



# Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association (SUPRA) Rules of Order

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## A. Preamble

### **Name of Rules**

These are the Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association (SUPRA) Rules of Order.

### **Commencement**

These rules of order commenced on 23 May 2011.

### **Rules are binding**

These rules of order bind SUPRA, its Council, members, and staff.

### **Statement of intent**

These rules:

- a) support the SUPRA Constitution ('the Constitution') and shall not be interpreted so as to contravene the Constitution;
- b) shall be the standing orders of meetings of Council and its subcommittees.

## B. Rules

### 1. Definitions

1.1 The definitions set out in the Constitution shall apply to these rules.

1.2 In addition, for the purposes of these rules:

1.2.1 **Absolute Majority** means a decision reached by a vote of all members, equal to half of the votes plus one.

1.2.2 **Clarification** means a query regarding a rule of order.

1.2.3 **Counterposed Motion** means any proposal that is presented alongside a motion on the same issue.

1.2.4 **Floor** means the general space around which speaking, and deliberation takes place.

1.2.5 **Foreshadowed Motion** means any proposal that is contingent on another motion being passed.

1.2.6 **General Vote** means a simple majority vote on any ordinary or procedural motion.

1.2.7 **Ordinary Motion** means any proposal that the meeting take certain action, or that the meeting expresses itself as holding certain views.

1.2.8 **Point of Order** means any statement invoking a rule of order.

1.2.9 **Privileged Motion** means any motion that is given priority before other motions on the table.

1.2.10 **Procedural Motion** means any proposal that the meeting change some aspect of the order of the meeting.

1.2.11 **Progressive Speaking List** means a list which orders speakers according to when they signal their intention to speak, but which shall prioritise those who have not spoken either to the matter or historically at meetings.

1.2.12 **Qualified Majority** means a decision reached by a vote of all members present, equal to two-thirds of the votes.

1.2.13 **Resolution** means a formal written statement of substantial content, expressing an opinion or intention.

1.2.14 **Simple Majority** means a decision reached by a vote of all members present, equal to half of the votes plus one vote.

1.2.15 **Simple Speaking List** means a list which orders speakers according to when they signal their intention to speak.

- 1.2.16 **Starring** means notating the agenda to signal that an item shall be discussed.
- 1.2.17 **Table an Item/a Motion** means to place it before the meeting for discussion.

## **2. Meeting Structure**

### **2.1 Apologies**

- 2.1.1 All apologies must be submitted to the Chair or Secretary, prior to the commencement of the meeting.
- 2.1.2 All apologies must be submitted in writing from a verifiable source.
- 2.1.3 Apologies received in writing from a verifiable source during the course of the meeting may be accepted at the discretion of the Chair or at the direction of the meeting.

### **2.2 Consensus**

- 2.2.1 In the first instance, the Chair shall determine whether the motion is unanimously supported.
- 2.2.2 If the motion is not unanimously supported, the meeting shall devolve either to deliberation or debate.

### **2.3 Deliberation**

- 2.3.1 Should the meeting progress to deliberation, it shall:
- a) attempt to reach consensus through negotiation; or
  - b) informally discuss the matter prior to taking a vote which shall be determined by a simple majority.
- 2.3.2 The Chair will facilitate all deliberations and shall be able to do so with no speaking list, a simple speaking list, or a progressive speaking list at their absolute discretion.
- 2.3.3 The Chair may instigate a speaking list at any time during the deliberations.

### **2.4 Debate**

- 2.4.1 Should the meeting progress to formal debate, it shall be:
- a) facilitated by the Chair; and

- b) determined by a simple majority of the vote.
- 2.4.2 Anyone wishing to add their name to the speaking list shall indicate whether they are for or against the matter.
- 2.4.3 In facilitating the debate, the Chair will call the first speaker on the list for the matter, after which the first speaker on the list against the matter will be called. The Chair will then proceed to call speakers from the list alternating those for and against unless no further speakers for one side remain on the list.

