

**Instructor Cheat Sheet**

**Phase 1. Registration**: see [Getting Started](http://info.legsim.org/resources/LegSim%20Getting%20Started.pdf) documentation

Instructors should encourage students to contact us when they are having difficulty registering or logging in. The most common problem is that students try to login with their email address instead of their user name.

**Student Profiles**:

Students create their member profiles when they login for the first time. Instructors will need to tell them how to choose a district or state (see Getting Started above) and will want to direct them to the resources above for entering information about their constituency.

**Assume student account.**

If a student is having difficulty, or if the administrator wants to look at a page from the member’s or leader’s perspective, she can assume their account from the administrators home page. On the upper right there is a ‘release’ tab which restore the administrator view.

**Dear Colleague** communications

The Dear Colleague communication tool allows the instructor or students to communicate with the entire legislature or with groups or individuals within the legislature. **Students should know that the instructor receives all of these emails.**

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**Phase 2. Organizing the legislature**

**Chamber leader**

The choice of chamber leader is left to the class/instructor. The instructor makes the actual assignment on LegSim by clicking on the administration link at the bottom of the website, and then clicking on the Assign Leaders tab.

**Committees**

LegSim comes with a committee system that is probably too large for most classes. The instructor will probably want to reduce the number of committees, and perhaps even broaden their jurisdictions by renaming them. Each committee should have a minimum of 3 students. House members serve on just one committee, while senators typically serve on several.

Students request up to 2 committees on LegSim.  The appointment decisions are left to the instructor/class. The actual assignments are made by the chamber leader or instructor on the Floor/Leaders Desk/Committee Assignments page. The committee leaders are assigned by the instructor clicking on the administration link at the bottom of the website, and clicking on the Assign Leaders tab.

**Caucuses**

There are two default parties that students can join. In addition, students can create additional caucuses on any subject and the student who creates the caucus is its leader. The instructor must designate the 2 party leaders (by clicking on the administration link at the bottom of the website, and clicking on the Assign Leaders tab).

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**Phase 3. Legislating**

Consider running a practice bill so that everyone understands how the process works. The administrator (instructor) can sponsor a bill, then go to floor/leaders desk and refer the bill to every committee (do secondary referrals for all but one committee). Each committee chair uses the manage committee link to 1) schedule a hearing; 2) draft a committee report; and 3) schedule a vote to report the bill from committee. Once the vote starts, the committee members see a vote option on their home page.  If the primary committee votes to report the bill, it can be found on the floor/leaders desk/calendar page. Place the bill on a calendar. Then go to floor/leaders desk/open debate. The go to floor/leaders desk/manage floor votes to schedule a vote on the bill. Once again the vote will be visible on members’ home pages.

**Sponsoring bills**

Students can sponsor as many bills as they want.A sample bill template is provided on the page (and under tutorials)

A bill can be edited or withdrawn until the chamber leader refers it to committee. **After it has been referred, it cannot be edited or withdrawn**.

Only one member can sponsor a bill but other students can cosponsor a bill once it has been introduced.

**Referring bills**

The chamber leader refers bills to committee on the Floor/Leaders Desk/Committee Referrals page.  A bill is usually referred to one committee based on which committee has jurisdiction, but multiple referral is an option. **If a bill is multiply referred, it cannot be placed on the floor calendar until EVERY committee has reported it.**

**Committee markup and reporting**

This the most challenging process for students, so **encourage committee chairs to read the instructions on the committee management page**. To report a bill to the floor they have to complete several steps. 1. schedule a hearing; 2. draft a committee report; 3. schedule a committee ‘motion to report’ vote on the bill. Usually students forget to complete this last step.

Voting options. The committee chair can schedule either an on-line recorded vote, or enter the results of a previous vote that took place in class. If the former, they need to provide sufficient time so that busy students have an opportunity to vote (e.g. 24 or 48 hours).

A sample committee report can be found under Instruction.

**Placing bills on the floor calendar**

A bill that has been reported will be visible on the Floor/Leaders Desk/Manage Calendars page. The leader must first create a calendar (using the create calendar link) before bills can be added to it.

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**Opening floor debates and sponsoring amendments**

A floor debate should also be opened for every bill on the calendar at Floor/Leaders Desk/Open Floor Debate. These bills on the Floor page have a debate tab and a propose amendment button. **These options are only visible from the floor page for the bill** (not by clicking on the bill from another location)

**Floor scheduling procedures**

Each chamber has its own process for scheduling floor consideration of bills. Although the chamber leader is constrained by these procedures, the administrator can schedule a vote on any bill on the calendar via the Floor/Leaders Desk/Vote Scheduling page.

**House**: The leader can schedule votes on the bill at the top of the calendar only. This is why only one bill may be visible on the vote scheduling page.  **To schedule votes on another bill, 1. the Rules committee must draft – and pass a motion to report – a special rule, and 2. the leader must schedule a vote and the chamber pass that special rule.** Once this happens, the new bill becomes visible on the Leaders Desk/Vote Scheduling page.

**Senate:** The majority leader must propose, and the Senate must pass a **“motion to proceed”** to consideration of a specific bill. This motion can pass by a simple majority or by unanimous consent. If it passes by unanimous consent, the bill cannot be filibustered. If it passes by majority rule, the bill can be filibustered. To make matter more complicated, the motion to proceed is also subject to filibuster.

**Filibuster.** This process is clearly explained on the website, but it is probably worth going over it with students. If they would like to have the opportunity to filibuster, **student must place a ‘hold’ on the bill BEFORE the motion to proceed vote is scheduled by the leader.** If a student does not place a hold BEFORE the motion to proceed is scheduled., they will not be able to filibuster the bill at any time in the future.

When one or more students indicates that she is ‘still debating’  on the vote page for a bill, the vote stops, and the only vote that can be scheduled by the leader on that bill is a **cloture motion**. The leader enters the text of the cloture motion, which 3/5th support of the Senate to pass. If it passes, the vote on the bill itself restarts.

**Voting**

To reiterate, the administrator can circumvent the normal vote scheduling process from the Floor/Leaders Desk/Vote Scheduling page (this page looks different for the chamber leader and administrator). As in committee, the chamber leader can schedule on-line floor votes or enter the results of previous votes. We generally recommend a 48 hour time window for scheduled votes to ensure that all students have an opportunity to cast their votes.

**Executive Action**

If there is a President, bills that pass the chamber are referred to the President’s desk. The President can then sign or veto the bill (H.Res and S.Res do not require the President’s signature). There is currently no veto override tool, so a vetoed bill will continue to indicate that it has been vetoed even if the chamber passes a separate resolution to override the veto. We are working on it!