

# EQUITY

## **EQUITY CONFERENCE STANDING ORDERS**

*Approved by the Council: 12 September 2023*

\* References to Rules in these Standing Orders refer to the Rules in the Union's Rulebook

### **Annual Conference**

1. The Equity Conference shall take place each year in accordance with Rule T1.

### **Purpose**

2. The Equity Conference is the Union's annual forum for elected representatives from amongst the Union's committees and branches to meet with the Council to discuss and decide matters of Union general policy and changes to its Rules.
3. Elected representatives and Councillors shall abide by these Standing Orders, the Rules and the policies of the Union at all times in respect of the Equity Conference. If there is any inconsistency between the Rules and these Standing Orders, the Rules shall apply.

### **Chair**

4. The Equity Conference shall be chaired by the President or, in their absence, by one of the Vice-Presidents or the Honorary Treasurer.

### **Chair's Vote**

5. The President (or another Officer if presiding in their absence) shall have a vote and also a casting vote.

### **Decisions of the Chair**

6. The Chair's decision (on any point) shall be binding unless it is challenged by not less than ten members entitled to vote, in which case, the conference shall then immediately vote on whether to uphold the Chair's ruling. If passed by a simple majority, the Chair's decision shall apply.

## Conduct

7. All attendees at the Equity Conference shall:
  - (a) abide by the procedures set out in these Standing Orders and the Rules; and,
  - (b) refrain from behaviour that contravenes Rule D14.
8. A failure to do so may result in disciplinary action in accordance with Rule S.

## Conference Motions

9. The conference agenda shall include the conference motions and any Council amendments for discussion at conference.
10. "Motions" are proposals for the Union to take action or a stand on an issue.
11. Each conference motion shall be moved and seconded before it is opened up for discussion. "Moved" means formally confirming support for the motion. "Seconded" means formally confirming further support for the motion.
12. The Chair shall call for a mover and seconder for each motion and amendment who shall state their name and whom they represent.

## Speakers

13. Movers may speak for not more than five minutes in support of the motion they move. Seconders of the motion, and the movers and seconders of amendments, may speak for not more than three minutes.
14. Elected representatives and Councillors wishing to speak for or against the motion shall raise their voting cards. If called on by the Chair, they shall state their name and whom they represent. They may then speak for not more than three minutes.
15. The mover of the motion shall be given a right of reply of not more than three minutes by the Chair.
16. All speakers may remain in their seat in the body of the hall, rather than speak from the rostrum, if they wish. All speakers are encouraged to speak from the rostrum, if possible, so that they can be seen by those in the hall and on the screen transmissions. Speakers who remain in their seats must wait for the roving microphone to be provided before they start speaking.
17. Attendees shall not interrupt speakers other than to raise a point of procedure or a question (see below).

## **Points of Procedure & Questions**

18. An attendee wishing to raise a point of procedure or a question shall first raise their voting card. The Chair shall decide on any point of procedure or question. The Chair may, if they so decide, refer the point to the Conference Business Committee for later decision.
19. A point of procedure is an appeal to the Chair on a matter of conference procedure. A question is a request for information, or a clarification on conference procedure.

## **Withdrawal & Remittance of Motions**

20. Requests at the conference to withdraw a motion, to composite (join together) motions or any other request that may alter the conference timetable shall not be permitted from the floor of the conference. All such requests must be made to the Conference Business Committee in its committee room.
21. A motion that has been moved and seconded at conference may not then be withdrawn or remitted to the Council by the mover without the consent of conference.

## **Chair's Interruption**

22. If the Chair stands during a debate, the representative or Councillor speaking shall immediately give way and shall wait for the Chair's permission to continue.

## **Voting**

23. Only elected representatives and Councillors shall be allowed to vote at Equity Conference.
24. All voting shall be by a show of voting cards.
25. Members of Equity staff shall be appointed as tellers (the people who count the votes).
26. A motion is passed if two-thirds of those voting for and against vote in favour of it.
27. A motion that achieves a majority but fails to reach a two-thirds majority shall be dealt with in accordance with Rule T16.

## **Unfinished Business**

28. If, for any reason, conference business is not completed by the last day of conference, the business shall be remitted to the Council who shall decide on the appropriate action in response.

## **Stewards**

29. Stewards, who shall be members of Equity staff, shall be responsible for admittance to the conference floor and all attendees, including authorised visitors, shall provide their entry credentials on request.

## **Photography & Recordings**

30. Only the Union's designated official photographer/s may take photographs or videos or any form of audio recording in the conference hall.

## **Flyers**

31. No Councillor, representative, other member or authorised guest shall place any flyer on the tables in the conference hall.

## **Alteration & Suspension of Standing Orders**

32. These Standing Orders shall not be altered without the prior approval of the Council.
33. No motion to suspend these Standing Orders shall be permitted.

## **Interpretation**

34. The Council shall interpret these Standing Orders if in dispute. The Council shall decide on any conference matter where the Standing Orders are silent. In both cases, the Council's decision shall be final and binding.

## **Rules of Debate**

35. All other matters of procedure are governed by Rule V. Rules of Debate in the Union's Rulebook.

## **Copies of the Rules & Standing Orders**

36. Copies of these Standing Orders and the Union's Rules are available to view and download on the Union's website at <https://www.equity.org.uk/about-us/how-were-run/rules-of-the-union/>