

# **BSBADM405**

# **Organise meetings**

Release 1

**Learner guide**

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Aspire Version 1.1

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BSBADM405 Organise meetings Release 1

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# Before you begin

This learner guide is based on the unit of competency *BSBADM405 Organise 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](http://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 and case studies	Examples of completed documents that may be used in a workplace are included in this learner guide. You can use these examples as models to help you complete practice tasks and learning checkpoints. Case studies highlight 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.
Video clips	Where QR codes appear, learners can use smartphones and other devices to access video clips relating to the content. For information about how to download a QR reader app or accessing video on your device, please visit our website: <a href="http://www.aspirelr.com.au/help">www.aspirelr.com.au/help</a>
Summary	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 outlines specific foundation skills noted for your learning in this learner guide.

Foundation skill area	Foundation skill description
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identifies and interprets information from instructions, organisational policies and procedures, or legislation</li><li>• Compares final output with original notes to check accuracy</li></ul>
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prepares complex texts from notes using appropriate structure, accurate spelling, grammar and punctuation</li><li>• Records notes of meeting proceedings according to organisational requirements</li><li>• Edits and corrects own work to ensure accuracy</li></ul>
Oral communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Listens for specific information during meetings</li><li>• Conveys specific instructions using vocabulary appropriate to context, purpose and audience</li><li>• Asks questions and listens to responses to clarify understanding</li></ul>
Numeracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Performs calculations required to measure output against predetermined timeframes</li></ul>
Navigate the world of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recognises and responds to both explicit and implicit organisational procedures and protocols and legislative/regulatory requirements</li></ul>
Interact with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Selects the appropriate form, channel and mode of communication for a specific purpose relevant to own role</li></ul>
Get the work done	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Applies formal processes when planning complex tasks, producing plans with logically sequenced steps, reflecting an awareness of time constraints</li><li>• Understands the purposes, specific functions and key features of common digital systems and tools and operates them effectively to complete routine tasks</li></ul>

## 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 Make meeting arrangements	1A Identify different meetings types and their purpose	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1B Identify and comply with any legal or ethical requirements	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1C Identify the meeting and its participants	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1D Make meeting arrangements	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1E Advise of meeting details	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
Topic 2 Prepare meeting documentation	2A Prepare meeting notices, agendas and papers	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2B Check meeting documentation for accuracy and errors	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2C Distribute documents to participants	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2D Prepare spare sets of documents	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Key outcome</b>	<b>Rate your confidence in each section</b>
Topic 3 Record and produce meeting minutes	3A Take notes that accurately record the meeting	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3B Produce true and accurate minutes	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3C Check meeting minutes and submit them for approval	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3D Dispatch copies of the minutes	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident

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# Topic 1

## Make meeting arrangements

Effective meetings provide a means of communicating with others to achieve an outcome and help attend to the organisation's business in a systematic way. The primary purpose of any meeting is to communicate with others. A meeting is a time, place and location (including a virtual one) where this can occur, outside of normal business activity.

There are different types of meetings that can be used for different circumstances, depending on the needs of the organisation at the time. Most organisations make use of a wide variety of meetings, each of which facilitates the communication process in different scenarios.

Some meetings require minimal organisation, while others require a lot of time and effort to ensure they run smoothly and meet their objectives. For example, in many work situations, designated people are responsible for organising formal meetings, while in other workplaces, formal meetings never occur. Similarly, in some organisations, meeting organisers are expected to take minutes, while in other organisations this responsibility is rare.

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 1A Identify different meetings types and their purpose
- 1B Identify and comply with legal and ethical requirements
- 1C Identify the meeting requirements and participants
- 1D Make meeting arrangements
- 1E Advise of meeting details

# 1A Identify different meeting types and their purpose

Before you can determine the requirements of a meeting, you need to determine the type of meeting required and its purpose.

Meetings are held for a variety of reasons. It is important to identify the objectives of each meeting and communicate these to the participants so the meeting stays on track and achieves the desired outcomes. You should also think about the way the meeting is to be delivered; for example, meeting face-to-face or using teleconferencing equipment.



## Types and styles of meetings

The following list is an example of the types and styles of meeting conducted by an organisation.

### Informal face-to-face meetings

These meetings are one of the most common types of meeting in organisations. Sometimes they are unexpected; for example, when someone you sit next to at work asks you a question about something you're doing or when your manager stops by your desk for a brief chat. Sometimes you know they are going to happen.

### Regular workplace meetings

These meetings are generally in the form of team updates or staff meetings. Many teams experience regular workplace meetings, where the same group of people meet, often at the same place and time on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis. Often, an agenda is prepared and the responsibility of taking minutes is shared among team members, or not done at all.

### Project meetings

These meetings are held to bring together people who are involved in a specific project. They are held either regularly or on an as-needs basis and involve all or some of the people who are working on that project. They may only include internal staff or be a mixture of internal and external representatives, depending on the project.

### Departmental meetings

These meetings are held regularly with department or section teams; for example, the sales team may meet fortnightly to discuss matters relating to sales promotions, budgets, strategies, level of sales etc. According to the size of the organisation, these meetings may involve only the local team or the entire state or national teams.

## Other types and styles of meetings

Here are further examples of styles and types of meetings conducted by an organisation.

### Meetings with other organisations

These meetings between different organisations are commonplace and are usually arranged for a number of purposes. For example, for forming a business alliance or promoting goods or services. These sorts of meetings will need to be held at a mutually convenient venue for all parties, so careful thought needs to be given to location. It is important to plan carefully for these sorts of meetings and ensure that all attendees are well prepared and the meeting is arranged, recorded and followed up in a timely and efficient manner.

