

# UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO ENGINEERING SOCIETY

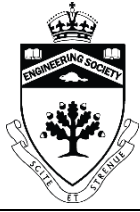
Engineering Society Board of Directors  
Beginners' Guide to BoD Meeting Procedure

October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018

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## 0. Introduction

This document shall serve as a brief guide to parliamentary procedure. It does not serve to replace Robert's Rules, but to communicate those rules in a more manageable fashion. The author of this guide guarantees that items are left out of this; and that to be a the best board member one can be, one should commit to further research.

Items are presented in the order that they will generally be encountered.

### 0.1 Basic rules

- Direct all motions and speech towards the chair.
- Never use personal pronouns. (I is permissible).
- A member must be recognized in order to enter debate.
- In this document exist Incidental Motions such as **points of order, information, and parliamentary procedure**. These can be made without being recognized by the Speaker. If any of these are abused, the Speaker retains the right to eject members from the room.



## 1. Definitions

### Germane

“Relevant to a subject under consideration.”

- All discussion must be **directly** germane to the pending business.

### Seconding

Motions must be seconded to prove that someone other than the maker of the motion wants the motions to be heard by the board.

- Not all motions need to be seconded, and if debate occurs without a second, the debate qualifies as a second.

### Debatable

Some motions are debatable, some are not.

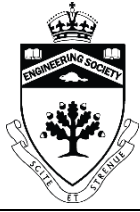
- Motions which are debatable are subject to discussion.
- More information on this later in the document.

### Majority

- Majority is not half of (50%, 1/2, etc.) votes cast.
- Majority is **more than half** of votes cast.
- An abstention is when one decides to not cast a vote.
- This is sometimes referred to as a “simple majority”.
- **Example:** 51 of 100 is a majority. 45 of 89 is a majority.
- **Example:** 99 abstentions, 2 for, 1 against, is a majority.

### 2/3 Majority

- Is **at least 2/3** of votes cast.
- This is required whenever a motion limits a member’s ability to participate in activities of the board, or would infringe on the rights of the minority. It is also required when amending the constitution.
- An abstention is when one decides to not cast a vote.
- This is sometimes referred to as a “super majority”.
- Occasionally this can be substituted with a **majority of the entire membership** (read: all undergraduate engineering students).



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- **Example:** Calling question prevents debate, therefore requires a 2/3 vote. A special order interrupts all business when its allotted time arrives, therefore requires a 2/3 vote.
- **Example:** 66 of 99 is a 2/3 majority. 67 of 100 is a 2/3 majority.

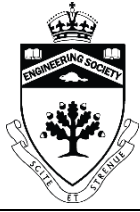
## Quorum

- In order for decisions of the Board to be credible, enough members of the board must be present.
- As such, it is a rule that if not enough board members are present to fairly conduct business, a meeting is automatically adjourned.
- The number of Board members needed is referred to as **quorum**.
- Quorum at the EngSoc Board is **a majority** of the board.

## Voting

Every decision of the board must be voted on by the Board.

- Votes require either a **majority**, a **2/3 majority**, or a **majority of the entire membership**.
- A vote occurs when discussion on a motion is exhausted or the question is successfully called.
- A member can cause a vote on a motion to occur by **motioning for the previous question, or calling the question**.
- All Board members have the right to abstain, and none may hold more than one vote.



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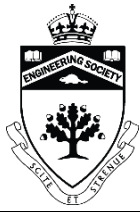
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## 2. Motions

General motions are actions taken by the Board. An effective Board member makes, debates, and analyzes motions. The items are ordered based on how often a member will use them.

