

SCOTTISH HIGH
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL
MODEL UNITED NATIONS

GUIDE TO MODEL UNITED NATIONS



Model United Nations (MUN) is an academic simulation of the United Nations where students represent different countries (or portfolios) and try to solve real-world issues. In the United Nations, diplomats from various countries defend their country's policies and represent them on the international stage. Delegates have to act like these diplomats and discuss, deliberate, make resolutions and formulate policies based on their country, to solve international issues.

MUNs are different from debates because they follow a very specific structure. MUNs have their own rules and procedures, and the person has to frame the arguments they make in context of their portfolio.

The Role of Model UN in Personal Development

- Critical Thinking Skills
- Public Speaking skills,
- Empathising with other Viewpoints,
- Gaining insight into Socio-political issues,
- Seeing problems from a Global perspective,
- Learning about Legal frameworks,
- Conducting oneself in a Dignified manner,
- Building remarkable Memories,
- Adding to their Profile (CV/Resume),
- Networking to advance Academic and Professional opportunities

Committees at a Model UN Conference

Committees are often simulations of real United Nations committees such as the UN General Assembly or the UN Security Council; these are known as conventional committees. Besides conventional United Nations committees, MUNs can also simulate other types of committees. Some of these *include the Lok Sabha (the Upper House of the Indian Parliament), the Rajya Sabha (the Lower House of the Indian Parliament) and other Indian committees*. In these committees, students do not represent countries, but rather politicians or government ministers, and have to defend the policies of their party.

There are various other types of committees, and students naturally learn more about these as they gain experience and attend more conferences. Students are encouraged to choose agendas that call out the most to them. As MUN committees are varied, there is always a committee suited to one's interests.

Following is a comprehensive Detailer regarding the same:

1. Traditional Committees are larger committees where delegates represent countries and pass a resolution to address a specific global issue. They simulate bodies seeking to solve a single issue by writing a resolution, generally (but not always) focusing on present-day issues and address them through well-researched, negotiated solutions. These are typically some of the larger committees at a MUN conference. Delegates represent countries and should consider the issues of a committee from the perspective of these countries.

There are three different types of traditional committees:

- i) General Assemblies; Typically the largest committees and cover a broad range of issues. There are 6 main GA committees:
 - Disarmament & International Security
 - Economic & Financial
 - Social, Humanitarian & Cultural
 - Special, Political & Decolonization
 - Administrative & Budgetary
 - Legal
- ii) Economic and Social Councils: Committees focusing specifically on economic, social and environmental issues.
- iii) Regional Bodies: Delegates represent countries in specific region. Typically, small (15-30 delegates) committees. Some are traditional; others have crisis elements.

2. Specialised Committees tend to be smaller committees with a special mechanism, such as an election or a mock trial. These committees are “specialized” in their topic areas, and have a narrow scope that delegates focus on, such as the International Olympic Committee. Each specialized committee has its own special mechanics that make it unique - which is why these committees are difficult to generalize.

3. Crisis Committees are microcosmic committees where delegates represent people and pass multiple directives. They simulate rapid-responses to urgent issues by smaller bodies like cabinets, campaigns, corporate boards, and more. Delegates represent individuals rather than countries. Instead of representing the entire nation of Uzbekistan on the World Health Organization, a delegate may be representing Uzbekistan’s Chief of the Air Force on a simulated Cabinet of Uzbekistan from 1991. Delegates pass multiple directives and write crisis notes. Instead of writing a single resolution, crisis delegates pass shorter directives on many issues. Crisis committees are typically the smallest, with about 25 delegates.

Rules of Procedure of a Model UN Simulation

MUNs in India typically follow the UNA/USA Rules of Procedure, which is the method we will follow in club. Before we begin with the exact structure, we must know how to move around in debate.

Essentially, when the committee is in session, it must move between procedure, different topics of discussion, and documentation. This movement is done using what we call a motion. Motions are used to move the committee in a particular direction, and must be voted upon by the whole committee. The structure of a motion tends to be similar to the following: “The delegate would like to raise a motion to move the committee into ”_____.” Motions to move into debate are more complex; these will come later.

