Minute-Taking Guide

**Introduction**

Each Committee has its own mode of operation and should operate in accordance with their constitution. Committee Constitutions can be found on the Committee Drive - Committee Constitutions.

All committee meetings are to be held in the Guild Boardroom, unless otherwise stated. The Secretary or the Chair of the meeting shall book the Guild Boardroom (The Bridge) based on the Committee Meeting Schedule issued at the start of the year.

Templates related to meetings can be found here:

* [Committee Report Template](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1gQAsio9NHVutMtFrbe-0TLiwUhL0dz0O)
* [Motion Template](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1jVJoGnYIafxc9TKH-6u4qLmneJwIMj0O)
* [Meeting Agenda/Minutes Template](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1fDkrCPlm2u74FXpAtjoXZSShbAlyE_o5)
* [Template Declaration of Minutes Approval (for GC/Finance/Reps Board/Legal)](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1VtXd3xZ2HBzsXwj67mP_NgYnPzak4gPb)

**Roles and Responsibilities**

Minute Secretary

The role of the Committee Minute Secretary should:

* be broadly familiar with legislation, policy and Guild activities relevant to the committee’s constitution.
* be aware of decisions taken by other committees and the activities of staff and student representatives of the Guild that may be relevant to the deliberations of the associated committee.

The responsibilities of the Committee Minute Secretary should:

* Be aware of the agenda items.
* Notify the Convenor/Chair of any issues or concerns.
* Have knowledge of the Committee constitution.
* Have skills such as, active listening, critical thinking to decide what to record and accurate and concise writing in minute taking.
* Assist the Chair during the meeting.
* Monitor members present to ensure that the meeting remains quorate and advising the Chair when a quorum is lost. Make note of members leaving/arriving to the meeting.
* Contributes to the discussion on issues of precedent and procedure.
* Ensuring the order of the agenda including any guest speakers.
* Ensuring the Committee votes on a motion, and noting the seconder.
* Knowing which members can vote on a motion and to count the votes.
  + For example: the Chair has a casting vote only and there will likely be a number of non-voting members on the committee so make note of these.
* Provide a membership list to be attached to the Agenda.
* Providing no more than six (6) copies of the agenda at the meeting.
* Ensuring relevant materials/documentation is available to all committee members.
* Provide a set of the previous minutes for approval.
* Bring a [declaration of approval](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1VtXd3xZ2HBzsXwj67mP_NgYnPzak4gPb) of the previous minutes to the meeting for the Chair to sign once the previous minutes are approved *(Required for: Finance & Risk/Guild Council/Representation Board/ Legal Committee only)*
* Bring an attendance list for members to sign in for the following boards and committees *- (Guild Council & Representation Board)*
* In the instance of Guild Council, bring the voice recorder to audio record the meeting. Ensure the Chair presses play at the start of the meeting, and STOP at the end of the meeting.

**Committee Meeting Agendas**

The Minute Secretary/or Secretary prepares an agenda a minimum of three (3) days prior to the meeting deadline based on the items and reports received which are to be tabled at the meeting. For Representation Board and Guild Council, ideally the agenda is prepared seven (7) days prior to the meeting.

An email reminder is sent to committee members and relevant staff by the Minute Secretary or Chair prior to the document deadline date. The email reminder includes the date, time and location of the proposed meeting, and a request for any items of significance to be discussed and any reports by student representatives to be presented at the committee meeting.

All committee members and staff should be aware of the document deadline dates. These dates can be found in the Committee Meeting Schedule. All students and staff should refer to the Committee Meeting Schedule for document deadlines and meeting dates and adhere to these dates. The Meeting Schedule is updated when necessary by the Minute Secretary or Secretary.

Members of the Committee are also required to submit business/agenda items to the meeting based on the Workplan of the particular meeting. This should also be found on the Committee drive.

**Agenda Preparation**

The Agenda template can be found on the Committee drive or at the links above.

The agenda includes:

* The name of the committee, a sequential meeting number followed by the year, the date, time and location of the meeting.
* An acknowledgement of the Traditional Owners
* A register of members attendance, apologies, leave of absence and absent
* Disclosure of any perceived or potential conflicts of interest
* Business arising from the previous meeting, including action items
* Matters of significant items from committee members
* Reports or discussion items, or arising from current strategically important activities or projects.
* A membership list of the committee members.
* Minutes/reports from the standing or sub-committees and any matters/items which these committees wish to refer to the committee.
* The date and time of the next committee meeting.

The Minute Secretary/Secretary or Nominee circulates the prepared Agenda including any supporting documentation via email in Pdf format to all members of the committee.

After the meeting, the Minute Secretary shall prepare a set of draft minutes.

**Committee Meeting Minutes**

The minutes of each committee contain a summary of the discussions of the committee and the resolutions of the meeting. Minutes are not a transcript or verbatim records and students/staff are only identified by name when speaking to an item.

Not all matters agreed upon at a meeting are recorded in the minutes as resolutions. The text of the minutes may also record a matter that does not require specific resolution but for which there has been general discussion or a general consensus that action be taken. This may be the case where there is a variation to the recommendation put forward as part of the agenda, or as a result of a new matter being raised at the meeting.

The unconfirmed minutes, once completed by the minute-secretary, are distributed via email to Committee members requesting any amendments/changes. The unconfirmed minutes are included in the agenda papers for the subsequent meeting, where Committee members will be asked to approve the minutes as a true and correct record of that meeting. Any amendments agreed upon are recorded in the minutes of the meeting and incorporated into the minutes prior to their approval.

**Minute Preparation**

The Committee minute Template can be found on Committee Shared Drive – Templates – Minute Templates.

