

Procedural rules for the meeting

General Assembly Meeting 2023

SFS

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Purpose and form of the General Assembly

Sweden's National Union of Students General Assembly, SFSFUM, is the organisation's highest decision-making body. SFSFUM is made up of the organisation's members and meets once a year. The meeting consists of two main spaces: the plenary meeting and åsiktstorg [Opinion Square].

Public nature of the meeting

SFSFUM is public, though the meeting may, however, decide that specific issues should be dealt with behind closed doors. During the meeting, the meeting chairs may decide to temporarily close the doors to avoid movement in and out and distractions. If such a decision is made, the doors will be opened at the first possible opportunity, such as a change of item on the agenda, a break or other interruption to the deliberations. The meeting chairs of the meeting notify the General Assembly when the doors are closed and opened.

Delegation

Delegation refers to the collective representatives and observers of a student union. Each delegation has a **delegation leader** who is appointed by the union to organise the delegation. This is the contact person for the delegation and the person who distributes the union's votes among its **representatives**.

If a member union wants more representatives at SFSFUM than the number of places assigned for representatives, those representatives are registered as observers. Observers only have the right to speak.

Power of attorney

A member union that must leave SFSFUM while deliberations are ongoing may confer a power of attorney on another member union to represent it during parts of the meeting. A power of attorney must be submitted in writing to the meeting chairs of the meeting and it must specify the sender, the party on whom the power of attorney is conferred and the period of time for which the power of attorney is valid. A power of attorney can only be conferred if a student union's representative has been registered and has participated physically during part of the meeting.

Rights to speak, put forward motions and vote

Participant	Right to speak	Right to put forward motions	Right to vote
Representative	X	X	X
Observer	X		
Meeting chairs of the meeting	X	X	

Board	X	X	
Election Committee	X	X	
Auditor	X	X	
Postgraduate Student Committee	X	X	
Graduate	X		
SFS employee	X		

Officials have a right to attend the plenary meeting and may also be granted the right to speak by the meeting chairs.

Others may be granted the right to speak by the meeting chairs.

Delegation leader meetings

The purpose of delegation leader meetings is to be able to clarify and provide information on the order for the General Assembly. A delegation leader is responsible for ensuring that the information is passed on to their delegation. Delegation leader meetings consist of the meeting chairs and the delegation leaders of the member unions and the Board. The meeting is coordinated by the meeting chairs and the Board. The meeting chairs convene delegation leader meetings and are responsible for inviting other relevant parties.

Meeting officials

The meeting chairs leads the General Assembly’s plenary deliberations. The Chairperson of the meeting is responsible for ensuring that the General Assembly’s democratic processes function correctly. That means, among other things, the right to adjust speaking time, decide on the order in which agenda items are dealt with, make changes to schedules and adopt both proactive and reactive measures to counteract and deal with suppression techniques or behaviour that restricts everyone’s equal participation in any way.

The Secretary of the meeting is responsible for taking the minutes of the meeting of the General Assembly and for helping the Chairperson to conduct the meeting.

The meeting chairs are the Chairperson of the meeting and the Secretary of the meeting.

The meeting adjusters are responsible for checking the minutes after the end of the meeting and for signing the minutes along with the Chairperson and Secretary.

Meeting officials are elected by the General Assembly and are responsible for helping the meeting chairs conduct the Opinion Square and the plenary meeting. The officials of the General Assembly are not confined to the duties listed in this document.

Language of the meeting

The meeting chairs preside over the meeting in Swedish and all written motions must be in Swedish. Verbal motions may be put forward in English. Speeches from the rostrum may be in Swedish or in English. Specific matters may be dealt with entirely in English if the meeting so decides, on request to the meeting chairs.

VoteIT

VoteIT is a digital platform for decision-making meetings that is used during SFSFUM to put forward motions, request the floor and vote. All representatives will have access to VoteIT. All items to be deliberated at the meeting will be visible in VoteIT and the results of votes will be updated continuously during the meeting.

Plenary meeting

The plenary meeting is the SFSFUM public decision-making space where the agenda is dealt with. Member unions have the opportunity to debate proposals at the plenary meeting. Decisions are made at the plenary meeting and the items discussed at the plenary meeting form the basis for the minutes of the meeting.

Register of voters

The register of voters consists of the votes of the member unions present according to the allocation of votes. The register of voters is established at the beginning of the meeting and is then adjusted as necessary. The meeting chairs must be informed if a delegation leaves the meeting. The allocation of votes within the delegation is dealt with and managed by the delegation leader.

