

ENGSOc GUIDE TO WRITING MOTIONS

Introduction

The Engineering Society is governed by Executive but driven by the needs of undergraduate students. One of the best ways to effect change within the Society is to pass a motion or a mandate through a meeting. This guide will go through what types of motions can be submitted, how to write a motion, and the process to submit your motion for consideration.

Who can Submit a Motion

Who can submit a motion varies depending on what type of meeting it is. For a general council meeting (typically 5 a term) any class can submit a motion through their class representative. Every student is invited to attend council meetings but only class representatives can submit motions on behalf of their class. For a term or annual general meeting any EngSoc member may submit a motion.

Types of Motions

While you can submit a motion for anything there are two main types of motions that this guide will cover: Executive Mandates and Policy Changes.

Executive Mandates

Council and General Meetings have the power to mandate the Executive. A mandate is defined as a command or authorization to act in a particular way on a public issue given by the electorate to its representatives. In the case of the Society this means the general members dictating a goal, stance, or mission of the Society. While the Executive are elected to define the vision and move the Society forward the general members always have that power to mandate the Executive to shift their priorities or express an opinion based on general members consensus.

Policy Changes

The other main type of motion is making changes to the governing documents. The governing documents dictate the most fundamental workings of the Society and consist of the By-Laws and our Policy Manual. Complete versions of the governing documents can be found on the website. Changes to the Governing Documents and Policy Manual can be submitted by anyone with an opinion on wording, has ideas on new content, or disagrees with our current policies. Please note that since we are under the Federation of Students (Feds) and the Not-for-Profit Cooperation Act all additions or modifications must be in line with this act. If you are unsure if your motion is in breach of the act still submit the motion and the Board of Directors can work with you to modify it if necessary.

How to Write a Motion

On the website under Documents>Miscellaneous you can find the motion template below. You can also make your own template as long as you include all the components outlined below.

Title	
Mover	
Seconder	
Spirit	
WHEREAS	
AND WHEREAS	
BIRT:	
BIFRT:	

Title

The title can be anything you like but should be somewhat relevant to the spirit of the motion.

Mover

The mover is the submitter of the motion. For a council meeting this is the class name and year (example Mechanical 2016) and for a general meeting this is the name of the member (example Leila Meema-Coleman).

Secunder

Every motion needs a seconder to be considered for a vote. You can either find a seconder before submitting a motion (a class for a council meeting or a member for a general meeting) or you can submit the motion without a seconder and we will ask for a seconder at the meeting.

Spirit

The spirit of a motion is the fundamental intent of the motion. This is typically summed up in one sentence. The spirit of the motion will govern discussion of the motion and what amendments are allowed since no amendments will be permitted that are not in “the spirit” of the motion.

Whereas/ And Whereas

Whereas statements provide the background information and reasoning behind the motion and they cannot contain any action. This could include historical information on the topic or past problems occurred about the topic. You can have as many whereas statements as necessary to provide all the information.

BIRT (Be it Resolved That)/ BIFRT (Be it Further Resolved That)

BIRT statements provide the call to action for the motion and are binding. These can include wording changes in the policy documents, a statement to be adopted as an official stance of the Society, a mandate for the executives, or stipulations on any of the above. You can have as many BIRT statements as necessary.

How to Submit a Motion

Motions can be submitted at any time to the Society council speaker (speaker@engsoc.uwaterloo.ca) and they will ensure that the motion is put on the agenda for the next meeting it is eligible for, if you would like to plan when to submit a motion for a specific meeting see below for the approximate timelines.

Executive Mandates and Non-Governing Document Motions

To be considered these need to be submitted during the “call for agenda” period before a council meeting or general meeting. This deadline will be set by the speaker and sent out on the Society mailing list.

Amending the By-Laws

To amend the by-laws at a council meeting or a Joint General meeting the motion must be made publically available at least one month beforehand therefore you will need to e-mail the speaker more than a month in advance of the meeting you would like it to pass. Note no changes to the By-Laws are permitted at a term general meeting.

Amending the Policy Manual

To amend the policy manual at a council meeting the motion must be made publically available at least one week beforehand therefore you will need to e-mail the speaker more than a week in advance of the meeting you would like it to pass. To amend the policy manual at a general meeting the motion needs to be submitted before the deadline for the call agenda items.

Conclusion

If you are unsure of anything included in this document or any part of the motion process but have ideas we encourage you to reach out to the on-term speaker or the on-term Executive. They can help you put together your motions or answer any questions you have. If you don't feel comfortable sharing your motion with the Executive or Speaker before it's submitted speak to your class representatives or upper year class representatives who should be able to help as well.

There is an example motion below as well as all the previous meeting agendas from recent years are posted on the website which you can use for reference.

Example Motion

Title	Council's Turn
Mover	Leila Meema-Coleman
Seconder	
Spirit	To evaluate the current Engineering Society council structure
WHEREAS:	The Engineering Society Council is the highest decision making within the Society;
AND WHEREAS:	The structure of council has not changed or been reviewed within the last five years;
AND WHEREAS:	As the Society grows it is necessary to continually evaluate the structure of it's various bodies;
AND WHEREAS:	It is best practice to have a committee of members investigate this then leaving the task solely to the Executive;
BIRT:	An Council Review Committee (CRC) be formed to investigate the structure of the Engineering Society Council;
BIFRT:	The committee consist of the two Engineering Society Presidents, two students at large from Society A and two students at large from Society B to be elected at the first council meeting of each Society following the Joint Annual General Meeting 2015;
BIFRT:	The committee have a term from the September 2015 to June 2016;
BIFRT:	The committee members must be able to serve on the committee for its entirety;
BIFRT:	The committee shall perform consultations with current Executive, past Executive, current council members, the current Board of Directors, and general members;
BIFRT:	The committee shall perform an external review of the council structures of ESSCO and CFES members schools and the Federation of Students;
BIFRT:	The committee shall hold at least one open review session during a Society council meeting in the Fall 2015 and Winter 2016 terms to be advertised at least two weeks in advance through Society electronic communications;
BIFRT:	The committee shall provide updates on progress to council a minimum at a minimum of 2 other council meeting during their tenure;
BIFRT:	The committee shall prepare a formal report outlining the following items: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) A summary of all feedback gathered b) A summary of the external reviewed performed c) Proposed structure for the Society Council including each position it's responsibilities d) Implementation plan for introducing the proposed structure e) Future recommendations for changes to council structure
BIFRT:	The committee be tasked with preparing and presenting the report and accompanying policy changes at the Joint Annual General Meeting 2016.