### Committee meetings

A committee is a group of people elected or appointed from a larger body to investigate, report or act in special cases. Like a project team, a committee may form for a specific period of time or may be a permanent fixture within an organisation. Often, committees are a group of people who work in different areas of an organisation but have a common interest or goal to achieve. Committee meetings can be small and informal or much larger and more formal, depending on the size of the organisation, committee and the outcomes to be achieved.

### Teleconferences or videoconferences

These meetings are tools that organisations can make use of to enhance communication among colleagues. These technologies enable you to talk face to face to an expert who works in London from your office in Sydney; for sharing and debating the issues raised in an industry report with your team members located across the globe or for chatting to interstate colleagues about new developments at your workplace.

### Annual general meetings

All companies, except proprietary companies, are required to hold an annual general meeting (AGM), at least once every calendar year and no later than five months after the financial year ends. For listed public companies, at least 28 days' notice must be given for a meeting of a listed company's members. This notice period applies despite anything in the company's constitution.

### General meetings

All meetings of a company, other than the annual general meeting, are called general meetings. Notice should be given for all general meetings and should specify the place, date, time and general nature of the business to be transacted.

### Board meetings

The board of directors is generally responsible for setting the goals for the organisation, overseeing management's plans for acquisition and organisation of the financial and human resources necessary to achieve these goals and to review, at reasonable intervals, the company's progress towards attaining its goals. Depending on the size and type of the organisation, the board of directors usually meets on a regular basis according to the rules set down by the organisation's constitution and any relevant requirements of the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth), which sets out the legal requirements that a company must adhere to in the running of its business. This might be monthly, bimonthly or quarterly and minutes of the meetings are required to be kept as a signed record of all proceedings.

## Understand meeting terms

When organising meetings, it is important to understand the various terms used. Some terms relate to formal positions held by the participants; others describe specific purposes associated with the conduct of meetings. The following are common terms you need to be familiar with. The more formal the meeting structure, the more likely these terms will be used.

Commonly used terms that describe formal positions in meetings include the following.

#### Board members and directors

Board members and directors are nominated or elected members representing the interests of an organisation.

#### Chairperson

The chairperson is responsible for seeing that a meeting is conducted in an orderly fashion and according to meeting procedures.

#### Secretary

The secretary assists the chairperson in gathering information for the meeting, as well as organising meeting arrangements and taking the minutes.

### **Treasurer**

The treasurer is the person responsible for reporting the financial business of an organisation.

### **Agenda**

The agenda is a plan for the stages of a meeting, which includes the opening, acceptance of previous minutes, business arising from the minutes, correspondence, general business and close.

### **Minutes**

Minutes are an official record of what took place at a meeting.

### **Proxy**

A proxy is where a member who is unable to attend a meeting nominates someone else (a proxy) to attend, and/or to vote in their place.

### **Quorum**

Quorum is the minimum number of people who must be in attendance before a meeting is official and business can be transacted.

### **Standing orders**

Standing orders are an outline of the rules for meeting procedures.

### **Motion**

A motion is a proposal that is officially put before a meeting and that goes through several stages before it is accepted or defeated. A motion is always carefully worded and recorded verbatim in the minutes. The person who suggests the proposal moves the motion. A person who supports the motion seconds the motion.

### **Mover**

The mover is the person who moves that a meeting accept a decision, such as the contents of the minutes of the previous meeting or a motion raised.

### **Resolution**

Resolution is the name given to a motion once it has been agreed to by a meeting.

## Practice task 1

1. What is the purpose of project meetings?

2. What is the purpose of regular workplace meetings?

3. What is the purpose of board meetings?

4. What is a committee?

# 1B

## Identify and comply with legal and ethical requirements

For board meetings, general meetings, extraordinary meetings and annual general meetings, there are a number of legal and ethical requirements that need to be considered before you make any arrangements. Further information can be obtained by referring to the *Company Law Review Act 1998* (Cth), the constitution of the organisation and the relevant codes of practice relating to the industry in which you work.

You can access the *Company Law Review Act 1998* (Cth) at the Australasian Legal Information Institute website, which can be found at: [www.austlii.edu.au](http://www.austlii.edu.au).



### Legal requirements

Legal requirements of holding a meeting include compliance with work health and safety regulations and the provision of public liability insurance. For example, a public meeting at which food will be served needs to comply with safety standards and safe food-handling practices. Those holding the meeting must be aware of insurance needs.

### Ethical requirements

Ethical requirements cover meeting protocol and the behavioural expectations of those attending a meeting.

A meeting's code of conduct may include:

- honesty
- integrity
- respect
- accountability
- confidentiality
- essential disclosure
- lawful compliance.

### Identify and comply with legal and ethical requirements

When arranging a meeting, you need to be aware of the requirements relevant to that meeting. The company's constitution normally outlines the voting rights and procedures for a company. Where no provision is made, each member will be deemed to have one vote on a show of hands and one vote per share on a poll; that is, for every share they hold in a company, they are entitled to one vote. Where the company does not have share capital, each member has one vote.

Here are common examples of voting methods.

**Show of hands**

Each person raises one hand to vote, either in favour or against a proposal.

**Voices**

Each person vocally indicates their preference; for example, 'yes', 'aye' or 'no', 'nay'.

**Ballot**

Each person records their decision or opinion on a ticket or paper.

**Poll**

Similar to a ballot.

**Acclamation**

Each person applauds loudly to indicate their preference.

**Division**

Each person physically moves to either the left or the right of the room.

## Practice task 2

1. Identify the legislation that needs to be referred to when organising board meetings, general meetings, extraordinary meetings and annual general meetings?

2. List three examples of legal requirements of holding a meeting.

3. What is the difference between the 'division' and 'voices' voting methods?

# 1C

## Identify the meeting requirements and participants

For any kind of meeting, you need to clarify how many people are expected to attend so you can determine their requirements, the size of the venue and quantity of materials that will be needed. The following examples demonstrate why this is important for all types of meetings, regardless of how formal or informal they are and the number of attendees.

