

Educational Institute of Scotland

Notes of Guidance for EIS Members on the Drafting of Motions and Amendments

The purpose of these notes is to assist EIS members in the drafting of motions or amendments. Any member of the EIS may submit a motion, or amendment to motion for the Local Association AGM.

The competence of the proposal is determined by the Local Association President's Committee. The President's Committee also decides the order in which motions etc. will be taken. Where a motion or amendment is found to be incompetent, it will not appear on the agenda and will not be debated, however, a full explanation as to the reasons for declaring the motion or amendment to be incompetent will be provided.

Motions must be submitted to the Local Association Secretary to arrive at least 15 working days before the Local Association Annual General Meeting. Those motions found by the President's Committee to be competent are circulated to all Local Association members and can be amended. Proposed amendments to motions may be sent to the Local Association Secretary or proposed at the Annual General Meeting itself.

EIS members should do everything possible to ensure that motions and amendments submitted are in a suitable form, paying particular attention to the points below.

- (a) **The correct body** - As motions are intended for submission to and debate by the Local Association, they should begin "That this Local Association ...".
- (b) **Need to be specific** - The commonest single reason for motions being found incompetent is that they are "lacking in specification". What this means is that, if the motion became a resolution, the Local Association would find difficulty in processing it because of doubt about its meaning. Usually, the problem lies in ambiguities of wording or internal contradiction.
- (c) **Royal Charter** - The objects of the EIS, as set out in the Royal Charters, are (a) the promotion of sound learning, (b) the advancement of the interests of education in Scotland, (c) the promotion of the interests and welfare of teachers generally in Scotland. While these objects are wide, motions are sometimes received which are not clearly related to any of them and these are likely to be found incompetent.
- (d) **Avoid argument** - Motions should not include debating points or arguments. The Local Association General meeting is the place for argument, and it is bad practice for a motion to contain a preview of the arguments which will be used in its support.
- (e) **Accurate and concise** - A good motion is one which is concise in its wording, unambiguous in its intention and accurate in its references to documents, reports or bodies.

- (f) **Prior advice** - The Local Association Secretary will provide informal advice on questions of competence, but please note that this advice must be sought **before** a motion is formally submitted to the Local Association Secretary.
- (g) **Single subject** - Wherever possible a motion should deal with one subject.
- (h) **Conduct of debate** - Where the mover of a proposition is not in attendance when the proposition is called for debate, that proposition falls automatically. You must arrange a seconder for your motion or amendment as motions or amendments not seconded will fall automatically. A member who formally seconds a motion or amendment may speak at a later period in the debate but should ask to reserve his or her right to speak. Movers of motions and amendments are allowed to speak for a maximum of ten minutes and other speakers for a maximum of five minutes. Members are allowed to speak only once on the same motion or amendment, but movers of proposals have the right to reply to the discussion, but this reply is limited to five minutes. Repliers must strictly confine themselves to answering points raised by previous speakers and must not introduce any new matter into the discussion.