<center>**University of Leicester**</center>

<center># Committee Servicing</center>

<center>**Guidance for Committee Secretaries**</center>

A.   Introduction

Purpose of this document

1.   This document provides guidance on committee servicing at the University of Leicester. It also sets out the University's 'house style' for agendas and minutes, considers the framework within which a committee works, and recognises how the agenda can help manage the business of a meeting and the writing of the minutes.

2.   The guidance is aimed specifically at the secretaries of Council and Senate, and of the committees which report to those bodies. The approach outlined in this guidance should be used by most committees, sub-committees, boards or working groups and may also be of interest to those who chair committees.

3.   The main body of this guidance has been kept as concise as possible. Annotated examples of the standard layout of agendas and minutes are provided in the appendices, and the text highlights other detailed guidance available on the Governance website.

4.   The guide can be read in conjunction with the Good Practice Guide on how to take and write minutes. The Good Practice Guide provides a detailed overview of the purpose and style of minutes and discusses the different tasks involved in minute taking. Whilst this Committee Servicing Guide includes some information on minute writing, it covers the holistic practice of servicing a committee, of which minute taking is only one part.

Definition of a committee

5.   A committee is a formal group of people within an organisation who are appointed or elected to discharge a defined set of responsibilities. Typically this will require the committee to make a decision on a particular matter, which might be:

a.   to approve something
b.   to recommend something for approval by another body
c.   to note something.

6.   By contrast, informal groups do not have an official status or decision making powers.
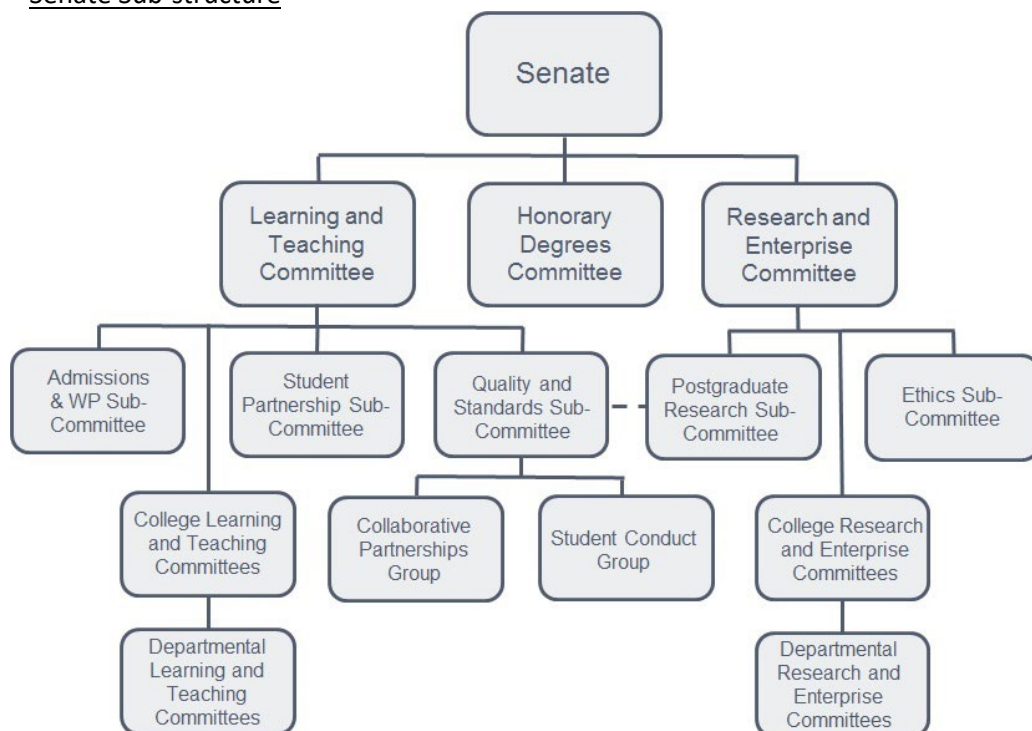
Committee structure

7.   The University operates a committee structure, which sets out reporting lines for committees under either the Senate or Council umbrella.

8.   There are a number of committees that fall outside of these umbrellas, which are not reflected here.

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Council Sub-structure
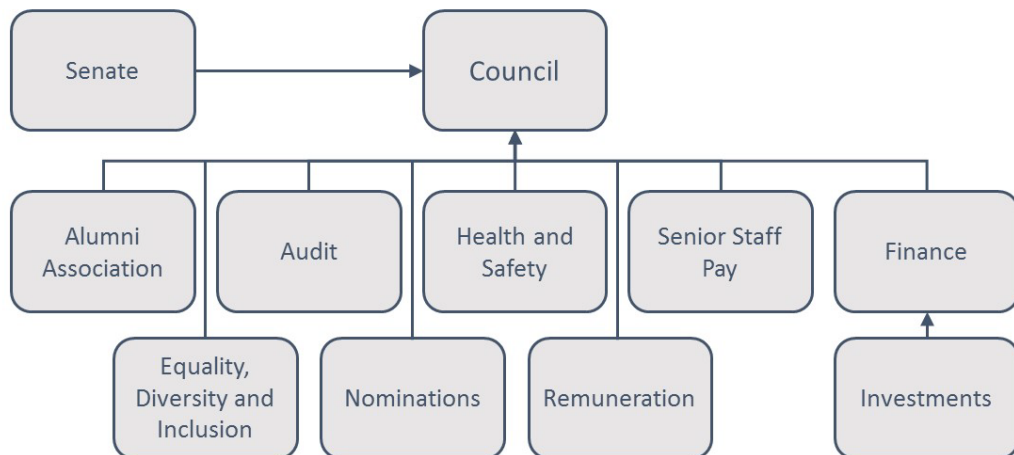
9.   Council is the University's supreme governing body, responsible for taking all final decisions on matters of fundamental concern to the University, including its academic mission and strategic direction. Further information on Council, its powers and membership is provided on the University's website.

