions. Any Senator may require that the Senator's own vote be reported in the Minutes. If not requested, only the result will be noted. A mechanism may be used in Senate meetings to capture votes (i.e. Slido)

For meetings whenever the Speaker is in doubt as to the result or if any member requests a count prior to the vote being taken, the votes will be counted, or an electronic method will be used. For electronic votes, voting shall be by email or other electronic means identified by the University Secretary.

For elections involving more than one candidate, voting shall be by a means that does not allow members eligible to vote to identify how any other member voted.

4.0 Attendance

To attend open sessions, other than by invitation, requests shall be made to the University Secretary. All individuals in attendance at any Senate meeting shall observe rules of decorum, and the Speaker may require any individual to leave any meeting if, with the discretion of the Speaker or a majority of the members, such individual acts contrary to good order and decorum.

Those in attendance shall not be permitted to use cameras or other electronic recording equipment or broadcast proceedings of the Senate unless permission is granted by the Speaker or a majority vote of the Senate and subject to such conditions as the Senate may impose. Senate and Committee meetings may be recorded for minute-taking purposes.

Guests must identify themselves prior to the meeting and may speak by addressing the Speaker but not vote. Anyone attending a meeting that does not identify with the University Secretary, or the Speaker is subject to being removed from the meeting, until such time as they identify with their legal name.

5.0 Virtual Attendance Etiquette

To support a respectful and effective virtual meeting environment, all participants are asked to keep their microphones muted during presentations to minimize background noise and distractions. When invited by the Speaker to contribute to the discussion, participants may unmute their microphones. Once their contribution is complete, microphones should be re-muted promptly.

6.0 Interpretation

Questions of interpretation or application of this policy or its procedures will be referred to the University Secretary governance@nosm.ca.

7.0 Related Documents

University Documents and Information

- By-law
- Legislation and Information
- NOSM University Act

AUTHORITIES AND OFFICERS

The following is a list of authorities and officers for this policy:

- a. Approving Authority: Senate
- b. Responsible Officer: Speaker or Deputy Speaker
- c. Procedural Authority: Speaker or Deputy Speaker
- d. Procedural Officer: University Secretary

Review and Revision History

Review Period: 3 years

Date for Next Review: 2028 01