

# How to Assemble

A Written Guide on What Assembly is, How it Works, and Who is on it





## Welcome

Members of AMS Assembly,

I am Amir-Ali Golrokhian-Sani, and I will be Secretary of Internal Affairs for this year. I am overwhelmingly thrilled to be your support throughout the Assembly experience for 2022-2023. Hopefully, this year will be a return to completely in-person activities, allowing us to all be in the same room again for Assembly.

In this document, you will find information on the general functions of the Assembly. Assembly is structured very much like Parliament as a space where different policies and bills are presented and voted on. This space allows AMS Governance to demonstrate transparency in its decision-making, by allowing members-at-large to be present. The majority of the voting seats in Assembly belong to Faculty Societies, allowing us to operate like a representative democracy, with Faculty Societies almost representing parties or regions. In the upcoming pages, more information will be provided on Assembly membership and policy and procedures.

Now for some background, Assembly is older than Canada itself, so it is one of oldest governing bodies in the country. Furthermore, we are the one of the largest student government conglomerates, with the AMS being a roughly \$20 million corporation. Our operations are split into the AMS Board and Assembly, meaning we all have a major responsibility to the students to operate this organization to the best of our abilities. Our decisions can impact many students and stakeholders, which is a reality of which all members should be aware.

Everyone in Assembly, voting member or not, has a role to play. Representatives are meant to bring forth perspectives from their constituencies and contribute to policy changes with the best interest of their faculty and the AMS in mind. Hire and appointed members bring forth their expertise and perspectives to guide decision-making. While often seen as a mundane part of the role, AMS Assembly requires its members to be attentive, engaging, and resourceful during debates and queries. Do the research into the structures of the student governments here at Queen's, collaborate, innovate, read reports fully, encourage your constituents to come out to Assembly, and most of all, ask questions. We can all benefit from having more voices in the conversation.

The AMS is made up of all of us. We are in this together regardless of faculty or affiliation. The students you represent, the ideas you want to see made, those policy changes, that contested election you want to see, grants that will be established and more begin at Assembly.

Let's do something we'll be proud of!

*Ductu, Patrocinium, Regimen [lead, advocate, govern]*

**Amir-Ali Golrokhian-Sani (he/him/his)**

Secretary of Internal Affairs

LaSalle Building, 146 Stuart Street

[secretariat@ams.queensu.ca](mailto:secretariat@ams.queensu.ca)

<https://www.myams.org/about/governance>



Hello everyone,

My name is Tiffany Li Wu, and I will be your AMS Speaker for the 2022-2023 term. Although I will only serve you for a few assemblies, I am beyond excited to see everyone. AMS has been a big part of my student life since 2nd year. I am the Head Gecko of NEWTS Orientation under the Campus Activities Commission, Housing Resource Centre officer turned manager under the Commission of External Affairs, a club President for an AMS ratified club with the Club Commission and being the AMS Speaker landed me under the Secretary of Internal Affairs. Outside of being all over the place in AMS, I am in my 4th year with a major in Global Development Studies and a minor in Politics Studies with a Certificate of Business.

AMS assembly is where student voices are heard, and student leadership shines. My experience of attending AMS Assemblies and seeing how each Member works to understand how we as students can better the lives of other students made it clear that round table discussion is the best forum for collaboration.

Each one of you who attends the Assembly has a valuable perspective to bring forth, and your representation of our diverse student body is what the Assembly values the most. Therefore, my role as the Speaker is to ensure that the discussion in Assembly is productive, effective and enjoyable. Being an involved student is hard work and takes determination and time management to be committed, so I vow to respect your voice, time, and energy during Assembly. The AMS, as the overarching student government at Queen's, requires your consistent engagement in decision-making and debate. Therefore, come to Assembly prepared and encourage those from your affiliation to attend to ensure that more students are heard and represented.

AMS Assembly is where collaboration, innovation and changes happen. So, let's get together and represent the voices that can change our student's life and more that come after us!

**Tiffany Li Wu (she/her/hers)**

Speaker

[speaker@ams.queensu.ca](mailto:speaker@ams.queensu.ca)

## Composition of Assembly

The Assembly is made up of voting and non-voting members. The voting members include AMS President, AMS Vice-President Operations, and AMS Vice-President University Affairs, as well as elected representatives from each of the 9 faculty societies. Each of the 9 faculty societies shall have representatives that sit on assembly based on the percentage of AMS members in the faculty society:

≥45.00%	7 representatives
35.00-44.99%	6 representatives
25.00-34.99%	5 representatives
15.00-24.99%	4 representatives
5.00-14.99%	3 representatives
3.00-4.99%	2 representatives
2.00-2.99%	1 representative
≤0%-1.99%	0 representatives

The following chart outlines the projected seats of Assembly for the coming year.