### A board meeting

In addition to a list of board members, there may be additional participants, such as senior staff members or external people, who have been invited to attend for part of the meeting for some reason.

### Informal lunch meetings with team members

You will need to know how many people are invited and whether everyone can make it so that you can book a table at a local venue.

### Annual general meetings

You will need to obtain a list of all directors, shareholders or company members. In very large corporations that have private and institutional investors that number in the thousands, external consultants usually handle the complex task of arranging all or part of the annual general meeting, and will maintain databases of shareholder information on behalf of the company.

### Formal meetings

These will require attendees to undertake reading beforehand and documentation will need to be distributed at the meeting, so it is important that the number of both invited participants and actual attendees is known in advance. Even people who are unable to attend will most likely still need to have documentation provided to them for their information or so that they can lodge a proxy vote.

### Staff meetings

You will need to ensure that the space you have booked will fit the number of attendees comfortably, and that adequate seating is available so at least some attendees can sit down during the meeting. You will also need to make sure that you have enough handouts and/or that any presentation material can be viewed by all staff members.

### Meeting with an external organisation

You will need to know who is attending (their names as well as their titles) and ensure that all attendees are clear on the location of the meeting as well as who is chairing or running it.

## Identify the meeting requirements

Once you have identified the type of meeting you have to organise, are clear about its purpose and have clarified the participants and their needs, there are still a number of factors you need to know before you can start to make arrangements.

Regardless of the kind of meeting that is being held, you need to determine exactly what needs to happen during the meeting, so you can make the appropriate plans and preparations in order for it to be a success.

To identify the meeting requirements you need to understand:

- the purpose of the meeting
- the meeting structure
- the voting protocols and procedures
- any special needs of the participants
- the resources that are required.

## Purpose of the meeting

If you have been asked to organise a meeting on behalf of your manager, a team, department or other individual or group, ensure you take the time to understand what the purpose of the meeting is.

It is a good idea to spend a few minutes with whoever has asked you to assist them and run through a list of questions to gain a better understanding of what you are helping to organise.

### Questions to ascertain the purpose of the meeting

- Why is the meeting being held?
- What do you want to achieve from the meeting?
- Has a meeting like this been held before? If so, when, where and what other details can you give me?
- Who are the main participants? How many people will attend?
- When do you want the meeting to be held?
- Do you have a preference in terms of location?
- How long do you think it will run for? How formal or informal will it be?
- Will lunch or coffee be required?
- Who else will be organising or involved in arranging any aspect of the meeting?

## Structure of the meeting

Some meetings are highly structured and, by law, have to include certain components and steps. Others are more of an opportunity for people to have an unstructured chat about certain issues or simply catch up with colleagues they don't often get to talk to.

More formal styles of meetings (such as AGMs or board meetings) will require more preparation in terms of ensuring the meeting runs smoothly and is structured well, so advance planning and knowledge will be essential in these situations.

Ensure that you are aware of what structure the meeting you are organising will take. Find out how it will run, who will be in charge of proceedings, what topics will be discussed and in what order and any other information you will need.

Much of this information will be available from the person who has called the meeting or you may be able to adapt or work from agendas and meeting papers from similar meetings that have previously been held.



## Voting protocols and procedures

It is vital to know whether your meeting is to have a session where issues are voted on. If this is the case, ensure you are completely aware of the processes and rules that apply for the vote to be held legally and for a true record to be held of the outcome of any decisions put to the meeting's attendees.

## Special needs of the participants

Ensure you find out participants' requirements when you are planning the meeting because they could impact your time lines or be easily overlooked and have to be completed in a rush at the last minute.

Here are examples of other needs that a participant in a meeting environment may have.

### Special needs of the participants



#### Equipment

Participants who are presenting reports at a meeting may have particular equipment needs; for example, to play a DVD, deliver an electronic presentation using Microsoft PowerPoint, use a data projector or to demonstrate how a computer system works. Knowing in advance what these requirements are is essential because you may need to hire, set up and help operate the equipment.



### **Technology**

Participants who are meeting via a teleconference or videoconference will have a need for access to the relevant technology; for example, if a live presentation on the company's latest product is to occur, you will need to access technology that allows this to happen.



### **Disabled access**

Some attendees may require wheelchair access to the meeting venue or may require other special equipment or access if they have a disability. Most people who have such a requirement will be used to raising this with meeting organisers but if you are unsure whether this is the case, ask your manager for guidance on whether anyone will need special access.



### **An interpreter**

This may be particularly important for meetings with foreign businesses, or attendees who are from other countries, whether they are internal staff members or external consultants, experts or representatives of other organisations. If you think it is likely, find out whether any attendees need an interpreter and the specific language and dialect they speak so the correct interpreter can be found.

Some people or organisations choose to bring their own interpreter, which will mean additional catering arrangements need to be made and an extra place set for the interpreter at the meeting table.



### **Larger print**

Ensure that meeting notes and any presentations produced are in a suitable format so all attendees can easily read and understand them. Photocopies should be clear, diagrams easy to read and text large enough so all people can read them. If any attendees have vision problems, they will probably alert you to this prior to the meeting. It could mean you need to create a special set of meeting notes for them in a larger format.



### Parking facilities

Attendees may not be familiar with the meeting venue, so it is a good idea to include parking instructions for attendees so they know where they can safely leave their cars. If they need to pay for parking then ensure they are aware of this as well as any other costs involved.



### Special dietary requirements

Some people are allergic to wheat-based products, so arranging a plate of sandwiches to share for lunch will not be suitable for them; pregnant women are unable to safely eat certain foods; others will simply prefer not to eat certain foods so ensure you are familiar with the dietary requirements of the attendees.