Once raised, motions tend to go through informal voting first, wherein we ask for seconds (people who agree with raising the motion) and oppositions (people who disagree with raising the motion). This is an informal way of seeing if anyone disagrees with the motion. If there are one or more oppositions, the committee must move into formal voting, wherein we ask for votes for and against. This is fairly self-explanatory, and the simple majority wins. To speak in a committee when not giving a whole speech, you must raise a point. There are four kinds of points: Point of Information, Personal Privilege, Parliamentary Inquiry, and Order. A Point of Information is a question you raise to a delegate who has just finished speaking, and this question can act as a rebuttal to

their speech. A Point of Personal Privilege is a concern you personally have, and is used to make requests to allay those concerns, such as turning down the AC temperature. A Point of Parliamentary Inquiry is a question you have to the executive board about the proceedings or rules of the committee, such as a doubt. A Point of Order is a factual or procedural inaccuracy committed by a delegate or executive board member; you may use these to either point out an incorrect fact stated by a delegate or to correct the executive rule if they broke a rule of procedure. If pointing out a factual inaccuracy by a delegate, you must state verbatim (word-for-word) exactly what the delegate said, followed by what they should have said.

Now, onto the structure! Before the committee starts, the Executive Board takes a roll call, asking all delegates whether they are Present, Present and Voting, or Absent. Delegates who are Present are there in committee; Delegates who are Present and Voting are there in committee and will compulsorily have to vote on everything done in committee. Delegates who are absent are not there in committee. Following this, Quorum is established, which includes a count of the total number of delegates, a simple majority count (50% + 1 Vote), and a special majority count (66.7%). This will help us in figuring out if a motion passed or failed.

After the roll call, the floor is opened to motions, and a delegate must raise a motion to establish the agenda. They should use the structure given above, and then state the agenda word-for-word as given by the executive board. Once this motion passes, delegates must raise a motion to establish the General Speakers' List, or GSL. This is one of four types of debate we will explore in club. The GSL is a list of speakers who make general statements, and the list can never end. If the GSL ends, the committee does too, so it is important that the last speaker on a GSL does not speak unless more speakers are added. At a normal MUN conference, speakers are added to the GSL regularly, so this is not a concern. A motion to establish the GSL must also state the speaking time, or the time given to an individual speaker. This is supposed to be 90 seconds by default, and is sometimes set at 60 seconds. Though rarely, there are instances where this may be set at 45 seconds or 120 seconds as well, but such motions generally don't pass. Once the motion passes, we start taking names to speak for the GSL, and the speeches begin.

If a speech has time remaining, we use something called a yield. A yield is used to allot the remaining time to something. There are four kinds of yields a speaker can use: yield to Points of Information, yield to the Executive Board, yield to another speaker, or yield to comments from the floor. Yield to Points of Information generally allows others to ask questions to the speaker; yield to Executive Board allows the EB to move onto the next speech, yield to another speaker allows a named delegate to speak, and yield to comments allows others to give feedback to the speaker. This is one of the rarest elements of the Rules of Procedure and is barely invoked.

After a few GSL speeches, we move onto motions for other kinds of debate. These include the Moderated Caucus, Unmoderated Caucus, and Provisional Speakers' List (PSL). Whilst we would raise motions for these, it is important to know that we cannot move between different types of debate without having a few GSL speeches in between. For example, we cannot have two PSLs directly in a row.

The Moderated Caucus is like a GSL, except it has a defined subtopic that is much narrower in nature and is time-bound. Hence, when raising a motion for the Moderated Caucus, you must include the Speakers' Time, Topic, and Total Time as well. Moderated Caucus speeches are generally shorter, and tend to be 60 seconds long. If time runs out for a Moderated Caucus and some delegates do not get to speak, they may also raise a motion for extension (the extension may only be half as long as the original Caucus).

The Provisional Speakers' List is exactly like a Moderated Caucus, except it is used only during a crisis. The Unmoderated Caucus is an informal session that only has a Total Time (between 5 and 20 minutes), where anyone can get up from their chairs and discuss things with other delegates. There are minimal restrictions on how you can use these, pertinent to the code of conduct.

Sometimes in committee, your executive board may decide to give you a crisis. This is essentially an update about your agenda that is very sensitive or urgent, and needs to be addressed immediately. It should be discussed as a priority and resolved as soon as possible by the committee, which may provide solutions to the same.

