

POSITION PAPER GUIDELINES

Writing a well-researched and substantive Position Paper is the best way to prepare for any Model United Nations conference. Through the position paper your delegation will express its ideas and policies by defining your nation-state's perspective on the issues at hand. Moreover, it is the means by which you bring all of your research together in a logical and succinct form.

At BMUN, we encourage our chairs to take on a mentor role in guiding delegates in their preparation for the conference in addition to chairing on the day of. This is why we have integrated position papers into our process. All position papers will not only be assessed as part of a delegate's performance, they will also be returned in the week prior to the conference with feedback to allow delegates to fine-tune their research.

BMUN has a great variety of committees. Therefore, there is no singular Position Paper structure. **While this section will outline the general guide for position papers, it is advised that delegates check their committee's page in case there are more specific assignments for their committee.** The following committees have more specific instructions for their position papers – BVC, CYBER, SC and ICJ.

OVERVIEW

Researching and writing a Position Paper go hand-in-hand. While researching will give you an overwhelming amount of information, it is through the Position Paper that you will be able to narrow in on the mission you have set before yourself. In writing the Position Paper, you will be able to understand the complexity of the situations and issues, as seen from your country's vantage point. To say it simply, you will be condensing the vast amounts of books, magazine articles, newspaper clippings, and websites you've collected down to just a few more comprehensible pages.

After breaking it down, your Position Paper should flow smoothly. In the end it should come to **between 5-10 pages per topic**. What you should aim for however is quality not quantity. If you're struggling to reach 4 pages, please don't include your country's national anthem to get that last line stretched onto page 4. This is a sign that you need to go back to the previous section and do more research. Overall, your Position Paper should exhibit the following:

- Comprehensive understanding of the situation
- An organized and argumentative structure
- Original thinking that follows with the policy of the represented state
- An attitude of seriousness to the issues in question

The Position Paper, ultimately, is your opportunity to develop a deep understanding of the issues presented in the committee, and thus will go a long way in preparing you for direct interaction and debate with other delegates.

REQUIREMENTS

One position paper is due per delegation for each topic on the committee agenda, whether the country has been assigned to a single delegate or a pair of delegates. On each submission delegates should use only their committee, country, and topic for identification purposes. **Personal and school names are not allowed for the purposes of blind grading.**

There are four required sections in the position paper, delegates have to identify each section they are working on clearly, and any prompts or questions they are responding to, where relevant.

The four sections are:

- I. Past and Current International Action (15%)
- II. Country's Position (25%)
- III. Proposed Solutions (30%)
- IV. Questions to Consider (20%)

In addition, the **chair's discretion on overall quality** will encompass **10% of the criteria**.

But delegates are advised to check their individual committee pages as the sections may differ committee to committee. More information on each section and what they comprise of is available under "Writing a Position Paper", at the end of this document.

Format

- Please submit in .doc, .docx, or .pdf
- 1 inch margins on all sides
- Indicate in your header your committee, country, and topic
 - please **do not** include your name or school name
- Typed, 12 point Times New Roman Font, double-spaced
- 5 page minimum, 10 page maximum; not including the bibliography
- All citations should be done in the MLA format

Submission Instructions

- You should have been emailed information for an account at huxley.bmun.org, specifically a username and password. If you do not have these, ask your advisor to reset your password (make sure the correct email is entered). A link labeled 'Position Paper' will appear next to where it says 'Profile'. Clicking on this will switch you to a page where you can then upload your paper for grading.
- Title your files Submission_Committee_Country
- If submitting your two position papers separately by topic, please indicate in the title as well using Topic1 or Topic 2 where appropriate
 - I.e. if you are in DISEC, and are representing Mauritania and submitting your position paper for topic 1, your file should be titled:
Submission_DISEC_Mauritania_Topic1

Position Papers are due on **February 5th** to be considered for the ***Best Position Paper Award***, and **February 12th** to be considered for ***any committee award***. Late submissions will not be considered, and submissions will be graded on a rolling basis. It is advised that delegates submit their position paper when they are done instead of waiting till 23:59PST the day of the deadline to get it in, to avoid technical difficulties.

PLAGIARISM AND CITATIONS

All position papers will be extensively cross-referenced through various sources, both online and in-print. If there is any evidence of using the work of others without citations, the delegate(s) will not be eligible for an award. Any school that has multiple cases of plagiarism may be reconsidered for a School Delegation Award. It is the responsibility of the delegate and the advisor to ensure this does not happen.

