



How do I write a motion for the AGM?

First off, brainstorm! Figure out what you want to do and write it down. Also make sure you note the reasons why you would like to do it.

Next up, take a look at this template of what a motion should look like:

WHEREAS URSU is a fun organization;
WHEREAS people like events run by fun organizations
BE IT RESOLVED THAT URSU commit to running 20 fun events next year
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT URSU file a report about the success of those events

You can learn a lot by looking at this example. First off, you can see that there are four lines or *clauses* in this motion and two overall parts to this motion. The first two lines are informational in nature and try to describe the current state. The second two lines are active lines and describe direct actions that the organization will take.

Whereas (or informational) clauses

Simply writing a motion isn't enough; you have to make sure that you explain to the members of URSU why this change should be made so that they vote in favour of it. This is the purpose of Whereas clauses.

Remember the reasons you wrote down at the start? Those go here. These clauses should contain the gist of your argument so that other people can understand why you are making the changes that you are. These statements should be factual and connected. Each clause should cover one subject. There are few limitations on the number of clauses that you can have but a good rule of thumb is that not more than three to five whereas clauses should be used to support a motion. This just helps saves trees and makes your message easier for your audience to understand. Remember, you'll always have time to speak about your motion at the actual AGM.

Be it resolved (or action) clauses

So what is it that you actually want to do again? Did you write that down? Good - this is where the actual meat of the motion begins.

The clauses that start with "Be it resolved that" for the clause and then "Be it further resolved that" for all subsequent clauses are the clauses that really matter in the meeting. These clauses are actually capable of motivating people or the organization into doing things. They are also usually the subject of debate and are the things that can be modified by motions to amend at the actual meeting. Examples of things you might do include:

- Make specific changes to language in bylaws or policy
- Give specific directives to the executive committee or the board (like "Write a letter" or "develop an advocacy program on this issue")
- Give general directives to the staff of the organization (general directives must be interpreted by the General Manager - that's their job!)
- Direct the Board or executive to adopt general strategic directives like "Host more events" or "do more advocacy".



Summary & Do's and Don'ts

And writing a motion is as simple as that. Use "Whereas" clauses to inform and use "Be it resolved that" 's to make a change!

Here's a few quick Do's and Don'ts for you as you write a motion.

DO:

- Use a clear, concise and active voice
- Use respectful, inclusive language; your goal is to build consensus, not divide the meeting
- Choose issues that are topical and that are of interest to the student body
- Mention the source for data you use in "whereas" clauses
- Break your "action" clauses
- Do your research on an issue
- Ask for help if you need - getting more input just means you have more potential supporters
- Send your motion to chair@ursu.ca before the deadline; all motions need to be published in advance of the meeting

DON'T:

- Be vague when creating "action" clauses
- Submit multiples of the same motion; the chair will potentially remove items from the agenda if they are duplicates or address the same topic
- Use false information in your "Whereas" clauses
- Submit motions that are against existing policy without proposing a change to it; URSU's existing policies are on www.ursu.ca under the "Governance" tab