List of speakers and speaking time

Participants who wish to speak sign up on the list of speakers in VoteIT. SFSFUM uses double lists of speakers, which means that priority is given to those speaking on an item for the first time.

A speaking time of three minutes applies in the case of opening remarks. A limit of one minute applies to the other speeches from the lectern. The meeting chairs signal to the speaker when time begins to run out. The Chairperson of the meeting may grant a right to deviate from the established speaking times.

Candidates for the posts of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson are entitled to five minutes for their presentations. All other candidates are entitled to three minutes.

Motion stop

SFSFUM decides on a deadline for new motions on an item. For questions dealt with in Opinion Square, motion deadline occur automatically. See the chapter on Opinion Square in this document. The meeting chairs are entitled to deviate from a motion stop.

The General Assembly may only make decisions on matters for which notice has been given in the manner prescribed in the Charter. The General Assembly may, however, decide with a 5/6 majority to make a decision on an issue that has not been given notice in the manner prescribed in the Charter. This must not, however, be done if the issue relates to a single member union, or person, who is not present or who opposes a decision being made at the meeting.

In cases where notice has not been given on a full document, the motion is restricted to the paragraphs or subchapters raised at the time when notice of the issue was given in accordance with the Charter. Motions for consequential changes to other parts of the relevant documents are permitted. The Chairperson of the meeting interprets and decides on the delimitation of documents on the basis of the regulations contained in these procedural rules for the meeting.

Procedural rules for decisions

After speeches and deliberations at the plenary meeting, the meeting chairs asks whether the General Assembly is ready to move to a decision. If the General Assembly is not ready to move to a decision, either the list of speakers can be reopened or a reflection period is requested by a member union and such a period is established by the meeting chairs. If the General Assembly is ready to move to a decision, the meeting proceeds to make a decision. Then no-one else can then put themselves on the list of speakers.

As a rule, the General Assembly makes decisions by means of acclamation with a raised voting card, i.e. voting by calling out “Yes” and raising a voting card in order to vote for or against the various proposals. In the case of more than two proposals, the Chairperson of the meeting may proceed with what is referred to as a “counter-proposal vote”. In such a vote, the proposals are pitted against each other two by two until there are only two proposals remaining to choose from.

Most decisions will be made through VoteIT and will be made differently depending on the nature of the item. This takes place automatically in the system, though it may be useful to be aware of the various terms listed below.

Simple combination

In the case of multiple non-opposing motions, simple combination is used with the options of for/against/abstain.

Majority vote

In the case of two opposing motions, majority vote is used. This method can also be used in several steps for managing a counter-proposal vote with more than two proposals.

Single transferable vote (STV)

STV can be used for election items. In this method, the number of votes required in order to be elected is first calculated. This is done by dividing the number of votes on the register of voters by the number of ordinary seats to be filled.

Step 1: Check whether all seats will be filled by adding up the number of first-choice votes.

Step 2: If not all seats will be filled and one candidate receives more first-choice votes than are required in order to be elected, the surplus votes are distributed proportionally to the other candidates according to the second-choice votes on all ballot papers. This step is repeated until a candidate has more votes than are required in order to be elected.

Step 3: If all seats will still not be filled, the candidate with the fewest first-choice votes is eliminated, the votes are distributed proportionally to the other candidates according to the second-choice vote on all ballot papers and the process goes back to step 2. Except if the number of remaining candidates amounts to the number of seats, in which case the counting of votes ends and the remaining candidates are elected.

Election to positions of trust

Each election begins with the Election Committee presenting its proposal. After that, the candidates are given time to introduce themselves and then answer any questions. Candidates who are unable to attend physically have the option of submitting a pre-recorded five-minute presentation for candidates to the Presidium and a three-minute presentation for all other candidates. If there are multiple candidates for the same post, they are presented after the Election Committee's proposal has been presented. The Election Committee is responsible for preparing and coordinating all presentations.

If there are more candidates than the number of seats for a post, only one candidate at a time may be in the plenary meeting. In elections to the Board and Presidium, all candidates for the same post must leave the plenary meeting. In cases where questions and presentations take place in the plenary meeting, these take place with one Board or Presidium candidate present at a time.

During voting at the plenary meeting, candidates who are outside the room must be in a separate, designated place along with a presiding officer of the meeting. The room is closed. In other words, there must be no communication with anyone other than the people in the room and the meeting chairs. This is to ensure that the purpose of the place is fulfilled. In order to ensure this, there is a ban on electronic devices. These are left at the door and are watched over by the presiding officer of the meeting present.

If a candidate is the only representative present from their student union, the person in question has two options: either to use their electronic device to vote themselves under the supervision of the presiding officer of the meeting in the room and then hand in their electronic device again or to assign their vote to another representative by means of a power of attorney.

