

How to Submit a Motion for an SGM

You are always able to tell us what you want us to do – by emailing us, visiting one of our exec members, by facebook, even handwritten letter if that's how you roll - but there is one forum where our members (you!) tell OUSA exactly what you want us to do. This is the Student General Meeting (SGM).

The SGM is a formal meeting where you can raise issues and direct OUSA.

Want OUSA to hold an opinion on something? The SGM is where you tell us what you want our stance to be.

At SGMs you can do this:

OUSA brings motions to do with good governance

- (proposed budgets and constitutional changes have to be approved by you; you also have the final say over who is the honorary solicitor and auditor, for example)

You bring your motions

- Do you want us to change our constitution? These kind of motions need at least 10 working days notice prior to the meeting and must be passed by at least a 2/3 majority at the meeting.
- Motions requiring OUSA to hold an opinion require at least 5 days notice prior to the meeting and be passed by at least 50% majority at the meeting OR can be presented at the meeting, but then need to be passed unanimously. (So it's best to present motions to the OUSA main office at least 5 days before...)
- Sometimes motions brought by our members take the form of rescinding motions regarding views members may no longer agree with us holding. OUSA may be directed by the meeting to stop holding that view (by rescinding the relevant motion) and sometimes then to hold another view on the same issue.
- Sometimes motions are brought by individual Executive members; they do so as ordinary OUSA members and their motions must be presented in exactly the same way as those of any other member.

Do you want to put a motion forward?

Do you want to:

- change something that is in the OUSA constitution
- add something new to the OUSA constitution?

- You will need to come to the OUSA Main Office and collect a SGM Motion Form
- You should ask the Association Secretary for advice on presenting your motion, as there are legal implications for constitutional things under the Charities Act.
- You need to write the exact wording of your motion on the form. Because it relates to the OUSA Constitution, you may like to seek advice.
- You need to bring your motion to the OUSA Main Office at least 10 working days before the date of the next Student General Meeting.
- Both the mover and the seconder of the motion must be present on the day of the SGM. The mover has to be prepared to speak to the motion!

Or do you want:

- OUSA to take a stance or hold an opinion about a particular thing?
- or change an opinion OUSA has been directed to hold by its members at a previous Student General Meeting?
- You can either come to the OUSA Main Office and collect a SGM Motion Form Or give the motion at the SGM itself (needs to be unanimous to pass, though)
- You may like to ask to see the Association Secretary for advice on presenting your motion
- You will need to write the exact wording of your motion on the form.
- You need to bring your motion to the OUSA Main Office at least 5 working days before the date of the next Student General Meeting if you want it to pass with 50% majority.
- Both the mover and the seconder of the motion must be present on the day of the SGM. The mover has to be prepared to speak to the motion!

Want to Call an SGM?

Student General Meetings are called in two ways:

- The OUSA Constitution says that OUSA must hold at least two SGMs a year, to enable good governance.
 - When OUSA calls an SGM, you can collect motions forms from OUSA's main office and put in any motions you want to have presented. This is the best way, as this is the most likely way for the meeting to reach quorum [link to section about quorum].
 - If you don't want to wait for OUSA to hold an SGM, you can:
 - Email or visit the Harriet (the OUSA president) to ask her to consider asking the Executive to set an SGM date
 - Consider contacting the Secretary and asking if you can address an Executive meeting to encourage the Executive to hold an SGM, or petitioning the Executive to hold an SGM.
- A petition needs to be signed by at least 1% of OUSA members
- Contact Donna, the OUSA secretary, to find out how many people this is: secretary@ousa.org.nz

At an SGM: What to Expect

At the first Student General Meeting each year, you'll elect a Chairperson for the year.

- Their role is to run and control the meeting
- They will have a good knowledge of the OUSA Constitution, especially the rules relating to Student General Meetings.

Donna, the OUSA Secretary, takes the minutes and counts the votes for and against each motion. She'll also count heads to make sure enough members are present for the meeting to start!

A meeting will begin when the quorum for the meeting (1% of OUSA membership) is reached. If the 1% threshold isn't reached by 15 minutes, the meeting is over. That's why it pays to be at the SGM right from the start!

A meeting ends once all the motions have been presented or if a further quorum count shows less than 1% of all members are present. A second quorum count usually only happens if someone at the meeting asks for it.

Any OUSA member can speak to any motion at a SGM.

- After the mover and seconder of a motion have been invited to speak, the SGM Chair will invite anyone to speak to the motion.
 - If a number of people wish to speak to the motion, they will be invited to form a line and speak to it one at a time.
 - They are also able to use this time to ask questions of the mover and seconder.
 - The mover will have a further opportunity to speak to their motion.
 - The motion is then put to a vote.

So, what happens when you put your motion?

When your motion comes up on the Agenda, the chairperson will read it out, and name you and your seconder. You will both have to show that you are there.

As the mover, you will be invited up to the microphone to explain why you have put the motion, and why you think the meeting should vote in favour of it.

Your seconder can also speak if they want to.

The chairperson then opens up the floor for further discussion and debate.

If you have friends and supporters with you, they may like to go up to explain why they support the motion, and respond to points others make

After the debate is over, the chairperson will ask you if you have anything more to say

The motion is then put to a vote

If you gave your motion in to OUSA at least 5 working days before the meeting (and it doesn't require a constitutional change), you need a simple majority for it to pass.

If you made your motion 'from the floor' (ie at the meeting itself, which you can do once the business on the printed agenda is concluded), you need a unanimous vote in favour for it to pass.

Motions are sometimes ruled out of order by the Chairperson and not put to the meeting. These can be when they are in breach of OUSA's constitution, when they are in breach of human rights, when they are in opposition to a stance OUSA has already been directed to hold (you have to make a motion to rescind the existing motion first), or when OUSA already holds the position you would like it to adopt. While this is very rare, it's a good idea to contact the Secretary about your proposed motion and plan it out a little.

Are there any other ways to formally direct OUSA?

You can stand and vote in yearly OUSA elections.

You can also put a motion to a Student General Meeting calling for a referendum on a matter. Your motion needs to state if the referendum will be considered binding on the Executive, or indicative only. (Indicative means it offers the Executive a snapshot of student opinion, but no further action need be taken on it)

Any referendum is considered non-binding if less than 5% of OUSA members vote in it.

The constitution has a section on this [Section 21, p. 15]

Feeling Safe

A Student General Meeting can sometimes become a little heated when people feel strongly about both sides of an issue. Please don't let this put you off – the best kinds of ideas come out of robust debate!

- OUSA has support staff and advocates present at the meeting
- If you would like to voice your opinion but feel unsafe in doing so, you can approach one of the OUSA support people for help.
- If you feel intimidated in the environment but would like to cast a vote, likewise please talk to an OUSA support person. It's your democratic right as an OUSA member to voice opinions, put motions, and vote in any way you choose.