10.   Guidance on the remit and powers of Council committees, alongside terms of reference, is provided on the University's Governance webpages.

Senate Sub-structure

11.   Senate and its subsidiary committees form the academic governance framework of the institution. The Senate sub-structure is concerned with the bodies reporting into Senate as part of the University's formal academic governance. It does not incorporate:

a. Task and finish or other working groups which may be established periodically and on a temporary basis to consider individual issues. The reporting line for these groups will be defined by their focus, remit and the approval route for their output.

b. Groups or bodies which are part of the management structure of the institution and which operate outside the direct remit of Senate.

12. Guidance on the remit and powers of the committees in this structure, alongside terms of reference and memberships, is provided in the Code of Practice for Academic Governance.

The purpose of a committee

13. A committee is a means of sharing responsibility for decisions and establishing ownership thereof. It may not have the power to make decisions itself on all matters within its remit, but is likely to be able to recommend a decision to a higher authority, such as another committee, Senate or Council. It may also be a means of investigating a matter, with a view to making a decision or recommendation about it.

Terms of reference

14. Every committee has terms of reference, which set out its general purpose, powers and responsibilities, as well as general ways of operating. Importantly, the committee's terms of reference will set out whether the University's governance structure requires it to do or decide something (including setting out what it can and cannot approve or consider as part of its business). Terms of reference should also include other standard information about the workings of the committee, such as its formal constitution, the 'higher' University body to which it is responsible, and the minimum number of meetings that it will normally hold in each academic year.

15. Members will often look to the secretary to provide advice on whether an action or decision is permissible under the committee's terms of reference. As such, it is considered good practice for the secretary to always have a copy of the terms of reference to hand at committee meetings.

16. The terms of reference should be reviewed and confirmed by the committee at its last meeting of each academic year. Thereafter, the terms of reference will be submitted to the 'higher' University body, to which the committee reports, for formal approval. It is the responsibility of the secretary to ensure that this process takes place for every committee for which they are responsible.

17. Further guidance on the standard required layout of terms of reference is published on the Governance website.

Membership

18. People are appointed as members of a committee:

a. in a representative capacity (e.g. where a member is representing a particular division or college).
b. for their expertise (e.g. to bring to the committee knowledge of a particular issue).
c. by virtue of the office they hold (commonly known as an 'ex officio' appointment).

19. The committee's terms of reference provide a formal statement of how the membership is determined and appointed, and the members' periods of office.

20. Every year, the Nominations Committee will make a recommendation to Council on the appointment of lay members of Council and other lay people to serve on selected University committees for the following academic year. This process usually takes place in early summer and is facilitated by the Governance Office.

Quorum

21. The quorum for a committee meeting is the minimum number of members required to make the meeting valid. If a meeting is inquorate, it cannot make decisions on behalf of the committee. It can hold discussions and make recommendations for later confirmation or rejection by the committee. At Leicester, the quorum should be no less than one third of the total membership. The quorum includes co-opted members but excludes 'attendees'.

22. The quorum for every committees under the Senate umbrella is set out in the Code of Practice for Academic Governance.

Roles and responsibilities

23. The Chair and the Secretary of the committee, and the individual members, have their own distinct roles. These need to be discharged effectively in order for the committee to fulfil its responsibilities and to deliver on its terms of reference.

24. Role descriptions for these positions are published on the Governance website.

Notification of dates and times of meetings

25. The dates and times of meetings of Council, Senate and their committees are listed in the Almanac. A number of other committees are also included in the Almanac – a list of committees included in the publication is included at Appendix 1.

26. The Almanac is released annually, normally in the summer term, to give adequate notice of committee meetings for the forthcoming academic year. The Almanac is updated as required throughout the year; please always refer to the website for the latest version. Committee secretaries should notify changes and corrections to the Almanac to the Governance Office [governance@le.ac.uk].

27. Committee members should be notified by the secretary of the dates and times of all meetings, and any changes, as soon as the details are known. 'Outlook' meeting invitations should be issued electronically where possible, and this is also the most reliable way of notifying members of changes to the schedule of meetings.

B. **The agenda**

28. The agenda is a list of items of business. It helps to organise and plan the meeting. It also simplifies minute writing, by giving the meeting a proper structure. In constructing the agenda, the secretary is likely to refer to a number of sources:

   a. The Committee's forward business schedule .
   b. the agenda for the corresponding meeting in the previous year, which will usually identify matters considered as part of the above forward business schedule.

c.   a pending file of items notified since the last meeting.

d.   *significant* matters arising from the minutes of the most recent meeting. These should appear as separate items on the new agenda, rather than under a generic 'matters arising' heading, as this will help to manage the committee's business better.

29.   The agenda must be laid out in accordance with the University's standard <u>agenda template</u> available for download from the Governance website. An example is given in Appendix 2. Certain types of basic information must be shown clearly on the agenda, including:

a.   the date, time and location of the meeting.

b.   whether there is a paper (report) to support an item, and whether it is attached to the circulated agenda or will follow separately. The papers should be numbered as outlined in the agenda template.

c.   if a paper is not ready to be sent out when the agenda is first circulated it should still be given a number, and marked 'to follow' on the agenda to indicate that it will be sent out separately in a second circulation.