## **2.5 Presentation of Matters**

- 2.5.1 Any matter brought before the meeting must be presented by a member at the meeting, who will speak to it.
- 2.5.2 In presenting a matter before a meeting, the speaker must outline the issue and present a particular action which is sought from the meeting in response to that issue.
- 2.5.3 The speaker and the Chair must ensure that all attendees of the meeting understand the matter, and any relevant implications of the matter, before moving to discussion, deliberation, or debate.
- 2.5.4 The Chair shall facilitate all deliberations, discussions, and debate, by formulating or reformulating the question or matter where necessary.

## **2.6 Speaking Order**

- 2.6.1 Should the Chair create a speaking list, those wishing to speak to a matter should signal to the Chair and indicate if they wish to speak on a privileged matter.
- 2.6.2 When a speaking list is being used, members should wait for the Chair to recognise them before addressing the meeting.
- 2.6.3 The minute-taker will be prioritised in the speaking order.
- 2.6.4 Clarifications, points of order, and procedural motions shall be privileged.
- 2.6.5 A speaker may pose a direct question to the floor, to the Chair, or to a particular member and shall have the option to respond to any answer provided.

## **2.7 Conduct**

- 2.7.1 The floor shall be considered a SUPRA space, regardless of location, meaning that the conduct of those attending the meeting is subject to the SUPRA Policy Manual.
- 2.7.2 Speakers shall be concise and to the point when addressing the floor.
- 2.7.3 Attendees shall avoid using personal statements or making statements which characterise others adversely, save for when it directly relates to the matter before the meeting.
- 2.7.4 Attendees shall allow the Chair to address the floor without interruption, unless calling a point of order, seeking a clarification, or raising a quorum-related issue.

## **2.8 Conflicts of Interest**

- 2.8.1 The Chair will call for disclosure of conflicts of interest at the start of all meetings. If a meeting attendee has not disclosed a conflict of interest at the start of the meeting, they must make their disclosure during the governance agenda item, or before the relevant agenda item. Where an attendee only becomes aware of a conflict of interest during the relevant agenda item, they must immediately disclose the conflict of interest.
- 2.8.2 In the event that the conflict of interest is of a confidential nature, it can be submitted to the Chair of the meeting rather than to the open floor.
- 2.8.3 In response to a conflict of interest, the person with the declared conflict may elect to:
  - a) leave the room for the duration of the discussion;
  - b) refrain from participating in the discussion and/or decision making; or
  - c) suspend their voting rights, which will include any proxies they hold.
- 2.8.4 In response to a conflict of interest, the meeting may move, by procedural motion, to implement one or more of the options set out in subclause 2.8.3 of these rules.
- 2.8.5 In the case of a conflict of interest of a confidential nature which has been disclosed to the Chair, the person with the conflict may elect any of the options set out in subclause 2.8.3 of these rules and the Chair of the meeting may decide to implement one or more of them.

- 2.8.6 If an attendee is excluded from an item before the meeting pursuant to this clause 2.8 of these rules and their inclusion is required for the meeting to meet quorum, then the meeting shall fall inquorate:
- a) as a whole when that attendee leaves the room;
  - b) for the purposes of discussing the matter when that person is to refrain from being involved in discussion of that matter; or
  - c) for the purposes of voting on the matter when that person is to refrain from being involved in the vote on that matter.
- 2.8.7 If a meeting is unable to deal with a matter due to being inquorate, the item shall be deferred to the next quorate meeting.

### **3. Agenda**

- 3.1 The Chair, or their nominee, shall draft the agenda for the meeting.
- 3.2 Items for inclusion on the agenda should be submitted to the Chair of the meeting in writing.
- 3.3 Where an agenda item's associated documentation has not been submitted to the Chair by the close of business three days prior to the meeting, it shall only be tabled for noting by the meeting.
- 3.4 Clause 3.3 of these rules shall not apply to office bearer reports which shall be presented and voted on in accordance with the SUPRA Financial Regulations.

