Introduction and Overview

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1. Learning outcomes

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

• UNSW Governance framework
• 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. Overview of UNSW Governance Framework

UNSW Council

- Risk Committee
- 2025 Sub-Committee
- Finance & Business Committee
- Audit Committee
- Remuneration & People Committee
- Honorary Degrees Committee

President and Vice-Chancellor

- Management Board
- Senior Leadership Team

Academic Board

- Academic Board Advisory Committee
- Academic Board Programs Committee
- Academic Board Program Review Committee
- University Academic Quality Committee
- University Higher Degree Research Committee
- University Research Committee

Faculty Board

- Faculty Academic Committee
  
  UNSW Rules – Section 4.10 (a): The Faculty Board may determine to split the Faculty Academic Committee into such committees as will fulfill the functions of the Rules (for example, this could be a Faculty Academic Quality Committee and a Faculty Academic Programs Committee).

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

School Boards

- The UNSW Rules do not prescribe committees at this level. Schools can determine this.
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

ToR assist the Chair & Secretary in setting the agenda

UNSW Rules – some are mandatory
4. 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 Secretary’s Role

For every meeting

• Identify relevant agenda items from the agenda schedule, call for agenda items from members, and prepare the agenda for approval by the Chair,

• Create cover sheets for reports, for inclusion in meeting packs.

• Email the agenda (once approved by the Chair) and papers to members, usually one week prior to a meeting.
Committee Secretary’s Role (continued)

• During meetings, support the Chair by noting attendance and apologies, checking there is a quorum present and prompting the Chair regarding the timing of discussion items.

• Take notes at the meeting and prepare the minutes for review by the Chair and approval at the next meeting.

• Prepare an action sheet and follow up on any actions as required. Ensure reports that need to be sent to other committees are distributed, as appropriate.
Committee Secretary’s Role (continued)

Close to the end of the year

• Schedule meeting dates for the following year and book meeting venues.
• Send the meeting dates & Outlook calendar invitations.

Also remember the following for every meeting:

• Consider venue bookings, teleconferencing, catering, testing of presentations.
• Ensure confidentiality, as appropriate.
• Establish a good relationship with your Chair and other stakeholders.
6. Committee support process – Agenda

- Set and publicise meeting dates, times and venues for the year
- Before each meeting, send out a call for agenda items and papers (templates) with deadlines for submission. Provide the draft agenda and the papers template, which helps to identify confidential items
- As items are received, draft the agenda
- 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, venue and other relevant information
Actions/Matters Arising

• Maintain an action sheet
• Distribute the actions or action sheet (template) to the relevant Committee members/stakeholders
  o 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
Day of the Meeting

- **Sit** next to Chair if possible.
- Confirm **attendees** (attendance sheet)
- Notify Chair of all apologies so they can be noted
- Some Committees have **alternate members** - confirm with Chair
- If it is a formal committee/board, establish if the meeting is **quorate**
- **Starring** of items helps with prioritisation of items (Only starred items will be discussed in a meeting. Unstarred items will be moved by Chair for approval if they require approval.)
Minutes

• Clear, concise and accurate record of meetings
• All committees are different – so level of detail varies
• Templates help to provide a consistent layout
• Where papers are provided, there is usually no need to reiterate what is in the papers
• Record ACCURATE resolutions (often based on recommendations provided in papers)
• Record discussions where relevant to outcomes
• Chair to review draft minutes before distribution to the members
• 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 its implementation phase will be provided to us by an external supplier.

Correct version
# Writing of Minutes – Examples of verbs

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Writing of Minutes – Examples of phrases

• The Chair welcomed/thanked/reported/explained…
• The Committee concurred that/approved/discussed….
• It was suggested that…. 
• Consideration was given to…. 
• It was approved, subject to the required/following amendments…. 
• Members discussed the item and noted the following points (then list the points) 
• X provided an overview of/summarised…. 
• In discussion, the Committee/Board agreed/noted/confirmed/accepted that…. 
• The Committee/Board granted….
Minute taking exercise 1

• Use active verbs, eg reported, requested, replied, highlighted, thanked, noted, resolved, recommended, approved

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

[Link to exercise]
Minute taking exercise 2

Directions

- Take notes while the sample Report from the ADE is read to you
- 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)
- Sample answer
7. Editing and proofreading

• Always proofread and edit agendas & minutes
  o Ask a colleague to proofread your work (preferably on hard copy) as we don’t see our own 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
  o it’s/its; faculty/faulty; draft/daft; your/you’re; form/from; let’s/lets

• A misplaced clause can make nonsense of a sentence, eg
  o 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

• Be consistent (at least within a document)
Punctuation matters

Time to eat children!

Commas save lives.
8. 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...
  o Include a ‘RAMS Reference’ in papers
  o Send RAMS links
9. Resources & further development

- UWA: How to take and write minutes
- UNSW Governance Website and Templates
- UNSW Records & Archives (RAMS training)
- UNSW Policy

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  records@unsw.edu.au

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10. Questions & discussion