

Meeting protocols for committees: Best practice guidelines

Committee Chair

The roles and responsibilities of a Committee Chair can be summarised as follows:

- Chair the committee in the interests of the University and implementation of the University's Strategic Plan. This may require strategic oversight of proposals and performance of units under the direct leadership of the Chair.
- In conjunction with the Executive Officer, ensure timely advice is provided to members regarding meeting dates, times and venues.
- Actively contribute to the agenda and/or background papers.
- Reject late papers where there is insufficient time for members to adequately review them prior to the meeting.
- In conjunction with the Executive Officer, ensure timely provision of agenda and papers to committee members (5 working days prior).
- In conjunction with the Executive Officer, control the volume of papers submitted to the committee.
- Ensure that the committee is operating within its objectives/terms of reference; within its delegations; and in accordance with University policy and legislation.
- Conduct meetings in a timely manner (i.e. meetings to commence and end on time).
- Maintain order and focus on meeting priorities.
- Lead and encourage relevant discussion on items.
- Ensure that all committee members' voices are included and actively support participants to engage in discussions and decisions of the committee.
- Ensure there is agreement on future actions to be taken. This may take the form of a vote where deemed necessary.
- Manage and appropriately deal with any grievances and complaints arising from or between members.
- Behave professionally and respectfully at all times.
- At each meeting there are certain procedural matters that the Chair is responsible for:
 - Check that a quorum is present
 - Declare the meeting open
 - Welcome any new members
 - List/call for apologies
 - Request that committee members declare any possible conflicts of interest
 - Request that committee members approve the agenda. Ask if there are any additional items to be starred (if the starring system is being used)
 - Request that committee members confirm the minutes from the previous meeting
 - Ensure any formal resolutions are appropriately debated and approved (see note below regarding motions)
 - Close the meeting and note when the next meeting is scheduled.
- After each meeting the draft minutes provided by the Executive Officer should be cleared by the Chair in a timely manner to facilitate the distribution of action correspondence.

Committee Members

The roles and responsibilities of committee members can be summarised as follows:

- Provide apology, verbally or in writing, to the Chair via the Executive Officer, prior to the meeting.
- Actively contribute to the agenda and/or background papers.
- Prepare for the meeting by thoroughly reviewing the agenda and papers.
- When speaking to an item, ensure that the issue/agenda item under discussion is addressed.
- Express opinions during debate, but listen to and value others when they have the floor. Provide full attention to discussion and refrain from using mobile phones and other technologies (which should be set to silent mode) for non-meeting purposes.
- Adhere to professional and respectful behaviour during meetings. Do not use inflammatory language or engage in bullying, inappropriate or intimidating behaviour.
- Respect the role of the Chair as leader of the meeting and abide by their rulings in relation to meeting procedure.
- Respect the confidential nature of the business of the committee.
- Refrain from improper use of position on the committee to gain an advantage for themselves or another person.
- Always act in the best interests of the University as a whole, with this obligation to be observed above any duty a member may owe to those appointing or electing them.

Standing orders for committee meetings

Note that Academic Board and its committees use the [standing orders](#) approved by Academic Board.

Procedural Matters

- At the commencement of each meeting the Chair will check that a quorum is present and if so, declare the meeting open
- The Agenda will commence with:
 - welcome to any new members
 - list/call for apologies
 - request that members declare any possible conflicts of interest
 - request that committee members approve the agenda, and ask whether there are any additional items to be starred (if the starring system is being used)
 - request that members confirm, or make amendments to, the minutes from the previous meeting
- Previous business (matters pending)

Quorum

- If no quorum, as specified in the Terms of Reference, is present 30 minutes after the starting time, the meeting will be cancelled.

Motions

- All proposals made to the meeting shall be in the form of motions in writing unless the Chair decides otherwise.
- All motions and amendments must be moved and seconded. If no seconder is found, the motion or amendment lapses.
- Discussion regarding the motion should be allowed from the floor and addressed to the Chair.

- If the motion is verbal, the Chair should restate the motion to ensure that all members understand what they are being asked to vote on.

Amendments:

- Amendments to motions can only be put once the substantive motion is moved.
- Amendments must be debated prior to the mover of the motion taking their right of reply.
- If an amendment is not seconded then it will lapse.
- An amendment that is acceptable to the mover of the motion may, with leave of the meeting, be incorporated into the substantive motion without debate.

Voting

- Once the debate on a motion is concluded, the Chair then calls each option: "All in favour?"; "Opposed?" or "Abstaining?"
- Once a clear majority has been ascertained, the motion is declared and the committee can move onto the next item of business.
- All members present at a meeting are entitled to have one deliberative vote. The Chair of the committee may have a casting as well as a deliberative vote but only where this is stated in the composition of the committee.

Closing the meeting

- The Chair will formally close the meeting and identify the date and time for the next scheduled meeting of the committee.