

The Role of Secretary

The secretary is defined as “the person who will take the minutes of meetings, deal with correspondence and be responsible for the secretary’s end of year report.”

1. Administrative Duties

The secretary should attend all training workshops provided by the Societies’ Office, and make themselves familiar with the relevant handbooks and guidelines. They should make sure the society constitution is up-to-date and be familiar with its conditions. The secretary is responsible for having a current list of committee members’ names, contact details and student number, and must ensure this list is filed with the Societies’ Office. A secretary’s *End of Year Report* is to be prepared as the year draws to a close, detailing the societies activities for the year.

2. Communication Duties

Secretaries are responsible for the society’s communications, both internal and external. Internal communications include keeping committee members informed of meetings, agendas and minutes, as well as making sure the society has an up-to-date calender of events. External communications includes receiving, reading, and responding to any communications from third parties.

3. Recording Duties

The secretary is vital to ensuring successful committee meetings. They are responsible for communicating the date, time and place of these meetings to the committee, as well forwarding an agenda for each meeting. During the meeting, secretaries record the minutes, paying particular attention to any motions which are carried or overturned as well as specific decisions made. These minutes are to be typed and circulated to the rest of the committee. They must also be read at the start of the next meeting.

4. Types of Meetings

Committee Meetings – AGM – EGM

AGM

- At the end of Semester 2 you must hold an AGM
- At the AGM new committee members are democratically elected and changes to the constitution are raised and agreed.
- Check your constitution for specific regulations regarding your AGM.
- Best Practice would suggest giving one weeks’ notice of the AGM.
- Make every effort to publicise the AGM (posters, email, websites)
- At the AGM you present a secretary’s report and a treasurer’s report
- After the AGM inform the Societies Officer of new committee members and their contact details
- Make sure any new members’ details are included on the website.
- Provide an updated constitution at the earliest convenience.

EGM

- An EGM may be held at any time of the year.
- If you have held an AGM at the end of semester 2 of the previous academic year and you have not filled all the positions on your committee you will need to hold an EGM in September, (preferably after Societies day) to fill the vacant posts
- It is advisable to advertise the EGM with date & venue on your table on Societies day.
- Attendance is open to all members of the society.
- Usually one weeks notice is required (Check your individual constitution)
- The Agenda is at the discretion of the committee.
- Changes to constitutions may be made at an EGM

5. Agendas

The meeting agenda is a roadmap for the meeting. It lets participants know where they're headed so they don't get off track. Most importantly, the meeting agenda gives a sense of purpose and direction to the meeting.

All agendas should list the following:

1. Meeting start time, end time & location
2. Matters Arising (Refer to the previous minutes when drafting these)
3. Topic headings (Include some topic detail for each heading)
4. Attach any additional material which it would be advantageous for the committee to read before the meeting - this can save considerable time.

A good agenda will help you to understand the objectives of the meeting, which will help you to know what is important to include in the minutes.

Prepare the agenda after discussion with the Chairperson and any other key participants.

Distribute the agenda and additional material prior to the meeting so members will be prepared and feel involved and up-to-date.

6. Minutes:

Minutes are the key points made during a meeting. Keep minutes of all your meetings safe. Use google docs so they are easily accessible to everyone. They provide a written record and prove the meeting took place. Minutes should always be written in a consistent style.

Minutes of the last meeting: You will need to agree on the minutes of the last meeting as an accurate account of the previous meeting. Once approved, discussion of these items should not be reported.

Matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting: This is where questions/requests for further information can be raised about items from the last meeting which are not scheduled for later in the agenda.

Committee Reports: This provides an opportunity for committee members to give a report on the work they have done since the last meeting.

Any other Business: If "other business" tends to go on too long it may indicate that not enough planning has gone into the meeting and the participants are just thinking on their feet.

Date of the next meeting: Always remind people of (or agree) the date of the next meeting.

Tips for taking Minutes

- Don't wait too long to type up the minutes, do them while your memory is fresh. Be sure to have the minutes approved by the chair or facilitator before distributing them to the attendees.
- Don't be intimidated by the prospect of taking minutes. Concise and coherent minutes are the mark of a professional. The very process of recording minutes can give you a deeper understanding of the issues faced by your society along with ability to focus on what's important.

Do Not Record

- Speaker's experiences, Personal comments
- Old material, Redundant information, Withdrawn motions
- Many minutes do not record individual speakers unless the individual speaker requests that their comments be recorded) but concentrate on topics, decisions and plans of action attributing to the individual the course of action which they have agreed to undertake. This appears as matters arising at the next meeting.
- Verbatim transcripts are very unusual and do not facilitate efficient management or action.