Motion to...	Description
<p><b>Main motion</b>  <i>Speaker:</i> The next motion is...  <i>Member A:</i> I second            (Can require a <b>majority</b>, or a <b>2/3 majority</b> based on the bylaws and Robert's Rules)</p>	<p>The original motion discussed. Generally will have come from the agenda.</p>
<p><b>Amend</b>  <i>Member A:</i> Motion to amend such that...  <i>Member B:</i> I second.            (Requires a <b>majority</b>).</p>	<p>Change the wording of a motion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This can also be applied to most other motions, and to itself.</li> <li>- Amendments must be <b>germane</b> to the pending business.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Previous question</b>  <i>Member A:</i> Motion to call the previous question  <i>Member B:</i> I second            (Requires a <b>2/3 majority</b>)  <i>Undebatable</i></p>	<p>Immediately vote on the <b>main motion</b>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Skips the rest of the speaker's list and immediately moves</li> <li>- to voting.</li> <li>- Can also be applied to any other <b>debatable</b> motion.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Point of privilege</b>  <i>Member A:</i> Point of privilege...  <i>Speaker:</i> (Can answer however they deem appropriate)  <i>Undebatable</i>  <i>No vote taken</i>  <i>Can interrupt a speech</i></p>	<p>Board attendees have privileges.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If a board member is at any time uncomfortable, confused, or afraid, they should make a point of privilege and state their concerns.</li> <li>- <b>Use when confused.</b></li> </ul>

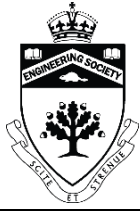


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<p><b>Point of parliamentary inquiry</b>  <i>Member A:</i> Point of parliamentary inquiry...  <i>Member A:</i> States confusion/question.  <i>In order when a member is confused.</i>  <i>No vote taken, answered by <b>speaker</b>.</i></p>	<p>Points of parliamentary inquiry exist to allow members to ask questions about parliamentary procedure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Use when confused.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Request for information</b>  <i>Member A:</i> Point of information.  <i>In order when a member does not know something.</i>  <i>No vote taken, answered by <b>speaker</b>.</i></p>	<p>Points of information exist to allow members to ask questions about general information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Use when confused.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Point of order</b>  <i>Member A:</i> Point of order...  <i>In order after a breach of procedure.</i>  <i>No vote taken, ruling by <b>speaker</b>.</i></p>	<p>Points of order exist to allow board members to keep each other in line when the chair fails to do so.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Use when someone breaks the rules.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Commit or refer</b>  <i>Member A:</i> Motion to commit to...  <i>Member B:</i> I second  <i>(Requires a <b>majority</b>)</i></p>	<p>Send to a committee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The committee could be a standing committee or one created specifically to address the issue at hand.</li> <li>- The committee can be asked to report back at a specific time with their recommendation.</li> <li>- Is referred for review with all amendments that were made during debate.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Adjourn</b>  <i>Member A:</i> Motion to adjourn (at ...)  <i>Member B:</i> I second  <i>(Requires a <b>majority</b>)</i>  <i>Undebatable.</i></p>	<p>Adjournment ends a meeting immediately</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pending business and remaining agenda items become <b>general orders</b> at the next meeting.</li> <li>- Can also specify at time.</li> </ul>

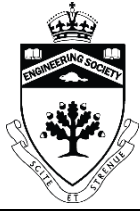


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<p><b>Recess</b>  <i>Member A:</i> Motion for recess... (Now or later)  <i>Member B:</i> I second  <i>(Requires a <b>majority</b>)</i>  <i>Undebatable.</i></p>	<p>A recess is a short break</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can be at a specific time.</li> <li>- Should specify an amount of time to recess for.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lay on the table</b>  <i>Member A:</i> Motion to lay the main motion on the table.  <i>Member B:</i> I second.  <i>(Requires a <b>majority</b>, unless it is being tabled for the purposes of defeating the motion, at which point a <b>2/3 majority</b> is required).</i>  <i>Undebatable.</i></p>	<p>Imagine a table; imagine placing the <b>main motion</b> on that table.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The motion shall be left on the table until there is a motion to <b>take it from the table</b>. This motion is applicable as a main motion.</li> <li>- Does not kill the motion, simple puts it aside temporarily.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Change debate rules</b>  <i>Member A:</i> Motion to change the limits of debate such that...  <i>Member B:</i> I second  <i>(Requires a <b>2/3 majority</b>)</i>  <i>Undebatable</i></p>	<p>Change the rules governing debate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Includes time for each speech, number of speeches, amount of time allocated for debate, etc.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Postpone to a certain time</b>  <i>Member A:</i> Motion to postpone to...  <i>Member B:</i> I second  <i>(Requires a <b>majority</b>, unless the motion is made into a <b>special order</b>, which requires a <b>2/3 majority</b>)</i></p>	<p>Make the motion a <b>general order</b> to be taken up at another time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Generally something is postponed to another board meeting, but technically can be postponed to any time.</li> </ul>