<b>Faculty Society</b>	<b>2023-24 Seats on Assembly</b>
Arts and Science Undergraduate Society	7
Engineering Society	4
Physical and Health Education and Kinesiology Students' Association	2
Computing Students' Association	3
Concurrent Education Students' Association	3
Commerce Society	3
Health Sciences Society	2
Nursing Science Society	1

## **Functions of Assembly**

AMS Assembly is the highest legislative body for undergraduate students at Queen's. It is the ultimate decision-making body for the "government" affairs of the AMS. Therefore, the Assembly has full power, within the restrictions of the AMS Constitution, to create, alter, and/or terminate any policy statements which are under Society Policy, and to deal with any reports, recommendations and/or conclusions of any groups, committees, and organizations which fall within its purview.

Assembly shall aim to fulfill its mandate by debating and dealing with any reports, including their recommendations and conclusions; with motions, as submitted by the Executive Team, Assembly, or the student body at large; with policy decisions regarding the official stance of the Society on any issue within the purview of Assembly; and with granting allocations for all moneys assigned to grants in the current Assembly Budget. The Assembly shall also be empowered to direct the Executive and/or the Executive Team to represent the Society where it is deemed necessary, and to carry out various duties in the interest of the student body.

Assembly is directly responsible for the actions and activities of the various commissions; all Assembly committees and any groups, organizations and clubs are within its jurisdiction. Assembly shall have the authority, except as otherwise specified, to appoint representatives of the Society to any committees, commissions, boards etc., external to the Society. Such appointees shall report to the Assembly at least twice per term or be subject to removal.

## **Reports to Assembly and Students**

### **Who submits written reports?**

- AMS Executive Team (the Executive, Commissioners)
- Faculty Societies
- Ex-Officio: Senate Caucus Chair, Rector, Chair of Board, Undergraduate Student Trustee, Residence Society, Queen's Student Alumni Association

### **What is generally included in written reports?**

Written reports are to update the student body about events and important discussions. They encourage dialogue and allow people to ask questions and become aware of the issues and events that are pertinent to your position. Most reports are one or two pages and can vary in format – bullet points, paragraphs etc. The written reporting system was created to cut down the length of Assembly; therefore, **members should not repeat the content of their written reports during oral reports.**

### **What kinds of questions about reports are appropriate?**

Try and pose questions that are beneficial to a large portion of the AMS members. Minor issues of less materiality can be discussed later. Please note that not all questions need to be answered at an Assembly, and many questions can be answered before or after meetings. Contact information for other members is available from the Office of the Secretariat.

## **At-Assembly Guidelines**

### **The Speaker**

The Speaker is vested with the authority of presiding over meetings. They enforce the Rules of Order and ensure that meetings run along the guidelines set by them. Policy concerning the Speaker can be found in the policy appendix of this guide.

## **Attendance**

Each meeting, an attendance list will be circulated. You are required to sign your name and make any corrections on the sheet. The Secretary will keep an updated spreadsheet of attendance. If members are aware of future absences, they should make a statement during Member Statements as an act of courtesy. A member can leave Assembly early by raising a point of personal privilege that requests permission from the Speaker to leave the meeting early (voting members only). Absence from AMS Assembly due to religious holidays do not count on the attendance record of an elected member. Please inform the Speaker or Secretary if you are planning to miss a meeting, or if you will be sending a proxy.

If an Assembly member misses **four** Assembly meetings, the Speaker may put forward a motion to suspend that member's voting rights. Sending a *proxy* will still count as an absence.

## **Quorum**

A majority plus one of voting Assembly members, not including proxies, shall form a quorum for the transaction of business. In the event of the above number not being a whole number then the next highest whole number shall constitute quorum. If the quorum is not met, the meeting shall be adjourned and the time and names of members still present shall be recorded in the minutes.

## **Online Assembly?**

If this is the case, as per policy it will be announced to all members and the student body. We will resume with online instruction and have an announcement as to when the next in-person assembly will be held.