### Meeting times

Be aware that meeting times need to be carefully planned in order to maximise the effectiveness of the meeting, as well as to avoid any issues arising because the meeting falls on a culturally or religiously sensitive day or time (such as on certain days during Ramadan, Easter or during Chinese New Year). For meetings involving participants from different time zones, the selection of a suitable meeting time can be problematic, so ensure you take this into consideration.

## Resources that are required

Once you have determined the meeting method that best suits the circumstances, you need to find out any special resources and equipment that is needed.

Although items such as pens or having water available can seem trivial, making sure that all the items attendees could possibly require are on hand will result in a meeting that is more effective and runs smoothly. If attendees have all the necessary tools and comforts on hand, they will be less distracted because they aren't thinking about how much they want to get a drink, that their pen has run out or that their presentation won't work because a data projector isn't on hand.

Equipment and resources required might include:

- standard or electronic whiteboard
- DVD or video player or recorder
- television monitor
- flip chart and markers
- data projector and screen
- butcher's paper and felt pens
- adhesive material such as tape or BluTac
- pens and notepads
- table and chairs
- computer equipment
- food and drinks
- product or marketing samples or other items
- notes and meeting reference materials.

## Be prepared for the meeting

Before you commence making any arrangements for a meeting, it is a good idea to prepare a checklist of issues you need to consider. The smallest detail overlooked can often have a significant impact on the success of the meeting.

### Example: meeting checklist

Here is a sample checklist that you might like to use, or you may prefer to develop your own.

Item	Costs (where applicable)	Completed
Name of meeting:		
Purpose of meeting:		
Date of meeting:		
Commencement time:		
Estimated finish:		
Participants: (If numerous, attach a list)		
Facilities required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wheelchair access</li> <li>• Parking</li> <li>• Additional rooms</li> <li>• Kitchen</li> <li>• (add others)</li> </ul>		
Venue selected and costs confirmed		

*continued ...*

... continued

<p>Equipment ordered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Electronic whiteboard</li> <li>• Overhead projector</li> <li>• Video player</li> <li>• Television monitor</li> <li>• Flip chart</li> <li>• (add others)</li> </ul>		
<p>Catering organised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Morning tea</li> <li>• Lunch</li> <li>• Drinks</li> <li>• Special dietary needs</li> <li>• Serving/break times agreed</li> <li>• (add others)</li> </ul>		
<p>Travel and accommodation requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hotel bookings</li> <li>• Air travel</li> <li>• Car hire</li> <li>• Taxi vouchers etc.</li> <li>• (add others)</li> </ul>		
Video or teleconference organised		
Other arrangements		
Comments		

**Practice task 3**

Identify five meeting requirements.

# 1D

## Make meeting arrangements

When you are sure you have gathered all the necessary details, it is time to put the meeting arrangements into place.

When putting the meeting arrangements into place, ensure that:

- you have scheduled the date and time
- you have booked an appropriate venue
- you have organised catering
- you have organised accommodation and transport
- you have organised appropriate communication technologies
- you have a full understanding of the costs and operating are within the budget.

### Schedule the date and time

It is important that a time is agreed to that is suitable for the participants as well as best suits the purpose of the meeting; for example, is the meeting urgent? Will it need to be held immediately? Is an informal get-together of team members best done after work, perhaps at a local pub or restaurant? Is a formal meeting where a lot of business is to be completed best started early in the day to allow enough time for all the items on the agenda to be properly dealt with?



### Book an appropriate venue

As soon as you know the date, time and approximate number of participants, it is important to book the venue. Meeting room requirements and facilities will vary according to the type, size, style and method of the meeting.

Your organisation may have a room where all meetings are held. In this case, it may be your responsibility to complete a booking form recording all the details of the meeting. Imagine if you planned a meeting without booking the room and found out on the day that another meeting was being held there.

It is a good idea to keep a file of appropriate venues, which also lists the costs and facilities. Use your network of business associates and friends to find out about new venues that could prove suitable for your organisation's needs.

Here are examples of physical characteristics that may need to be considered.

Physical characteristics of meeting venues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lighting (natural or artificial, room with or without windows)</li><li>• Ventilation and room temperature</li><li>• External distractions such as movement and noise</li><li>• Furniture layout and comfort</li><li>• Equipment availability and placement</li><li>• Proximity to participants' work areas</li><li>• Availability of space for workshops</li><li>• Location of toilets</li><li>• Parking facilities</li><li>• Wheelchair access</li><li>• Signposting the location for easy access</li></ul>

## Organise catering

Whether the meeting is held internally or externally, catering may be required. If so, the following questions need to be considered:

- Do you have a budget allowance for catering?
- What type of catering is required; for example, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea?
- What level of catering is required; for example, do you offer biscuits or cakes with morning tea?
- Are there any special requirements; for example, vegetarian or kosher meals?
- What is the timing for the catering; for example, tea and coffee on arrival, morning tea at 10.30 am, lunch at 1 pm?
- Is there to be a meal break or is perhaps a working lunch planned?
- Will you require catering staff?

## Organise accommodation and transport

As soon as you have established a participant's availability for the meeting, you should determine their accommodation and transport requirements and, if necessary, make these arrangements for them immediately.

Your organisation's policies and procedures may indicate the level of accommodation and travel participants are entitled to. Transport arrangements may include air, rail or road travel. Participants may need a taxi from the airport or a hire car.

## Cultural appropriateness

Something that needs to be identified and considered is whether the communication techniques and conversations engaged are culturally appropriate to the audience. To ensure that any meeting is being conducted in a culturally appropriate manner it will be a requirement that all parties involved in the organisation and underpinning meeting demonstrate that they have indeed referred to the organisation's policies and procedures that they understand these policies and procedures have been designed to promote cultural inclusivity and diversity.

