BSB 7.0

BSBTWK503

MANAGE MEETINGS

Aspire Learning Resources

BSBTWK503

Manage meetings

Release 1

Learner Guide

Aspire Version 1.1

Learning Resources

BSBTWK503 Manage meetings, Release 1

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Before you begin

This Learner Guide is based on the unit of competency *BSBTWK503 Manage meetings*, Release 1. Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. You can access the unit of competency and assessment requirements at:
www.training.gov.au.

How to work through this Learner Guide

This Learner Guide contains a number of features that will assist you in your learning. Your trainer will advise which parts of the Learner Guide you need to read, and which Practice Tasks and Learning Checkpoints you need to complete. The features of this Learner Guide are detailed in the following table.

Feature of the Learner Guide	How you can use each feature
Learning content	Read each topic in this Learner Guide. If you come across content that is confusing, make a note and discuss it with your trainer. Your trainer is in the best position to offer assistance. It is very important that you take on some of the responsibility for the learning you will undertake.
Examples	These highlight key learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.
Practice Tasks	Practice Tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into action. Your trainer will tell you which practice tasks to complete.
Summaries	Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.
Learning Checkpoints	There is a Learning Checkpoint at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which Learning Checkpoints to complete. These checkpoints give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.

Foundation skills

As you complete learning using this guide, you will be developing the foundation skills relevant for this unit. Foundation skills are the language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) skills and the employability skills required for participation in modern workplaces and contemporary life.

The following table provides definitions for each foundation skill.

Foundation skill area	Foundation skill description
Reading	▪ Identifies and interprets information from complex texts including organisational policies and procedures
Writing	▪ Addresses the context, purpose and audience when generating a range of texts ▪ Prepares notes using appropriate structure, and accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation ▪ Edits and corrects own work to ensure accuracy
Oral communication	▪ Participates in verbal exchanges using appropriate style, tone and vocabulary for audience, context and purpose ▪ Listens for specific information during meetings ▪ Asks questions and listens to responses to clarify understanding
Numeracy	▪ Identifies and interprets numerical information related to timeframes
Enterprise and initiative	▪ Identifies and responds to both explicit and implicit organisational procedures and protocols and legislative and regulatory requirements
Planning and organising	▪ Applies formal processes when planning complex tasks, producing plans with logically sequenced steps, reflecting an awareness of time constraints ▪ Recognises and takes responsibility for addressing predictable problems in familiar work contexts

What do you already know?

Use the following table to identify what you may already know. This may assist you to work out what to focus on in your learning.

Topic	Key outcome	Rate your confidence in each section
Topic 1: Prepare for meetings	1A Develop agenda	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	1B Establish and verify meeting requirements	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	1C Contact participants and confirm meeting details	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	1D Provide meeting papers	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
Topic 2: Conduct meetings	2A Chair meetings according to relevant requirements and conventions	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	2B Promote participation, discussion, problem solving and resolution	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	2C Brief the minute-taker	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
Topic 3: Follow up meetings	3A Review and edit meeting minutes	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	3B Distribute and store minutes and documentation	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident
	3C Report meetings outcomes	❑ Confident ❑ Basic understanding ❑ Not confident

Topic 1 | Prepare for meetings

1A Develop agenda

An agenda is a list of items that sets out what needs to be discussed in a meeting.

An agenda is required for all formal meetings. It provides a structure for the meeting and helps to ensure all relevant items are covered in an orderly and efficient manner.

An agenda should include all the relevant matters that need to be covered in the meeting and set out the order of proceedings. It should be developed in conjunction with relevant parties – such as the chairperson, managers and attendees – to ensure all the necessary information and details are included. Note that the chairperson is often referred to as 'the chair'.

Establish a purpose for the meeting

Before you begin developing an agenda, you need to confirm the purpose of the meeting.

The purpose could be to obtain or provide information, discuss options, make decisions or complete a task. Some meetings will be a formal requirement. For example, a company might require an annual general meeting of shareholders. Examples of other meeting purposes are listed below.

Set goals	Employees meet to discuss and decide upon team or company goals.
Business review	Managers and staff meet on a regular basis to review matters regarding the financial position of the company, staff, management and the performance of its divisions.
Project planning	Team members consider how to undertake and complete a project.
Project monitoring	Team members meet to evaluate time lines, costs, progress on a project. Project obstacles can be dealt in these meetings before they get out of hand.
Gather ideas	A group of employees or stakeholders meet to brainstorm ideas, consider different perspectives and undertake activities for generating innovative solutions to problems.
Resolve conflict	Two or more people meet to resolve a conflict quickly and contain any issues that have arisen from the conflict.
Forum for discussion	Individuals share viewpoints, listen to each other, and consider various plans of action.

Prepare the agenda

In most companies, agendas are prepared by an employee who is designated to assist the person managing or chairing the meeting.

The employee responsible for preparing an agenda is sometimes referred to as the meeting 'secretary'. They are responsible for:

- gathering information for the meeting
- organising the meeting
- recording proceedings at the meeting
- preparing and distributing meeting minutes.

The way an agenda is presented will depend on an organisation's policies and standard practices. Some agendas are detailed and include information about who will speak to each item and the time allowed; other agendas simply list items to be discussed.

It is essential that agenda items are ordered correctly so participants can see how the meeting will progress. Numbering agenda items helps when writing meeting minutes, as each section of the minutes can be matched to the relevant agenda item.

When arranging meetings for a Board, a group of executives or shareholders, you may need to prepare an annotated agenda to assist the chairperson. An annotated agenda includes information such as background information about a guest speaker and answers to potential questions.

Agenda components

An agenda can include a range of different components. Although the order of these components will depend on the meeting type and organisational processes, the agenda typically begins with information about the date, time and location of the meeting. After that, the agenda should state the purpose of the meeting.

Here are some common examples of components in the typical order in which they appear.

Date, time and location of meeting	Include as much detail as needed; for example, Saturday 25 June 2015, 10.00 am–4.00pm, Boardroom 1, Level 2, Pacific Financing, 345 Argyle Street, Sydney.
Statement or purpose of meeting	The statement of purpose might be, for example, 'Annual shareholders meeting', 'Rotary fundraising meeting'.
Welcome and apologies	Welcome and apologies are used to indicate that the meeting has begun and to identify those people who cannot attend the meeting.

Quorum	A quorum is the number of people required to attend a meeting to ensure decisions are valid. In most states and territories of Australia, the quorum is stipulated in the company's constitution.
Minutes of previous meeting	This component is included when there is a requirement for attendees to agree upon the proceedings of a previous meeting. Meeting minutes may be required for official records.
Matters of business arising from the previous minutes	This component is included when there is a requirement to review any actions or decisions from a previous meeting; for example, a decision may have been made to set a sales target by the next meeting so the meeting needs to know whether this has been achieved.
Correspondence	Correspondence is any communication relating to the meeting. During a meeting, each piece of communication (e.g. email, letter) is read out and discussed. If a decision or action needs to be taken, a motion will be moved and seconded by members in the group. Correspondence can also be covered during 'General business' (see below).
Reports	Any relevant reports that need to be read by participants prior to the meeting are listed.
Agenda items	Agenda items should relate to the meeting's purpose. The agenda items can be quite general, such as 'Progress of project', or relatively specific, such as 'Review project goals' or 'Discuss new project requirements'.
General business	The General business component of a meeting provides employees or departments with an opportunity to report upon progress, issues or obstacles. The General business component of a meeting also provides an opportunity to discuss items left over from a previous meeting, adjourned business or 'motions on notice'. (A motion on notice is an issue which attendees have had time to consider and decide upon. During the General business component, attendees can raise objections or state their opinions related to the motion on notice).
Other business	The Other business component of a meeting provides participants with the opportunity to raise or address any other relevant issues. To ensure the meeting does not go over time, issues raised during Other business may be added to the agenda of the next meeting.
Next meeting	This component of a meeting provides the chairperson with an opportunity to inform attendees about the date and time of the next meeting, or the procedure for providing attendees with the information (e.g. 'We will send you an email in the next few days outlining the date and time for the next meeting').

It is important to remember that not all meeting agendas will include all these components. The components included will depend on the purpose and style of the meeting, and the relevant organisational requirements.

Agenda template

If you are responsible for organising meetings on an ongoing basis, or organising multiple meetings for different purposes, it may be useful to develop an agenda template. This will make the process of developing the agenda more efficient.

Depending on the type of meetings you are responsible for, the template could include sections for the following components:

- statement of purpose of the meeting
- date, time, location of meeting
- minutes of previous meetings
- matters arising from the previous minutes
- clearly worded agenda items and speakers/presenters' names and allocated time
- agenda items for actioning
- other business
- details of the next meeting.

Agenda items

When preparing an agenda, make sure all relevant items are included. For example, you may be required to:

- include a list of all the correspondence received (rather than simply including the heading 'Correspondence')
- include breaks for long meetings
- include the name of the person who is going to present each item
- insert a time limit to each agenda item
- cross-reference items that have supporting papers.

Use action words

If you are creating an agenda item that requires attendees to take an action, begin with the relevant action word.

An 'action word' is a verb. Here are some examples of action words you might use in an agenda.

Where attendees are required to *decide* 'Decide on the next convention venue' 'Decide on a president'
Where attendees are required to *discuss* 'Discuss file naming policy' 'Discuss installation of new office furniture'
Where attendees are required to *review* 'Review the accounts' 'Review recommendations from the previous meeting'
Where attendees are required to *select* 'Select possible guest speakers for the upcoming convention' 'Select candidates for training'

Prepare the agenda and check for accuracy

Once the agenda has been drafted, you need to check that all the items are included, and all the details are correct.

Be sure to check that the date, time and venue details are correct. Ensure people's names are spelled correctly and all the required agenda items have been included. You may need to ask the chairperson to review and approve the draft before it is finalised.

Example

Developing a meeting agenda

Oscar has been asked to develop an agenda for a regular meeting that is being chaired by his boss, Miranda. The purpose of the meeting is to bring all the senior managers in the company together to discuss the allocation of staff for six new upcoming projects.

This is the first time Oscar has a prepared an agenda for the meeting. Miranda emails him a list of requirements stating that the agenda must include:

- the following standard details: the date, time and venue of the meeting, as well the minutes from the previous meeting, general and other business
- the following agenda items:
  - Review of upcoming projects (presented by Miranda)
  - Review of current staffing allocations (presented by Min Lee)
  - Team 'pressure points' (general discussion)
  - Budget review (presented by Casper)
  - Decision on allocation of projects (led by Miranda).

