



VAASAN YLIOPISTON
YLIOPPILASKUNTA

Best Practices for Associations

This is an unofficial translation of the *Hyvät yhdistyskäytännöt* document created by the Student Union of the University of Vaasa. This document has been translated by VYY's Communications Specialist Aino Hyryläinen for informative purposes to international students.



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Annual Meetings

A statutory annual meeting (aka ordinary meeting) is a meeting where the association's members decide on matters concerning the association's activities and finances. It is usually organized once a year (or more, depending on the association's rules), and the items on the agenda are determined by the association's rules and the Finnish Associations Act.

If the association holds its statutory annual meeting once a year, the items on the agenda are as follows:

1. Opening the meeting

2. The meeting comes to order

- Electing a chairperson for the meeting
 - This is usually someone other than the chairperson of the Executive Committee, but it can also be the same person.
 - Electing a secretary for the meeting
 - The secretary is in charge of keeping the minutes of the meeting.
 - Electing the minutes examiners and vote counters
 - Their task is to check the accuracy of the minutes and count the votes in case of voting.
 - Minutes examiners and vote counters must be present for the entire meeting.
 - Minutes examiners should have deputy examiners in case of unexpected disruptions.
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3. Declaring the meeting duly convened and quorate

- Checking that the meeting convenes in accordance with the regulations (e.g. that the invitation was sent to members on time).
 - Ensuring there is a sufficient number of members present for the meeting to be quorate (ie. that the meeting has the power of decision).
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4. Approval of the agenda

- Matters discussed in the meeting are written down on an agenda, which is approved at the beginning of the meeting.
 - The agenda notes only what decision is being made (usually as a title), or the Executive Committee has submitted a proposal on the matter.
 - If a participant wants to add an item to the agenda, it is proposed during this point in the meeting.
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5. Presenting the annual activity report, the financial statement, and the statement of the performance auditors

- The annual activity report:
 - The Executive Committee presents the activities of the association in the past year.
 - The financial statement:
 - The closing of accounts. The Executive Committee or the treasurer presents the financial situation of the association, including revenues and expenses and the balance sheet.
 - The statement of the performance auditors:
 - A statement on whether the financial matters and the association's activities are in order and handled according to regulations.
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6. Confirmation of the annual activity report

- The meeting will confirm the association's annual activity report (either without changes, or members may propose changes to the report).
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7. Confirmation of the financial statement and granting discharge

- Confirmation of the financial statement:
 - Members decide whether they confirm the financial statement of the previous year.
- Granting discharge to Executive Committee members and other liable people:
 - Members vote on whether the Executive Committee members are granted discharge from the previous financial year. This means that they will not be charged compensation for possible errors if all matters have been handled according to regulations.



- If the annual activity report and the financial statement are confirmed (that is, they don't include any serious issues), the Executive Committee should be granted discharge.
 - If the result is no, members may vote on further action.
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8. Confirming the membership fee

- The meeting decides on the membership fee amount for the upcoming year. (This may be dependent on the association's rules.)
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9. The plan of action and budget for the upcoming year

- The Plan of Action:
 - The Executive Committee submits a proposal for the association's activity in the upcoming year (e.g. events and projects). Members may propose additions or changes. The meeting then confirms the Plan of Action.
 - The budget:
 - The meeting confirms the budget for the upcoming year: how much money is needed and where it comes from. This is an estimate and not binding.
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10. Electing the Executive Committee

- The meeting elects the new Executive Committee if that task has been assigned to the annual meeting:
 - Chair (if not elected in a separate meeting).
 - Other members and possible deputy members of the Executive Committee.
 - Electing the members may be unanimous (e.g. if there is only one candidate) or occur by voting. The manner of election and voting are usually dependent on the association's rules. Vote counters count the votes, but it is a good idea to consider the voting system beforehand.
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11. Electing the operations inspectors



- The meeting elects the operations inspector(s) (or auditor) to audit next year's financial statement and annual activity report.
 - The meeting elects deputy inspectors or auditors.
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12. Other business

- The meeting discusses other matters that members have proposed to the agenda beforehand or that arise during the meeting.
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13. Closing the meeting

- The chair closes the meeting, and the secretary finishes the minutes. The minutes examiners, the meeting's secretary, and the meeting's chair later adopt the minutes by signing the document.



Creating the annual activity report

The annual activity report describes the association's key activities from the previous fiscal year. It serves as a basis for evaluating the association's operations. The report should be based on and correspond to the year's Plan of Action. This list is an example and should be modified to the association's needs.

Contents

1. General overview

- The name and purpose of the association.
 - The timeframe of the fiscal year.
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2. Objectives

- What objectives did the association set for the fiscal year?
 - Have these objectives been met? If not, why?
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3. Key events and activities

- The events, projects, and campaigns that the association organized.
 - How the number of members has developed: new members, resigned members, and total number of members.
 - Participation in cooperative projects and networks.
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4. Administration and meetings

- The composition of the Executive Committee during the fiscal year.
 - The meetings held during the fiscal year (ordinary meetings, convened meetings, and Executive Committee meetings).
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5. Fundraising and funding the operations

- Forms of fundraising (e.g. membership fees, events, donations).
- Other sources of funding (e.g. grants and sponsorships).



6. Summary and evaluation

- The accomplishments and challenges the association has faced.
- Possible plans for the future.

7. Signatures

- The annual activity report must be signed, usually by the current Executive Committee before the annual meeting. The Executive Committee proposes that the report be approved, and if the meeting makes any changes (by discussion and unanimous decision or by voting), it is approved with changes.



Creating the financial statement

The financial statement consists of the documents that detail the association's financial status and activity. It includes:

1. The income statement
2. The balance sheet
3. Supplementary reports (attached documents)
4. Financial statement signatures
5. The statement from the operations inspector or auditor

Parts of the financial statement

1. The income statement

- Includes the association's revenues and expenses from the fiscal year.
 - Counts the profit, loss, or break even of the fiscal year.
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2. The balance sheet

- Describes the association's financial situation at the end of the fiscal year.
 - Includes assets (e.g. bank account, property) and liabilities (e.g. loans, unpaid bills).
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3. Supplementary reports (attached documents)

- Supplementary information, like further detailing of assets and liabilities or significant events during the fiscal year.
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4. Financial statement and signatures

- The financial statement must be signed, usually by the current Executive Committee, before the annual meeting. The Committee proposes that the financial statement be approved, and if the meeting makes any changes (by discussion and unanimously or by voting), it is approved with changes.
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5. The annual activity report or financial audit

- Depending on the size of the association and its rules, the operations inspector or the auditor will check the financial statement.
- If everything is in order (or any faults have been fixed), the financial statement is taken to the annual meeting to be approved.

If you need any further instructions, please contact VYY's Board member responsible for organizations (jarjesto@vyy.fi), or you can utilize the Finnish Patent and Registration Office's website for models and guides.