The organiser of the meeting may consider making an interpreter available, having resources available in languages other than English, providing meeting notes in larger print, being sensitive to cultural beliefs and practices when scheduling meetings and observing cultural differences in nonverbal communication such as body language and personal space and the role of women in public forums.

Here are some aspects of legislation that you need to be aware of when organising a meeting.

Relevant legislation
Anti-discrimination legislation
Ethical principles
Codes of practice
Privacy laws
Work health and safety

## Organise appropriate communication technologies

You should be completely familiar with the type of meeting that is being held, its purpose and agenda, the communication technology required for presenters and attendees and how this compares with the technological specifications of the venue. This is particularly the case if a meeting you are organising is going to be held off-site in a location you have not used before.

Consider the following when identifying meeting technology requirements:

- Does the venue have its own lectern, microphone and speaker system?
- Does it have a data projector and screen so an electronic presentation can be shown?
- Does music, a DVD or video need to be played? If so, do they have this equipment on hand?
- Will your own technology be compatible with whatever the venue uses?
- If a teleconference is organised, do you have the right equipment available?
- Is videoconferencing or web conferencing technology on hand and in working order?
- Do staff members know how all of these technologies operate?
- How can the internet be accessed?

## Web conferencing and other tools

There are a many web conference tools available. Most have the ability to share the screen, and to connect via webcam and microphone and most also allow for some degree of file-sharing. It's important to bear in mind that these tools tend not to be compatible with one another, so you can't use Skype to connect to an Adobe Connect session, for example. ITS Research Services have provided this useful round-up of a variety of web-conferencing tools.

Here are descriptions of three particular tools.

### Skype

Skype is undoubtedly the most well-known and most popular web-conferencing tool currently available. Even if you haven't used it in a professional setting, you've probably used it to contact friends and family. Signing up for an account is free and very easy: just enter your details and download the software, which is available for Windows, Mac and Linux.

### Adobe Connect

Adobe Connect gives you the option to share your whole desktop with the meeting or just one application and it is also possible for the attendees to view the application you are sharing in full screen while you're doing something else on your desktop. Unlike Skype, Adobe Connect does not require your attendees to have an account; you just share the URL of your session.

### Big Blue Button

As with other web-conferencing tools, you can share documents and presentations and participants can also make use of extended whiteboard capabilities, such as a pointer, zoom controls and drawing functions. You can record and playback sessions and it is compatible with Windows, Mac OS and Linux. Initial set-up as host is a little fiddly but there is a range of supporting video tutorials on the Big Blue Button website at: <http://bigbluebutton.org>.

## Understand costs and operate within a budget

The costs of meetings can vary considerably, so you need to establish whether a budget exists for the meeting you have been asked to organise. Depending on the size and frequency of the meetings, there may be a separate budget for each item or one all-inclusive budget.

It is important that you keep records of actual expenses and compare these with the budget as you make your meeting preparations.

Set up a spreadsheet to keep track of quotes, actual costs and budgeted amounts as you go, so costs can easily be reviewed and kept on top of. Doing this also makes it easier when you need to authorise the payment of invoices or submit expense claims after the event.

The costs involved in holding a meeting might include:

- venue hire
- catering
- equipment hire
- support materials
- printing
- travel and accommodation
- human resources.

### Example: use of technology in a meeting

A financial services company has a quarterly briefing for clients. It is held at a theatre, built for business purposes, in a new high-rise building in the city. The venue is equipped with all the latest technical gadgetry including wireless internet connection, sound system and data projection facilities, as well as the usual items such as a microphone and laser pointer for use with electronic presentations.

Before the company used the theatre for the first time, the venue manager suggested that the speakers and organisers come along for a session that would show them how all the technology works, and give them the opportunity to test their computer equipment with the system and try out things like the lights, speakers and data show before the presentation.

This meant that the company was fully confident that the technology would work well on the day and the presenters felt more comfortable and confident after seeing and experiencing first-hand the way the system worked.



## Practice task 4

1. Why should you make accommodation and transport arrangements for meeting attendees without delay?

2. What do you think makes a good meeting venue?

3. List five questions to be considered when organising catering for a meeting.

# 1E

## Advise of meeting details

When organising a meeting, you will generally be required to follow established procedures for informing participants of relevant meeting details. As you have already learned, in some circumstances there are legal obligations to be met when calling a meeting. However, there are also protocols that apply to advising of regular, extraordinary or even informal meetings.

### Change meeting arrangements

Sometimes, meeting arrangements have to be changed. For example, key participants might unexpectedly be unavailable, circumstances regarding the meeting content might change and meeting requirements or venue locations might change. Changing a meeting usually involves rescheduling it to another day, rebooking the venue and contacting all relevant people to let them know of the changes.

If a meeting has to be altered or cancelled, all changes must be communicated to participants immediately. Internal participants can be advised quickly, face to face, through a telephone call or by a memo, which can be emailed, faxed or hand delivered. If the participants are external to your organisation, the most appropriate method is to telephone and follow up your call with an email or fax confirming the changes.



### Example: change of meeting arrangements

Olivia is the manager of a company that manufactures boutique make-up and beauty products. She has recently organised meetings with some new potential buyers at large department stores in New York, Paris and London. This is a big opportunity for her company and she is excited at the prospect of going to see these influential people and showing them her products.

She arranged that she would be away for 10 days and in that time attend meetings in all three locations. She had the times and dates all arranged and confirmed before her departure and prepared well for her trip, taking everything she thought she would need with her. Her first meetings in New York went very well and she was looking forward to the next round of meetings in London.

On arrival at Heathrow airport, however, she turned on her mobile phone and was dismayed to hear a message saying that the buyer she was going to meet with at Selfridges was ill and unable to see her tomorrow and wanted to reschedule to later in the week when she was due to be in Paris.