Miranda informs Oscar that each of these agenda items should be allocated a maximum of 30 minutes for completion and the entire meeting cannot go any longer than three hours.

Oscar develops the agenda according to Miranda's specifications, allocating 30 minutes for each of the agenda items Miranda identified, and breaking up the remaining time for the other standard items. Because the meeting will be three hours long, Oscar includes time for a short break half-way through the meeting.

Once Oscar has finished a draft of the agenda, he checks it carefully to make sure all the details are correct. Then he emails it to Miranda and asks her to review it and forward it back to him with any suggested amendments.

Practice Task 1

Read the case study and then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

In your recent departmental meeting, you identified that three members of staff need to improve on the customer database management skills and that they have not been inducted properly for their positions. The new staff members are:

Julie – works in the customer service role

Peter – works in the mailroom

Halva – works in the mailroom.

You need to organise a meeting with Jenna Simpson, the Human Resources Manager, and Michael Burgess, the Mailroom Supervisor, to discuss a review of the company's induction procedures and potential training opportunities for the new staff.

Question 1

What is the purpose of the meeting?

Question 2

Which components would you include in the meeting agenda?

1B Establish and verify meeting requirements

For a meeting to be effective, planning is essential.

An effective meeting is a meeting that fulfils its intended purpose and satisfies the needs and requirements of the organisers and attendees.

Requirements for a meeting – such as venue, catering and technology – will depend upon the meeting type, the methods of communication, the needs of attendees and organisational policies, procedures and legislative requirements.

Types of meetings

To understand the requirements for any meeting, you need to clarify the meeting type.

Here are some examples of common types of meetings.

Board meeting	▪ The purpose of a Board meeting is to report on the progress of operational activities and provide strategic direction for specific projects. ▪ Board meetings are typically face-to-face (rather than virtual) and highly structured. Specific resources are usually required for a Board meeting and documents typically need to be distributed beforehand.
Shareholder meeting	▪ The purpose of a shareholder meeting is to provide shareholders with the opportunity to vote on motions and to gather feedback on strategic directions. ▪ Shareholder meetings are typically face-to-face (rather than virtual) and highly structured. Arrangements for shareholder meetings need to be made well in advance of the meeting date.
Annual general meeting	▪ Annual meetings are structured formal meetings that follow comprehensive guidelines set up in a company charter and organisational procedures. Annual general meetings are highly structured and formal. ▪ Annual general meetings are an official requirement of public companies. The minutes will be kept as a company record and need to accurately reflect the proceedings of the meeting.
Budget meeting	▪ The purpose of a budget meeting is to report current and project expenses versus projects and allocate funds. ▪ Budget meetings can be face-to-face or virtual; web conferencing tools are often used to facilitate a budget meeting. Documents for participants can be shared in hard or soft copy.

Team/Staff meeting	▪ The purpose of team/staff meetings is to monitor the progress of tasks and projects, share information with the team/staff and provide feedback. ▪ They may be part of a regular schedule, such as a regular Monday morning meeting with a standard brief agenda. Other team meetings will be held on an 'as needs' basis to address specific needs or issues.
Emergency meeting	▪ Emergency meetings are held to resolve urgent issues. They can be face-to-face or virtual.
Virtual meetings	▪ Virtual meetings are meetings that involve the use of web conferencing technology. ▪ The benefits of virtual meetings are that they provide people from different locations with the opportunity to participate in the meeting. They can also reduce the costs and time taken for meetings because people do not need to travel in order to attend. ▪ It is possible to digitally record virtual meetings (using web conferencing technology, such as Zoom, which enables recording of audio). ▪ However, one of the disadvantages of virtual meetings is that because it is harder for participants to read each other's body language, it can also be harder for them to trust each other and demonstrate transparency.

Confirm meeting requirements

A large part of planning for a meeting relates to the confirmation of requirements.

If you are responsible for confirming meeting requirements, you may need to consult with a range of people, such as the chairperson, senior management, attendees, guest speakers, venue managers, accommodation and travel agents.

Here are common requirements that may need to be considered.

Attendees	▪ The decision about who to invite to a meeting is typically made by the meeting chairperson, however the meeting secretary may also be involved in this decision. ▪ If a decision has already been made about who is being invited to participate, you will need to confirm the number of attendees.
Guest speakers	▪ You may need to confirm the details of guest speakers with the meeting chairperson. You may also need to check whether the guest speaker has any specific requirements, such as transport, accommodation or technology.

Venue	▪ The venue needs to be large enough to accommodate the attendees. It also needs to be accessible to the people who are attending and appropriate to the meeting type. For example, a formal meeting may need to be held in a boardroom, whereas an informal team meeting can be held in a less formal setting (e.g. staff lunchroom, break-out area). ▪ You may need to view the venue before making the final decision.
Catering	▪ Depending on the duration of the meeting, refreshments and meals may need to be provided. If it is an informal meeting involving internal stakeholders, food and refreshments may not be necessary. However, if your meeting is face-to-face and involves external stakeholders or guests, it is good practice to provide tea, coffee and water – or access to relevant facilities (e.g. urn, cups, glasses, kitchen). ▪ If you are providing food or refreshments for a meeting, make sure you check attendees' dietary requirements before you organise catering.
Transport and accommodation	▪ If attendees are travelling from another location, interstate or overseas, the organiser may need to organise their transport and accommodation. ▪ Where possible, provide participants with at least three alternatives for accommodation, taking both cost and location in mind. ▪ If you are organising transport for the participants, you need to know how many participants require transport and where and when they will be arriving. Participants may need directions to the accommodation and meeting venue. ▪ Attendees may have specific needs or preferences regarding transport and accommodation. For example, they may need to travel on a particular date at a particular time, or they may prefer to be close to a specific venue or transport hub (e.g. train station, airport).
Budget	▪ You may need to confirm the budget for the meeting. This will determine how much money is available for attendees' transport and accommodation requirements, as well as affordable venues and catering.
Technology	▪ The chairperson and attendees may require access to technology. For example, if a presenter is making a presentation with slides, you will need to ensure the venue is equipped with a projector. ▪ Other technology that might be required include microphones, speakers, laptops and electronic whiteboards. You may need to ensure the venue has PowerPoints (for charging phones and laptops). ▪ If your company cannot provide the technology, you will need to identify an alternative source. Some venues will provide technology as part of their service, or you may be able to hire equipment.

Recording	▪ You need to confirm how the meeting will be recorded. For example, you may need a notetaker to take minutes. You may also need to confirm how detailed the minutes need to be, whether you will use an organisational template, how the previous minutes will be accepted and whether the minutes need to be signed by the chairperson at the conclusion of the meeting.
Organisational policies, procedures and conventions	▪ Your company may have requirements relating to: – when meeting papers are sent to participants – the required format of papers distributed to participants – who is an appropriate chairperson and minute-taker – the process for deciding upon and inviting guest speakers – the process for taking and recording minutes – the quorum – the timing and duration of meetings – voting procedures, – the process for recording motions.
Legislation	▪ You will need to confirm whether there are any legislative requirements relating to the meeting. For example, a public meeting that has been called to discuss strategic options and make decisions may have conventions requiring: – a specific quorum (e.g. 60% participation in person participation) – level of agreement (e.g. at least 50% of members need to approve a decision) – requirements for speakers (e.g. speakers must register, each speaker only has one minute to speak) – voting procedures (e.g. provision for absentee votes) ▪ Some meetings will also require attendees to be informed about a meeting in a certain way, and within a specific time frame.

Checklists

It is good practice to develop a checklist with time lines when you are planning a meeting.

A checklist will help you organise all the tasks you need to complete and ensure you get them done on time.

The checklist should include a list of the tasks that need to be completed, when the task needs to be completed (i.e. the time line), and whether the task has been completed.

The tasks included in a checklist could include:

- Arrange a venue for the day of the meeting
- Book accommodation for interstate participants

- Check dietary requirements for attendees
- Arrange catering
- Check transport needs for attendees (e.g. flights, taxi vouchers)
- Hire data projector
- Send meeting invitations with meeting documents.

Here is an example of a meeting checklist with some examples of specific tasks.

Task/Activity	Description	Timing	Completed ✓
Confirm list of attendees	Check list with Joan	6 weeks prior to meeting	✓
Visit Waterside Conference Centre to check facilities	Check data projector availability Check catering availability	1st September	✓
Book accommodation for John Willis and Rosalba Braidotti	Use company credit card according to organisational requirements	4 weeks prior to meeting	
Order taxi vouchers	Record details of taxi vouchers in the taxi voucher spreadsheet Send vouchers by express post	7 days prior to meeting	

Time lines

The time line for each task will depend on a range of factors including:

- *the amount of planning required*: a formal meeting, such as an AGM that involves multiple participants travelling from interstate, will require more planning than a routine, informal weekly team meeting involving a small number of people who are all based in the same office.
- *the number of people available to assist with planning*: a team of people can share the tasks involved with planning (e.g. accommodation and transport, venue, catering) but if only one person is responsible for planning the meeting, they will need more time to complete the tasks.
- *the number of people attending the meeting*: in general, the more people involved in the meeting, the more time is required to plan the meeting, especially if it involves many people who are travelling to the meeting from interstate or overseas; however, if it is a regular meeting involving staff based at the same office, less planning will be required.

Example

Establishing meeting requirements

The Operations Team at McCloud and Sons have a team meeting every week. The purpose of the weekly meeting is to ensure all team members are kept up-to-date on the progress of team projects and informed about relevant information and updates from senior management.

The Operations Team's weekly meetings have an agenda with standard items, such as Project Updates, Project Issues and Management Updates, and other agenda items are added as needed. The meetings are typically informal; however, when important decisions need to be made or communicated, the meetings take on a more formal style.

Guest speakers from other teams within the company are sometimes invited to present at these weekly meetings. The team's administrative assistant, Giuliana, is responsible for ensuring guest speakers' requirements are met, such as the need for specific technology.

Practice Task 2

Question 1

Which of the following are examples of formal meeting styles. Tick all that apply.

- ◯ Annual general meeting
- ◯ Project management meeting
- ◯ Team meeting
- ◯ Staff lunch meeting

Question 2

Identify two features of virtual meetings.

