

Role of Chair

Effective meetings require people to play defined roles. An effective Chair can improve team performance significantly.

1. The Chairperson is usually assigned monthly to allow continuity in the role.
2. A list of Chairs for the next several months should be put together when all team members have their schedules available so that they can pre-plan the best month for them to take on this leadership role in addition to other duties and responsibilities in the team and in the program.
3. The Scribe from one month typically becomes the Chair for the next.
4. The Chairperson runs the meeting according to the team's defined norms and meeting rules, but also offers opinions and engages in the discussion when he or she chooses.
5. The Chair also, with input from the team, will design the agenda for the meeting and the methodology for the meeting.
6. Once in the meeting, the Chair manages participation, offers useful tools to keep the team on track and periodically checks with team members on how things are going. The role of Chair is meant to foster full and equal participation of all members when their input is needed to decide issues (note that sometimes an individual or set of individuals from the team may be authorized to make a decision on behalf of the team).
7. The Chair should keep track of the time spent on each item and keep the team moving forward toward decisions on each topic. The Chair guides the team toward making decisions and attempts to produce consensus. To do so, he/she completes a round table check-in with all members each time a decision must be taken to assess the level of agreement within the team. Either alignment has been reached or a decision is made to spend more time seeking consensus. If an action item comes out of a decision, the Chair asks the Scribe to record it and assigns responsibility to the item by placing the person's name who agreed to take responsibility next to the item.
8. At the end of each meeting the Chair should spend the last few minutes debriefing meeting effectiveness to assess what worked well and what could be done more effectively. Each team member should be asked individually for his/her input. The Chair should also seek input from the team's members on what he/she could do to be a more efficient and effective Chairperson.