Governance

Committee Management and Minute Taking Workshop

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September 2019
Introduction and Overview

1. Learning outcomes
2. UNSW Governance Framework
3. Committee Terms of Reference
4. The role of: Chair & Secretary
5. Committee support process & templates:
   • Agendas
   • Papers
   • Minutes
   • Actions/Matters Arising
6. Capturing your records & using RAMS
7. Questions and discussion
8. Review of key learnings
9. Resources
Learning outcomes

Upon completion of the training, you should be able to understand:

• UNSW Governance frameworks

• The Committee management process and how terms of reference, schedules and checklists can aid the process

• The role of the Chair and Secretary, and the use of templates to:
  ➢ Produce good quality agendas and relevant committee documents
  ➢ Take meeting notes and draft minutes for approval by the relevant stakeholders
  ➢ Draft and circulate action sheets
2. UNSW Governance Framework

- Council
- Management Board
- Academic Board & University-level Committees
- Faculty Board(s)
- School Board(s)
UNSW Rules – Section 4.10 (a): The Faculty Board may determine to split the Faculty Academic Committee into such committees as will fulfil the functions of the Rules (for example, this could be a Faculty Academic Quality Committee and a Faculty Academic Programs Committee).

UNSW Rules – Section 4.10 (b): The Faculty Board may determine to split the Faculty Research Committee into such committees as will fulfil the functions of the Rules (for example, this could be a Faculty Research Committee and a Faculty Higher Degree Research Committee).
UNSW Portfolio Governance Framework

• Explains the process for gaining approval for projects (primarily S25) and delivering them:
  ➢ Documentation – viability paper, business case
  ➢ Funding delegations – level of expenditure determines who can approve the project
  ➢ Governance Bodies
    • Project & Program Steering Committees
    • Divisional Boards & Committees
    • Strategic Portfolio Assurance Review Committee (SPARC)
    • Management Board (President & Vice-Chancellor)
    • Council
3. Committee Terms of Reference (ToR)

- Provide members with the committee’s:
  - Purpose
  - Roles & responsibilities
  - Composition & structure, which include required membership & membership terms
  - Meetings & attendance, including quorum
  - Reporting
  - Review, which should ideally be annually or every two years

All of the above can be published for ease of reference

ToR assist the Chair & Secretary in setting the agenda

UNSW Rules (as @ 8 April 2019) – some are mandatory
4. **The role of: Chair & Secretary**

What is the role of a Committee Secretary?

What is the role of the Chair?
Chair’s role

• Develop & approve the annual agenda schedule, in conjunction with the Secretary & in line with the ToR
• Review & approve agendas for distribution to members
• Chair meetings in a timely manner, ensuring that all:
  ✓ Members have an opportunity to participate
  ✓ Discussion items end with a resolution/decision or action
• Summarise decisions, resolutions or actions for clarity & to aid minuting
• Report to relevant committees/boards (to promote decisions)
• Review draft minutes as a formal record for approval at the next meeting
5. Committee support process & templates:

The **Agenda** Process

- Set and publicise meeting dates, times and venues for the year
- Coming up to a meeting, send a call for agenda items (including Chair) and papers *(template)*
- As items are received, draft the agenda *(Academic Board)*
  - Overview of agenda structure
- Confirm draft agenda with the Chair and obtain approval before distribution
- Distribute the collated agenda pack preferably one week before a meeting, with another reminder of the meeting date, time and location
Committee support process & templates (continued)

Papers

• Use a template ([Council Template](#)) or refer authors to the template to ensure consistency

• Encourage approval of papers by a senior team member before submission to the Secretary

• Provide authors with a deadline for submission to the Secretary so that papers are available with sufficient time to compile meeting packs
Minutes

• What are minutes?
• All committees are different – so what do I need to note?
• Templates help to provide a consistent layout
• Minutes should record discussions and resolutions (based on recommendations provided by papers)
• The Chair should review the draft minutes before they are distributed to the members (if this is the practice for a particular committee) or for approval at the next meeting
• Minutes are formally endorsed (pending amendments) and signed at the following meeting
Writing of Minutes – Tense and Writing Style

Minutes must be written in the past tense. We use reported (indirect) speech with the verbs in past or conditional tense.

Example: Tenses

Professor Jones reported that the new program approval process is in place and being rolled out to all the Schools. She reported that her administrative team will ensure training is provided to all staff to ensure a smooth transition.

Correct version
Writing of Minutes – Tense and Writing Style

• Avoid the use of first and second person pronouns such as I, we, you and they in minutes
• Use a formal tone - avoid a conversational style
• Use Active Voice

Example: Passive
It was reported by the Chair that the new student enrolment system has been finalised and that support during it’s implementation phase will be provided to us by an external supplier.

Correct version
Minute taking exercise

- Use active verbs, e.g. reported, requested, replied, highlighted, thanked, noted, resolved, recommended

- Directions
  - Take notes during the short video meeting (6 minutes)
  - Review notes and identify the key points and decisions to be recorded in the minutes (2 minutes)
  - Refine notes to create minutes for the meeting (10 minutes)
  - Group discussion and reflection
  - Sample answer

Link to exercise
Editing and proofreading

• Always edit and proofread agendas & minutes
  ➢ Ask a colleague to proofread your work (preferably on hard copy) as we don’t see our own errors or typographical errors

• Always switch on the spellchecker to English (Australia) on your computer but you cannot ‘trust’ it completely as although it will pick up many errors, it can miss errors, too, eg
  ➢ it’s/its; faculty/faulty; draft/daft; authorise/authorize; form/from

• A misplaced clause can make nonsense of a sentence, eg
  ➢ The Committee discussed building a carpark in the Council Chamber. *[editing made easy, Bruce Kaplan]*

• Spell names correctly, use correct titles, & check numbering & dates, eg Monday 25 August 2019 or Monday 26 August 2019

• Try to be consistent (at least within a document)
Punctuation matters

Time to eat children!

Commas save lives.

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Committee support process & templates (continued)

Actions/Matters Arising

• Maintain an action sheet
• Distribute the actions or action sheet (template) to the relevant Committee members/stakeholders
  ➢ This facilitates the tracking of actions as well as the follow-up & reporting of actions
• Circulate information, as required (eg reports & presentations not included in the meeting papers)
• Follow up on the actions & update the action sheet in advance of the next meeting
6. Capturing your records & using RAMS

RAMS (the Records & Archives Management System) is the University’s recordkeeping system.

Using RAMS ensures records are:

- Available for future reference (kept as University Archives)
- Protected from deletion or alteration
- Accessible to people with permission (through Access Control)
Using RAMS

- Create a container for each committee at the start of each year

- Apply Access Control so access to the records is restricted

To aid in the sharing of information, you can also...

- Include a ‘RAMS Reference’ in papers
- Send RAMS links
7. Questions
8. Review of key learnings
9. Resources

- [UNSW Governance Website](#)
- [UNSW Records & Archives](#)
- [UWA: How to take and write minutes](#)
- [Governance contacts](#)