<u>"To Consider" and "To Note" items</u>

30.   A key detail to be shown on the agenda is a clear indication of what the committee needs to do with each item. This is done by denoting it as TO CONSIDER or TO NOTE:

a.   TO CONSIDER items require active discussion by the committee in order to come to a view on something. Usually this will result in a specific decision or recommendation being recorded in the minutes

b.   TO NOTE items do not require active discussion as the committee is not being asked to come to a view on something. Usually the minutes will simply record that the committee has received a particular document or information, or noted certain facts

c.   TO NOTE items may be further differentiated by being marked with an *. This means that such items are intended for information only and are not expected to be discussed at all unless this is specifically requested by the committee, before the meeting commences. The agenda must not * an item which requires the committee to approve something, as this may be seen as taking the committee's approval for granted

d.   TO CONSIDER items should normally be listed before TO NOTE items on the agenda.

<u>Unreserved and Reserved Business</u>

31.   As a general rule, items containing commercially sensitive information, or sensitive personal information about a named or easily identifiable individual, should be placed in a separate 'Reserved Business' section of the agenda.

32.   This approach is designed to reflect both Freedom of Information Act and Data Protection Act requirements in committee servicing procedures at the University. The Reserved Business section of the agenda must not be used as a means of restricting access to items of business where there are no reasonable grounds for doing so.

33. Please refer to the section below on 'Confirmation and circulation of the agenda' regarding the circulation of reserved agenda items and papers.

34. Comprehensive guidance on the use of Unreserved and Reserved Business is published on the Governance website.

Declarations of interest

35. Members with a clear and substantial financial, family or other personal interest in an agenda item for a meeting where they are present must disclose this to their committee. Declarations of interest usually relate to:

    a. pecuniary matters – where a committee member has a financial interest in the item of business to be discussed.

    b. family matters – where a committee member has a family member who is tangibly linked to the business to be discussed.

    c. other personal interests – this could be where a committee member is a non-paid (i.e. not a pecuniary interest) trustee of a charity that is involved in the item of business.

36. Once an interest has been declared, the committee will then decide what level of participation (if any) in the subsequent discussion and decision making process is acceptable on the part of the conflicted member. The outcome of such deliberations should be recorded in the minutes.

37. 'Declarations of interest' is the standard first agenda item for all committees in the Council sub-structure.

38. Guidance on the University policy on the registration and declaration of interests is published on the Governance website. Lay members of Council and other lay people will usually declare any interests upon joining the University. The Governance Office maintain a register of interests, which is reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

Date and time of future meetings

39. Having this as a standard item on the agenda is a useful means of reminding the members of the schedule of forthcoming meetings. The dates and time of all future meetings, if known, can be listed on the agenda. If no further meetings have been arranged this item will prompt the committee to decide when its next meeting should take place, and to give the maximum period of notice.

The use of 'Any other business'

40. 'Any other business' is a standard agenda heading, but raising substantive items under this heading is unfair to committee members as they will not be prepared for it, there will be no planned time for discussion, and absent members will not be able to comment. The agenda should indicate that any member who wishes to raise business under this heading is expected to notify the Chair or secretary in advance, so that they and the committee are not taken by surprise.

<u>Timed agendas</u>

41. Some committees try to estimate how much time each item of business will take, and then indicate this as part of the item title on the agenda. This can be a useful means of helping to manage the flow of business in the meeting, although reliable estimates can be difficult to achieve in advance and may give a misleading impression of the expected length of the meeting.

42. It is important that timed agendas are not enforced so rigidly that they give the impression of being used to curtail legitimate discussion of key items. Committee Chairs will need to apply reasonable flexibility if it becomes apparent in the meeting that the time allowed for a particular item is not sufficient for it to be dealt with properly.

<u>Confirmation and circulation of the agenda</u>

43. Every summer, Secretaries should engage with the Chair and agree a forward business schedule for the upcoming academic year. The forward business schedule should be maintained by the Secretary on a regular basis and be used in creating and drafting agendas for each meeting.

44. Secretaries are responsible for drafting agendas for each meeting. Normally, secretaries would get in touch with Chairs between four and six weeks in advance of the meeting date to share an initial, draft agenda and to issue a call for papers. The final agenda should not be released until the Secretary has received approval from the Chair that it is ready to be circulated.

45. The agenda and as many of its supporting papers as possible should be circulated to the members at least five working days before the meeting. Authors will therefore need to be given reasonable notice of the deadline for submission of papers to the committee secretary, and the committee's forward business schedule should assist with this.

46. A list must be maintained of those individuals who are <u>not</u> to be sent the reserved business section of the agenda, if there is one, and its accompanying papers. Committees with student representatives, for example, will have rules about not sending reserved business items to their student members. Particular care should be taken with regard to any non-members of the committee who are sent papers 'for information only', as they should not gain access to sensitive personal data by this means.

<u>Chair's briefing</u>

47. It is good practice for secretaries to prepare a Chair's briefing for each meeting and to share this with the Chair no later than three working days before the meeting. The briefing is there to assist the Chair in overseeing the meeting and conduct its business. It will usually include apologies received, timings for individual items, detail of external attendees, names of individuals who are presenting papers or discussing items, and outline for each item what decision the committee is asked to take.

