

# **BALMUN'25**

## **HOUSE OF COMMONS**

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# **RULES OF PROCEDURE**

## **HOUSE OF COMMONS RULES OF PROCEDURE**

1. **Scope:** These rules apply to the House of Commons except for modifications provided by the Secretariat and will be considered adopted in advance of session.
2. **Language:** English will be the official and working language of the conference.
3. **Delegations:** Each member state will be represented by one Member of the Parliament and shall have one vote on each voting.
4. **Participation of Non-Members:** A guest member, expert witness, or representative of an entity that is neither a member of the committee nor an accredited observer may address a committee only with the prior approval of the Mr/Ms/Mrs Speaker.
5. **Credentials:** The credentials of all Members of the Parliament have been accepted upon registration. The Secretary-General shall be the final arbiter of the validity of all credentials. Any representative to whose admission a member objects will provisionally be seated with the same rights as other representatives, pending a decision from the Secretary General.
6. **Statements by the Secretariat:** The Secretary General or a member of the Secretariat whom they designate may make either written or oral statements to the committee at any time.
7. **General Powers of the Mr/Ms/Mrs Speaker:** Mr/Ms/Mrs Speaker will declare the opening and closing of each meeting and may propose the adoption of any procedural motion to which there is no significant objection. Subject to these rules, the Mr/Ms/Mrs Speaker will have complete control of the proceedings at any meeting. Mr/Ms/Mrs Speaker will direct discussions, accord the right to speak, put questions, announce decisions, rule on points of order, and ensure and enforce the observance of these rules. Mr/Ms/Mrs Speaker may temporarily transfer their duties to another member of the Committee Board. Mr/Ms/Mrs Speaker may also advise Members of the Parliament on the course of debate. In the exercise of these functions, they will be at all times subject to these rules and responsible to the Secretary General.
8. **Appeal:** Any decision of the Mr/Ms/Mrs Speaker, with the exception of those matters for which the Rules of Procedure explicitly prohibit appeal, may be appealed immediately by a Member of the Parliament. Mr/Ms/Mrs Speaker may speak briefly

in defense of the ruling. The appeal will then be put to a vote, and the decision of the Mr/Ms/Mrs Speaker will stand unless overruled by a two-thirds majority. The Secretary General has ultimate discretion on any ruling, whether it is appealed successfully or not.

- 9. Quorum:** Mr/Ms/Mrs Speaker may declare a committee open and permit debate to proceed when at least one-fourth of the voting members of the committee is present. A member of the committee is considered present if at least one Member of the Parliament representing that constituency is in the chamber. The presence of a majority of the members will be required for a vote. A quorum will be assumed to be present unless specifically challenged by a point of order and shown to be absent. A roll call is never required to determine the presence of a quorum.
- 10. Courtesy:** Members of the Parliament will show courtesy and respect to the committee staff and to other MPs. Mr/Ms/Mrs Speaker will immediately call to order any Member of the Parliament who fails to comply with this rule.
- 11. Electronic Devices:** No laptops, tablets, cell phones, or other electronic devices may be used in the chamber during formal debate or semi-moderated caucus. Computers may be used outside the committee room at any time, or in the committee room during unmoderated caucus at the discretion of the Committee Board. Rules can be altered at the discretion of the Committee Board.

## **Rules Governing Debate**

- 12.** In the event of an international crisis or emergency, the Secretary General or their representative may call upon a committee to table debate on the current topic area so that the more urgent matter may be attended to immediately. Under such circumstances, a delegate may motion to table the topic and temporarily set the agenda to the crisis situation. After a resolution has been passed on the crisis, the committee will return to debate on the tabled topic. Until a deal/hansard has passed, the committee may return to debate on the tabled topic area only at the discretion of the Secretary General or their representative.
- 13. Debate:** The debate will proceed through a combination of Semi-Moderated Caucuses and Unmoderated Caucuses, ensuring both structured and flexible discussion formats. There will be no formal speaker's list; instead, delegates will engage in dynamic, topic-specific discussions based on motions raised during the session. The Speaker of the House will oversee the debate, ensuring order and adherence to the Rules of Procedure. **First Session of Everyday shall start with a Prime Minister Questions**

## 14. Structure of PMQs:

### Opening of PMQs

- The Speaker of the House calls the session to order.
- The first question is always a procedural one, asked by a backbench MP:
  - *"If the Prime Minister will list his/her engagements for the day?"*
  - The PM responds with a general statement about their day's agenda.