Question 3

You are appointed to organise a planning meeting to be held over two days in two months' time. There will be 20 attendees from different locations and states.

Specify two requirements for the meeting that you would need to verify and with whom.

Question 4

Create a checklist of arrangements that you would need to organise for the planning meeting. Indicate time lines and completion status in your checklist.

Task	Time line	Completed Yes/No

1C Contact participants and confirm meeting details

All participants required at a meeting need to be notified in advance.

Some organisations have policies and procedures relating to meeting notifications. For example, board members may need to be informed about a meeting at least 14 days before the meeting occurs.

For a general staff meeting, it is good practice to provide an agenda at least 48 hours beforehand. Check your company's policies and procedures (such as Staff Meeting Policy) to see if there are any guidelines on when an agenda should be provided to meeting participants.

Confirming meeting details

When you send a meeting invitation to participants, you need to confirm a range of details.

The absolute minimum information required for a meeting invitation is the:

- meeting date
- meeting time
- location of meeting
- purpose of meeting.

If you are organising a virtual meeting and participants are based interstate or overseas, be sure to account for differing time zones.

Notice of meeting

The law requires that for shareholder meetings and annual general meetings, certain people must receive a 'notice of meeting.' The notice of meeting must – by law – include the following information:

- the location, date and time of the meeting (if the meeting is being held in two different places, the notice of meeting must include details of the technology that will be used to facilitate this)
- the general purpose of the meeting
- intentions to propose special resolutions at the meeting and a statement on what the special resolutions are
- details regarding proxies.

The notice of meeting must be written in a clear and concise way.

In addition to this legally required information, companies and organisations may have their own organisational procedures for annual general meetings. These might include:

- preparation of the agenda
- items for discussion in the agenda
- who needs to attend the meeting
- the required duration of the meeting
- resources required for participants
- quorum and voting procedures
- procedures for recording and distributing minutes from the meeting.

Incorporated associations must hold their first annual general meeting (AGM) within 18 months of becoming incorporated. Different states have different rules for when subsequent AGMs need to held. For example, in Victoria AGMs must be held within five months after the end of the association's financial year.

Accuracy

The information you provide to participants about an upcoming meeting must be accurate.

This is essential for any meeting and, for some, it is a legal requirement. If legal requirements for these types of meetings are not followed, any decisions made at the meetings could be regarded as null and void.

If a formal notification of meeting has been published and is found to be incorrect, a correction can be sent out or published if there is time prior to the meeting. Otherwise the meeting must be cancelled and another one convened.

Notification methods

It is important to be aware of the necessary and appropriate method for notifying meeting participants.

For some meetings, the contact method will be prescribed by organisational or legal requirements. For example, a notice of meeting can be sent:

- in the post
- via fax
- via electronic means (e.g. email) (if the person has nominated this method).

Whichever method you choose to notify participants, make sure it is appropriate to the meeting type. For example, if it is a formal meeting, notifying participants via SMS may not be appropriate. Other methods you could use to notify participants include a phone call and a notice on a staff bulletin board.

The method you choose also needs to be accessible to all participants. For example, if you are inviting participants who are not employed at your company, notifying participants via your company's intranet will not be sufficient.

Example

Contacting participants with meeting notice

Raiden is a personal assistant to Jerome, a senior manager at a firm that is required by law to hold an annual general meeting for shareholders. Raiden is responsible for putting together the 'notice of meeting' for the AGM.

Raiden starts developing the draft notice of meeting three months before the AGM is due to be held. This gives him plenty of time to find out the meeting requirements and to check all the details with Jerome and the meeting chairperson.

When drafting the notice of meeting, Raiden makes sure that it includes:

- the location, date and time of the AGM
- the details for meeting participants who will be attending the AGM virtually, rather than face-to-face
- the purpose of the AGM
- any intentions to propose special resolutions at the meeting and statements on special resolutions
- details regarding proxies.

Practice Task 3

Read the Case Study and then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

An annual general meeting for the shareholders of Visual Communications needs to be called for 31 July of the current financial year. It will be held in Visual's main boardroom at 742 Corporate Road, Binder, Queensland 4245 and will run all day. Daily business hours are from 8.30 am to 5.30 pm with the building itself opening from 6.00 am to 6.00 pm. All shareholders need to be notified, as well as Mandy Hopkins, the guest speaker. There are two motions on notice, 'That Gerald Ford be confirmed as President of Visual Communications' and 'That new head office premises be found for Visual Communications'.

Question 1

Specify and explain one common organisational procedure or policy for organising annual general meetings.

Question 2

Create a notice of meeting that would comply with legal requirements for an AGM.

1D Provide meeting papers

Meeting participants may need to receive and review documents before the meeting takes place.

Meeting participants need to have enough time to read meeting documents before the meeting takes place.

It is usually the role of the meeting secretary to organise and distribute these documents, in conjunction with the chairperson.

Meeting papers

Here are some examples of meeting papers that may need to be provided to participants prior to a meeting.

Meeting agenda	It is good practice to provide participants with an agenda prior to the meeting.
Previous minutes	Providing the meetings from previous meetings gives participants the opportunity to review previous decisions and identify potential issues.
Chair's report	The chair's report might include information such as the direction of proceedings or additional information regarding a motion on notice.
Relevant correspondence	Any correspondence that has relevance to any motion or discussion during the meeting should be tabled.
Ballot papers and envelopes	Where a vote is necessary, ballot papers and envelopes may be required.
Information about submitting ballots	If ballots are being submitted for the meeting, relevant information about how to submit them may need to be provided.
Proxy forms	If meeting participants can nominate a proxy to take their place, a proxy form may be required. The proxy form is completed by the meeting participant – indicating who their proxy will be – and can be used by the meeting convenors to record proxy details.
Financial reports	These may be required for decision-making during the meeting.
Research reports	These may be required to inform participants about issues relevant to the meeting and any decisions that need to be made.

A company may have procedural requirements relating to meeting papers. For example, the company may require that:

- nominations for proxies cannot be accepted after the start of the meeting
- proxy forms need to be sent prior to the meeting
- previous minutes need to be included with the meeting agenda
- notice of motions need to be made.

Time frames for sending out meeting papers

You will need to allocate time to prepare, collate and send meeting papers to participants.

You can add the tasks of preparing, collating and sending meeting papers to your meeting checklist, along with a time line, to ensure the papers reach participants on time. When deciding upon time frames for these tasks and documents you will need to account for:

- *the method of delivery*: an email will be delivered immediately, whereas documents sent by post will take longer
- *whether the documents need to be prepared*: if the documents still need to be compiled, you will need to take this into account when developing your time frames – check to see how long this will take, then adjust your checklist accordingly
- *whether the documents need to be checked by the chair, or other relevant stakeholders before they are distributed*: if the documents need to be reviewed or approved by the chair or senior management, you will need to build the additional time for this process into your checklist and time lines.

It is important to take note of any relevant legal, contractual or organisational requirements relating to the time frames for sending out meeting papers. For example, a notice of meeting usually needs to be given at least 21 days prior to the meeting taking place. Meetings that are part of a company's contractual obligations may require meeting papers to be provided a specific number of days in advance.

Examples of other potential requirements relating to the time frames for meeting documents are outlined below.

Organisational policies and procedures

This time frame for sending out meeting papers may be dictated by organisational policies and procedures. For example, a company may decide on the dates for their annual general meeting and bi-monthly board meetings at the beginning of the year. This provides the meeting secretary with the opportunity to develop a calendar of meetings, along with dates for when meeting papers need to be prepared and sent.

Project time lines

A project time line may include a list of dates for project meetings. The meeting secretary will need to ensure all relevant meeting papers are provided to participants according to this project time line.

Participant preferences and availability

In some circumstances, especially for informal meetings, the meeting participants will be asked to nominate a date and time for a meeting, depending upon their preferences and availability. The meeting secretary will then need to provide the relevant meeting documents according to what the participants decide.

Additional information for participants

In addition to the meeting papers, make sure you include all the other relevant information and documents that the participants will need.

Directions to venue
Information about accommodation (e.g. name of hotel, directions to accommodation)
Information about parking and other methods of transport (including costs, such as cost of taxi from airport, cost of parking)
Information about catering (e.g. which meals will be provided)
Information about local cafes, restaurants and tourist activities (for interstate or overseas travellers)
Additional preparation required (e.g. read a report, download an app, watch a video)
What equipment or resources the participant needs to bring with them (e.g. laptop, report)
A list of other participants (if relevant)

As well as providing information to participants, you may also need to request information from them. For example, you may need to:

- request an RSVP
- ask participants if there are any items they would like to add to the agenda.

Example

Distribution of meeting papers

Alex is the secretary for a quarterly meeting of executives at Wired, a medium-sized telecommunications company. Jin, Alex's boss, is the meeting chairperson.

According to Wired company policy, all executives attending this quarterly meeting need to receive a copy of all the relevant meeting papers 14 days before the meeting occurs. The meeting papers must include:

- Meeting agenda
- Minutes from the previous meeting
- Any relevant correspondence
- Any relevant financial or research reports.

It is Alex's job to prepare and collate the meeting papers for these quarterly meetings and to ensure all executives receive the relevant meeting papers by the deadline.

Five weeks before the meeting takes place, Alex gives Jin a copy of the draft agenda. Alex reminds Jin that he needs to approve the agenda within a week and provide her with a list of any relevant meeting papers that participants will require.

Four weeks before the meeting, Jin lets Alex know that he approves the agenda and also provides her with a list of documents she needs to collect and provide to the meeting participants.

Three weeks before the meeting, Alex collects and collates all the meeting documents and checks with Jin to ensure she has the correct documents. Once Jin has checked all the documents, and Alex has reviewed the agenda to make sure it is complete and accurate, she emails the agenda and all the meeting documents to the meeting participants.

By giving herself plenty of time to prepare for the meeting, Alex can ensure the meeting documents get to all the executives at least 14 days before the meeting takes place, as per Wired company policy.

Practice Task 4

Read the case study and complete the task that follows.

Case study

Sue is an office manager of Westway Court body corporate management company. Here is a copy of the email:

Good morning Sue,

As you know, the next body corporate meeting for Westaway Court is to be held on Friday 26 June at 2.00 pm in our offices.

Please ensure all papers are sent out between 15 May and 5 June to coincide with the required time lines.