48. A template for Chair's briefing is attached at Appendix 3.

C.   Papers

Agenda and paper creation – timeline and process

4-6 weeks before the meeting
Secretary drafts proposed agenda for initial review by the Chair

4-6 weeks before the meeting
Secretary issues 'call for papers' and confirms deadline or receipt of papers

2 weeks before the meeting
Secretary confirms final agenda with the Chair for approval

5 working days before the meeting
Secretary circulates the meeting papers

3 working days before the meeting
Secretary shares Chair's Briefing with the Chair

49. A call for papers should normally take place between four and six weeks before the meeting. It should be requested that papers are received by the committee secretary at least six working days, but ideally ten working days, before the meeting to allow time to check, proofread, collate and prepare. In circumstances where a committee meeting is likely to be particularly long or significant, secretaries may request that papers are submitted earlier than this.

50. Secretaries should seek to work with those who are responsible for authoring papers to ensure that what is ultimately submitted is in accordance with the agreed deadline and has been suitably sense-checked and proof read, and has received the necessary sign-off from the relevant senior member(s) of staff. Equally, secretaries have a role to ensure that the quality of information provided to committees is of the highest standard, confirming that the action being recommended of a committee is appropriate and within its remit. Secretaries should consult the constitution and terms of reference in order to be able to confirm this.

51. The submission of late papers should be discouraged and only be permitted in exceptional circumstances, and with the prior approval of the Chair. The tabling of papers at the meeting should only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and, again, with the approval of the Chair. This is to enable committees to have access to the information it requires in order to come to an informed view. For this reason, and if permitted, tabled papers should always be brief, usually in the form of an addendum to existing information.

52. 'To follow' papers should be avoided wherever possible. However, where necessary to use, they should be sent out at least two working days before the meeting. Tabling of papers at the meeting should also be avoided wherever possible, for the same reasons as given under 'Any other business'. They should only ever be permitted with the prior approval of the Chair.

53. Guidance for report authors, alongside a report template, is available here. Committee secretaries should circulate this template to staff who are due to write and submit reports to their committee, and should ensure that, once draft papers are received, they adhere to this format and rectify, where necessary.

54.   Each item submitted to a committee should have its own unique reference. When referencing a paper, the calendar year of the committee meeting should be listed first, followed by the initials of the name of the committee and a number, separated by slashes (/). The first paper for the first Audit Committee meeting in 2019 would therefore be 19/AC/01. The next paper would be 19/AC/02 and so on. The number would start again at 01 for the first meeting of the calendar year 2020.

55.   The paper reference should be added as a header at the top right of each page of a paper and any appendices, as well as indicated on the agenda aligned to the right of the relevant item heading. The reference should appear in size 11 Calibri font.

Electronic versus paper copies [NB: This section will be updated with the introduction of the SharePoint Committee site]

56.   The University operates a standard procedure for the electronic circulation of committee papers, as a secure and economical alternative to issuing paper copies. Committee members are sent an email to their University IT account (external committee members can be set up with an account) containing a link to the papers for the meeting. Members are prompted to log on to a special SharePoint Committee page in which Secretaries will publish all of the individual papers as combined PDF files.

57.   Committee members can then view the agenda papers on a computer or portable device, or print off a hard copy if they need one. Further guidance on the procedure for the electronic circulation of committee papers is available on the Governance website.

58.   Committees should circulate their agenda papers electronically wherever possible, using the standard procedure referred to above. For security reasons papers must not be circulated as e-mail attachments.

59.   Internal committee members (i.e. University staff and students) who still require hard copies of agenda papers should be asked to print off their own set locally inside the University, having first accessed the papers via the SharePoint site. Committee secretaries are not expected to circulate hard copies to internal members.

60.   In the case of external committee members, it should be borne in mind that they may not have easy access to printing facilities, and they should not be expected to incur printing costs on a personal basis. If any such members do request hard copies of the agenda papers it will be appropriate for them to be provided by the committee secretary.

Security issues

61.   All committee members and committee support staff should be reminded of the need to ensure that confidential or sensitive information contained in both hard copy and digital documents, including the agenda papers for meetings of Council, Senate and their standing committees, are secured appropriately.

62.   Downloading committee papers documents from the SharePoint Committee site using a university-issued portable computing device (e.g. a tablet, laptop or smartphone) presents a number of security risks. Adequate security provisions must be place in order to secure the