Once the committee has extensively discussed the agenda, it moves into the formal documentation process. This is when you develop committee-end documents, of which there are several. Conventional committees may adopt a Draft Resolution, pass a Working Paper, or release either a Press Release or a Communique. These documents differ in scope and purpose, and will be elaborated upon. Once either of these have passed, the committee is considered successful, since it has achieved its purpose.

Code of Conduct at a Model UN Simulation

An MUN is a strictly formal procedure, similar to an actual UN meeting by leaders and top diplomats from across the globe, hence one must conduct themselves properly with a certain formality. Starting from the very basic question of what to wear, every MUN has social media pages wherein they release the itinerary and dress code for the event. For an MUN in India, the general dress code is Indian formals on one day and Western formals on the other, and wearing casuals is strictly prohibited due to the nature of the conference.

The next question is of when to speak and when not to. Since an MUN is a place where your diplomatic nature is what you have to showcase, until and unless you are recognized by the Executive Board (EB) of the committee you are in, you are strictly prohibited from speaking. Be it amongst the committee or with the EB themselves, speaking out of turn and without permission is a gross violation of the basic code of conduct at any MUN conference.

To speak in the committee, you must raise your placard and once the EB recognizes you by calling your portfolio, you may rise and start speaking once recognised.

Irrespective of whether you like the point stated by a delegate, you are not allowed to interrupt them under any circumstance. If you disagree starkly with a certain point being raised in the committee, you may tap the table firmly thrice, with a gap of half a second between each gap. On the contrary, if you agree vehemently with a point, you may gently tap your table repeatedly at a rapid pace, for a total of no more than five seconds.

Fighting with fellow delegates, use of inappropriate language inside the committee or during the conference, or carrying any substances which are prohibited in schools is unacceptable. Display of such behaviour may result in a delegate being blacklisted, i.e. removed for consideration for any MUN conference wherein a delegation on behalf of the school has to be sent even if they are the only one willing to take part.

Whilst you are generally allowed to bring an electronic device into an offline conference, these must be taken care of by you and the loss of any personal property by any delegate will be solely their responsibility.

Key Terms to Know

The following are words or phrases used commonly at Model UN Conferences, the knowledge of which is imperative to do well in the long run.

Agenda: An agenda is the topic or issue that will be discussed in an MUN. It is given beforehand and delegates have to do in-depth research on it and its subtopics. Delegates should have a general understanding of the topic and their portfolio's relation to it. Example: An agenda for the United Nations Human Rights Commission could be "Rights of Different Religions in a Country". Students should research about religious rights in an international context, their own country's stance on them and what improvements or changes are needed on an international level.

Delegate: Every participant of an MUN is referred to as a delegate, regardless of their gender, age or portfolio. Delegates representing countries may be referred to as "Delegate of _____" representing people will be called by their portfolio names. Example: The Delegate of China is the representative of China. If you are representing Narendra Modi in the Lok Sabha, that's how you'll be referred to.

Foreign policy: The foreign policy of a country is defined as its conduct in international relations. All countries have allies (friends) as well as enemies, just like humans a country also needs to make sure that it is looking out for its own interests. Hence, as a representative of a country, a delegate should be aware of its foreign policy and interests. Example: India and Pakistan are not allies. The UK and USA are allies.

Executive Board/EB: The Executive Board, or the EB, simply refers to the judges of a committee. They are designated by different terms in different committees, such as Chair or Moderator, and should be treated with respect and dignity.

Decorum: When the EB tells delegates to maintain decorum, they are simply asking delegates to behave in a proper manner like diplomats are supposed to. This means not shouting, being disrespectful or inappropriate while at an MUN.

Socials: Socials are an optional after-party that students can attend. At the socials, students get to dance and have fun. While these are not compulsory, these are recommended to get the full experience of an MUN.

Quorum: The number of Delegates in committee needed to start debate.

Majority: The number of Delegates required to pass a motion.

Stance: The position of opinion adopted by another delegate.

Deliberation: Discussion

Unanimous: Having full agreement (no oppositions)

Lobbying: Discussion and Convincing in order to reach some Consensus.

Consensus: Agreement.

This guide has been jointly developed by the Scottish High International School Model United Nations Club Moderators with inputs from the Department of Social Sciences. In case of any queries, you may reach out to any of the Moderators or Teachers, all of whom are present on the "SHISMUN Club" WhatsApp Group. This is also where many updates are received. If you are not on this group, please let us know ASAP.