### **4. Motions**

#### **4.1 Rules for Motions**

- 4.1.1 All motions must be moved by an attendee with voting rights.
- 4.1.2 All motions, except where otherwise specified in these rules, require a seconder.
- 4.1.3 All motions shall be voted on in the order that they are tabled, except where:
- a) the motion is privileged; or
  - b) where otherwise specified in these rules.
- 4.1.4 All motions must be phrased in language that:
- a) is specific and unambiguous;

- b) prescribes an action or position;
  - c) sets out the party taking the action or position.
- 4.1.5 Any motion tabled may be withdrawn by the mover, at which point it is withdrawn from the floor.
- 4.1.6 Any motion tabled may be rescinded by the mover, at which point it is withdrawn from the floor and stricken from the minutes.
- 4.1.7 Motions will be considered in the order at which they are tabled, except for any foreshadowed motion which shall be dealt with after the motion it is contingent on.

## **4.2 Ordinary Motions**

- 4.2.1 Ordinary motions may be tabled with the Chair in relation to any matter under discussion.
- 4.2.2 Ordinary motions which have been tabled shall be voted on at the end of discussion of the matter to which they relate.

## **4.3 Resolutions**

- 4.3.1 Resolutions must be submitted to the Chair in writing before they and any motions attached to them can be tabled.
- 4.3.2 Amendments to a resolution may be proposed from the floor through an ordinary motion which does not require a seconder.
- 4.3.3 Proposed amendments shall be presented to the mover of the resolution who shall either:
- a) accept the proposed amendment, at which point the resolution shall be so amended; or
  - b) reject the proposed amendment, at which point the proposed amendment shall be put to the floor.

## **4.4 Procedural Motions**

- 4.4.1 Procedural motions do not require a seconder.
- 4.4.2 Procedural motions shall be voted on when they are tabled.
- 4.4.3 Movers of procedural motions can elect to proceed straight to a vote on their motion.
- 4.4.4 The meeting may use a procedural motion to direct the Chair to use any of the Chair's privileges as set out in clause 6.3 of these rules.

- 4.4.5 Procedural motions shall include, but not be limited to, calls to:
- a) move directly to any tabled motions;
  - b) discuss an item which was not starred;
  - c) adjourn the Meeting;
    - i) for a recess; or
    - ii) to another date;
  - e) remove an attendee of the meeting in accordance with the SUPRA Policy Manual;
  - f) direct an attendee with a declared conflict of interest to comply with one or more of the options set out in subclause 2.8.3 of these rules;
  - g) suspend an attendee's speaking or voting rights on a particular item in accordance with the SUPRA Policy Manual; or
  - h) dismiss or suspend the Chair for a period of time as determined by the meeting.

## **5. Voting**

### **5.1 Majority Rule**

- 5.1.1 Where a unanimous decision cannot be reached, the Chair may move to voting on a motion.
- 5.1.2 In the event that an attendee at the meeting raises an objection to moving to a vote, the Chair must call for a procedural motion to move to a vote. Where such a motion is either not tabled from the floor, or if tabled does not pass, discussion on the relevant item shall resume.
- 5.1.3 Attendees carrying proxies shall indicate to the Chair when they are using a proxy during a vote, or the Chair shall not count them.
- 5.1.4 The meeting may decide to vote on any motion by secret ballot, at which point a Returning Officer shall be appointed from the attendees to oversee and count the vote. Scrutineers may also be appointed at the request of any member at the meeting.

### **5.2 Proxies**

- 5.2.1 A member may appoint another member to carry their vote for



- any meeting.
- 5.2.2 A member can only hold two (2) proxies in addition to their own vote.
  - 5.2.3 The Chair of a meeting shall not carry any proxies.
  - 5.2.4 A member who carries proxies may not use them during any period for which they have assumed the Chair.
  - 5.2.5 All proxies must be submitted to the Chair of the meeting, or the Secretary, prior to the commencement of the meeting.
  - 5.2.6 All proxies must be submitted in writing from a verifiable source.
  - 5.2.7 All proxies expire at the conclusion of the meeting for which they were given.
  - 5.2.8 A member may proxy their vote to another member during the meeting by notifying the Chair at which point it shall be recorded in the minutes.