information. This will include up to date anti-virus protection, security patches and protection by a strong password.
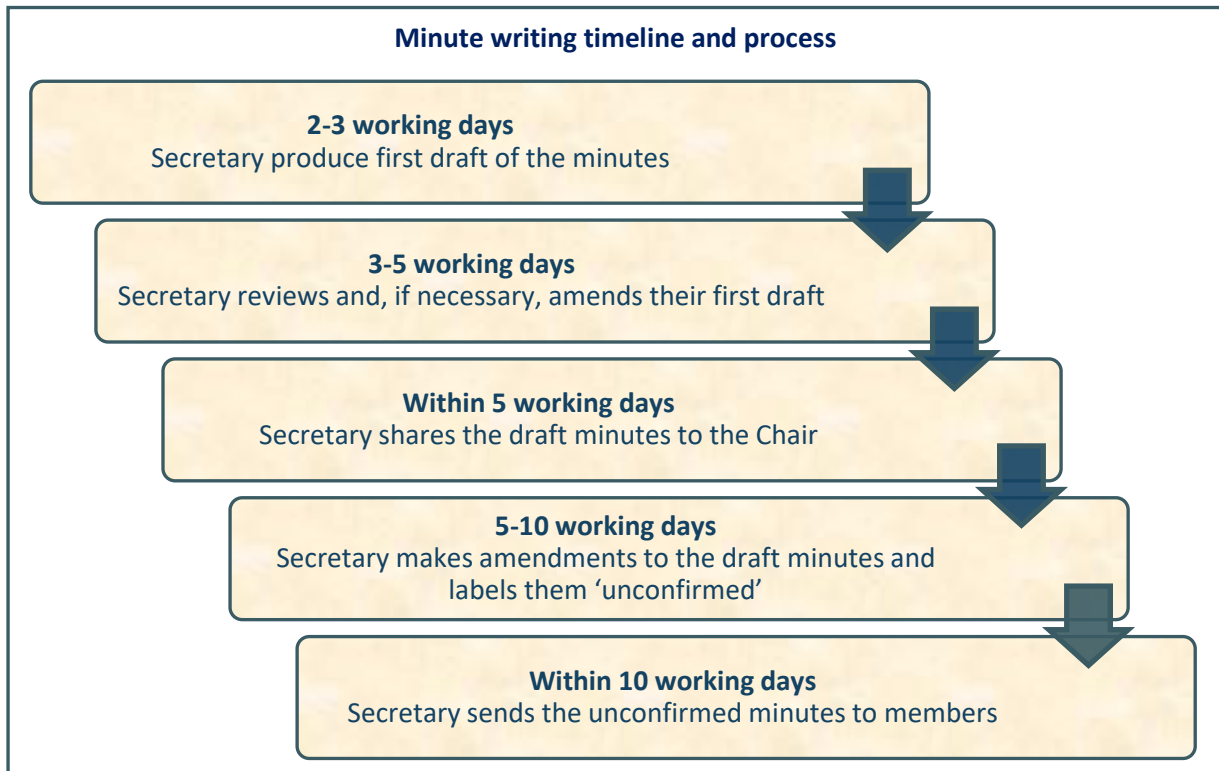
63. Advice about virus protection, including free anti-virus programmes for use at home, is available [here](#).

64. Other measures that need to be applied are: ensuring that any documents are only held on the portable device for the minimum time required; not allowing anyone else to have access to the device or its contents; and appropriately managing the physical security of the device at all times.

D. Minutes

Taking notes at the meeting

65. In deciding how to take the notes, secretaries should keep in mind the purpose of the minutes, which is to:

    a. record decisions made by the committee, and possibly and briefly the reasons for them
    b. note action required, and by whom
    c. provide a record of those present at the meeting
    d. communicate information to people who weren't there

66. Brief notes of significant points under each item, including points for and against the final decision, will enable the production of concise summary minutes that comply with the University's house style.

67. Any confusion over a decision should be resolved at the meeting, and jargon or technical language should also be clarified. If the secretary is confused, it is probable that others are too.

<u>Writing the minutes</u>

Minute writing timeline and process

2-3 working days
Secretary produce first draft of the minutes

3-5 working days
Secretary reviews and, if necessary, amends their first draft

Within 5 working days
Secretary shares the draft minutes to the Chair

5-10 working days
Secretary makes amendments to the draft minutes and labels them 'unconfirmed'

Within 10 working days
Secretary sends the unconfirmed minutes to members

68.   The first draft of the minutes should be completed within five working days of the meeting. If left longer it is possible that follow-up actions will be delayed and memory of points of detail will fade.

69.   Detailed guidance on minute writing is provided in the Good Practice Guide.

<u>Minutes style and content</u>

70.   A good minute of a meeting will be:

a.   brief, but intelligible;
b.   self-contained;
c.   written in the past tense;
d.   formal in style and tone;
e.   impersonal; and
f.   to the full extent that the discussion allows, decisive.

71.   Minutes should represent an accurate summary of relevant discussions and decisions taken by the committee. *Brevity is key*. Secretaries should avoid minuting lengthy exchanges between members and repeating content contained within the reports – instead, they should be selective and only pick up the relevant, main threads. The final minute should summarise the main points of a discussion, leading logically and clearly to any decisions or outcomes.

72.   *The minute of a discussion should be self-contained* so that any reader, including those not present at the meeting, can understand easily what was discussed and the outcome.

73. Minutes should be written *in the past tense*, so that future generations can review decisions taken.

74. The names of individual speakers should not be recorded. M*inutes should be impersonal* and provide a <u>summary</u> of the discussion rather than a detailed account of every individual contribution. Personal pronouns should not be used. An exception may be where a member will explicitly request to be named in the minutes.

75. Minutes should be *as decisive and unambiguous as possible*, especially where they relate to decisions or actions (section E refers).

<u>Structure of a minute</u>

76. Each minute is usually structured as follows:

   a. Introduction.
   b. Summary.
   c. Record of decisions made / conclusion / actions required.

77. When faced with a particularly complex item, secretaries should establish a logical framework for the minute along the lines of the above structure. Focus should be placed on the conclusion and key discussion points should be arranged in the logical order in which they lead up to it. Often, a discussion at the meeting may be relatively untidy, perhaps with pros and cons for a proposal scattered throughout the notes. Different speakers may have made much the same point, perhaps with a slight variation in each case. Secretaries can tidy up and re-order the points made, as long as they accurately reflect in the summary the gist of the main points made and they lead logically to the conclusion reached by the committee. It is not necessary to capture very single point made.

