Information for Council

Third Week Hilary Term 2023: Amendments, Procedural Motions, Referenda and Disaffiliation

# Amendments in Council

Any member of the SU who is present at Council can propose ‘relevant amendments’ to any motion for resolution. The amendment may either be accepted as ‘friendly’ by the motion’s proposer, or otherwise debated like a mini-motion. If, at the end of this sub-debate, a simple majority of present and voting Council members vote to adopt the amendment, it gets applied, and otherwise it does not. Regardless, debate then resumes on the main motion.

# Procedural Motions

There are a number of procedural motions which may be proposed by any student present at Council. If a member opposes the procedural motion proposed, there may be a short (2 speech) debate on the motion, and then it will go to a vote of present and voting Council members to decide.

The Procedural Motions are:

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| Motion | MajorityNeeded | Effect |
| No Confidence in the Chair | 2/3 | Removes the Chair from their position permanently |
| Overturn ruling of the Chair | 2/3 | This motion must state what the ruling should have been; if passed, that change is made |
| Move to a Vote | 2/3 | Ends the debate on a motion/amendment, and moves immediately to a vote |
| Vote on motion in parts | 1/2 | Splits voting on a motion into specified parts. |
| Defer to future meeting | 1/2 | Delays debate and voting on a motion (or a part of the motion) to a specified future meeting of Council |
| Refer to committee or consultation | 1/2 | Refers the motion to a committee for discussion, or requires Steering Committee to consult all students on the motion, before bringing it back to Council |
| Give attendance/speaking rights | 1/2 | Gives attendance or speaking rights to someone who does not have them (e.g., a non-member) |
| Discuss *below the lin*e item | 1/4 | If Steering Committee has marked a motion below the line, this will cause it to be discussed and (if necessary) voted on |
| Quorum Count | 1/4 | Chair counts members present |
| Recorded Vote | 1/4 | Record (and share) how people vote on a certain motion/amendment |
| Secret Ballot (Vote) | 1/4 | Forces a certain vote to be held by secret ballot |
| Adjourn | 1/4 | Temporarily pauses the meeting for a specified period of no more than 30 mins |
| Recount | 1/4 | Perform a recount of the vote just held |

# Referenda

A Referendum is a simple yes/no poll of all Student Members on a certain question or questions. One may be called to settle any question which the Board or Council cannot decide, but there are certain cases where one is necessary for the SU to follow a certain course of action.

## NUS Disaffiliation

In the case of the NUS, Steering Committee has received advice that a referendum is required before Oxford SU may disaffiliate from the *National Union of Students (United Kingdom)* (NUS UK). If a referendum were to be called on this issue by Council, the question would be

Oxford SU is currently affiliated to the National Union of Students (United Kingdom). Should it continue to be affiliated: yes or no?

Each Student Member would be permitted to vote either ‘Yes’, ‘No’ or to abstain. The outcome would be decided by a simple majority of either ‘Yes’ voters or ‘No’ voters, once abstentions had been discounted.

We are currently seeking advice on the majority required to pass the motion in Council, and whether there is a ‘quorum’ requirement for the referendum itself.

## Timeline and Campaigning

The three polling days for the referendum must occur within eight Term-time weeks of Council calling a referendum. Within this restriction, the Returning Officer is free to decide the timeline for the referendum.

There must be two Official Campaigns (one for ‘Yes’, one for ‘No’). Each Official Campaign receives a small amount of money and other support from the SU and is permitted to set out its position at Open Meetings (hustings-like events). At least one Open Meeting must be held before the referendum. Each Campaign is led by a Student Member, who would be selected by a method chosen by the Returning Officer.

The Returning Officer may also set rules around Campaigning, with the permission of the President.