



Association étudiante de l'Université McGill

Située sur les territoires traditionnels des collectivités Haudenosaunee et Anishinaabe.

Students' Society of McGill University

Located on Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe, traditional territories.

ssmu.ca | (514) 398-6800 | 3600 rue McTavish, Suite 1200, Montréal, QC, H3A 0G3

General Assembly Information

Quorum

General Assemblies requires 350 SSMU members. Strike General Assemblies require 500 SSMU members.

What is a Notice of Motion?

A Notice of Motion is a formal document submitted by a member to propose a change or decision within the SSMU. Serving as a precursor to discussions during a meeting, this Notice provides essential details about the proposed motion, including its wording, rationale, and pertinent background information. The purpose is to inform members in advance, allowing them time to review and understand the motion before engaging in the discussion and voting process during the scheduled meeting.

Motions at General Assemblies can propose, amend, rescind, or uphold any policy of the Society. General Assemblies have, essentially, the powers of Council, with the exception of a few powers that are legally reserved for a Council or Board of Directors. These restrictions include budgetary questions and any matters of human resources. Similarly, amendments to the Constitution can only be made by means of a referendum, not council or GAs. As with anything the SSMU does, GA motions and proceedings are subject to appeal to the Judicial Board should they be thought unconstitutional by any SSMU member.

Motions must also pertain to actions or policies under the purview of the SSMU. In cases where they are directed towards University policies, motions should call on the SSMU to take a specified stance or action, rather than demanding that the University take specific actions, as McGill is not bound by GA mandates.



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Timeline

Deadline

Motions in advance must be submitted to the Speaker at least two (2) weeks in advance of the General Assembly. The Winter 2024 General Assembly is taking place [February 5th 2024](#).

Main motions may be submitted to the Speaker late, up until 72 hours before the General Assembly begins.

It is highly encouraged that motions are submitted with a translated copy. If the late motion is not translated prior to the meeting, the translation in English and French will be available a few weeks following the meeting.

Motions in advance must be submitted to the Speaker at least two (2) weeks in advance of the General Assembly.

Who to Submit Motions to

Please submit all motions to ssmu-dais@ssmu.ca and any questions you may have to the Parliamentarian at parliamentarian@ssmu.ca, speaker@ssmu.ca and/or deputyspeaker@ssmu.ca.

Where to find the Internal Regulations (IR's)?

You can find all the internal regulations [here](#).

What's the Speaker's role?

The Speaker has several roles in this context, some of their responsibilities are:



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- The Speaker shall, among the responsibilities listed in the Governance Documents, enforce the rules under which the Legislative Council and General Assemblies meet, including Robert's Rules of Order and the Standing Rules.
- The Speaker, in consultation with the Steering Committee, shall prepare the order of business for Special General Assemblies and Strike General Assemblies.
- The Speaker shall receive items for the agenda up to two (2) weeks in advance of the General Assembly in question and receive motions from the floor up to the day of the General Assembly.
- It shall be the responsibility of the President, in collaboration with the Governance Manager and Speaker, to publicize and organize the logistics of General Assemblies.
- The Speaker shall be responsible for coordinating and chairing General Assemblies.
- The Speaker will be responsible for reviewing the late motions to ensure compliance with the Governance Documents.
- The Speaker shall read the motion from the floor aloud so that the motion is translated via whisper translation.
- The Speaker shall, in consultation with the mover and, if requested, the Steering Committee, review and edit all motions submitted for concision and cogency.
- Any motion submitted and accepted for a General Assembly shall be decided upon by a vote of the Members present at the meeting by a raising of placards, unless another voting method is requested and approved by a vote of the Members present or unless the Speaker prescribes another voting method.
- It shall be the prerogative of the Speaker to rule as to whether or not motions presented for the General Assembly are in order.
- The Speaker shall have the discretion to rule a motion for an online vote out of order if the motion is made or used in a disruptive manner.

Further detailed information:

<https://ssmu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Internal-Regulations-of-Governance-2021-04-08.pdf?x21981>

How Voting Works

Any motion submitted and accepted for a General Assembly shall be decided upon by a vote of the Members present at the meeting by a raising of placards, unless another voting method is requested and approved by a vote of the Members present or unless the Speaker prescribes another voting method.



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Members present at the General Assembly must be given reasonable opportunity to debate and amend each motion. The General Assembly may amend motions and resolutions in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order and the Standing Rules.

A motion to hold an online vote on a main motion shall be in order at any time when a main motion is pending. Any Member present at the General Assembly, other than the Speaker or Parliamentarian, can move or second this motion. The online vote shall be open to all Members. A main motion may be moved to an online vote by a motion passed by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the General Assembly. The online vote shall be held no more than forty-eight (48) hours following the close of the General Assembly. It shall be open for a period of forty-eight (48) hours, and no campaigning shall be allowed on the motions in question. Minutes from the General Assembly shall be made available during the voting period. The Speaker shall have the discretion to rule a motion for an online vote out of order if the motion is made or used in a disruptive manner.

How to Write a Motion and Requirements

It is relatively straightforward to write a General Assembly motion, however, it is sometimes difficult to decide whether your issue concerns budgetary questions. Always consult with others, and work your motion into a form that addresses your concern, without stumbling into the financial territory. Remember, if your motion passes it will give the SSMU Executives a mandate, and ultimately, it will be their responsibility to allocate funds to your cause.

A Handy Guide To Writing A GA MOTION

First, let's think about what exactly you want to do with your motion...Remember that your motion will be debated by dozens if not hundreds of people, so it is crucial that people clearly understand your motion's goals, and what actions it will empower the Student Society to take. Motions should be short and to the point – 1/2 to a full page and all motions have a basic form:

- PREAMBLE: Optional background information (the preamble clause(s) should be concise, unbiased, and directly relevant to the resolutions);
- WHEREAS: The facts and arguments (the whereas clause(s) should be concise, unbiased, and directly relevant to the resolutions); and
- RESOLUTION: The action or policy proposed



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Motions must also be in line with the SSMU Constitution, Internal Regulations and Policies (unless the motion directly alters one of these last two). Furthermore, motions should be grammatically correct (however, improper grammar can be corrected at any time without consequence).

Motions may be submitted in English or French.

Finally, motions should be as specific as possible and should, where possible, direct the SSMU to take specific, as opposed to ideological or rhetorical, actions. Nevertheless, specificity of motions should not cause them to be ruled unconstitutional and outside the powers of a GA (see clause 29 of the [Constitution](#)). Further, motions should make exceptionally clear any potentially confusing statements, phrases or concepts, so as to avoid conflict, confusion and/or redrafting at the Assembly.

Items for the agenda shall require either the signatures of one hundred (100) Members or the signatures of four (4) Councillors or Officers, with Members from at least four (4) faculties and no more than fifty percent (50%) of signatures coming from any one (1) faculty. Petitions to place items on the agenda shall require the name, signature, faculty, and student number of all Members signing the petition in support of placing the motion on the agenda. These motions will be subsequently translated and publicized in both English and French.

Late motions will be considered if two-thirds (2/3) of the General Assembly votes to do so. All reasonable efforts will be made to translate late motions in both French and English.