

UNSW
ELEC4122

Chairing the seminar class (a type of meeting)

1. The Chair introduces the team-members.
2. The Chair keeps everyone to time, whatever activity is happening. So the Chair needs to have a plan about how to manage the whole 2 hr. (Presumably decided by the team before class begins.)
3. The Chair outlines the agenda/scope for the class (meeting), i.e. briefly introduces the key themes for the class. Like the introduction in a report: “We will be talking about ...” or “answering the following questions ...” Equally important is explaining, “Today we are not discussing ...”
4. At the end of the class (meeting), the Chair summarises (without introducing new ideas) the main points that were said. And not just from the formal presentation, but all the unscripted contributions, too.
5. The Chair makes sure everyone/everything is on the topic. “That’s interesting, but this week ...” “That’s a good question for moodle.”
6. The Chair identifies who asks a question and in what order. The Chair then nominates someone to reply to the question.
7. The Chair keeps order, stops interruptions, etc.
8. The Chair ensures the room is set correctly, e.g. is the lighting/volume right? and table arrangement? Doesn’t necessarily do it, but ensures it happens.

Chairs have to manage and organise the class (meeting) in real-time, and modify what was previously planned whenever that is needed. So the Chair has to pay careful attention to all that is going on. Which is why someone else (secretary) takes the notes.

Over the past couple of sessions, some teams have chosen to hide a ‘reluctant’ (for whatever reason) speaker by having that person chair a seminar class. This is not a good idea. Chairing well is the hardest of the jobs. But only the bad Chairs are noticed.