78. Sometimes this will involve amalgamating points made by different speakers, and often it will involve bringing together points made at different times in the meeting. That's fine. Secretaries should remember that the minutes are a <u>summary</u>. They are not required to give a blow by blow account of precisely what was said at each stage. Secretaries can use their own words if they better convey the gist of a point made in slightly different words at the meeting.

79. Each minute must conclude with the final view or explicit decision of the committee about the item of business, which should always be expressed in one of the following forms:

   a. Approved.
   b. Endorsed.
   c. Noted.

80. Secretaries should record a committee's decisions in bold to make it more visible to readers. The decision should be located at the end of the minute, for example '**The Committee approved** the policy.' Multiple decisions should appear in separate paragraphs with the decision located at the end of each paragraph.

<u>Time and tense</u>

81. Minutes should be written in the past tense and in the third person.

82.   The minutes should record clearly the nature of the action, the timeframe for delivery of the action, and the person taking the action forward. Where the person proposed to take forward the action did not attend the meeting, it is good practice for secretaries to notify them immediately after the meeting. Decisions need to be recorded in a clear and concise manner, and should be written as decisions of the committee rather than those of individuals.

83.   Responsibility for such action should be indicated in capital letters and in square brackets, for example: '**The Committee approved** the new policy and requested that the Secretary of the Personnel Committee prepares a progress report for the next meeting. [ACTION: JOANNE SMITH]'.

84.   The secretary must ensure that the need for any follow-up action is communicated to the relevant individual(s) immediately after the meeting. This is particularly important for individuals who were not present at the meeting, and who may have to take action straightaway. A copy of the relevant minute (once approved by the Chair) should be provided to them.

85.   For some matters the follow-up action may involve a specific requirement for some or all members of the committee to play an active role in conveying, explaining and promoting the decision of the committee to the wider University community. In order for them to do this effectively, members may find it helpful to be provided with a separate note on the "key messages" that they are expected to convey, as this is likely to involve additional or more detailed information than would be included in the minutes.

86.   It is the secretary's responsibility to engage with action holders and ensure that the committee receives updates from action holders on how they have implemented their follow-up actions. Usually, the committee will receive updates in writing or orally under the matters arising heading on the agenda. Secretaries should maintain an actions log for regular review with the Chair.

Attachments to the minutes

87.   The minutes should not normally need attachments, unless it is necessary for Senate/Council or another committee to receive detailed information on a particularly significant matter. In such cases a paper may be attached to the minutes as an appendix.

Approval and publication of the minutes

88.   The draft minutes should go to the Chair for possible amendment and initial approval. Minutes are 'unconfirmed' until approved by the committee at its next meeting, but once approved by the Chair they should be circulated to the committee for information. **This should be done within ten working days of the meeting.**

Committee reports to Senate and Council

89.   Committees which report to Senate/Council should supply their minutes to Senate/Council in report format, as shown at Appendix 4. This format reorders the minutes into three sections:

a.   matters referred to Senate/Council for approval.
b.   matters referred to Senate/Council for information.
c.   other matters considered at the meeting.

90. Items in the first two sections require the full text of each minute to be included, so no further editing of the minute is required. For items in the third section only the heading is needed.

<u>Communication between committees</u>

91. Committees should be alert to cases where their discussion of an item is likely to be of close or direct interest to another committee in the University. This is particularly important where one committee has taken a view, or made a decision, about something which may influence another committee's deliberations on the same topic.

92. In such cases the secretary of the first committee should deposit a copy of the relevant report considered by that committee, and the minute of the resulting discussion or decision, with the secretary of the second committee so that it can be drawn to that committee's attention at its next available meeting.

E.   Urgent business between meetings

<u>Use of 'Chair's Action'</u>

93. In exceptional circumstances there may be a need for the Chair to consider items of business between meetings, under 'Chair's Action', on behalf of the full committee. This helps to ensure that important business is not delayed unnecessarily in cases where no scheduled meeting is imminent.

94. Items considered under Chair's Action must lie within the committee's terms of reference and should normally be confined to matters which, in the judgment of the Chair, are routine and likely to be non-controversial, but which for timing reasons cannot be delayed until the next meeting. If the likelihood of needing to consider major and/or controversial items between scheduled meetings is known in advance, the committee may consider explicitly delegating the matter to the Chair at the previous meeting

95. Where Chair's Action on a major or controversial item is deemed to be necessary, the Chair should seek the views of members by email before arriving at a decision or, if requested by members and time allows, a Special Meeting may be called. In extreme cases the Chair may have to use discretion on whether to take Chair's Action – and what action to take – with advice if appropriate from the committee secretary and relevant University officers. All decisions taken under Chair's Action should be reported to the Committee at its next meeting for information.

F.   SharePoint committee site

96. Each committee will operate through a bespoke SharePoint site. The site will serve as a means for circulating papers and other documents, archiving committee papers and minutes and sharing information about the committee with staff and students.

97. If no SharePoint site currently exists, it can be created by sending an email to the IT Service desk (ithelp@leicester.ac.uk). The following information should be provided:

    a.   The committee name

    b.   Acroym/ abbreviated name for the committee

c. Description of the committee – brief, one or two sentence usually suffice

d. Meeting frequency

e. Names of the Chair and Secretary

f. The data classification for the information being stored on the committee site – A decision tree and model is provided on the IT Services webpages to help Secretaries determine the data classification of their committee.