Can you ensure that a notice of meeting is sent to each owner of the 24 units? This can be found in the body corporate roll. Please note that Lot 15 was sold two weeks ago and you may have to contact the real estate agent, or Luke the property manager, for the new owner's details.

As this will also be an annual general meeting, we need to supply all voting papers (including ballot papers), an envelope marked 'ballot papers', along with the notices for the annual general meeting. In the letter containing the notice of meeting, ensure that it is noted that all ballots must be received prior to the beginning of the meeting.

Please explain that according to the organisational procedures we cannot accept any nominations after the start of the meeting. This must be made abundantly clear.

Additionally, proxy forms must be sent for those owners who wish to send their proxy by mail, or a person in their stead.

Please also supply owners with the previous minutes and make special reference to the two motions on notice.

Please also alert Luke Simpson, the property manager, to be in attendance.

Collect the documents and send me a sample by 8 May so I can be assured all documentation is in place.

Many thanks,

Jeremy Benson

Manager, Body Corporate Services

Question 1

What are the procedural requirements indicated in the email for preparing the meeting papers?

Question 2

List the documentation that needs to be sent for the body corporate meeting and indicate the time frame for when it should be sent.

Documentation	When sent by

Summary

- An agenda is a list of items that sets out what needs to be decided in a meeting.
- A meeting agenda should include a statement of purpose, the date, time and location of the meeting and major agenda items.
- There are a range of different types of meetings including board meetings, stakeholder meetings, annual general meetings and staff meetings.
- Meetings differ in terms of the level of structure and formality. Annual general meetings are highly structured and formal, whereas team meetings are typically less formal with a more casual structure.
- Meetings take time to plan, especially when there are a lot of participants travelling from interstate or overseas.
- By law, the convenors of shareholder and annual general meetings must provide members with a 'notice of meeting' that includes specific information, such as intentions to propose special resolutions.
- Along with a meeting agenda, a range of other meeting documents may need to be provided to meeting participants, such as previous minutes, correspondence and relevant reports.

Learning Checkpoint 1
Prepare for meetings

Part A

1. For each of the types of meetings listed in the table below, identify a potential purpose of the meeting and any features of options for meetings.

Meeting type	Purpose of the meeting	Features of options for meetings
Board meeting		
Shareholder meeting		
Budget meeting		
Staff meeting		
Emergency meeting		
Virtual team meeting		

2. Outline the structure of the agenda for a formal meeting.

Part B

Read the case study and then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Office manager Carly Houghton reports to director of operations John Reed. For each monthly staff meeting, Carly prepares the agenda, checks if staff members need any resource support, and ensures all staff members receive any papers they need to read before the meeting. Carly also arranges a guest speaker, subject to John's approval, and consults him on the number of critical items for the agenda.

Organisational procedures require all papers to be sent out to members at least a week prior to the meeting, and Meetings Policy provides for the details of chairing the meeting, minute taking, and inviting guest speakers or guest attendees.

Carly has developed a draft agenda for the next meeting as follows:

Staff Meeting
Wednesday 14 September [YYYY] 10.30 am until 12.00 noon
Venue: Conference hall
Meeting Purpose: To discuss operational performance and targets
1. Welcome: attendance and apologies 2. Review and approve minutes from 10 August 3. Business arising from the previous minutes 4. Correspondence 5. Operations update: Mary Simmons (operations manager) 6. Marketing update: Bob Wrangle (marketing manager) 7. Finance report: Felicity Manning (accounting manager) 8. IT upgrade status report: Alan Peters (technology manager) 9. Sales report: Mary Simmons reporting on behalf of Craig Tines (sales manager) 10. Employee update: Julie So (human resources manager) 11. Guest speaker 12. General business 13. Other business 14. Next meeting: Wednesday 12 October [YYYY]

1. What other meeting requirements will Carly need to establish and verify? Who would she need to talk to?

2. What organisational procedures does Carly need to observe in preparation for the meeting?

3. Prepare a checklist of activities for the preparation of this meeting that includes:
   - Inviting participants
   - Arrangements for the meeting according to organisational procedures
   - Providing meetings papers to participants
   - Indicative time lines.

   Use a table to list and describe activities, for example:

Preparation activity	Description	Timing
Develop agenda and get approvals	Define any non-standard items such as the guest speaker	

Topic 2 | Conduct meetings

2A Chair meetings according to relevant requirements and conventions

2B Promote participation, discussion, problem solving and resolution

2C Brief the minute-taker

2A Chair meetings according to relevant requirements and conventions

Meetings can quickly go off-track if there is no agreement on how they should be conducted.

Meeting conventions are the procedures that guide the structure of a meeting and the behaviour of participants. The purpose of meeting conventions is to ensure no one person or faction controls the decision-making process and all participants have equal and fair input.

In some instances, meeting procedures are governed by legal, organisational and ethical requirements. Codes of conduct and practice ensure that meetings are conducted in an ethical way.

Role of the chair

The chairperson (or chair) of a meeting has a number of important responsibilities

The key responsibilities of the chair are to:

- open and close the meeting on time
- follow the meeting agenda
- follow meeting conventions (e.g. motion procedures) and other relevant policies and procedures
- ensure there is a quorum in attendance
- maintain order.

It is essential that the chair keep the meeting on track. They can do this by fulfilling their key responsibilities and:

- clarifying what is expected from participants before the meeting
- circulating documents in advance
- clearly stating the duration of the meeting at the outset
- outlining the agenda at the beginning of the meeting
- using their communication and interpersonal skills to encourage participation
- encouraging participants to keep to stated time lines
- dealing with difficulties firmly and politely
- ensuring contributions are appropriate and relevant
- summarising proceedings
- agreeing on an action plan and identifying follow-up actions
- delegating follow-up tasks to participants (e.g. further documentation).

Meeting chairs needs to be confident, tactful, patient and impartial.

Meeting procedures

Most companies have policies and procedures relating to how meetings should be conducted.

Some companies' policies and procedures will incorporate information about 'office bearers' and how they are elected. An office bearer is a person who holds a position of authority in an organisation, such as a president, vice-president or treasurer.

The chair of a meeting needs to adhere to the relevant policies, procedures, rules and requirements. For example, your company may have a range of policies relevant to meetings such as: Conduct of Meeting, Conflict of Interest, Transparency and Accountability and/or Chairing a Meeting.

Policies and procedures related to meetings include how to format, structure, distribute and store meeting documents.

If you are new to the role of chairperson, you could keep a copy of relevant policies and procedures with you at the meeting and refer to it if you need to.

Quorum requirements

The quorum is the minimum number of members of an organisation that must be present for the proceedings of a meeting to be considered valid.

The quorum is typically the majority; that is, more than half the total number of members. For example, if a company has 150 shareholders and their company charter states that the quorum for voting on policy changes is 76, then at least 76 shareholders need to put in a vote regarding that decision.

However, some resolutions require a different quorum. For example, a company may require that changes to their standing orders require a quorum of two-thirds of the total number of members. Standing orders are the rules of an organisation that ensure continuity of procedures at a meeting.

It is the chairperson's responsibility to ensure there is a quorum before a meeting commences. If the quorum is not in attendance, then the chair must postpone the meeting and set a new date and time for the meeting.

Not all meetings require a quorum but they are required by law in some cases.

Order of business

All formal meetings should follow a prepared agenda.

The meeting usually begins with the chairperson welcoming participants and noting apologies. The agenda is then followed in a sequential order (otherwise referred to as the 'order of business').

When certain people at presenting an item at a meeting, it is the chair's role to invite them to speak. During a formal meeting, questions are typically addressed through the chair. For example, a person who wishes to ask a question while someone is presenting an item should indicate this to the chair, who will then ask them to speak when appropriate. This is referred to as being 'recognised' by the chair.

In those circumstances where there are a lot of questions from participants, the chair needs to recognise each of them and keep track of whose turn it is to speak.

Motions

Formal meetings require proposals to be made through a 'motion'.

A motion is essentially a suggestion for action. When someone makes a motion, it is known as 'moving' a motion. The person who makes the motion is referred to as the 'mover.'

Motions must:

- begin with the word 'that' (for example, 'That this company adopt the new guidelines'; 'That the Operations Team purchase a new photocopier')
- use clear and concise phrasing
- focus on one idea
- be expressed in the positive (for example, 'That we select Joan Smith as the candidate for this role' rather than 'That we don't accept John Whittaker as the candidate for this role')
- be within the terms of reference of the group.

Types of motion

There are two types of motion.

Substantive motion

A substantive motion is related to the purpose of a meeting.

For example, if the purpose of the meeting is to review a list of proposed environmental guidelines, a substantive motion might be: *'That this company officially accepts the new environmental guidelines'*.

Procedural motion

A procedural motion relates to how a meeting is conducted.

For example, if a meeting participant wants to change the order of items on an agenda, a procedural motion might be: *'That we move on to the next agenda item'*.

Motion procedure

In a formal meeting, when a motion is made ('moved'), a specific procedure must then be followed.

1. Move motion

The motion must be clear and concise and focus on one idea.

The minute-taker records the motion, the details of the motion and the person who moved the motion.

2. Second motion

The motion must be supported by another meeting participant. The person who supports the motion 'seconds' the motion.

The minute-taker records that the motion has been seconded and records the person who seconded the motion.

3. Chair calls for debate on the motion

Meeting participants speak to or against the motion.

Each person is given a reasonable amount of time to express their support or disagreement of the motion (it is the chair's responsibility to keep time).

If all meeting participants agree with the motion, a debate is not necessary.

4. Chair concludes the debate

After an appropriate time for discussion, the chair calls the debate to a close.

5. Chair restates motion and calls for a vote

The chair restates the motion and asks participants to vote on the motion (for or against).

If the required majority vote in favour of the motion, the chair declares the motion 'carried'.

If the vote is tied, the chair may be able to pass a deciding vote. Some organisations consider a motion defeated if the majority is not in favour.

6. Recorded by minute-taker

The minute-taker records the result of the motion.

Ideally, the person who moves a motion will have done all the necessary research required to enable the meeting participants to make an informed decision. For example, if a participant is moving a motion to purchase a new photocopier, they should have done some research on the different options available and the costs of each model.

If this has not been done – or if the discussion at the meeting highlights the need for further information – the chair may decide that the motion needs to be investigated further, in which case the vote on the motion will be postponed until the next meeting.