She quickly emailed her assistant back in Sydney, Martine, and asked her to try and find a solution. The next morning, she logged onto her email system and found that Martine had been able to move a meeting in Paris around as well as book Olivia on another flight to Paris in order to cater for the change in schedule. Martine confirmed the new times with the buyers in writing and called Olivia to let her know that all was well.

## Practice task 5

1. What are five methods for advising participants of meeting details?

2. Why do you think advising changes to meeting times, dates, places or agenda items is important to convey in writing?

## Summary

1. A meeting's primary purpose is to exchange information.
2. Organisations make use of a wide variety of different meeting styles – anything from a face-to-face discussion over lunch to a formal sit-down gathering of the board of management can be classified as a meeting.
3. The degree of organisation and preparation required for a meeting is determined by the style of the meeting (formal or informal; large or small, etc.), the attendees and their preferences and also the legal requirements that may have to be satisfied.
4. Many organisations have to comply with legal and ethical requirements; for example, holding an annual general meeting every year and issuing reports and results to shareholders.
5. People who organise meetings held for legal reasons must be familiar with the basics of what is expected and understand the role they are required to play.
6. Organisers of meetings need to understand, in some detail, the purpose of the meeting, who will be attending, its structure, procedures and protocols, any special needs the participants may have and the resources required in order for a successful meeting to take place.
7. Organising a meeting may involve scheduling the date and time, booking a venue, organising catering, accommodation and transport for attendees and making sure that attendees have access to and can use any technology they may need. It also requires organisers to work within any budgets set.
8. Attendees must be advised of any changes to meeting plans and details promptly and in an appropriate format.

## Learning checkpoint 1

### Make meeting arrangements

This learning checkpoint allows you to review your skills and knowledge in making meeting arrangements.

#### Part A

1. List five different meeting types. Identify who attends, whether the meetings are formal or informal and explain their purpose.

2. What are the behavioural expectations of those attending a meeting?

3. Explain the meeting requirements that are to be identified when organising a meeting.

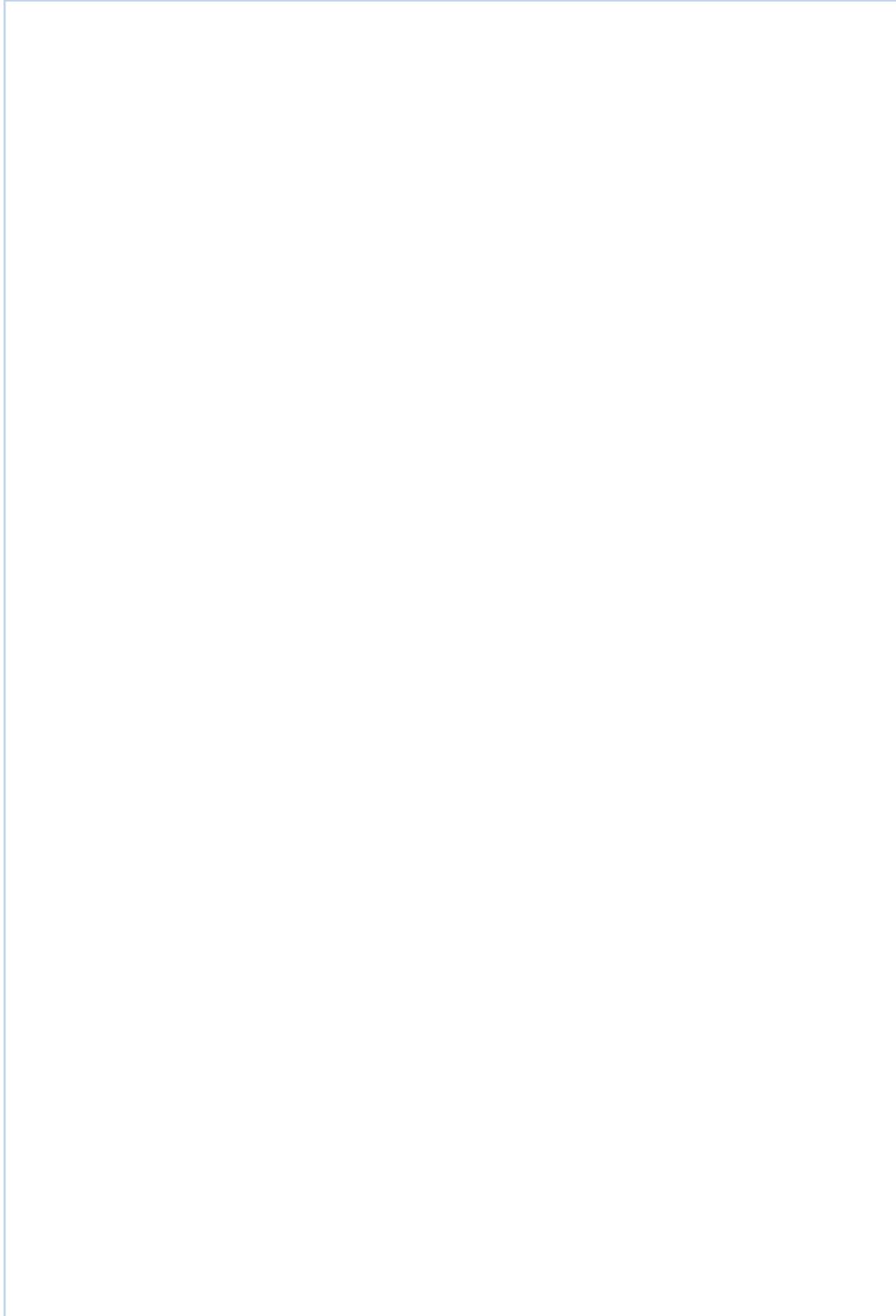
4. What tasks are to be completed when making meeting arrangements?

