



# USI CONGRESS

## BEGINNERS' GUIDE TO MOTIONS, AMENDMENTS AND NOMINATIONS

### What is USI Congress?

USI Congress is the supreme decision making body of the Union of Students in Ireland. It has the power to review and amend the Constitution, to decide policy and to elect five of the National Officers .

- President
- Deputy President / Campaigns Officer
- Welfare Officer
- Education Officer
- Equality Officer

### Who attends Congress?

Congress is composed of the current elected USI officers and Delegates from each Constituent Organisation (member StudentsqUnions) whose affiliation fees have been paid.

The amount of delegates from each Constituent Organisation varies according to the number of students registered in that organisation.

Before each Congress USI Steering Committee advertise the dates when motions may be submitted. There is a limit of how many motions you may propose.

- Constituent Organisations may submit up to 10 motions each.
- USI Officers may submit up to 5 motions each.
- Committee / Working Groups established under the auspices of the Constitution with the exception of the Elections Committee and the Steering Committee may submit up to 5 motions each.

### **What subject can be discussed in a motion?**

You may submit motions on any subject you wish. Following the closing of motions, USI Steering Committee will separate all proposed motions into the following categories:

- Union Organisation
- Education
- National Affairs
- Welfare
- Equality
- International Affairs
- USI Administration and Finance
- Constitutional Amendments

### **What are the main points to consider when writing a motion?**

When writing a motion, the first thing to consider is if the issue is already part of USI Policy. USI Policy lasts for five years, so it would be a waste of time to propose something that was agreed at USI Congress in 2005. However, motions passed at Congress 2002 will expire at this congress, so it may be worth checking if there is any policy you wish to keep active.

### **Where can I find past motions?**

The USI Policy Manual contains all motions passed at the last five congresses. It is worth referring to the manual for examples on how to structure a motion. The USI Policy Manual is available from Ceann Áras na Mac Léinn, or on [www.usi.ie](http://www.usi.ie)

### **What should I include in a motion?**

Generally your motions should include some background, merits, and a mandate. A mandate is essentially an order for a USI Officer or Officers. Remember, you write the motion as it appears in the Congress Clár, and as it appears in the Policy Manual, if passed. You include the congress notes, congress believes, etc.

was proposed in 2002 on the Student Summer Job Scheme and is a good guide for writing a basic motion.

The opening point outlined the subject:

**Congress notes:**

*The importance of the Student Summer Job Scheme to students throughout the country.*

The second point outlined some of the argument for the mandate which followed:

**Congress further notes:**

*That there are a number of problems within the scheme. The rate of pay has still not been raised to match minimum wage. The scheme is not available to all students. The scheme is poorly publicised and in turn the student take up is lower than it might be.*

The mandate clearly outlined the orders which congress was asked to agree. Remember to mandate the appropriate Officer:

**Congress mandates the Welfare Officer:**

*To lobby the Department of Social Community and Family Affairs to seek a resolution to the problems prevalent in the scheme.*

Remember, you are asking all delegates at congress to accept the motion in its entirety, not just the mandate. Therefore you may wish to include something asking congress to welcome, praise, recognise or condemn something. You should also ensure that all information you include in the motion is relevant and correct.

**What is the Pre-Clár?**

The Pre-Clár contains all motions, separated into the various categories, but appearing in random order. The Pre Clár is distributed to COs and USI Officers following the closing date for submission of motions.

**Who decides what order motions appear in the Congress Clár?**

Priority Ballot Papers are issued to Constituent Organisations and USI Officers with the Congress Pre-Clár. Each CO and USI Officer may prioritise 10 motions each. After Priority Ballots have been processed, motions appear in the Congress Clár according to priority. This is to form an order for motions to be discussed, as motions on similar topics may conflict. For example, if Tuam University Studentsq Union proposes the abolition of USI Finance Committee and Mullingar I.T. proposes a restructuring of USI Finance Committee, there is obviously a conflict. If Tuam University Studentsq Union's motion is discussed and passed, then it becomes impossible for Mullingar IT Studentsq Union to propose restructuring a committee which no longer exists.

## in the Pre-Clár?

You may propose an amendment to a motion appearing in the Pre-Clár. Amendments to motions may not alter the overall intention of the motion. Proposed amendments are included in the clár under the original motion. At the beginning of the debate, the amendment is debated and congress decides whether to accept the proposed amendment or not. If accepted, the amended motion is then proposed in the normal fashion.

## CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

### What are Constitutional Amendments?

A Constitutional Amendment is a proposal to change, add or delete something in the USI Constitution. The Constitution is the governing instrument of USI, therefore any proposed amendments must be very specific.

### How are Constitutional Amendments proposed?

Constitutional Amendments are presented in a completely different way to motions under other headings. A Constitutional Amendment must be very specific and may not be presented as a broad idea. USI Congress is the only body which can make any change to the USI Constitution, so any word that you wish to add, change or delete must be presented to Congress for consideration.

For example, if you feel that USI would benefit from a change of name to ~~Thomas~~, you would present your proposal as outlined below.

#### Constitutional Amendment

Article 1

**Delete:** ~~the~~ Union of Students in Ireland+

**Replace with:** ~~Thomas~~+

**Delete:** ~~Antas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn~~+

**Replace with:** ~~Tomás~~+

**Delete:** abbreviation U.S.I., or in Irish, A.M.L.É.

Basically, a constitutional amendment is a strict step by step instruction on what changes you wish to make to the constitution. You may not include any remarks or arguments when presenting a constitutional amendment.



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not be amended once they have been included in the

## **NOMINATIONS**

### **Which officers are elected at Congress?**

Elections for five USI Officers take place at USI Congress. They are:

- President
- Deputy President / Campaigns Officer
- Welfare Officer
- Education Officer
- Equality Officer

### **When can I nominate somebody for a position?**

The dates when nominations are accepted are advertised by USI Elections Committee in advance of Congress.

### **Who is eligible for nomination?**

Any member of USI is eligible to be nominated for positions listed above.

### **How many nominations do I need?**

Candidates must be nominated by at least one Constituent Organisation. Traditionally, candidates seek more than one nomination.

### **How many people can I nominate?**

Constituent Organisations may nominate as many candidates for as many elections as they wish. Remember, a nomination is not an intention to vote. It simply allows a candidate to run for election.

### **How do I nominate somebody?**

Nominations must be presented on Union Headed paper and must be signed by the President. When writing a nomination there is no need to include any reasons why you are nominating a candidate. One simple sentence will suffice.

### **What do I do if I have been nominated?**

Candidates must submit a manifesto, photograph (jpeg format) and " 30 refundable deposit to USI before the close of nominations. Your manifesto must be no more than three A4 typed pages. USI Elections Committee format manifestos in a similar layout for all candidates.

## 1 Congress 2010 able and Deadlines

### Delegates

- 8th December 2009 Open of Submissions for Delegation Team
- 18<sup>th</sup> February 2010 Close of Submissions for Delegation Team
- 19<sup>th</sup> February 2010 Special CPIT . Delegates to be chosen

### Motions and Amendments

- 1<sup>st</sup> January 2010 Open of Submission of Motions
- 1<sup>st</sup> February 2010 Close of Submission of Motions
- ? Close of Amendments to Motions

### Important Dates

- 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2010 Governing Council . USI and DITSU Hustings
- 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2010 Congress Debrief
- 30<sup>th</sup> March . 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2010 USI National Congress