Motion amendments

A meeting participant might move that a motion be amended. This could happen if, for example, the original motion is poorly worded, too vague or incomplete.

The process for amending a motion is as follows.

A participant restates the motion.
A participant moves the amended motion.
A participant seconds the amended motion.
The meeting proceeds with the process for moving a motion from Step 3 (see above).

Making decisions in informal meetings

During less formal meetings, and in the absence of standing orders, a motion does not require a mover or seconder. In these situations, a participant might simply put forward a proposal that is then discussed by participants. The chair can then summarise the discussion and paraphrase the decision (if it has been made) or call for a vote. The proposal, discussion and decision are then recorded in the minutes.

Voting procedures

Voting procedures are used in meetings to assess whether the motion can be passed. For some meetings, every person has the right to vote; whereas in other meetings, only some people have the right to vote. If you are a meeting chairperson, it is your responsibility to be aware of the rules about voting within your company. These rules should be outlined in your company's standing orders.

A range of voting methods can be used.

- Show of hands: each person raises a hand to indicate whether they are in favour of or against a motion
- Voice vote: each person indicates their preference by saying either 'yes' or 'aye', or 'no' or 'nay'
- Clapping: each person claps loudly to indicate their voting preference
- Ballot or poll: each person records their vote on paper or in electronic format
- Division vote: each person moves to one side of the room (for example, left in favour, right against)

In certain cases, a person who is eligible to vote but cannot attend a meeting can delegate someone else to vote for them. This person is referred to as a 'proxy'. Different companies will have different rules and requirements for proxies. For example, your company may require that notice of a 'proxy to appoint' be given in writing at least 48 hours before a formal meeting.

Conventions, terms and phrases

A range of conventions, terms and phrases are used in relation to formal meetings. It is important to understand these conventions, terms and phrases and the most common ones are listed below.

To carry a motion

When a motion is voted on and approved, the motion is then 'carried' by the chair.

Conflict of interest

If a person in a decision-making position has an interest in a particular vote, it may be a 'conflict of interest'. For example, if a meeting participant could benefit financially from a motion that is being moved, this may be a conflict of interest. A person who has a potential conflict of interest may have a duty to declare the conflict of interest and/or abstain from voting.

Point of order

If a participant believes there has been an alleged irregularity in the proceedings, they must officially bring it to the attention of the chair by calling a 'point of order'.

Restricting discussion

If a participant strays from the motion item under discussion, speaking privileges may be withdrawn. A person may be expelled from the meeting if they cause a disruption.

On notice

When a document related to an agenda item is distributed to participants prior to a meeting, this document is referred to as being 'on notice' for discussion.

Noted/Tabled

If a participant brings to a meeting a document that has not been distributed to other participants, it can be formally 'noted' or 'tabled' in the minutes; however, it usually will not be discussed at that specific meeting.

Time limits

In some meetings, participants may only be allowed to speak for a specific amount of time. This applies to both formal and informal meetings. However, time limits are likely to be stricter and more heavily enforced at formal meetings such as an annual general meeting.

The meeting chair might instruct meeting participants to disregard comments made by a speaker who has gone over time and request that those comments not be taken into account when voting.

Legal and ethical requirements

All meeting participants – especially the meeting chair – need to be aware of relevant legal and ethical requirements.

A range of legal and ethical considerations are relevant to the process of running a business meeting. For example, legislation relating to anti-discrimination may require that certain technologies be used to ensure participants with a vision or hearing impairment are able to vote on a motion.

The chair also needs to be aware of cultural sensitivities that could influence how people respond to events that occur, or affect issues that are raised.

Legal requirements and business meetings

Legal requirements that may be relevant to business meetings are outlined below.

Anti-discrimination legislation covers a range of different types of discrimination including discrimination based on age, disability, race, ethnicity, sex, pregnancy and marital status.	▪ Participants with a disability must have access to the venue where a meeting is being held ▪ Resources and technology must be provided for people with hearing or vision impairments
Privacy legislation relates to the collection, use and disposal of personal information.	▪ Who receives meeting minutes ▪ Which discussions are held 'in camera' ▪ The sharing of a person's personal details in a meeting ▪ How meeting minutes and meeting documents are circulated and stored

Copyright is a form of intellectual property that ensures the protection of original ideas.	▪ Sharing documents with participants ▪ Using images and music in meeting presentations
Work Health and Safety legislation is designed to prevent workplace disease, injury and death. Employers and employees have rights and responsibilities regarding workplace health and safety.	▪ Meeting locations ▪ Meeting breaks ▪ Timing of meetings

Legislation relating to meetings in companies

The Australian *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth) is the principal legislation regulating companies in Australia. Corporations law and the Australian Securities and Investment Commission (ASIC) stipulate the requirement for companies to hold regular meetings as a measure of good governance. Companies limited by guarantee are required to hold annual general meetings as well as regular board meetings under the Act.

While there is no legislative requirement for the directors of proprietary limited companies to meet, it is seen as good practice and is often inferred as a requirement of good financial housekeeping.

The Corporations Act also includes a range of other legal requirements relating to certain meetings including:

- who can call a meeting
- how a meeting is called
- information required on meeting notices
- when and where the meeting can be held
- timing and methods for circulating meeting minutes.

These procedural details are usually included in a company's constitution.

Incorporated association legislation

An incorporated association is a registered legal entity that is formed for recreational, cultural or charitable purposes. Each state and territory in Australia has laws relating to incorporated associations; some are relevant to when and how meetings should take place.

Although the laws are slightly different in each state and territory, they typically outline meeting procedures, schedules and record-keeping processes. The relevant Acts for each state and territory are listed below.

State/Territory	Act
Australian Capital Territory	*Associations Incorporation Act 1991*
New South Wales	*Associations Incorporation Act 2009*
Northern Territory	*Associations Act 2005*
Queensland	*Associations Incorporation Act 1981*
South Australia	*Associations Incorporation Act 1985*
Tasmania	*Associations Incorporation Act 1964*
Victoria	*Associations Incorporation Act 1981*
Western Australia	*Associations Incorporation Act 1987*

Ethical requirements

Participants in a meeting – including the chairperson – should behave in an ethical manner. Some ethical requirements are legislated, others may be part of a company's Code of Ethics or Code of Practice. These Codes usually refer to an organisation-wide set of behaviours that all employees are expected to follow. They incorporate existing anti-discrimination and work, health and safety (WHS) legislation. For example, a Code of Ethics might require that:

- all meeting participants are treated equally
- cultural differences are respected
- evidence must be provided to support a specific claim or statement.

In general, ethical behaviour in business is guided by the principles of:

- honesty
- fairness
- equality
- dignity
- diversity
- individual rights (e.g. basic human rights).

Example

Chairing meetings according to relevant requirements and conventions

Beedle is a large financial services company with procedures that outline the rules and requirements for company meetings.

The quorum for stakeholder meetings is at least half the voting members. Every formal meeting at Beedle follows the standard motions procedure. The chairpersons of formal meetings at Beedle are nominated on an annual basis.

When a vote occurs during a Beedle meeting, the chair can use any voting method that is suited to the circumstances. The voice vote is the most popular method, but the division method is also used when the voice vote is 'too close to call.'

Some Beedle shareholders have physical disabilities, including mobility and visual impairments. To ensure every shareholder has the same opportunity to participate in meetings, meeting documents are available in large print format and only venues that are wheelchair accessible can be used for shareholder meetings.

Practice Task 5

Question 1

Which of the following are key responsibilities of the chairperson?
Select yes or no for each one.

a) Follow meeting agenda	» Yes	» No
b) Follow meeting conventions such as motion procedures	» Yes	» No
c) Ensure there is a quorum in attendance	» Yes	» No
d) Send invitations to guest speakers	» Yes	» No
e) Record the meeting minutes	» Yes	» No

Question 2

A public meeting is held but it lacks a quorum, yet decisions need to be made. What options are open to the chairperson considering his/her key responsibilities?

Question 3

In a general staff meeting, a member presents the following motion to the meeting:

'I want us to buy a new photocopier so we can photocopy quicker and do more advanced things like scanning.'

a) Reword the motion so that it can be voted upon.

b) Determine if any further discussion is required.

c) List other steps to ensure an appropriate and effective decision is made.

2B Promote participation, discussion, problem solving and resolution

A well-facilitated meeting promotes the participation of all attendees, encourages relevant discussion, problem solving and the resolution of conflicts.

It is the chair's role to set a positive and productive tone for the meeting. The chair can have a significant influence on how the participants interact with each other – by encouraging a culture of trust and respect and dealing with conflict effectively. The chair also needs to ensure that all meeting participants adhere to the relevant meeting requirements, such as a Code of Ethics or Code of Conduct.

Some meeting participants may have specific requirements; for example, an interpreter may be required for participants who do not speak English. Documents may need to be presented in large-print format for participants with visual impairments.

Encourage participation and discussion

The chairperson needs to have advanced communication skills to encourage and facilitate participation and discussion during a meeting.

The following strategies are especially useful for encouraging participation and discussion in a meeting.

Ensure participants are provided with a detailed agenda within a time frame that allows them to adequately prepare for the meeting
Explain the purpose of the meeting and what it is hoped the meeting will achieve
Introduce agenda items clearly, including the objective for each item
Use appropriate language, tone of voice and vocabulary for the audience and the context – avoid jargon and slang that is unfamiliar to participants
Refer to participants by name
Pay attention to group dynamics – do not let one person dominate the discussion
Exercise judgement when inviting participants to offer their opinion and point of view (e.g. not focusing the issue if the participant is obviously reluctant)
Help participants to express their opinion by asking questions or paraphrasing
Use active listening skills
Let people know how much time is available for them to speak – if they go over time, gently remind them of the time limitations

Summarise the key issues raised in discussions
Ask questions to clarify people's opinions and viewpoints
Demonstrate respect for diversity within the group – including cultural diversity and diverse points of view – and encourage others to do the same

Managing disruption

A participant in a meeting may disrupt proceedings. For example, they might ignore repeated requests to stop talking, repeatedly raise issues that are not relevant to the agenda item or attempt to 'shout down' another participant.

The chairperson needs to be able to manage these disruptions effectively to ensure the smooth running of the meeting. Some examples of how they might do this follow.

