Parliamentary Procedure and Rules of Order: Standing Orders, Motions and Voting

4 – 8 October 2027
Paris - Right Bank business hotel



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Introduction:

Parliamentary procedure decides whether a council or assembly reaches valid, defensible decisions. When quorum is miscounted, motions are taken out of order, amendments pile up unresolved or the chair's rulings go unchallenged, resolutions can be contested and minority members lose their voice. This Core Concept course trains members and secretariat staff of councils, assemblies, consultative and municipal bodies and statutory boards to apply rules of order on the floor: standing orders, motions and their precedence, debate, points of order, voting and the official record. Participants produce a Chair's Session Script and Annotated Standing Orders Pack.

Course Objectives:

- Interpret the standing orders of a deliberative body, including quorum, notice, order of business and the authority of the parliamentary manual
- Handle main, subsidiary, privileged and incidental motions in their correct order of precedence, from moving and seconding to putting the question
- Process primary and secondary amendments and manage debate within speaking turns and time limits
- Raise, rule on and resolve points of order, parliamentary inquiries and appeals from the decision of the chair
- Select the voting method and the majority each question requires and declare the result so it stands in the official record
- Draft or amend standing order provisions and a chair's script for a body the participant serves

Target Audience:

- Elected or appointed members of councils, assemblies and consultative bodies who move, debate and vote on motions
- Chairs, deputy chairs and presiding officers responsible for rulings and order in plenary sittings
- Clerks and secretariat staff who prepare the order paper, advise the chair on procedure and keep the journal of proceedings
- Members and staff of statutory boards and municipal bodies who apply formal rules of order to public decisions
- Legal and procedural advisers who interpret standing orders and draft amendments to them
- Committee secretaries who prepare committee reports for consideration by the full assembly

CONCEPT

Course Outline:

Day 1: Deliberative Assemblies and the Purpose of Standing Orders

- Principles of Parliamentary Law: Majority Rule, Minority Rights and One Question at a Time
- Hierarchy of Rules: Founding Instrument, Standing Orders, Special Rules and the Parliamentary Manual
- Quorum Rules: Counting, Loss of Quorum and Business Permitted Without It
- Notice of Sittings, Order Paper and the Standard Order of Business
- Procedural Health Check of a Participant's Current Standing Orders

Day 2: Motions, Precedence and the Robert's Rules Framework

- Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised as a Parliamentary Authority
- Main Motions: Moving, Seconding, Stating and Putting the Question
- Subsidiary Motions Ladder: Postpone Indefinitely, Amend, Refer, Postpone, Limit Debate, Previous Question, Lay on the Table
- Privileged Motions: Orders of the Day, Question of Privilege, Recess and Adjourn
- Incidental Motions: Suspend the Rules, Objection to Consideration and Division of the Question

Day 3: Presiding, Amending and Managing Debate

- Presiding Officer's Powers, Impartiality and Scripted Wording for Each Stage
- Primary and Secondary Amendments, Substitute Motions and Germaneness Tests
- Assignment of the Floor, Speaking Order, Time Limits and Closure of Debate
- Voting Methods: Voice Vote, Show of Hands, Rising Vote, Roll Call and Ballot
- Majority Thresholds: Simple Majority, Two-Thirds and Majority of the Entire Membership

Day 4: Rulings, Appeals, Committees and the Official Record

- Points of Order, Parliamentary Inquiries and Rulings From the Chair
- Appeal From the Decision of the Chair and Handling Disorderly Conduct
- Reconsider, Rescind and Take From the Table: Reopening Decided Questions
- Committee of the Whole, Select Committees and Consideration of Committee Reports
- Oral and Written Questions, Interpellation Overview and the Verbatim or Summary Journal of Proceedings

Day 5: Simulated Sitting and the Chair's Session Script

- Standing Orders Amendment Drafting: Notice, Wording and Adoption Vote
- Simulated Plenary Sitting Part One: Order Paper, Quorum Call and Main Motion
- Simulated Plenary Sitting Part Two: Competing Amendments, Point of Order and Appeal
- Simulated Division, Result Declaration and Journal Entry Drafting
- Chair's Session Script and Annotated Standing Orders Pack Review Panel

Skills You Will Gain:

- Standing Orders Interpretation
- Motion Precedence Handling
- Presiding and Chairing Formal Sittings
- Amendment Processing
- Procedural Rulings and Appeals
- Voting Procedure and Majority Calculation
- Order Paper Preparation
- Journal of Proceedings Recording

Why Attend This Course:

- Leave with a Chair's Session Script and Annotated Standing Orders Pack ready for your own council, assembly or board
- Move, amend and oppose motions with confidence because you know which motion is in order at each moment
- Rehearse a full sitting under time pressure, including a contested ruling and an appeal, before facing one in public
- Compare procedural practice with members and clerks from municipal, consultative, statutory and professional bodies

Conclusion:

Sound parliamentary procedure lets an assembly decide by majority while protecting the right of every member to be heard. The week moves from the principles of parliamentary law and the purpose of standing orders, through motions and their precedence, presiding, amendments, debate and voting, to rulings, appeals, reopening decided questions, committee reports and the journal of proceedings. The final day runs a simulated sitting from quorum call to recorded division and closes with each participant presenting a Chair's Session Script and Annotated Standing Orders Pack.