The Committee minutes should:

* Be a true and accurate record of the meeting
* Contain clear and concise notes of main points of discussion
* Be an accurate and clear register of decision, recording;
* What was decided
* any additional information tabled at the meeting
* a significant point in how the decision was reached
* Any action items and who is responsible for actions arising and by when
* If attendees join the meeting after it has started or leave early, the minutes should note the time they joined and left the meeting.

The voting and decision-making processes used during meetings may affect what is recorded in minutes. Where decisions are not made by consensus, dissenting voters may wish to have their objections noted.

The minutes should record any discussion or reference to items carried forward, matters arising or outstanding issues for future discussion.

Action Item Register

An action list should be included in the minutes or as a separate document (attachment to the agenda). It allows Committee members to review progress on the actions arising from previous meetings and provides a concise summary of tasks to those people responsible for each action item. The action list should record:

* actions arising from the previous meeting and any outstanding items from prior meetings which have not been completed.
* the person identified as responsible for actioning each item and the time frame for completing it or reporting on progress to the relevant Committee.

The action item is circulated via email with the committee minutes.

The Chair will be responsible for following up with relevant persons to ensure their action items are completed prior to commencement of the meeting.

In-Camera Minutes

In-Camera means a session of a meeting where all non-voting members must leave the meeting unless invited to remain by resolution of the meeting and no publically available minutes taken, in order to allow voting members to discuss business relating to personal or staffing matters, legal proceedings or other business of a confidential nature.

Committee Documents

All committee related documents are uploaded on to the Committee Shared Drive. These include agenda, minute and circular resolution templates and membership lists. The Secretary manages the updating and maintenance of the templates and membership lists.

Sub-Committee Reports/Minutes

Subsidiary bodies of the Guild Council such as the International Student Committee, Postgraduate Student Committee and other committees are to include collective minutes/reports/significant items for noting.

Committee Work Plans

A committee work plan allows forward planning by students and staff to have the opportunity to prepare in advance any material to be submitted to the committee. The work plan also acts as an important communication and performance tool for committee members and other interested stakeholders.

Each committee will approve an annual Work Plan at the first meeting of each calendar year which will reflect the committee’s constitutional responsibilities. The Work Plan will inform the agenda items throughout the year.

Committee Resolutions – Numbering

Resolutions should be kept as a progressive summary and **numbered sequentially** to form a separate record of decisions and recommendations made by the Committee.

Communicating Decisions

Members are encouraged to communicate issues and decisions from committee meetings to their Faculty/areas and colleagues following each meeting, whilst observing the confidentiality of any matters which have been identified as such.

**The Committee Meeting Cycle**

The meeting process can be divided into three stages, with certain tasks for each stage.

**Stage One - Before the meeting**

The Minute Secretary:

* Communicates with committee members by way of an email reminder with the date, time and location of the meeting, and requesting any reports, items to be discussed at the meeting. (Usually a minimum of four (4) days prior to the scheduled meeting).
* Reviews the agenda, minutes and action lists of the previous meeting for information and context.
* Drafts an agenda (if required), to be finalised in consultation with the meeting convenor.
* Circulates the agenda via email to the committee members three (3) days prior to the meeting, allowing adequate reading time for committee members. This is 7 days for Guild Council or Representation Board
* Any late or amended reports/items must be added to the agenda, and an amended agenda circulated prior to the meeting.
* Organises the equipment needed for the meeting i.e. laptop is powered and is working, voice recorder has sufficient battery power (for Guild Council). Checks the venue to see if it is in a tidy and professional manner for the meeting. Records the minute taking on a USB drive to enable mobility and ensures a backup of the minutes taken.
* Confirms the requirements with any presenters or external parties who may be attending the meeting.
* Print a few copies of the agenda to be tabled at the meeting, for the use of committee members.
* Arrives ten (10) minutes early to the meeting to ensure the meeting room is tidy and the equipment is set up and working.
* Prints off an attendance list to be signed by members (for Guild Council and Representation Board)

**Stage Two - During the meeting**

The Minute Secretary:

* Takes notes/minutes at the meeting, making note of action items for committee members, outcomes, decisions, resolutions, and any topics of discussion, agreement or disagreement.
* Clarifies with the committee members any item points and any actions required.
* At the close of the meeting, powers down the laptop, tidies the room (takes any surplus papers/agendas, tidies the chairs, turns off the lights and shuts the door).

**Stage Three - After the meeting**

The Minute Secretary:

* Transcribes the minutes as soon as practicable to ensure accuracy.
* Writes the minutes onto the committee minute template.
* Allow time for writing, typing, checking, and adjusting the minutes.
* The style of minutes can be a mix of brief narratives and dot point form. The minutes may set the scene in a brief narrative paragraph and then summarise in dot points.
* All items should be numbered from 1 onwards for each meeting.
* All minutes should be written in past tense. Minutes report what happened at a meeting which is now past, and the standard tense of their verbs is, therefore, simple past.
* Minutes are recorded as precise, and are not a verbatim account of the meeting.
* Minute Secretary to select an appropriate structure before transcribing the minutes. Sentence structures should be varied with a wide variety of action verbs (*The speaker “noted/outlined/reported/suggested/etc*.).
* Use resolutions to record important decisions arrived at via a vote. These resolutions are numbered sequentially followed by the year for each committee.
* Emails a copy of the draft minutes to the committee convenor to check for accuracy.
* Circulates the unconfirmed minutes to all committee members and attendees. The unconfirmed minutes to be circulated no later than seven (7) days after the meeting.
* Prepares for any updates from the minutes
* Ensures a copy of the approved minutes from the previous meeting are uploaded onto the web based Google drive and Guild Shared drive.

Information about Circular Resolutions can be found in the document titled [“Circular Resolution Guide”](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1zKp2X_dbgODXRxuM3EZNpu5AuAxkjDWF)