#### 14.1.1. Leader of the Opposition's Questions

- The Leader of the Opposition asks six questions, which may be direct or follow-up inquiries.
- The PM must respond immediately, often leading to heated exchanges.
- The Leader of the Opposition does not need to inform the PM of the questions in advance.

#### 14.1.2. Leader of the Third-Largest Party's Questions

- The leader of the third-largest party (e.g., SNP in 2016) is allowed two questions.

#### 14.1.3. Questions from Backbench MPs

- Backbench MPs submit questions in advance, and a random ballot determines which MPs can ask questions.
- MPs may also ask spontaneous follow-up questions (known as supplementary questions).

## 14.2. Rules and Conduct During PMQs

### 14.2.1. Speaker's Role

- The Speaker of the House controls the session, ensuring order and decorum.
- The Speaker can reprimand MPs for disorderly behavior or excessive heckling.

### 14.2.2. Style and Behavior

- PMQs is often highly confrontational, with rapid-fire exchanges between the PM and MPs.
- MPs frequently **jeer, cheer, and interrupt**, making it one of the most lively sessions in Parliament.

### 14.2.3. Time Limits

- Each **question and response** must be concise, with **no long speeches** allowed.
- The total session lasts **30 minutes**, with the Speaker ensuring timely progression.

## 14.3. Implementation of PMQs

### 14.3.1. Frequency

- PMQs will take place **once per day**, simulating the real UK parliamentary process.
- The Prime Minister (PM) must be prepared for questioning.

### 14.3.2. Speaking Order

1. First Backbencher's Question (*Standard procedural question*).
2. Leader of the Opposition (6 questions).
3. Leader of the Third-Largest Party (2 questions).
4. Backbench MPs (randomly selected, limited to 1 follow-up each).

### 14.3.3. Enforcement of Order

- The **Speaker will maintain order** and can issue warnings for disorderly conduct.
- **Excessive interruptions or personal attacks** may result in disciplinary action.

**15. Unmoderated Caucus:** An unmoderated caucus temporarily suspends formal debate and allows members to discuss ideas informally in the committee room. A motion for an unmoderated caucus is in order at any time when the floor is open, prior to closure of debate. The delegate making the motion must briefly explain the purpose of the motion and specify a time limit for the caucus, not to exceed twenty minutes. The motion will be put to a vote immediately, and a simple majority is required for passage. The Chair may rule the motion dilatory, and their decision is not subject to appeal. The Chair may prematurely end an unmoderated caucus if the Chair feels that the caucus has ceased to be productive, and this decision is not subject to appeal.

**16. Semi-Moderated Caucus:** A Semi-Moderated Caucus is a structured debate where: A delegate raises a motion specifying the topic, duration, and individual speaking time. If approved by a simple majority, the caucus proceeds with the Speaker calling on MPs to speak. The Speaker may interrupt speakers if they go off-topic or exceed their time limit. Direct responses and interjections are allowed, but MPs must raise their hands (or placard) and wait for recognition.

**17. Closure of Debate:** When the floor is open, a MP may move to close debate on the substantive or procedural matter under discussion. The Speaker of the house may, subject to appeal, rule such a motion dilatory. When closure of debate is moved, the

Speaker of the house may recognize up to two speakers against the motion. No speaker in favour of the motion will be recognized. Closure of debate requires a two-thirds majority to pass. If the committee is in favour of closure, the Speaker of the house will declare the closure of debate, and the resolutions or amendment on the floor will be brought to an immediate vote.

**18. Adjournment of the Meeting:** Whenever the floor is open, a MP may move for the adjournment of the meeting, to suspend all committee functions for the duration of the conference. The Speaker may rule such motions dilatory; this decision is not subject to appeal. When in order, such a motion will not be debated but will be immediately put to a vote and will require a simple majority to pass.