98. IT services have put together a help guide for committee secretaries and chairs for using the SharePoint site.

G. Retention of committee papers and archiving of minutes

99. The servicing office should retain copies of committee agendas, agenda papers and minutes for the current calendar year plus the previous six years. At the end of this period agendas and agenda papers should be destroyed but the minutes must be retained indefinitely, in accordance with the University's records retention schedule. For the standing committees of Senate or Council hard copies of the minutes must be deposited with the Governance Office, from where they will be bound and then regularly archived in the University Library as the official version. Hard copies of Council and its committees should be signed by the Chair before depositing.

100. Each committee must therefore create and keep up to data a separate 'Permanent Minute Archive' folder within its own committee folder on its SharePoint site. The committee will need one such archive folder for its Unreserved minutes, and (if relevant) a second archive folder for its Reserved minutes.

101. As soon as the committee has formally approved the minutes, the committee secretary must deposit a PDF copy in the relevant archive folder(s). This will form part of the University's historical record and the minutes should be retained in that location indefinitely. The committee secretary and the servicing office must ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place to prevent the archived minutes from being moved, deleted or otherwise interfered with. This is particularly important when there is a change of committee secretary or responsibility transfers to a different servicing office. It should be covered, for example, as part of the induction arrangements for any new or existing staff who are to be given access to the archive.

H. Committee effectiveness reviews

102. As part of the University's commitment to maintain and demonstrate high standards of corporate governance, the standing committees of Senate and Council are required to review their own effectiveness on a regular basis. Committees must undertake such reviews at intervals of no longer than four years, and ideally they should take place every other year.

103. The Governance Office will provide oversight of a rolling programme of effectiveness reviews to ensure that the above cycle is maintained. Each summer the Governance Office will engage with committee Chairs and secretaries to facilitate the carrying out of effectiveness review during the next academic year.

104. A standard on-line effectiveness questionnaire, which features an automated facility for collating and analysing committee members' responses, is available for use by committees as a self-assessment tool.

105. The University's full [Protocol](#) for committee effectiveness reviews is published on the Governance website.

I. Common committee terminology

Agenda

106. An agenda provides details of the items of business to be considered at a meeting.

Apologies for absence

107. Members unable to attend a meeting are normally expected to give their apologies to the Secretary as soon as possible before the meeting. For most committees, apologies received are recorded in the minutes.

Appendix

108. Appendix (plural: appendices) means 'subsidiary matter at the end of a book or document'. These should be discouraged wherever possible.

Attachment

109. Attachment simply means 'thing attached'. Attachments to agendas (and sometimes minutes) provide information additional to that provided in the agenda/minute item. Attachments to agendas/minutes should be labelled (for example, Attachment A) for easy reference when reading the documents.

Casting vote

110. Some committees make provision in their terms of reference for the chair to have a "casting" (that is an extra vote, which he/she may use if there are equal numbers 'for' and 'against' when a vote is taken. It is traditional (but not imperative) for the Chair to use the casting vote in favour of the status quo (where appropriate).

111. It is not usual for University committees to have votes as part of their business. Senate, Council and the standing committees of Council are the only ones in which this takes place. Even then, it will be exceptional, rather than the norm.

Chair

112. The "Chair" is the person who is appointed to chair a committee.

Co-opted member

113. Some committees make provision in their constitutions for one or more co-opted members – that is members who are invited by the other members to join the committee. A committee will usually co-opt members who provide expertise missing in the other members, or who balance the membership in some way (gender, academic discipline, and the like). Co-opted members are full members of a committee.

Ex-officio member

114. An "ex officio" committee member has membership by virtue of his/her position or office.

In attendance

115. A person who is 'in attendance' at a meeting attends because of the position he/she holds, normally to be kept informed and/or to provide information. A person who attends a meeting "by invitation" is not a committee member, but has been invited because she/he has some contribution to make to the meeting. For example, he/she may give a report or make a presentation. The person may be a regular ("standing") invitee or simply an invitee for a particular item or items.

<u>Minutes</u>

116. The minutes are the written record of what took place at a committee meeting. They are final only when they have been confirmed at a subsequent meeting.

<u>Modus operandi</u>

117. "Modus operandi" means method of operation. This covers a range of committee 'operation', including providing detail of meeting frequency and quorum, where relevant.

Any other business

118. Some meetings include an "Any Other Business" item at the end of the agenda to allow members to raise matters not otherwise included on the agenda. The use of "Any Other Business" is not generally favoured for formal committee meetings, since the general principle applying to committee business is that members must be informed properly in advance (via detailed agenda items) about any matters they are to discuss. So, if it is used at all, it must be restricted to very minor matters which do not require prior consideration' for example, matters of information.

<u>Quorum</u>

119. The quorum for a committee meeting is the minimum number of members required to make the meeting valid. If a meeting is inquorate, it cannot make decisions on behalf of the committee. It can hold discussions and make recommendations for later confirmation or rejection by the committee. At Leicester, the quorum should be no less than one third of the total membership.

<u>Standing committee</u>

120. A "standing committee" is one which reports to either Senate or Council and has an indefinite term of existence.

<u>Standing orders</u>

121. Some committees, such as the Senate and Council, have "Standing Orders" which set out the "rules" on the way in which their business is conducted -for example, rules of debate, methods of voting, powers of the chair, etc.

<u>Sub-committee</u>

122. A sub-committee is one appointed by a larger committee to undertake a specified task. Some committees have standing sub-committees which deal with specific tasks which arise throughout the year.