5. How have you previously been advised of a meeting, either within a workplace or within your community?

## Part B

For the organisation you currently work for, or for an organisation you are familiar with such as your local council, undertake some research and answer the following questions.

1. What types of meetings are commonly held? What is their purpose? Who attends? How would you categorise them (formal, informal, etc.)? Who organises them?

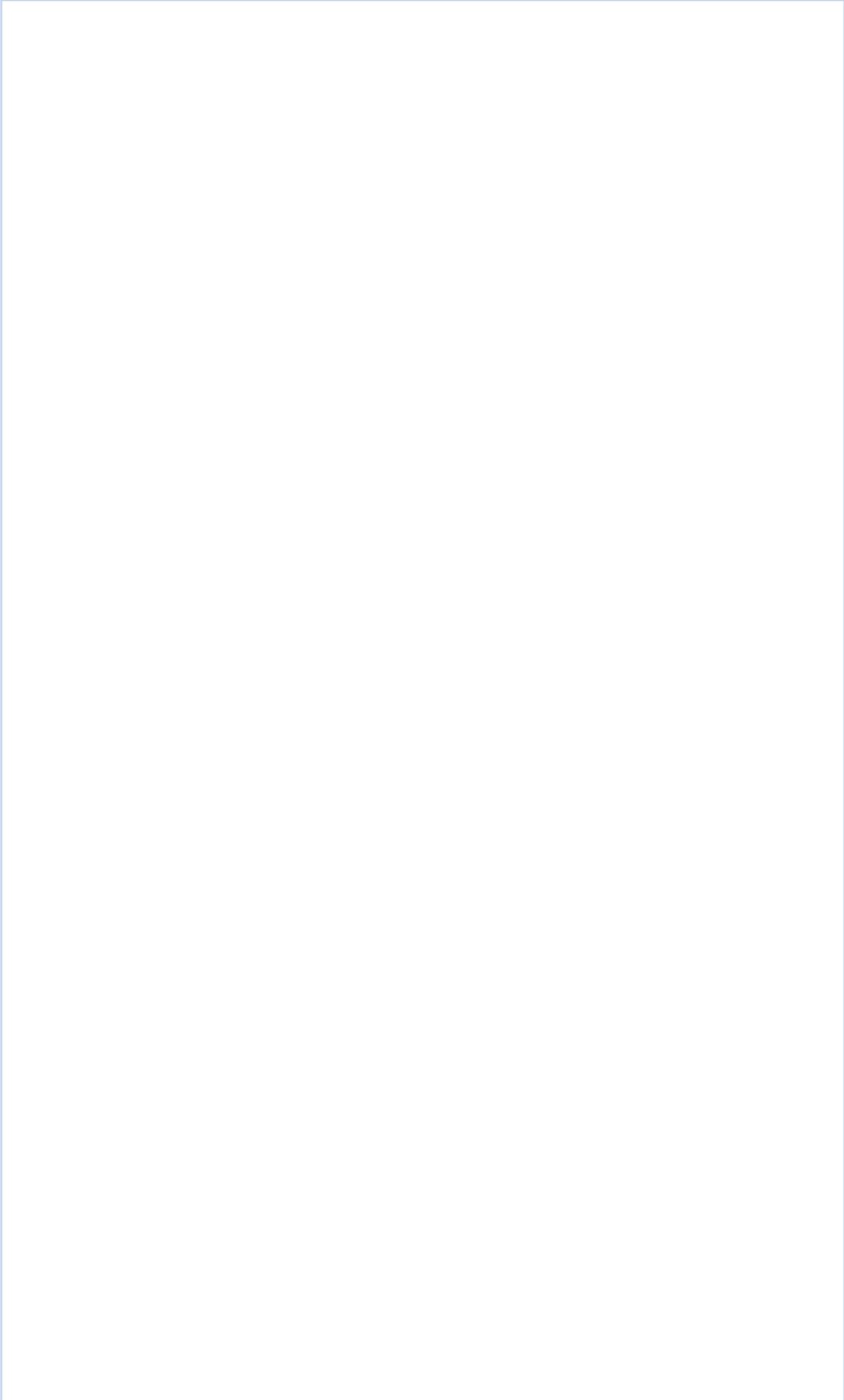


2. What legal or ethical requirements does the organisation have to adhere to when organising the various types of meetings and how do they do this? Provide examples of documentation or instances where procedures and protocol are followed in order to satisfy legal requirements.



3. Choose one of the larger meetings the organisation holds (for example, a staff meeting or an AGM) and identify the:
- purpose
  - structure
  - protocols and procedures (if voting takes place)
  - participants and any special needs they may have
  - resources and equipment required
  - date and time – find out how these were chosen and how suitable they were for the meeting's participants
  - venue – why it was selected and how well it worked
  - catering requirements and the caterer used
  - travel and accommodation requirements of attendees
  - what information and communications technology (ICT) required
  - actual cost and budget
  - process of organising it, including how any changes to plans were communicated.







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## Topic 2

# Prepare meeting documentation

Once you have made all of the meeting arrangements, the next stage is to prepare the documents required for the efficient running of the meeting. This begins with the notice of meeting, which advises participants of the meeting time, date and venue. This must be prepared and sent as soon as arrangements are made. Other common meeting documents include the agenda, reports, meeting correspondence and minutes.

Once these documents have been prepared, they need to be double-checked to ensure there are no errors, and then sent to the meeting participants. Other documents that could be required during the course of the meeting may also need to be prepared, checked and duplicated for the meeting.

You may need to consult organisational policies and procedures or other guidelines for preparing meeting documents. Certain meetings will also be regulated by statutory requirements and you are legally required to prepare specific documentation for those meetings.