Delegates must also remember to correctly cite sources, and papers without any cited sources will not be accepted. For more information on how to use in-text MLA citations, visit [Purdue OWL](http://PurdueOWL).

WRITING A POSITION PAPER

To assist you further, here are explanations of the sections of a position paper that will give you an idea of what makes for good substantive content. These guidelines are meant to guide your research so it can be structured in a clear manner that builds upon each previous section to further inform your country's policy. Your committee's topic synopsis is a great place to begin understanding your topic, but **do not cite the topic synopsis for information**; your research should extend far beyond the synopsis.

Past and Current International Action (15%)

Briefly cover any international efforts to confront the issue in question, both past and present. It helps to focus more on solutions that remain relevant and continue to affect the issue, rather than explaining outdated solutions that have since become irrelevant.

Though some of these solutions are typically covered in the general topic synopsis provided by the chairs, we encourage delegates to delve into proposed solutions in greater depth as well as look at solutions beyond those in the topic synopsis. This not only guides your research, but will also help you to see how your own nation-state's policies correlate with the efforts of its allies and the committee at large. Feel free to explore solutions outside of the jurisdiction of the United Nations or your committee, as long as they remain within the broader scope of international or multilateral action (i.e. between multiple actors).

Quotes and references look great, however, be sure to add the analysis of them as well. Simply dropping quotes or resolutions into your paper will not be as helpful as if you analyze what is being proposed and extracting the policies or ideas you think are important for considering. If your nation-state has not played a role in addressing the issue, try to explain why, understanding the underlying rationale for their inaction will help guide future policy within your committees.

Country's Position (25%)

After looking at the international community's general stance and position towards the topic, this section should focus specifically on your country and their experience with the issue. You should explain your country's general attitudes towards the topic and what actions they have taken concerning the topic, both domestically and externally.

This may include positive behavior such as ratifying treaties, enacting policies, or making statements of support. You may also choose to examine negative forms of behavior such as ignoring international scrutiny over controversial policies, or prioritizing economic development over ethical issues. You can also look up your country's past voting records on various UN resolutions, and through their past actions you will be able to get an idea of how your country feels on certain issues.

Clearly every country has a different course of action, and what matters is not the multitude of actions your country has undertaken concerning the topic but critically analyzing your country's policy towards the issue and understanding motivations behind it.

Proposed Solutions (30%)

This section may seem the most difficult part of the position paper, but it helps to consider the different solutions you have available before coming to conference so you are prepared for debate. Your goal in this section is to propose a course of action that your country wishes the UN or your committee and other international actors to initiate to resolve or alleviate the problem. While you may have many great ideas for how to resolve the issues, remember to always stay in policy; make sure that any ideas you include correlate with your country's perspectives and values.

Questions to Consider (20%)

For the last section, your chairs have provided you with several key questions to focus on at the end of the topic synopsis. You are expected to **pick TWO** of the questions to answer, be sure to clearly identify which question you are answering and **answer no more than TWO**.

These questions are intended to inspire further research and thinking on the topic, mirroring practical and ethical dilemmas that plague decision making on an international level. Your goal is to answer your question of choice analytically, taking into account the varied arguments and perspectives that define the issue at hand. It helps to look at both sides of one issue and address the counter arguments, even if you don't agree with it. Please refrain from simply restating information from previous sections, or giving pure opinion. As stated above, your responses should reflect additional research on your country's perspective.

Chair's Discretion (10%)

Additional consideration will be made to assess the overall quality of the submission, whether in the areas of comprehension such as grammar and flow of writing, or the delegate's clarity of ideas and robustness of explanation.

References

As mentioned in the guidelines, your bibliography should follow the standard MLA format for citations, this applies to both your bibliography as well as your in-text citations. Please remember to cite all external sources of information you use, not just for quotes but also for statistics, maps, and even past solutions and resolutions. Your bibliography will not count into the length of your position paper.

In-text citations should follow the format of (Author, Year), i.e. (Author, 2016). Where an author is not available, you may use a shortened phrase from the title, i.e. ("Syria: The Story of the Conflict").

In the actual bibliography, where applicable the format should be: Last Name, First Name. (Year) Title. Publisher, Page Number. I.e. March, J. and J. Olsen (1984) "The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life", American Political Science Review 78: 734-49.

Likewise if it is an article and there is no author available, you may proceed as follows:
Title, Publisher/ News Outlet, Date, Website Link. I.e. "Syria: The Story of the Conflict."
BBC News. 11 March 2016. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-26116868>

For more information on how to use in-text MLA citations, visit [Purdue OWL](#).