If participants – or a specific participant – is consistently going over time, enforce the time limit more forcefully
Assertively shut down discussions that do not relate to the agenda items
Instruct participants that they can only speak by requesting permission from the chair and only when the chair has acknowledged the speaker
Withdraw speaking privileges from a participant who is straying from the motion item under discussion
Expel a participant from the meeting if their behaviour contravenes the company's code of conduct (e.g. threatening or harassing others)
Expel a participant from the meeting if they are being consistently or unacceptably disruptive

Promoting participation in a virtual meeting

Virtual meetings are meetings held in real-time using video-conferencing technology, such as Microsoft Teams, Skype and Zoom. Virtual meetings pose unique challenges for meeting convenors and participants. For example, it can also be difficult to create a sense of belonging when people are not together in the same room. However, various technologies provide participants with opportunities to collaborate during a virtual meeting just as easily as in a face-to-face meeting.

Here are some tips for promoting participation in a virtual meeting.

Use collaborative tools such as Slack app for one-on-one and group discussions
Give people tasks that they can actively discuss (e.g. reflecting on a question)

Use break-out rooms for more engaging small group activities
If using PowerPoint as a presentation tool, keep the slide presentation as brief as possible and ask questions throughout to encourage active participation
Keep participants engaged by calling on them to contribute to discussion
Use online whiteboard tools so participants can brainstorm ideas collectively

If your team or company is hosting a virtual meeting, you could also investigate the vast range of other software applications that can help to promote participation.

Resolving conflict and problems

The chair can help to resolve conflicts and problems within a meeting.

Conflict is not necessarily disruptive or bad – in fact, healthy conflict can lead to new and innovative solutions to a problem. In some cases, however, conflict is unproductive. Unhealthy conflict can undermine trust and cooperation between individuals and within teams. It can also damage team morale and staff wellbeing.

The chair can use the following processes and skills to help resolve conflict and problems within a meeting.

Skills and processes	Description of skills and processes	How the chair can use these skills and processes
Conflict resolution skills	Effective conflict resolution involves four key tasks: identify and understand the problem, establish common goals, collaborate to find a win–win solution, monitor and evaluate the solution	▪ Help to identify the problem at the heart of the conflict ▪ Establish points of agreement between the parties in conflict ▪ Lead a discussion to find a win–win solution or a resolution to the conflict
Problem-solving processes	The problem-solving process involves four key steps: defining the problem, generating new ideas through discussion, evaluating and selecting solutions and implementing and evaluating solutions	▪ Lead a brainstorming session to generate new ideas ▪ Help participants evaluate solutions ▪ Remain impartial and allow each participant to express their point of view

Skills and processes	Description of skills and processes	How the chair can use these skills and processes
Decision-making processes	The decision-making process is similar to the problem-solving process, however it also involves gathering relevant information, weighing pros, cons and risks and making a decision	▪ Request the gathering of information before a decision is made ▪ Promote creativity when exploring options and solutions ▪ Help to identify pros and cons of specific decisions ▪ Encourage the use of specific standards during the decision-making process, such as clarity and logic

In the process of resolving conflicts and problems, discussion between participants may become heated. If two or more participants are arguing over a particular point, the chair may need to step in to calm the situation. The chair should allow each person to express their own point of view before asking other participants in the group to comment.

If the chair does not step in to calm the situation, it can become extremely unproductive. An ongoing tense and unresolved argument, where neither party is willing to compromise or listen to each other, takes up valuable time and can easily divide a group.

Example

Managing disruptions in a meeting

Amanda is the chairperson of a formal meeting involving a group of employees from Jezabel (a medium-sized market research company) and a group of external stakeholders from the Cardiff Group, a company that contracted Jezabel to conduct research on their latest marketing strategy.

There are 14 people participating in the meeting. The employees have been working overtime to complete a project for the external stakeholders. The project has been especially frustrating for the team because the external stakeholders have changed their minds multiple times about the direction of the project and the desired outcomes.

One of the employees, Marc, disagrees with one of the external stakeholders, Rajith, about the reasons why some project milestones have not been met. The discussion is becoming unproductive.

Amanda calmly interrupts Marc and Rajith. 'Both of your viewpoints are valid,' Amanda says. 'But I'm not sure this discussion is really getting us to where we need to be. We have about 25 minutes left to explore how we could address the obstacles that are standing in the way of this project being completed. It seems that both of you agree that you want to get this project finished – is that right?' Marc and Rajith nod in agreement.

'Okay,' Amanda continues. 'Let's spend the rest of this part of the meeting brainstorming a solution that satisfies both the project team and the external stakeholders – agreed?'

Practice Task 6

Question 1

Suggest ways in which a chairperson can facilitate participation and resolution of issues in the meeting by using:

- communication skills
- problem-solving skills.

Question 2

When discussions in meetings get heated, it is the role of a chairperson to manage the participants by using meeting conventions. What can a chairperson do to effectively manage participation?

Question 3

Which features can the chair use in a virtual meeting to promote participation?

2C Brief the minute-taker

The responsibilities of a minute-taker are to record what takes place in the meeting.

Recording minutes is a useful activity in any meeting and essential where meeting minutes are a legal or organisational requirement.

Before the meeting takes place, a minute-taker should be appointed and briefed on their role.

Minute-taking

The best method for recording minutes is the one that allows for speed and accuracy.

The minutes of a meeting are important because they provide a record of discussions and support follow-up activities (for example, the need to discuss additional issues at the next meeting).

Different organisations have different processes for minute-taking. For example, the minute-taking process for formal meetings is defined by an organisation's policies and is often outlined in the Board Meeting Procedure. Along with an outline of the minute-taking process, the Board Meetings Procedure might also indicate how motions, votes, and abstentions are to be recorded.

Different organisations also have different methods for taking meeting minutes. For example, some organisations use a minute-taking template. A pre-prepared minute-taking template helps the minute-taker remain focused, helps to ensure accuracy and save time. Minutes can be taken by hand – some minute-takers use shorthand for the task because it helps them rapidly record a large amount of information – or they can be typed directly onto a computer using word processing or other appropriate software.

Some organisations use audio or video technology to record their meetings. The audio or video files are then used by the minute-taker immediately after the meeting to complete the meeting minutes. Minute-takers should not rely on their memory alone to reconstruct the events that take place within a meeting.

Regardless of the method used, meeting minutes must be a true and accurate reflection of what takes place in a meeting. The reasons for selecting a specific minute-taking method include:

- type of the meeting (a regular staff meeting would require less precision compared to high-level budget approval)

- level of formality of the meeting
- organisational procedures and requirements.

Taking these factors into account, and unless organisational requirements state otherwise, minute-takers can use whatever method of minute-taking that works for them. Prior to the meeting, it may be useful for the minute-taker to agree on the method of minute-taking with the chairperson.

Minute-taking skills

Minute-taking is a skill and that can be developed.

In general, minute-takers should focus on recording actions rather than capturing the entire discussion.

The minute-taker must ensure that the phrasing of each motion is recorded correctly, decisions are recorded accurately, and names are spelt correctly. Where there is a legal requirement for recording meeting minutes – such as for a public meeting – it is essential for the minute-taker to understand that their minutes are a legal document.

Where possible, the minute-taker should not actively participate in a meeting. Rather, they should be focused on taking accurate notes on the proceedings. This is especially important if the meeting is going to be especially long or especially complex. In these cases, the minute-taker needs to have the time and space to focus on the task.

Checklist for minute-taking

Many companies employ people with specialist minute-taking skills. Effective minute-takers demonstrate the following skills:

- active listening
- critical thinking (to decide what needs to be recorded)
- accurate and concise writing skills
- the ability to write in a way that is easy to understand
- objectivity
- the ability to maintain confidentiality and privacy
- good grammar, punctuation and spelling
- the ability to understand prescribed editing marks.

Tips for recording minutes

The following tips may be useful if you are the minute-taker for a meeting, or if you are required to train or support another employee on minute-taking.

Use shortened terms and abbreviations to help you record information quickly (e.g. 'mtg' for meeting).
Ask for clarification during a meeting if you did not hear or understand a phrase or statement, or do not know how to spell a person's name.
Write up the minutes as soon as possible after the meeting.
Use clear and simple phrases phrasing to record proceedings, such as: ▪ 'The meeting agreed to …' ▪ 'Following discussion, it was agreed that …' ▪ 'The following questions were raised …' ▪ 'There was disagreement from this point and participants put forward the following suggestions: …'
Remain objective and never include your own opinion in the minutes.
Avoid using people's names unless you are recording who passed or seconded a motion. For example, if Mr Keith and Ms Emry had a discussion during the meeting, write: 'The discussion centred on …', rather than 'Mr Keith said … then Mrs Emry said …'

Preparing and briefing the minute-taker

The chair is responsible for preparing and briefing the minute-taker.

There are various reasons why a specific person might be chosen to be the minute-taker such as:

- issues relating to confidentiality
- the person's:
  - job description or position in the company (e.g. secretary)
  - relationship to the topics being discussed (e.g. the person who is not actively involved in the project being discussed)
  - minute-taking skills (e.g. skilled in using shorthand, high level literacy skills, accuracy).

The chair is also responsible for briefing the minute-taker prior to the meeting. It is useful for the chair to brief the minute-taker because it ensures the process of minute-taking is as efficient and effective as possible.

When briefing the minute-taker the chair needs to ensure the minute-taker understands the importance of following the agenda and accurately recording:

- apologies and participants in attendance
- absentee votes
- actions and time frames for actions (i.e. when the actions will be completed)
- motions and decisions
- outcomes of discussions.

Here is a list of other items that chair may need to brief the minute-taker about.

The type of meeting being conducted (e.g. regular staff meeting, board meeting)
Organisational requirements regarding which information needs to be recorded (e.g. the minute-taker may only need to provide a detailed record of the motions and decisions made or they may need to make a detailed record of the entire meeting) and the style of language required for the meeting minutes
The meaning of specific terms (e.g. technical terms specific to the industry) and acronyms
Meeting protocols such as motions, voting procedures, confidentiality clauses, dealing with 'off the record' discussions and other procedural issues
Potential areas for discussion in the meeting
The process for approving the minutes (e.g. submit a draft copy of the minutes to the chair prior to distribution)

Other tasks for the minute-taker

There are a range of other tasks the minute-taker may need to carry out during the meeting.

