

EQUITY

DEPUTIES COMMITTEES 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

Establishment

1. The Council may establish and maintain such Deputies Committees as it decides from time to time.
2. The Union's Deputies Committees are:

Committee	Committee's Area
Opera Deputies	Members engaged in the standing opera companies
Student Deputies	Student members
West End Deputies	Members engaged on a SOLT/Equity West End contract in London

3. Deputies Committees are Industrial Committees under the Rules. However, their own Standing Orders apply (this document).

Role

4. The role of the Deputies Committees shall be to:
 - (a) advise the Council and take action on any matters that fall within their area;
 - (b) work with others, including government and other bodies relevant to their area; and
 - (c) serve as a channel of communication between the Council and members in their area.
5. The Deputies Committees shall act in accordance with these Standing Orders, the Rules and the policies of the Union at all times. If there is any inconsistency between the Rules and these Standing Orders, the Rules shall apply.

Authority

6. Except for the action at 7. below, any action taken on behalf of the Union by the Deputies Committees shall be subject to prior approval by the Council or the General Secretary acting on its behalf.
7. The Deputies Committees (with the exception of the Student Deputies) may submit and settle industrial claims that fall within their respective areas without the prior approval of the Council.
8. All such industrial claims and settlements shall be:
 - (a) in accordance with the law;
 - (b) in accordance with the policy and directions of the Council.

Members

9. Each Deputies Committee shall consist of members elected as Deputies by either a company or production in the relevant industrial area (see 2.) or by student members on a course where participants are eligible for Equity Student Membership.

Term

10. Deputies Committees do not have a fixed term. The members remain in place for as long as they remain Deputies of a relevant company/production/course (unless removed in accordance with Rule H4).

Secretary

11. Each Committee shall have a Secretary who shall be a member of Equity staff appointed from time to time by the General Secretary. They do not form part of the quorum and may not vote or propose or second a motion.
12. The Secretary shall:
 - (a) convene Committee meetings;
 - (b) prepare the meeting agenda in consultation with the Chair;
 - (c) record a note of meetings to include the date, attendees, apologies, motions/decisions and agreed action points;
 - (d) conduct the elections for the Committee's Officers, Equity Conference representatives and any delegates;

- (e) advise the Chair on the Rules and procedure; and
- (f) liaise between the Committee and the General Secretary.

Committee Officers

- 13. The Committees shall have a:
 - (a) Chair; and
 - (b) Vice-Chair.
- 14. The Chair and the Vice-Chair shall be elected from amongst the Committee's members every two years, between the Committee's first and second meetings after the date of the general election of the Union's directly elected committees.
- 15. Committee Officer candidates may stand on a job-share basis.
- 16. The ballot shall be conducted by the Secretary by email. Candidates are not required to have a proposer or seconder. They may submit an election statement of up to 150 words to be circulated with the ballot papers.
- 17. The Chair or, in their absence, the Vice-Chair, shall preside at all meetings.

Vacancies

- 18. Deputies Committees may not co-opt members. Only eligible Deputies may sit on the Committee.

Union Officers

- 19. Officers of the Union may attend and speak at meetings of the Deputies Committees but may not vote, propose or second motions or form part of the quorum at a meeting unless otherwise eligible to sit on the Committee.

Councillor Observers

- 20. Councillors elected to an industrial seat on the Council shall attend the meetings of the corresponding Industrial Committee as observers. If more than one Councillor sits as a Councillor for the same industrial area, all of those Councillors shall attend. If, for any reason, there is no representative Councillor, the Council will appoint an observer from among its number.

21. Observers shall not vote, propose or second motions or form part of the quorum for a meeting unless otherwise eligible to sit on the Committee. Their role is to observe the meeting and act as a direct channel of communication between the Committee and the Council.

Committee Delegates

22. The Committee may elect delegates from amongst their number to organisations, meetings or events relevant to the Committee's work.

Committee Meetings

23. The Committee shall meet up to five times a year on dates to be decided by the Secretary in consultation with the Chair. A year for these purposes runs from the date of the general election of the Union's directly elected committees.
24. If further meetings are considered necessary these may be convened at the discretion of the General Secretary.
25. All meetings (including the joint meetings at 29. below) shall end no later than three hours after their start. If business is not complete, time may be extended by up to 30 minutes on a simple majority vote.
26. Attendance shall be in person or online (or a combination of both) at the discretion of the Secretary in consultation with the Chair.
27. Votes are passed by a simple majority.
28. The Secretary may record meetings to assist them with minute keeping but no other recording shall be permitted.

Chairs' Joint Meetings

29. The Chairs (or in their absence, the Vice-Chairs) of the Industrial Committees shall meet together with the Chairs of the Union's Equalities and National Committees twice a year to share information on the work and priorities of their respective Committees.
30. The joint meetings shall be chaired by the President or another Officer of the Union.