Results of elections for elected representatives are announced by the presiding officer of the meeting present in the room before candidates have entered the plenary meeting and the candidates are given the option of waiting outside if they have not been elected.

Voting in personal elections takes place in VoteIT and begins with the Election Committee's proposal being pitted against votes against. Election of Board members (11 members) and auditors (2 ordinary, 2 substitutes) takes place if the Election Committee's proposal is rejected through STV. Election of the Election Committee (7 members) is carried out directly through STV since there is no proposal. At least half the votes cast are required in order for a candidate to be elected to the office of Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson.

Nominations for all posts as an elected representative must be received no later than Friday 5 May at 21.00. Candidates nominated previously outside the Election Committee's proposal must have been re-nominated to the meeting chairs by the same time. A list of all nominees who have agreed to stand must be made available no later than 23.00.

For members of the Board and the Election Committee, SFSFUM has the option of establishing a ranked list of substitutes if there are more nominees than persons elected as members of the Board and the Election Committee. Substitutes for the Board are elected in the order in the Election Committee's proposal if the Election Committee's proposal is approved. If the Election Committee has no proposal or if its proposal is not approved, SFSFUM determines how many people should be included in the list and in what order they are elected.

Points of order

Adjournment

The Chairperson of the meeting decides to pause the meeting to resume at a later time.

Reply

If someone has been directly addressed on the rostrum or has been clearly misunderstood, they can request a reply. The Chairperson of the meeting decides whether a reply should be granted. A reply is requested from the Chairperson of the meeting by calling out "replik" [reply]. Counter-replies cannot be granted. A reply takes precedence over the list of speakers.

Factual question

A factual question is a request to be given specific facts that are missing from the debate so that everyone can keep up with what is being said. A factual question is requested from the Chairperson by calling out "sakfråga" [factual question].

Factual information

Factual information is not an argument but a request to be permitted to add specific facts to the debate made to the Chairperson of the meeting by calling out "sakupplysning" [factual information]. The Chairperson of the meeting decides how the factual information is to be dealt with.

Procedure for closing a debate

The procedure for closing a debate is requested by calling out “streck i debatten” [procedure for closing a debate]. The request for the procedure for closing a debate is a request to go directly to a decision without discussion unless the Chairperson of the meeting decides otherwise. If SFSFUM decides to adopt the procedure for closing a debate, the Chairperson of the meeting must allow everyone who wishes to put themselves on the list of speakers to do so one last time. After that, the debate moves directly to a decision.

Time for reflection

Time for reflection is requested if a delegation or a representative wishes to be given time to discuss the matter amongst themselves during the plenary meeting. Time for reflection is requested from the Chairperson of the meeting by calling out “betänketid” [time for reflection]. The Chairperson of the meeting decides whether time for reflection should be granted and how long it should be.

Other points of order

Other points of order relate to breaks or other matters relating to the conditions for holding the meeting. Other points of order are requested from the Chairperson of the meeting by calling out “ordningsfråga” [point of order], which then interrupts the ongoing factual debate. Points of order are dealt with immediately in the plenary meeting before deliberations are resumed.

Reservations and notes to the minutes

If a member union opposes a decision, it may submit a reservation against it.

Reservations must be reported to the meeting chairs at the time when the matter is discussed and must be submitted in writing to the Secretary of the meeting within seven (7) days from the end of the meeting and must be attached as an annex to the minutes.

If a member union wishes to submit a note to the minutes regarding a particular item or decision, this must be reported to the meeting chairs before the end of the meeting and must be submitted in writing to the Secretary of the meeting within seven (7) days from the end of the meeting and must be attached as an annex to the minutes. A note to the minutes may briefly describe a debate that took place at the plenary meeting or similar.

Opinion Square

Opinion Square is the SFSFUM discussion space where proposals and motions are discussed in advance of deliberations at the plenary meeting. Opinion Square provides the member unions with a space for adjustments, considering items in more detail or developing new motions to be deliberated at the plenary meeting. Not all motions can be dealt with at the plenary meeting because there is limited time and therefore the motions are screened by means of Opinion Square. The purpose of Opinion Square is to

prepare so that the plenary meeting works as well as possible and to provide the best possible basis for democratically-adopted decisions.

To allow the time at the plenary meeting to be spent on the most important matters for the unions, the work on requests, motions and proposals must be as complete as possible when Opinion Square ends. As a rule, proposals that have not achieved sufficient support via Opinion Square should not be put forward at the plenary meeting other than in absolutely exceptional cases. The idea is that anything that lacks sufficient support, is not clear enough or is not sufficiently well-founded will be filtered out, clarified and merged prior to deliberations at the plenary meeting.

