

# General meetings

## Notice

It's important to let your members know when you are holding a general meeting. It's a really good idea to inform members of the time, location, type of meeting (OGM, SGM, AGM) and the full agenda at least one week before the meeting. Your society might have different requirements because of your constitution. This is important so that you can make quorum (the minimum number of members needed for a meeting), and so members can submit motions if they want.

## Chairing

Chairing general meetings is more formal and structured than at executive meetings. Many club constitutions require the chair to abide by the ANUSA standing orders, which are found in the ANUSA constitution. The ANUSA Standing Orders are a bit tricky so you can move a motion to suspend them, which means you don't need them for the meeting. If you have a small general meeting, you may have a free-flowing discussion. But, if you have a large-ish meeting it can be good to stick to structured speaking lists with time limits.

### Structuring your Meeting

- It is really important that you begin with Acknowledgement of Country
- This is more or less the same as the structure recommended for an executive meeting
- It's just more likely that you will have more items, especially motions

### How to Conduct a Motion Fairly

- You should have a mover (person who wants the motion passed) and a seconder (someone who supports this motion)
- These must be different people
- They both have the right to speak positively about the motion
- Then the Chair will ask if anyone wants to speak against the motion
- If there are none you can vote
- If people do want to speak negatively about the motion, they also get to speak about it
- The Chair lets people talk, alternating between speakers for and speakers against
- This stops when no one wants to speak, or no new points are raised
- Then the mover is given the right to reply (this is the chance to speak again)
- Then people vote - either for, against or abstained
- The motion passes if the majority of votes are in favour of the motion
- For example, in a situation where you have 4 votes for, 3 votes against, and 3 abstentions, the motion generally passes, unless your constitution says otherwise.

- If a vote is tied it fails, unless your constitution says the Chair has a casting/deliberative vote
- In that case, they decide on the motion

## Elections

### Appointing a returning officer

Returning officers count the votes and declare the winner of the elections. They should be unbiased, and thus, cannot run in the election. Returning officers absolutely must not have conflicts of interest with anyone running in the election, or any other interest in the election. It would be inappropriate for a good friend, partner, relative or anyone with financial interest to be the returning officer. An outgoing President may be a good returning officer instead. The executive should decide who they want to be the returning officer and vote on this at a meeting before the election.

Some societies also have scrutineers, who count the votes alongside the returning officer and ensure that they have acted correctly. These are not strictly necessary, but can be useful for larger or more tightly contested elections. They can be selected, and approved with a vote before the general meeting too.

### Nominations

Nominations for executive positions must be open to all members of the society, with the exception of positions that are autonomous (e.g. a Wom\*ns officer that is only able to be held by non cis-males). Some junior positions may be appointed by the executive, but at least 50% of executive positions, including all trustees, must be elected and open to all members. Nominations may be permitted 'from the floor' (e.g. on the night of the AGM). All positions to be elected should be advertised well in advance to maximise turnout.

## Elections

If an election is uncontested, the returning officer will announce the candidate elected.

When elections are contested, candidates should be allowed to speak for a set time and answer questions. Voting normally uses a preferential system if there are more than two candidates, but it could depend on your constitution. Make sure this, and the method of counting is clarified at the beginning of the meeting. After the returning officer has tallied the votes, they will announce the winner. The election of the next position has to wait until the result of the first one so people can run for lots of positions. It's a good idea to start positions from the most important down.

If no candidates run, then the position has a casual vacancy. The executive can fill this vacancy through Expressions of Interest (EOIs).