## **6. Chairing**

### **6.1 The Chair**

- 6.1.1 The Chair of the meeting shall be as prescribed by the Constitution or as appointed by Council.
- 6.1.2 Where possible, the Chair shall refrain from proposing motions, other than those relevant to:
  - a) the order of the meeting; and
  - b) the conduct of standing items of business.
- 6.1.3 The Chair may ask the meeting to nominate another Chair from the floor.
- 6.1.4 The meeting may appoint a Chair by a general vote. Such an appointment shall specify the length of time the Chair will be held during the meeting.
- 6.1.5 In the event that the Chair declares a conflict of interest, the meeting will appoint another Chair unless the meeting is satisfied that the Chair's duties will not be compromised.

### **6.2 Duties of the Chair**

- 6.2.1 The Chair shall have the following duties:
  - a) to organise and conduct the meeting according to an agenda;

- b) to direct the order of the meeting;
- c) to discharge any point of order, or call for a quorum;
- d) to rule a motion or item out of order, subject to clause 6.4 of these rules;
- e) to facilitate discussion and ensure the floor comprehends both the matter being discussed and these rules;
- f) to ensure that all members are heard and given an opportunity to speak to any matter;
- g) to summarise questions and points of agreement and disagreement about a matter for the benefit of the floor;
- h) to keep order in the meeting and remedy any breakdown in the order; and
- i) to suggest appropriate motions or amendments for the consideration of the meeting.

### **6.3 Privileges of the Chair**

6.3.1 The Chair shall have the following privileges, subject to the direction of the meeting:

- a) to devolve to a less formal order of discussion where it is held to be advantageous to the floor;
- b) to propose a motion from the Chair;
- c) to be able to take the floor at any time, irrespective of any speaking list;
- d) to rule any item out of order, subject to these rules;
- e) to close a speaking list after suitable notice;
- f) to move straight to a vote on any motion tabled subject to subclause 5.1.2 of these rules;
- g) to impose a time limit on:
  - i) members speaking to the floor;
  - ii) speaking to an item on the floor;
- h) to move any matter of discussion in camera;
- i) to request order or a moment's silence from the floor; and
- j) to relocate any digression from a matter on the agenda to other business with that speaker's consent.

## **6.4 Out of Order Motions**

- 6.4.1 The following motions or items are proscribed and shall be ruled out of order:
- a) those counter to the objects of SUPRA as set out in the Constitution;
  - b) those which contravene the Constitution or the SUPRA Policy Manual;
  - c) those which are not relevant to the matter before the meeting; or
  - d) those that would constitute illegal activity.

## **7. Record Keeping**

- 7.1 All minutes and other records of meetings shall be kept as prescribed by the Constitution.
- 7.2 The Secretary or their nominee shall be responsible for taking minutes and keeping records of meetings.
- 7.3 Minutes of Meetings shall report:
- a) the Chair, attendance of members, observers and guests, apologies, and the minute-taker;
  - b) late arrivals, and early departures, including the time of arrival or departure;
  - c) all declared conflicts of interest including details of the nature of the conflict unless it is confidential, the response taken and the reasons for that response;
  - d) all motions, amendments, and resolutions tabled and their outcome including the votes for, votes against, and abstentions.
- 7.4 Minutes shall seek to capture and reflect all discussion on items, including attributing the discussion to the individuals present at the meeting using their preferred full name in the first instance, and the initials of their preferred name in all subsequent instances.
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## NOTES

### **SUPRA Rules of Order**

Date ratified by Council:	23 May 2011
Date commenced:	23 May 2011
Date last amended:	29 July 2021
Administrator:	Vice President, SUPRA
Review date:	29 July 2023

### **Amendment History**

#### **Dates amended:**

1. 21 September 2011
2. 7 September 2015
3. 12 April 2016
4. 29 July 2021