What’s on the agenda?

Skills for Supporting Griffith Committees and Working Parties

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Session objectives

- an understanding of committees and their role in University governance
- knowledge of committee and meeting preparation
- what to expect in-meeting
- what to do after the meeting
- how to manage business in between meetings
Program structure

- introductions and sharing of committee experience
- discussion about how decisions are made and how these are communicated
- the practicalities of being a committee secretary
University Governance

Academic University’s committee structure may be categorised as follows:

- The Council and its sub-committees
- Other central committees
- Faculty Boards and other faculty-level committees
- School Committees
- Research Centre Advisory Committees
The know list

- know your committee constitution
- know the place of your committee in the University’s structure of committees
- know the people who will attend the meetings
- know the rules of procedure

See [www.griffith.edu.au/committees](http://www.griffith.edu.au/committees) for Committee Constitutions
Committee membership types

1. **Ex officio** - person is a member due to the position they hold

2. **Elected** - an appointment made in accordance with the University’s election procedures

3. **Appointed** - an appointment made by a designated position or committee

4. **Coopted** – an appointment is made to provide specialist expertise to a committee
Chairperson – role and responsibilities

- call, cancel and adjourn meetings
- set agendas and timetable discussion time for each item
- approve attendance of visitors and observers
- request that a complicated question be divided and put in the form of a number of motions
- have a second or the casting vote (when there is a tied vote)
Members – formal role and responsibilities

- request the inclusion of an item on the agenda
- request an amendment to the minutes on the grounds they are inaccurate
- familiarise themselves with agenda items in preparation for discussion
- have their dissension, abstention or vote recorded in the minute action sheet
Committee Secretary – role and responsibilities

- draft accurate and concise agendas and minutes
- prepare discussion papers for consideration by the committee
- summarise material referred to the committees to make it clear and easy to consider
- communicate decisions of the committees to all relevant stakeholders quickly and in the most effective manner
- undertake associated administrative tasks related to the work of the committees
Committee and meeting preparation

- committee and meeting preparation is undertaken by the committee secretary in conjunction with the chairperson.

- when a committee secretary has been assigned to a committee they should introduce themselves by telephone to the members and organise a timetable of meeting dates and venues.
Pre-meeting activity

- book or confirm meeting room and equipment
- order refreshments
- prepare draft agenda
- discuss draft agenda with Chairperson
- circulate agenda
- brief chairperson and any invited speakers
Meeting types

1. **Ordinary meeting** – a meeting which is scheduled and convened on a regular basis at an agreed time

2. **Adjourned meeting** - a meeting which is convened to consider urgent business from an ordinary meeting which could not be completed at the ordinary meeting

3. **Special meeting** - a meeting which is convened between ordinary meetings to consider business which requires immediate or urgent attention
Preparing an agenda item

1. **Background and context** – Where is the item coming from? What is the committee’s authority in this area?

2. **Problem** - What is the committee required to do with the issue? Is there any supporting documentation in the form of attachments?

3. **Issues and implications** - What issues should the committee consider? What are the implications of each issue?

4. **Recommendation** - What would be an appropriate resolution?
Ineffective agendas

- Insufficient background and context information
- No guidance on what the committee is to do
- Items not within the committee’s ambit of responsibility
- No outline of policy relating to the item
- Ambiguous expression
- Poor use of attachments – too many or wrong attachments
- Late distribution of papers

Secretariat
Format of the agenda

1. Name of Committee & meeting number for the year is positioned on the top right hand corner of every page of the committee agenda.

2. First items on an agenda are: Apologies, Confirmation of Minutes, Business Arising from the Minutes, Any presentations.

3. These items should be followed by a statement on the ordering of the agenda, at which point, members of a committee may propose to change the order of the agenda or request an item be brought forward from Sections II-V.
Business of the agenda

The business of the agenda is divided into three parts:

Section I: Matters for Debate and Decision
Section II: Matters Requiring Ratification of Executive Action
Section III: Matters for Noting and where Appropriate Acceptance of Recommendation
During the meeting

- Assist the Chair during the meeting
- Know the *Committee Meeting Procedures* document
- Contribute to the discussion
- Guide the meeting discussion and facilitate decision-making
- Manage the length of meetings
- Use of guest speakers
- Know how to undertake voting processes
After the meeting

- review meeting notes to determine matters requiring urgent action
- debrief the chair
- write minutes/action sheet
- gain approval of the minutes by the chair
- circulate minutes
- send a CD ROM of the agenda, papers and minutes to CARMS and a signed copy of the minutes to CARMS for filing
Preparation of a Minute Item

1. **Statement of the problem** – background to the item – who sent it, for what purpose? What papers did the committee have?

2. **Discussion** - What opinions were expressed?

3. **Resolution** - What was the outcome of the committee’s discussions? Where is the decision to go? What does the committee want the receiving committee or officer to do with the recommendation?
Business of the minutes or action sheet

1. Name of committee and meeting number for the year is positioned on the top right hand corner of every page of the committee minutes

2. First entry on an agenda are: a list of those present, apologies, members absent and those present by invitation

3. First item is confirmation of the previous set of minutes, Business Arising from the Minutes
Body of a set of minutes

SECTION A: Reports and recommendations to the parent committee

SECTION B: Action under delegated authority

SECTION C: Recommendations and reports to other committees

SECTION D: Matters noted, recorded or remaining under discussion
What is Team Place (formerly QuickPlace)

- A collaborative online communication tool for committee members to access and share information relating to their committee (e.g., agendas, minute action sheet, discussion papers)
- Ensures valuable electronic discussion on particular issue is stored at one location (via Bulletin Board discussion forum feature)
- Accessible to Committee members only
- University Committees’ Team Place

https://qplace01.domino.griffith.edu.au/quickplace/sec-university-committees/Main.nsf
Agenda setting exercise

- At its 1/2010 meeting, the School Committee, School of Human Services and Social Work is required to recommend a new program called the Bachelor of Rehabilitation.
- The committees that consider new programs include: the School Committee, Health Group Board, Programs Committee, and Academic Committee.
- The Secretary has received the following documents: an Initial Program Proposal (2010/0016), a Full Program Proposal (2010/0085), and course outlines.
- The program is to be introduced in Semester 1, 2011.
- It is a joint initiative with the School of Physiotherapy and Exercise Science and will be taught at the Gold Coast to service the needs of the Gold Coast’s aging population.

How would you write an agenda item for this information?
Resources

- University Committees’ Website
  http://www.griffith.edu.au/ua/aa/secretariat/committees/

- Academic Policies can be found at:

- Campus maps

- Corporate Archives – Committee Records
  http://www.griffith.edu.au/records-management
Summary

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