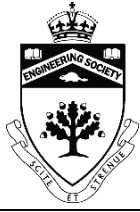
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<p><b>Postpone indefinitely</b>  <i>Member A:</i> Motion to postpone indefinitely  <i>Member B:</i> I second  <i>(Requires a 2/3 majority)</i></p>	<p>Kill a motion for the remainder of the session.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The motion is dead.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Appeal chair's decision</b>  <i>Member A:</i> I appeal the decision of the chair on...  <i>Member B:</i> I second  <i>In order when the <b>speaker</b> makes a mistake</i>  <i>(Requires a 2/3 majority).</i>  <i>The chair may finish and end debate on an appeal.</i></p>	<p>Motions to appeal allow the board to overrule a ruling of the speaker.</p>
<p><b>Motions relating to voting</b>  <i>In order promptly after the results of a vote are announced</i>  <i>Member A:</i> I motion to vote using...  <i>Member B:</i> I second.  <i>(Requires a <b>majority</b>, except closing polls which requires 2/3 majority)</i>  <i>Undebatable</i></p>	<p>When voting on motions a number of actions can be taken to modify the way voting is done.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- These include differing ways of voting, such as voting by ballot, by show of hands, by voice, and by rising</li> <li>- This can also include voting on a motion piece by piece (voting in seriatim), simultaneously (omnibus), or not all of it is desired.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Reconsider</b>  <i>Member A:</i> Motion to reconsider.  <i>Member B:</i> I second.</p>	<p>May only be made by an individual who voted for the motion in question.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Majority required.</li> <li>- Debatable only if the original motion is debatable.</li> </ul>



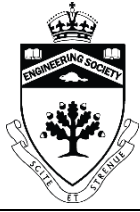


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<p><b>Take from the table</b></p> <p><i>Member A:</i> Motion to take from the the table.</p> <p><i>Member B:</i> I second.</p> <p><i>(Requires a majority, unless it is being tabled for the purposes of defeating the motion)</i></p> <p><i>Undebatable</i></p>	<p>Can only be applied to main motions.</p> <p>May only be made by an individual who voted for the motion in question.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Majority required</li></ul>
<p><b>Enter In-Camera session</b></p> <p><i>Member A:</i> Motion to enter In-Camera session.</p> <p><i>Member B:</i> I second.</p>	<p>Enter an In-Camera session in which minutes are not released publically. Only Board members are allowed in the room.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Majority required.</li><li>- The motion can not be discussed.</li><li>- Other individuals may remain in the room, should the Board vote to allow them.</li></ul>



### 3. Related Parties

#### 3.1 The Speaker

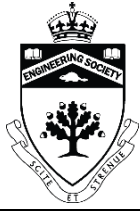
The Speaker is in charge of Board meetings. All speech and action is directed towards them, and they relay questions and rule on matters within their domain.

- Their decisions can be overturned by a **motion to appeal**.
- They are responsible for making the agenda.

#### 3.2 Committees

Committees provide EngSoc with a way to discuss matters more in depth and in a less formal setting.

- Standing Committees of EngSoc provide EngSoc with continuous advice within their assigned realms.
  - Current Standing Committees are the Policy and Structures Committee, Academic Advocacy Committee, Finance Committee, and Club Affiliation Committee.
- Ad-Hoc (as needed) Committees temporarily provide recommendations on issues the Board wants to consider more deeply, but which are not so constant as to require a Standing Committee.
- Committees may provide recommendations in the form of motions to the EngSoc board.
- Committees must provide recommendations to the board when motions are referred to them.
- Parliamentary procedure also applies in committees. This version of procedure is generally far more informal than that of the Board of Directors and is more variable.
- The Board may turn itself into a Committee if it wants to follow less strict procedure. This may only be done for one motion at a time, and decisions made in Committee are not binding. Therefore the board must exit Committee to actually vote on a motion.