## **Summer Assembly/President's Caucus**

Formal SA/PC meetings take place once a month during the summer, with voting powers being delegated to FacSoc Presidents and the AMS Executive, with agendas being posted for students to see on the website. This period in the summer is for planning and updates, getting ready to welcome everyone back in September! The first Assembly back, there will be a review of all passed motions, and Fall-Winter reps will have a chance to ask questions and vote.

## **Basic Rules of Order**

AMS assembly follows Bourinot's rules of order. At an in-person assembly, report to the following guidelines.

To do this:	Say:	May you interrupt the Speaker?	Must you be seconded?	Is the motion debatable?	Is the motion amendable?	What majority is required?
Move a motion	I move...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Change a motion. You may not merely amend to negate.	I move that the motion be amended to read...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
End debate on a motion	1) I call the question. 2) I move that council proceed to the next order of business.	1) No 2) No	1) Yes 2) Yes	1) Yes 2) No	1) No 2) No	1) Majority - motions on which question is called will be debated at the next meeting and the motion fails 2) Majority
End the meeting - the chair can simply call adjournment without a motion if all business is complete.	I move that the meeting adjourn.	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Consider something out of its scheduled order.	I move the agenda be amended in order to deal with the following item...	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Postpone further discussion on a motion until later in the meeting.	I move that the motion be tabled until...	No	Yes	Yes – only to time	Yes	Majority
Postpone consideration of a motion until a future meeting.	I move that the motion be postponed until...	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Have a motion studied more before voting on it.	I move that the motion be referred to... for further study.	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority
Raise a matter previously tabled (if at a different time from when was decided).	I move that the motion about... be lifted from the table.	No	Yes	No	No	Majority
Reconsider a motion already voted on earlier in the meeting.	I move that the motion about... be reconsidered at the next meeting and provide written notice requesting that the matter be raised at the next meeting.	No	Yes	Yes	No	2/3 Majority



Object to something which prevents your continued participation (e.g., excessive noise).	Point of Privilege.	Yes	No	No	No	Vote taken, Chair rules
Seek clarification from the previous speaker.	Point of Information.	Yes – if urgent	No	No	No	Vote taken, Chair rules
Overturn the ruling of the Chair.	I challenge the chair on...	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority
Enquire about procedure or consequences.	Point of Order.	Yes	No	Yes, only on the point	No	Vote taken, Chair rules
Object to incorrect procedure being used.	Point of Order.	Yes	No	Yes, only on the point	No	Vote taken, Chair rules

### **Point of Information**

May be used to:

- Contribute information which is important and relevant to the debate
- Ask for information which is important and relevant to the debate

May not be used to:

- Ask a long string of questions
- Make any statement of opinion

### **Point of Order**

A Point of Order may be raised whenever there is a suspected breach of the procedures of the AMS, such as, a constitutional violation or the Rules of Order which govern Assembly. Points of Order may interrupt anything except another Point of Order. A Point of Order does not constitute speaking to the motion that is under debate; however, it must be raised at the time of the offence. Once the point has been raised, the Speaker will rule and act accordingly.

### **Point of Personal Privilege**

May be used to:

- Correct a substantial misinterpretation or misrepresentation of your previous speech to the motion
- Bring to the attention of Assembly any personal insults or abuse directed at yourself

- Introduce new members of Assembly or Guest Speakers
- Request permission from the Speaker to leave the meeting early (voting members only)
- Request something (e.g., someone speak louder, you cannot see the speaker, etc.)

The Speaker must first recognize the member raising the point prior to them speaking.

Please note that **all voting members wishing to leave the meeting early must first rise on a Point of Personal Privilege** to ask the Speaker's permission to leave. Their departure is to be recorded in the minutes

## FAQ

I need to submit a report – how do I do that?

- Email it to the Secretariat as a Word file. Make sure you send it before the due date for reports has passed.

How can I get something included on the agenda?

- Email the Secretariat, requesting the addition to the agenda. Make sure you email before the due date for the agenda has passed.

I need to miss an Assembly, what should I do?

- Email the Secretariat, informing them of your upcoming absence and inform them of the person you will be sending as proxy. Make sure you email before the due date for the agenda has passed.

Where can I find due dates for reports?

- They are generally emailed to all known members of Assembly. You can email the Secretariat if you are not on the list.

Can members-at-large speak, and submit motions?

- They can speak during the Statements from Students section and should work with their representative(s) if they would like to submit a motion.

Assembly is the worst. Can we watch a movie instead?

- I... I guess if you get a majority vote?