Opinion Square should help delegates to be as well-prepared as possible for the votes they want to cast before they enter the plenary meeting. Discussions with other delegations, the Board and within a delegation itself should have been completed as far as possible or should at least have been given the scheduled time. This is so that everyone involved in making a decision at the plenary meeting will understand what they are deciding on and will have had an opportunity to adopt a position in consultation with the rest of their delegation.

Opinion Square should provide a place for the unions to have the space and the opportunity to discuss and promote political issues, ensuring that necessary information has been exchanged among member unions and between unions and the Board, as well as an opportunity for the Board to listen to the unions and answer any questions they may have.

Roles and functions

The delegation leader is responsible for coordinating the work of their delegation, ensuring that the delegates have accessed the available information and that the student union has indicated its support for the proposals that they want to be put forward at the plenary meeting.

Delegates and observers are responsible for assimilating available information, participating actively in discussions and representing the views of their student union. If the student union has its own proposals, the members of the delegation need to answer questions or provide more information about their proposals.

The Square Manager of Opinion Square is a presiding officer of the meeting. The Square Manager is responsible for all stations of Opinion Square and is ultimately responsible for the distribution of work, checking votes and writing minutes from the Square. The Square Manager is also responsible for ensuring that the time schedule is kept to and communicated.

Square officials work under the orders of the Square Manager. Square officials are responsible for the practical work in the Square such as entering motions in VoteIT, printing and setting up motions, keeping everything in order and counting votes on the various proposals

The Board, activity auditors and the Election Committee work to ensure that all necessary information is exchanged during Opinion Square. They are responsible for presenting their proposals, their processes, answering questions and, in the case of the Board, actively supervising options for adjustment.

The meeting chairs participate in Opinion Square. The meeting chairs who are not Square Managers are responsible for listening to the discussions and starting to plan the order for deliberation of the items at the plenary meeting and answering questions about the meeting from the participants. The meeting chairs help to formulate motions so they are understandable and their references are correct. The meeting chairs decide which matters should be discussed in the Square and which Square they should be discussed in.

Conducting an Opinion Square

Items in the Opinion Square

All proposals and motions put forward will be subject to discussion in the Opinion Square. The Board and the persons putting forward the motions are present in order to answer questions or provide more information about their proposals. Motions are divided up on the basis of which proposal they relate to or whether they are stand-alone motions.

Motions in the Opinion Square

All motions in items that will be discussed in the Square and that were submitted before the start of the Square period are posted in the Square at the start. If new motions arise during the Opinion Square, for example through adjustments to motions, the proposer submits his or her proposal to the officials at the motion station, who enter it in VoteIT. All proposals that arise during the Opinion Square must go through the motion station to ensure that all motions are made available to all those present.

Indicate support for a proposal

The representatives show their support for the various motions by registering their union and the union's vote beside the motions that they support and want to be put forward at the plenary meeting. Motions that have received support from at least **40% of the register of voters** are automatically put forward for further deliberation and decisions at the plenary meeting.

1. The Square starts with information for the whole group on which motions are available where, as well as a reference to the printed schedule with set times for the Square and Board members' presentations.
2. When the Opinion Square has been open for 60 minutes, the delegations will be given the opportunity to withdraw for internal discussions for at least 15 minutes.
3. A motion stop for new motions is enforced 60 minutes before the Opinion Square closes.

4. A motion stop for adjustment motions is enforced 30 minutes before the Opinion Square closes.
5. An internal meeting time for the delegations is held during the period for signing and counting and checking the votes in order to give them time to prepare before the start of the plenary meeting. At least 30 minutes should be set aside for this after the Opinion Square closes.

VoteIT

In order for registration in VoteIT to work, the hashtag for opposing proposals must be used, unless it is a question of a motion concerning a text amendment. In motions concerning text amendments, it is a question of making changes in paragraphs instead.

Items going forward to the plenary meeting.

After the Opinion Square, motions that have not achieved 40% support in a vote from the Opinion Square must be left unprocessed in VoteIT.

Motions that have received the support of at least 40% of the register of voters are automatically put forward for further deliberation and decisions at the plenary meeting. In cases where a motion needs to be put forward despite lack of support from the Opinion Square, it must be actively put forward by a representative of the meeting chairs no later than two hours after the end of the Opinion Square.

A summary of the motions that are automatically put forward from the Opinion Square must be sent out to the delegation leaders no later than one hour after the end of the Square.