## 4. Writing a Main Motion

The main motion is the item of business to which all other motions are applied to and made during. It has no specific framework, and is generally made as an expression of the maker's will. One can literally motion for anything they want (as long as it's not breaking applicable laws of higher jurisdiction - use your own judgement).

### 4.1 General form

MOTION by Member A to ... (This is usually just a title)

WHEREAS ... (A justification that doesn't affect the motions content)

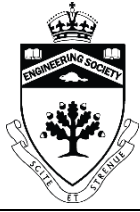
WHEREAS...

(There can be as many or as few whereas clauses as someone might want)

BE IT RESOLVED ... (The part of the motion that does something. This can literally be anything that doesn't break the law.)

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED ...

(There can be any number of these)



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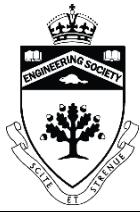
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## 5. Debate

Debate is what happens when the Speaker asks for discussion or debate on a motion.

- No speech is allowed without recognition from the Speaker.
- There may or may not be a speaking list.
- Do not speak unless asked by the Speaker.
- All debate must be germane, or else it is out of order.



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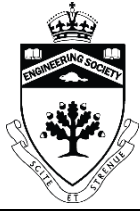
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## 6. Order of Business

Every meeting has an order of business, which is the order in which we conduct business. At the Engineering Society, this is the order of business. Everything the Board does is business.

Item	Description
Approval of the agenda <i>Member A:</i> Motion to approve the agenda. <i>Member B:</i> I second.	The agenda enforces the order of business. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The agenda can be amended before approval with a majority.</li> <li>- The amended can be amended after approval by a unanimous vote.</li> </ul>
Minutes <i>Member A:</i> Motion to approve the minutes. <i>Member B:</i> I second.	Minutes reflect the will of the board. They are the Board's words recorded. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The minutes of a meeting are approved at the meeting directly following.</li> <li>- If there are mistakes in the minutes, and they are approved, the mistake becomes the reality.</li> </ul>
Reports <i>Member A:</i> Motion to receive the officer/committee reports. <i>Member B:</i> I second.	Officers, and occasionally committees, like to give reports at meetings. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The reports may contain recommendations on motions and, if submitted beforehand, may contain motions themselves.</li> </ul>
Unfinished business <i>Speaker:</i> There next motion on the agenda is... ( <b>No second required</b> ) <i>(The speaker does not specify unfinished business)</i>	This is business not dealt with before <b>adjournment</b> at a previous meeting.

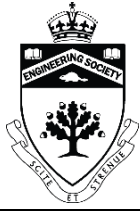


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<p>New business <i>Speaker:</i> The next motion on the agenda is... <i>Member A:</i> I second.</p>	<p>New motions presented by members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Must be submitted to the <b>speaker</b> a week in advance, or added to the <b>agenda</b> at the commencement of the meeting</li></ul>
<p>Discussion items <i>Speaker:</i> There is now a facilitation discussion on _____ for _____ minutes. <i>Member B:</i> I second.</p>	<p>A member may ask the <b>speaker</b> for a facilitated of a specified duration. These are generally put at the end of meetings.</p>
<p>Adjournment <i>Member A:</i> Motion to adjourn. <i>Member B:</i> I second.</p>	<p>A <b>motion for adjournment</b> occurs when a member wants a meeting to adjourn.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Business not finished at adjournment becomes <b>unfinished business</b> at the next meeting.</li><li>- Ends the meeting.</li></ul>



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## 7. Changelog

Document originally created by: Samuel McCulloch (2017)

Document edited by:

- Zachary LaPointe (2018)
- Andrew Kidd (2018)
- Samuel McCulloch (2018)
- Samuel McCulloch (2019)