Ensure that people sign in at the meeting; this is particularly important when a quorum needs to be established.
Ensure everyone has a copy of the agenda and the previous minutes, if appropriate.
Alert the chair to procedural issues; for example, if there is not a quorum.
Ensure minutes are signed by the chair (where required) and distributed and stored according to the relevant requirements.

Example

Briefing the minute-taker

Farhad's job description includes minute-taking. He is very accurate when undertaking his work and has high level literacy skills. For these reasons, he was appointed as the minute-taker for a regular meeting involving a group of senior executives.

Farhad uses a minute-taking template to record the meeting minutes. He types the minutes directly into the template using his laptop. It is Farhad's job to ensure the meeting is also recorded using a digital recorder. Farhad uses the digital recording to check the accuracy of his meetings once the meeting is finished.

The day before the meeting, the chair of the meeting, Hanh, takes some time to brief Farhad on the senior executive meeting. She fills him in on the agenda items and gives him some background information about some technical terms that will likely be used by a guest speaker. She also reminds Farhad that he needs to record apologies and attendance and record all actions, time lines, motions, decisions and meeting outcomes. Finally, Hanh asks Farhad if she can see the meeting minutes before they are finalised and distributed, as this is a new company policy.

Practice Task 7

Read the case study and then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Jason is appointed as minute-taker for the upcoming steering committee meeting. During the meeting, he finds it hard to follow the discussion, struggles with the jargon being used, and isn't sure which agenda item is being discussed because people seem to jump from one topic to another.

He notices that people don't explain anything to him but they do look in his direction to make sure he's taking notes.

Jason writes down as much as he can. The meeting lasts an hour and Jason has recorded several pages of notes. It takes him several hours to transcribe the notes, which he sends to his manager the next day for review.

Even though Jason has done the spellcheck and checked his grammar, the following day he receives his notes back from his manager with many amendments and insertions. They highlight omissions he has made in the meeting procedures, including incorrectly recorded motions. Although embarrassed, he makes the corrections and returns them to his manager. They are eventually accepted with a note asking that the minutes be circulated to the participants at the meeting and the committee chair. Jason does this, relieved that the minutes are finally completed.

Question 1

Specify at least three things that Jason's manager could have done to improve the minute-taking process.

Question 2

Review the following statements about minute-taking. Select True or False for each one.

a) The minute-taking processes for a board meeting are defined in a Board Meeting Procedure. » True » False

b) Minutes are a legal document. » True » False

c) Shorthand is not a suitable method for minute-taking. » True » False

d) Minute-takers should be focused on the discussion rather than actions. » True » False

e) Administration protocols for recording minutes do not require a minute-taker to understand the meeting types. » True » False

Summary

- The chairperson (chair) of a meeting is responsible for keeping the meeting on track.
- The chair needs to be aware of and follow organisational and legal procedures when running a meeting, such as codes of conduct, anti-discrimination legislation and the Corporations Act.
- In a formal meeting, proposals must be made through a motion.
- Once a motion is made, or amended, a specific procedure must be followed.
- The meeting chair has a key role to play in promoting participation in a meeting, ensuring discussions are relevant, addressing problems and resolving conflict.
- The chair can use a range of skills and strategies to manage conflict and resolve problems during a meeting, such as decision-making processes.
- It is the chair's responsibility to brief the minute-taker before the meeting.
- Meeting minutes must be a true and accurate reflection of what takes place in a meeting.

Learning Checkpoint 2
Conduct meetings

Part A

1. Explain the process of making and seconding a motion in a formal meeting for decision-making. Suggest a voting method that can be used.

2. Draw a line to match each of the legal and ethical requirements with an appropriate meeting convention.

» Anti-discriminatory legislation	» Treating participants equally, respecting cultural difference, being able to provide evidence for any statements made
» Privacy legislation	» Defines meeting procedure, conducting meetings to the required schedule, completing required records
» Corporations law	» Defines meeting locations, breaks and timing of meetings
» Work health and safety legislation	» Defines how and to whom minutes are published, what discussions may be held 'in camera', limits what personal details may be revealed in a discussion, requires secure methods of circulating and filing meeting documents
» State Associations Incorporations Act	» Defines information required on meeting notices, and timing and method for circulating meeting minutes
» Code of Ethics	» Provides access for disabled participants, provides materials for sight and hearing impaired participants, allows for dietary requirements

3. The chair of a meeting needs to manage the group dynamics and keep the meeting on track. Explain how the chair can:
   - promote participation and discussion between participants
   - keep meetings on track.

Part B

Read the case study and then complete the tasks that follow.

Case study

A car dealership in the outskirts of Melbourne holds regular management meetings on the morning of the last Friday of each month. These involve the two senior sales associates (Joe and Evan), the sales manager (Helen), the administration manager (Julie), finance manager (Paul) and service department manager (Ahmed). The meeting is chaired by the dealer principal.

The June meeting is going to be tense. The agenda is circulated to the staff prior to the meeting. Three items in particular are expected to cause a lot of discussion:

- Notification of the resignation of two sales staff (Jeff and Melanie)
- Third month of below-target sales performance … ideas!
- Delays in new stock arriving – now expected in August.

The meeting

The meeting starts at 7.30am and is due to run for one hour. Before the meeting is officially underway, a heated discussion erupts between Joe and Paul regarding the sales figures. Joe appears to blame Paul for the lack of sales, saying his finance rules are too strict and he'd knocked back perfectly good customers. Paul reports directly to the dealer principal; Joe reports to the sales manager (who is not present and has not informed the chair she would not be attending).

Ahmed has prepared a proposal for increasing the service department's contribution to the company's bottom line – but has not told the chair that he wants to table it at the meeting.

1. How can the chair ensure that each of the participants contributes effectively to this meeting?

2. What steps can the chair take to resolve issues?

3. Would meeting minutes be required for this type of the meeting? If so, what minute-taking method could be used?

4. Explain how the dealer principal should brief the minute-taker for this meeting. Provide examples of what information needs to be captured.

Topic 3 | Follow up meetings

3A Review and edit meeting minutes

3B Distribute and store minutes and documentation

3C Report meetings outcomes

3A Review and edit meeting minutes

The minutes from a meeting must be accurate and complete.

It is the minute-taker's responsibility to review the minutes and edit them accordingly. Ideally, meeting minutes should be reviewed as soon as possible after a meeting has concluded. In some circumstances, a minute-taker may need to obtain further information from a meeting participant or chairperson in order to complete the minutes.

The minute-taker needs to know when and how the minutes are to be distributed. To ensure that all the appropriate parties receive the minutes on time, the minute-taker needs to factor in the time it takes to prepare, review, edit, approve and amend the minutes.

Check and edit the minutes

Meeting minutes need to be submitted to the meeting chair for approval.

Prior to submitting the minutes for approval, the minute-taker could review the original notes from the meeting minutes to ensure nothing has been left out and all the information is accurate.

The minute-taker should also check the following items before the minutes are submitted for approval and circulated.

The minutes align with relevant organisational policies or procedures
The date, venue, purpose and addresses (e.g. the address of the venue) are correct
All names are spelled correctly
The document is grammatically correct
Punctuation in the document is correct
Motions are worded correctly
The minutes are concise, easy to understand and free of jargon
The time frames for actions are clearly stated
Legal regulations are adhered to in respect to confidential information (e.g. removing confidential information)
Follow-up action items are clearly recorded
The person or people responsible for each action item, along with the time frame for each action item, is clearly indicated

Additional tasks

In addition to reviewing the minutes, the minute-taker may have additional tasks to undertake.

For example, if actions from the meeting have not been assigned, it may be the minute-taker's responsibility to designate those tasks to specific people. It is the minute-taker's responsibility to ensure people who are designated tasks receive a copy of the meeting minutes so that they are aware of their responsibilities. Alternatively – or in addition to providing the minutes – the minute-taker may need to brief those people on the tasks that have been designated to them.

The minute-taker may also need to schedule reminders or interim meetings to check on the progress of tasks designated to specific people. They may also need to add items to the agenda for the next meeting, based upon progress or feedback on tasks.

Make amendments to minutes

The meeting chair may amend the minutes.

If the chair (or another person in the company) reviews a draft of the meeting minutes, they may ask the minute-taker to edit them and make the required amendments before they are finalised and circulated. The amendments could be suggested for a range of reasons, such as to ensure:

- the minutes are accurate (for example, discussion points, motions, seconds, votes, decisions)
- the minutes meet legal and organisational requirements
- the outcomes of the meeting are clear
- the time lines for action items are correct
- correct grammar and punctuation have been used
- names are spelled correctly
- the format and style of minutes are appropriate.

Example

Review and edit meeting minutes

Dimitris is the designated minute-taker at an emergency meeting that is called to address a problem with a supply chain at the company where he works.

The day after the meeting is held, Dimitris makes some time in his calendar to type up his hand-written notes from the meeting.

The meeting minutes need to be circulated to the meeting participants within three days of the meeting date according to the Emergency Communication Procedure, so Dimitris tries to finish the draft of the minutes as soon as he can. This will ensure he has enough time to get the minutes to the meeting participants within the required time frame.

Before he submits the draft meeting minutes to the meeting chair for approval, Dimitris uses a checklist to ensure the minutes are accurate and complete. He identifies a few spelling errors and notices that two of the actions have no time line attached to them. He reviews his original notes, retrieves the due dates for those two actions, and adds this information to the draft document.

Dimitris then emails the draft minutes to the chair, requesting that she approve the minutes within the next two days to ensure he can get the completed minutes to the meeting participants by the deadline.

Practice Task 8

Question 1

Create a checklist for reviewing meeting minutes after a meeting.

Question 2

Identify two reasons for editing or amending meeting minutes.

3B Distribute and store minutes and documentation

Once the meeting minutes are approved and finalised, they need to be distributed and stored correctly.

The minute-taker is usually responsible for distributing and storing the meeting minutes.

There may be legal and organisational requirements to consider when distributing and storing meeting minutes and documentation.

Procedures and regulations

There may be organisational procedures and conventions relating to the distribution of meeting minutes.

The person responsible for distributing the meeting minutes needs to be aware of relevant organisational procedures, requirements and conventions. These could relate to:

- the time line for distribution
- who receives a copy of the minutes
- what documents need to be included with the minutes
- the method of distribution (e.g. hard copies, electronic copies, access via a shared drive).

