

# How To: Write a General Assembly (GA) Motion

*Do you want to see a change? Do you want to create SSMU policy? Do you feel like you have a political stance to take?*

*Submit a motion to a GA! Read on to learn the ins and outs of GA motion writing and submission. It's your student government, so learn how to use it!*

*The first thing to keep in mind is that writing a GA motion is like writing a tiny, point-form essay... in reverse.*

The structure of the motion is important; it is simple and effective if you know how to use it:

- Whereas clauses should be background information on the issue that your motion pertains to - The history that SSMU has with the topic, what position does SSMU hold currently or what has been done concerning the topic. Include evidence of student support for and involvement with the initiative.

This part should be factual. This is the body of your essay, the supporting evidence.

- Be it resolved (BIRT) - This is the substance being voted on. What policy positions are you asking SSMU to take?
  - Be it further resolved (BIFRT) – This is the related, further points in the policy you're proposing. The BIFRT should specify your BIRT.
  - Keep it simple, one idea per BI(F)RT

*Now, you've written your motion. How do you turn your talk into action?*

Here are step-by-step instructions straight from the by-laws (this is as official as it gets, people). It has also been translated out of SSMUese into plain English for your benefit:

- As per Article 29.2, the Speaker shall receive items for the agenda up until 2 weeks in advance of the GA in question.

- *Translation: you should probably submit your motion no less than 2 weeks from the GA (the official deadline is 5pm. Now you know, don't be late)*
- The Speaker shall make him or herself available at the SSMU office until this deadline.
  - *Translation: if you have any questions, don't hesitate to ask them. The speaker knows what's going on and is supposed to be around, use them as a resource.*
- Motions may also be delivered up until this deadline at the SSMU front desk.
  - *Translation: now you know where to submit your motion!*
- Items for the agenda shall require either the signatures of one hundred (100) students or four (4) councillors, with no more than 50% from any one faculty and students from 4 faculties.
  - 10.5.1 Petitions to place items on the agenda shall require the name, signature, faculty and student number of all students in support of placing the motion on the agenda.
    - *Translation: get signatures; remember that this is also a time to give people a heads up about the motion. Walk around campus, talk to people, be nice, and explain your motion verbally, in English if you can. When you're getting signatures, don't forget to ask for name, signature, faculty and student number!*
- The Speaker or the SSMU Front Desk shall issue a receipt for all petitions for Special GAs and agenda items, along with a signed photocopy of said petitions.
  - *Translation: know your rights and get your receipt.*
- All petitions and motions should list a mover of the motion, with up-to-date contact information such as e-mail and if possible, a phone number.
  - *Translation: who are you? Make sure you (the mover) are reachable!*