**19. Postponement and Resumption of Debate:** Whenever the floor is open, a MP may move for the postponement of debate on a resolution or amendment currently on the floor. The motion, otherwise known as “tabling,” will require a two-thirds majority to pass and will be debated by two speakers in favour and two opposed. No debate or action will be allowed on any resolution or amendment on which debate has been postponed, and if debate on a resolution or amendment has not been resumed before debate is closed, that resolution or amendment may not be voted upon. A motion to resume debate on an amendment or resolution on which debate has been postponed will require a simple majority to pass and will be debated by two speakers in favour and two opposed. Resumption of debate will cancel the effects of postponement of debate.

**20. Speeches:** No MP may address a session without having previously obtained the permission of the Speaker. The Speaker may call a speaker to order if their remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion, or offensive to committee members or staff. MPs who are absent when recognized by the dais automatically forfeit their time, and debate will continue.

## Points and Motions

**21. Point of Order:** Raised if procedural rules are violated. The Speaker will rule on the validity of the point.

**22. Point of Personal Privilege:** Raised if an MP experiences discomfort affecting their participation (e.g., audibility issues).

**23. Point of Information:** Raised to request factual clarification from another MP during a caucus.

**24. Motion to Extend:** Raised if an MP wishes to extend an ongoing caucus. Requires a simple majority vote.

**25. Motion to Suspend the Meeting:** This motion is made to suspend the meeting for the purpose of a regular caucus or a semi-moderated caucus. When moving to suspend the meeting, the Member of the Parliament should specify the purpose. This motion requires an immediate vote.

**26. Motions to Introduce a Deal:** Since deals are informal agreements between MPs or parties, they are usually introduced through **formal parliamentary motions** that translate the deal into policy.

### **26.1. Motion Types for Deals:**

#### **26.1.1. Motion for the Introduction of Legislation (Government or Opposition Motion)**

- Used when a deal leads to the drafting of a new law or amendment.
- Example:  
*"This House resolves to introduce the Employment Stability Act 2016, as agreed upon by the Government and Opposition, to ensure post-Brexit job security for UK workers."*

#### **26.1.2. Motion to Adopt an Agreement**

- If MPs wish to formally acknowledge and adopt the terms of a deal before legislative action.
- Example:  
*"This House supports the principles outlined in the Cross-Party Employment Deal and calls for its implementation in the upcoming legislative session."*

#### **26.1.3. Motion to Amend Existing Legislation**

- If a deal modifies an existing law, an amendment motion can be introduced.
- Example:  
*"This House moves to amend the Immigration and Employment Act to incorporate provisions agreed upon in the Post-Brexit Labor Stability Deal."*

#### **26.1.4. Motion of Confidence/No Confidence (If Deal Breaks)**

- If a deal is broken and political instability arises, MPs may motion for a confidence vote.
- Example:  
*"This House has no confidence in Her Majesty's Government due to its failure to uphold the Employment Agreement."*

**27. Motions Related to Hansard:** Hansard is automatically maintained, but MPs can request clarifications or corrections through procedural motions.

### **27.1. Motion to Correct the Record**

- If an MP believes their statement was misrecorded in Hansard.
- Example:  
*"This House requests a correction in Hansard regarding the statement made by the Honourable Member for Manchester on February 2, 2016, concerning the Employment Stability Act."*

### **27.2. Motion to Publish a Special Report**

- If an MP or a party wants Hansard to publish a summary or clarification regarding a debated deal.
- Example:  
*"This House requests that Hansard publish a detailed report summarizing the discussions and agreements made during the Post-Brexit Economic Stability Debate."*

### **27.3. Motion to Strike a Statement from the Record**

- In rare cases, MPs may request the removal of remarks deemed inappropriate or misleading.
- Example:  
*"This House moves to expunge from the record the statement made by the Honourable Member for Birmingham on February 10, 2016, for being factually incorrect."*

## **Deals and Hansard**

**28. Deals:** In parliamentary proceedings, **deals** refer to negotiations and agreements made between MPs, political parties, or government officials to secure support for legislation, amendments, or policy initiatives. In the context of this committee, deals can play a crucial role in shaping the outcome of debates and votes.