<u>Terms of reference</u>

123. A committees "Terms of reference" set out its functions and role, reporting line, membership, chair, quorum, and frequency of meetings.

J.   Questions and further advice

124. Any questions on this guidance or any particular aspect of committee servicing at the University should be directed to the Governance Office (governance@le.ac.uk).

125. Detailed guidance on minute writing is provided in the <mark>Good Practice Guide</mark> on how to take and write minutes.

Governance Office, December 2018

K.   APPENDICES:

Appendix 1: Minute template

Appendix 2: Agenda template

Appendix 3: Chair's briefing template

Appendix 4: Committee report template

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

NAME OF COMMITTEE

**Minutes of a meeting held on
Day Date Month Year**

Present:

Anna Smith

Brian Smith	Elaine Smith
Carol Smith	Frank Smith
Donald Smith	Graham Smith

Helen Smith

In attendance: Ian Smith (Secretary) and Jan Smith (for the business recorded in 13/MXX)

Apologies for absence were received from Ken Smith

UNRESERVED BUSINESS[1]

13/MXX[2]   **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Mr B Smith declared an interest in respect of the business transacted under minute 13/MXX.

13/MXX   **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Committee considered the minutes of a meeting held on date month year.

The Committee approved them as a correct record.

Arising from minute 13/MXX (item title), **the Committee noted** that….

13/MXX   **ITEM TITLE**

The Committee considered/received…

Brief record of key points of discussion.

The Committee agreed/approved/recommended/ noted that …[ACTION: Lynne SMITH]

continued/

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[1]   not needed if only one section
[2]   calendar year/minute number

13/MXX   **ITEM TITLE**

The Committee considered/received…

Brief record of key points of discussion.

The Committee agreed/approved/recommended/ noted that …[ACTION: MARTIN SMITH]

13/MXX   **DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The Committee noted dates and times of future meetings:

Duration of meeting: x hours and y minutes   CHAIR

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

NAME OF COMMITTEE

Meeting to be held at Time on Day Date Month Year
in the Location

AGENDA

Items or papers on the agenda that are marked with an * will only be discussed at the meeting if this is requested specifically by the Committee. Any member who wishes to raise matters for discussion in relation to such items should inform the Chair or Secretary before the meeting commences.

UNRESERVED BUSINESS[1]

1.   **Declarations of interest**

2.   **Minutes of the previous meeting**

   TO CONSIDER

   Minutes of a meeting held on date   **XX/19/YY[2]**
   a.   Approval of the minutes
   b.   Matters arising

3.   **Item title**

   TO CONSIDER

   Item description   **XX/19/YY**

4.   **Item title**

   TO CONSIDER

   Item description   **XX/19/YY**

5.   **Item title***

   TO NOTE

   Item title   **XX/19/YY**

---

[1]   not needed if only one section
[2]   committee name initials/calendar year/ paper number

6. **Date and time of future meetings**

TO NOTE

Date and time of future meetings of the Committee:

7. **Any other business** (please notify the Chair in advance of the meeting)

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

NAME OF COMMITTEE

Meeting to be held at Time on Day Date Month Year
in the Location

AGENDA – Chair's briefing

Items or papers on the agenda that are marked with an * will only be discussed at the meeting if this is requested specifically by the Committee. Any member who wishes to raise matters for discussion in relation to such items should inform the Chair or Secretary before the meeting commences.

UNRESERVED BUSINESS

Note any apologies that have been received.

1.   **Declarations of interest**

Note any declarations of interest relating to the agenda.

2.   **Minutes of the previous meeting**

TO CONSIDER

Minutes of a meeting held on date   **XX/19/YY[2]**
a.   Approval of the minutes
b.   Matters arising

3.   **Item title**

TO CONSIDER

Item description   **XX/19/YY**
Note what decision is required of the committee and who will present the paper

4.   **Item title**

TO CONSIDER

Item description   **XX/19/YY**
Note what decision is required of the committee and who will present the paper

5.   **Item title**

TO NOTE

Item title   **XX/19/YY**
Note what decision is required of the committee and who will present the paper

6. **Date and time of future meetings**

TO NOTE

Date and time of future meetings of the Committee:

7. **Any other business** (please notify the Chair in advance of the meeting)

Note any other business of which you/the Chair have been notified

Appendix 4   **Report Template**

NAME OF COMMITTEE

Report of a meeting held on
Day Date Month Year

Present:

Anna Smith

Brian Smith   Elaine Smith
Carol Smith   Frank Smith
Donald Smith   Graham Smith

Helen Smith

In attendance: Ian Smith (Secretary) and Jan Smith (for the business recorded in 13/MXX)

Apologies for absence were received from Ken Smith

UNRESERVED BUSINESS[1]

a.	Matters referred to Parent Committee (e.g. Senate/Council) for approval

19/MXX[2]   **ITEM TITLE**

Text taken from the corresponding minute

b.	Matters referred to Parent Committee (e.g. Senate/Council) for information

19/MXX   **ITEM TITLE**

Text taken from the corresponding minute

19/MXX   **ITEM TITLE**

Text taken from the corresponding minute

19/MXX   **DATES AND TIMES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The Committee noted dates and times of future meetings:

c.	Other matters considered at the meeting

19/MXX   **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**   .

19/MXX   **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Duration of meeting: x hours and y minutes   CHAIR

[1]   not needed if only one section
[2]   calendar year/minute number (as taken from the minutes)