Working Parties

31. With the prior approval of the relevant member of the Secretariat, the Deputies Committees may establish working parties, made up of Committee members, to look at specific issues relevant to their area.

32. With the prior approval of the relevant member of the Secretariat, up to four non-Committee members with the relevant experience may also sit on a working party.

Working with Others

33. With the prior approval of the Council, the Deputies Committees may work with other organisations whose aims are the same or similar to the Union's Aims.

Quorum

34. The minimum number of attendees for Committee meetings shall be one member from at least two companies/productions/courses. If this number are not present within 30 minutes of the time appointed for the meeting to start, the meeting shall be dissolved.

Agenda

35. The Secretary, in consultation with the Chair, shall prepare the agenda for Committee meetings. The agenda shall be circulated with notice of the meeting to all Committee members at least seven days in advance of the meeting.

Motions to Committee

36. Members of the Committee may bring a motion to Committee on any issue they reasonably believe merits Committee discussion.
37. All motions shall be:
 - (a) in accordance with these Standing Orders, the Rules and the policies of the Union;
 - (b) proposed and seconded by two Committee members; and
 - (c) received in advance by the Secretary not less than 14 days before the meeting.
38. A motion that arises directly from a matter on the agenda and that does not propose any additional matter for discussion may be proposed, seconded and voted on without the need for prior notice.

Rescinding a Motion

39. A motion passed at a Committee meeting shall not be rescinded at any subsequent meeting unless Committee members are provided with notice of the motion to rescind of not less than seven days.

Motions to the Council

40. The Committee may submit motions to the Council. Such motions shall be received by the General Secretary by 9am on the Monday immediately preceding the circulation of the Council agenda on the following Friday. The Council shall consider the motion and provide a written response. The Council shall consider no more than one motion from each branch or committee at each of its meetings.

Rules of Debate

41. Rules V1 to V14 shall apply to Committee meetings.

Conflict of Interest

42. A conflict of interest is any situation in which a Committee member's personal interests (financial or otherwise) may unduly influence or may *appear* to unduly influence the member's participation in Committee business.
43. A member who believes that they may have a conflict of interest shall declare that this is the case before the relevant item is discussed. The declaration shall be recorded in the minutes.
44. A member who declares a conflict of interest may remain in the meeting and speak and/or vote on the item.
45. In addition to the continuing obligations above, all Committee members serving for 23 months or longer must complete a Declaration of Interest form.

Decisions Outside of Meetings

46. Committees may make decisions by email or in an online forum outside of scheduled meetings if the decision relates to:
 - (a) an industrial agreement including claims and on-going negotiations;
or
 - (b) a debate which was started at a scheduled meeting and where it was agreed by a majority vote that further discussion was needed.
47. A decision made outside of a scheduled meeting shall only be valid if agreed by a majority of all Committee members and approved by the Secretary. At their discretion, the Secretary may require the matter to be taken to a vote at the next scheduled meeting.
48. Committee members shall provide the Secretary with their email addresses.

Chair's Vote

49. The Chair (or Vice-Chair, if presiding in their absence) shall not vote on any question at a meeting unless there is a tied vote when they may exercise a casting vote.

Decisions of the Chair

50. The Chair's decision (on any point) shall be binding unless it is challenged by not less than two members entitled to vote, in which case, all members entitled to vote shall then immediately vote on whether to uphold the Chair's ruling. If passed by a simple majority, the Chair's decision shall apply.
51. No challenge shall be permitted to the Chair's decision whether or not to accept a motion to suspend Standing Orders.

Equity Conference

52. Deputies Committees are Industrial Committees under the Union's Rules. Deputies Committees may therefore each elect three representatives to send to the Equity Conference (and any Special Conference) from amongst their members.
53. Candidates shall be proposed and seconded by two other Committee members. The vote shall be by a secret ballot of all Committee members.
54. If an elected representative is unable to attend any day of the Conference, they shall immediately notify the General Secretary who shall invite the next unsuccessful candidate to attend in their place for that day.
55. The elected representatives shall discuss the conference agenda with the Committee in advance of the conference and report back to the Committee on conference business.
56. Each representative shall be free to decide how to vote at conference.
57. Each Deputies Committee may submit one motion for debate at Equity Conference in accordance with Rule T18.

Conduct

58. Attendees at Committee meetings shall:
 - (a) abide by the procedures set out in these Standing Orders; and,
 - (b) refrain from behaviour that contravenes Rule D14.

59. A failure to do so may result in disciplinary action in accordance with Rule S.

Alteration & Suspension of Standing Orders

60. These Standing Orders shall not be altered without the prior approval of the Council.
61. The Chair may accept a motion to suspend these Standing Orders to allow a matter of urgency not on the agenda to be discussed. A motion to suspend shall be proposed and seconded by two Committee members.
62. If passed by a two-thirds majority of those voting for and against, the suspension shall apply for not more than 30 minutes.

Interpretation

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

Copies of the Rules & Standing Orders

64. 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/>