### **28.1 Types of Deals:**

- **Cross-Party Agreements:** When MPs from different parties collaborate on a motion or amendment to ensure its passage.
- **Coalition or Confidence Deals:** In cases where the government lacks a majority, it may negotiate agreements with smaller parties for support in exchange for policy concessions.
- **Backroom Negotiations:** Informal discussions held during unmoderated caucuses to form alliances or make strategic compromises.

- **Policy Trade-offs:** MPs may agree to support certain legislation in return for amendments, funding allocations, or policy commitments.

**28.2 Formalization of Deals:** Deals may be presented in the form of written agreements, joint policy proposals, or public statements. Any formal deal must be announced in the House before the relevant vote to ensure transparency. Deals do not override parliamentary procedures, and MPs are still required to vote individually.

**29. Hansard:** Hansard is the official verbatim record of debates, votes, and decisions in the House of Commons. It provides an accurate and publicly accessible account of parliamentary discussions.

**29.1 Purpose of Hansard in the Committee:** Documents **all speeches, debates, and decisions** made in the committee. Ensures **accountability** by preserving records of MPs' statements and positions. Acts as a reference for future sessions, amendments, and negotiations.

## **29.2 Structure of Hansard Reports**

A typical Hansard entry includes:

- **Date and time** of the session.
- **Speaker's remarks** and announcements.
- **MP contributions**, recorded in **verbatim format**.
- **Voting results**, including names and party affiliations of MPs.
- **Amendments, motions, and passed legislation**.

## **Rules Governing Voting**

**30. Eligibility to Vote:** Only Members of Parliament (MPs) who are present in the chamber at the time of the vote are eligible to cast a vote. Proxy voting is not allowed; MPs must be physically present to participate in the vote. The Speaker of the House does not vote except in the case of a tie, where they cast a deciding vote following the convention of maintaining the status quo.

## **Voting**

**31. General Voting Rules:** Voting in this committee follows the procedures of the House of Commons of the United Kingdom, with MPs casting their votes either in favor, against, or abstaining where applicable. Votes are conducted on proposed motions, agreements, amendments, and final resolutions in

accordance with parliamentary practice. Only officially recognized MPs in attendance may vote; voting by proxy is not permitted.

### 32. Types of Votes:

- a. **Voice Vote ("Ayes" and "Noes"):** For most motions, the Speaker will ask MPs to verbally declare their support or opposition by stating:
  - i. "All those in favor, say 'Aye'."
  - ii. "All those against, say 'No'."
- *If the result is clear (one side is significantly louder), the Speaker will declare the result.*
- *If the outcome is uncertain, any MP may request a formal division.*
  - b. **Division (Recorded Vote):** If a division is called, MPs will physically move to separate voting areas to indicate their stance:
    - i. The "Aye Lobby" for those in favor.
    - ii. The "No Lobby" for those against.
- The Speaker announces "Clear the lobbies!" and a two-minute period is given for MPs to proceed.
- The Tellers (vote counters), appointed by the Speaker, will count and record the votes.
- The Speaker announces the result as follows:
  - "The Ayes have it, the Ayes have it." (If the motion passes)
  - "The Noes have it, the Noes have it." (If the motion fails)
- c. **Special Voting Rules, Majority Required:**
  - i. Simple Majority (50%+1 MPs present) is required for general motions, amendments, and procedural matters.
  - ii. Absolute Majority (over 50% of total MPs, even those absent) may be required for critical decisions, such as confidence votes.
- d. **Tied Votes:**
  - i. In the event of a tie, the Speaker casts the deciding vote, following the UK Parliament's principle of preserving the status quo unless there is a clear need for change.
- e. **Confidence and No Confidence Votes:**
  - i. A Motion of No Confidence in the government requires an absolute majority to pass.
    1. If passed, the government must resign, and a new government must be formed within the committee.

### **33. Voting Process of Deal/Hansard:**

- a. The bill is debated in the House.
- b. MPs vote on amendments proposed under the deal.
- c. The **final version of the bill** is put to a vote:
  - i. **If it passes:** The deal is successfully implemented into law.
  - ii. **If it fails:** The government may renegotiate, face criticism, or risk a confidence vote.