The meeting minutes may only need to be distributed to the chair and the meeting participants, or they may need to be distributed more widely. For example, they may need to be provided to people who were unable to attend the meeting.

Methods of distribution

Minute meetings can be distributed in either hard or soft copy format.

Common distribution methods include email, post (regular mail, registered post, express post) and intranet facilities. The minute-taker can also distribute minutes by uploading them to a server and alerting recipients about their availability and location.

The method for distributing meeting minutes will depend upon a range of factors, as outlined below.

Level of urgency	Where urgent actions need to be undertaken, or urgent decisions need to be made, email may be the best method due to its immediacy. Where documents need to be provided in hard copy, a same-day delivery courier may be the best option.

Organisational requirements	Companies may have specific policies and procedures relating to the distribution of meeting minutes. For example, a company may require that all minutes from high-level internal meetings are provided in hard copy to participants, with associated documents kept in an accessible electronic file.
Legal requirements	Where it is necessary to maintain confidentiality, specific steps need to be taken to ensure an appropriate method of distribution. For example, emails may need to be encrypted or documents may need to be sent by registered post.
Cost	Some methods of distribution are more expensive than others. The available budget may determine the method of distributed used.

Time lines for circulating minutes

Meeting minutes must be circulated according to the required time lines.

Organisational policies and procedures regulating meetings include the requirements relating to time lines for recording, circulating and storing minutes.

There may be legal, contractual or organisational obligations for recording or circulating minutes within a specific time period (for example, within one month of the meeting). Any legal requirements relating to time lines for recording or circulating minutes should be incorporated in a company's organisational regulations or constitution.

Regardless of whether there is a legal or organisational requirement to do so, it is important to circulate minutes to the relevant parties in timely manner. Receiving meeting minutes promptly ensures that participants who are required to undertake actions before the next meeting can complete those tasks on time. It also gives participants the opportunity to review the documents while the details of the meeting are fresh in their minds.

Store meeting minutes

Methods for storing meeting minutes vary between organisations.

Some organisations still use a paper-based filing system to store meeting minutes; however, most will store minutes electronically. Organisational requirements may specify that *all t*he records from a meeting are stored including; for example, the agenda, reports and copies of presentation slides.

Organisational requirements may also specify that the meeting papers are kept for a certain period (for example, five years) before they are discarded or destroyed.

Access

The meeting minutes and associated documents should be stored in a logical location, and they need to easily accessible.

In some circumstances meeting minutes and associated documents are only available to authorised people. In such cases, minutes that are stored electronically may need to be password protected or stored in a file that has restricted access. Where a paper-based filing system is used, the documents could be stored in a locked filing cabinet to ensure they cannot be accessed by unauthorised people.

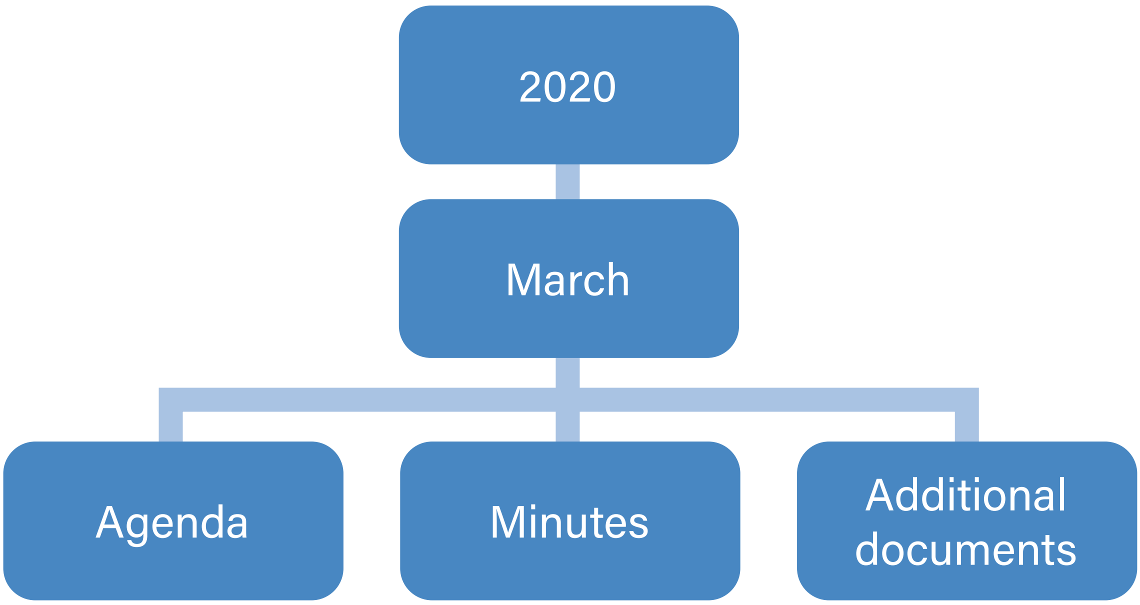
Filing procedures

Whether the storage method is paper-based or electronic, the correct filing procedures need to be followed.

Where documents are being stored electronically, follow the organisation's file-naming system. The files, folders and sub-folders must be easily identifiable in relation to their contents.

If you are required to set up a filing system for meeting minutes, you need to be able to explain the logic behind your system. If it is an electronic file, for example, you may need to include folders for the meeting year, and sub-folders for the meeting month. Within each sub-folder, you may need to include additional folders labelled: Agenda, Minutes and Additional documents.

Here is an illustration of this type of filing system, outlining the folders and sub-folders for a meeting in March 2020.



You can adopt a similar approach if your company uses a paper-based filing system. For example, one section for each year, with folders for each month and sub-folders within those folders for each of the different types of documents.

It is useful to also set up an indexing system when storing meeting minutes. This makes it easy for people to retrieve specific information relating to, for example, motions, votes and decisions.

Example

Distribution and storage of the meeting documentation

Monika has taken sole responsibility for distributing and storing minutes and documentation for her team. When Monika started her job a few years ago, there were only some very brief notes on the process of minute-taking. Although she has handled her duties exceptionally well, Monika has never documented or explained the filing system she uses. When she goes on maternity leave, her team-mates are unsure where the minutes from previous meetings are kept or how to access them.

Practice Task 9

Question 1

Explain the procedure and conventions for distributing the meeting minutes. Give an example from your work experience.

Question 2

Explain the requirements and conventions for storing the meeting minutes.

3C Report meetings outcomes

After a meeting has been held, it may be necessary to report the meeting outcomes to teams, committees and other relevant parties.

The process for reporting meeting outcomes is regulated by organisational policies and procedures.

The outcomes of a meeting relating to a specific project may need to be presented to a project committee. Alternatively, if the meeting outcomes relate to high-level decision-making in the company, the meeting outcomes may need to be presented to a senior management group.

Meeting outcomes

Here are some examples of meeting outcomes that may need to be reported after a meeting has been held.

Agreed actions
Decisions and resolutions (e.g. decisions about new equipment, decision to undertake additional research)
Additional tasks that need to be undertaken (e.g. distributing a report to shareholders)
Time lines (e.g. when actions need to be completed, when project milestones need to be revisited)

Timely communication

Meeting outcomes should be reported promptly.

Prompt communication of meeting outcomes is important for a range of reasons. For example:

- Shareholder meeting decisions need to be communicated to all shareholders within a specific time frame to adhere to the Corporations Law.
- Decisions regarding purchasing procedures may need to be made within a specific period of time to comply with organisational or industry requirements.
- New regulations or research findings need to be shared with employees to ensure their health and safety (for example, using additional protective gear when working with a specific substance or material).
- Tasks decided upon during the meeting need to be completed before the next meeting occurs.

Example

Report meetings outcomes

Reggie is a customer service manager at a regional call centre. In the past three months, multiple customers have complained about the service provided. Reggie organises a meeting for his staff to discuss his concerns. The meeting is very productive. Reggie is gathering input from staff members on how to resolve customers' issues more efficiently. During the meeting, Reggie guides the team through a decision-making process to identify which actions they must undertake immediately.

The meeting outcomes are reported in the minutes and distributed in hard copy to all relevant staff members, including those who were unable to attend the meeting. To ensure all staff members are aware of the actions, Reggie also posts the hard-copy document on the bulletin board in the lunchroom and includes the meeting outcomes in a post on the company's intranet.

Practice Task 10

Question 1

Give three examples of meeting outcomes that may need to be reported.

Question 2

Explain the importance of reporting outcomes of meetings within designated time lines. Support your explanation with an example.

Summary

- Meeting minutes should be written up and reviewed promptly after the meeting has occurred.
- The minute-taker is responsible for checking and editing the minutes before they are sent to the chairperson for approval and circulated.
- The method for distributing minutes – including whether the minutes are provided in hard or soft copy –depends on a range of factors, including the level of urgency and relevant policies and procedures.
- Meeting minutes should be stored in a logical place following standard file-naming procedures.
- Meeting outcomes – such as agreed actions, decisions and resolutions – may need to be reported to teams, committees and other relevant parties after a meeting has concluded.

Learning Checkpoint 3
Follow up meetings

Part A

1. Describe the process you use to check the accuracy of meeting notes according to the organisational requirements.

2. Explain the procedure that can be used to distribute action items and other important meeting notes after a meeting, to those who require them. Support your explanation with examples.

3. Explain organisational requirements or conventions for storing the meeting minutes.

4. Describe a time when you were required to send out meeting information within a given time frame. Ensure you cover:
   a) why the time frame was important
   b) the method you used to disseminate the report

Part B

Read the case study and then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Julia Jackson manages a team of seven staff at a regional freight distribution company. She instigates regular quality control meetings to gain input from each employee that can be used to improve the customer experience.

At today's meeting Julia has an agenda item that refers to the outcomes from the previous meeting. Before everyone gathers, she needs to make sure the notes are accurate but she can't recall last month's meeting with any confidence. Additionally, the minutes are handwritten and difficult to read.

There were also two action items from the last meeting:

- Change the logo on the invoices sent to customers (marked as urgent).
- Implement a 'three-ring-to-answer' policy (marked as non-urgent).

Neither of these has been completed in time for the next meeting.

1. Specify key follow up actions after the meeting that Julia needs to manage to avoid such situations in the future.

2. Based on the scenario in this case study, how should Julia report meeting outcomes to relevant staff in a timely manner? Outline a simple procedure.