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 2A Prepare meeting notices, agendas and papers
- 2B Check meeting documentation for accuracy and errors
- 2C Distribute documents to participants
- 2D Prepare spare sets of documents

## 2A

## Prepare meeting notices, agendas and papers

To ensure a meeting is successfully run you need to understand and prepare the necessary documentation. Generally a notice of meeting should be prepared first to advise participants of the meeting arrangements. Ideally, it should be sent in advance of other meeting documentation to alert participants to the date and venue of the meeting; however, it can be sent as part of the total documentation.

A meeting notice should specify:

- the name of the committee, person, organisation holding the meeting
- the purpose of the meeting; for example, a meeting of the board of directors or a sales strategy meeting
- the day and time of the meeting
- the venue
- whether there is any material enclosed; for example, draft agenda, financial reports
- a request for confirmation of attendance
- the name of the person to contact for further details.

### Prepare meeting notices

The notice might also request that participants advise the meeting organiser of any agenda items they wish to have included.

The notice of meeting can vary considerably in its format, from a simple email advising participants of the details of the meeting, to formal printed notices sent out to shareholders with a company's annual report.

The timing of the distribution of the meeting notice depends on the style, purpose and method of the meeting. As much notice as possible is preferred, to ensure maximum participation.

Often the dates of recurrent meetings are set well ahead or the date for the next one is determined at the end of the current meeting. The meeting notice then becomes a formal confirmation of arrangements that most participants already know.



### Prepare agendas

While not every meeting requires a formal meeting notice to be distributed, every meeting should have an agenda to follow in order for the objectives of the meeting to be met. An agenda represents a plan of the meeting and ensures that everything that needs to be discussed is clearly listed.

As a general rule, the more informal the meeting, the fewer items are likely to be found on the agenda. However, it is critical for the success of meetings that all items for discussion be listed on the agenda.

When preparing agenda items, make sure that you include:

- the purpose of the meeting
- the date, time and location of the meeting
- a welcome to participants
- a notice of apologies received
- the minutes of the previous meeting
- matters (or business) arising from these minutes
- appropriate correspondence and reports
- major agenda items
- any general (or other) business
- the date of next meeting.

## Prepare papers and documentation

In addition to the agenda, most business meetings require the preparation and/or coordination of meeting papers or documents for particular agenda items.

Here are several examples of papers and documents that may be prepared in coordination of a meeting.

Meeting papers and documentation
Minutes of the previous meeting assist attendees to recall what was discussed at the last meeting, as well as providing talking points.
Correspondence is material addressed to the group such as the board of directors, chairperson or that received by meeting attendees.
Financial reports include profit and loss statements, cashflow statements, forecasts or projections and earnings statements.
Chairperson's, CEO's or Managing Director's reports are high-level reports relating to the industry and operations of the organisation.
Research reports relate to new areas the organisation may be moving into, or initiatives that could facilitate growth or cost savings.
Reports from individuals could include slides or more detailed notes, or a formal report in hard copy to accompany the verbal presentation.

Once you have drafted an agenda, send it out to participants and ask for their feedback. Make sure you clearly state when they need to reply by. This provides participants with an opportunity to check the program and to add any other items before a final agenda is prepared. Once you have received any additional items, you can complete and send out the final agenda.

## Example: prepare documents for a meeting

Marcus attends a weekly sales meeting that his manager organises. It is usually held on Monday afternoon. Each Friday he receives an agenda and, often, some supporting documentation he needs to review for the meeting. His manager completes this herself and uses an agenda template she found on Microsoft Word's online templates listing.

Using the template means that creating the agenda is quick and easy, yet the agenda looks professional and is organised in a manner appropriate to the meeting. She also uses a minutes template from the list of Microsoft templates available and types in minutes on her laptop as the meeting progresses. As soon as the meeting is finished, she emails a copy of the minutes to each attendee.

Any documents that support the agenda, such as sales figures or reports, are also emailed. This means participants can read them electronically or print them off in hard copy for use at the meeting.



## Practice task 6

1. Explain the purpose of a meeting notice.

2. Explain the purpose of a meeting agenda.

3. List four examples of other meeting papers and documentation.

## 2B Check meeting documentation for accuracy and errors

It is important that documents provided to meeting participants are error free and accurate.

When checking documents, ensure that they:

- reflect the agenda and its order
- are consistent in their format and style and match the corporate style
- are consistent from meeting to meeting
- are free of typing errors, spelling errors or other mistakes, whether superficial or not
- are accurate and up to date.

### Check meeting documentation

In organising the coordination and distribution of meeting papers, you need to liaise with the staff responsible for preparing them to ensure they are ready by the set date.

Because they will probably have been prepared by a number of different people, you will need to check the formatting of these documents for consistency and make or suggest alterations as necessary. It is likely that your organisation will have a standard format or template to be used. If not, you should develop one and notify others of the standard so they can prepare their documents accordingly.



Do not rely on others for accuracy. If documents are forwarded to you electronically, run your spell-check through each one, then read it again and make any necessary corrections. Sometimes it is easier to do this by printing the document out and reading it through on hard copy; a lot of people find it difficult to proofread documents on a computer screen.

Remember also that it is not always wise to rely solely on your computer's spell-check function. However, do not make any changes to the content, even if you believe it to be incorrect, without first checking with the author of the document.

## Practice task 7

Review this agenda and identify any mistakes or possible omissions that need to be corrected before it is sent out to attendees.

<b>Meeting Agenda</b>	
<b>Acme Products Pty Ltd</b>	
<b>Client Christmas Party Committee Meeting</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	Monday 8 October 2016
<b>Venue:</b>	Meeting Room 1, Level 8
<b>Attendees:</b>	Sharon Milligan, Toula Varigos, Mitchell Peters, Tanya de Koonsen, Nikki Jamiseon
<b>Apologies:</b>	Margot Price
<b>1</b>	Report from Tanya and Sharon on visit to Park Hotel
<b>2</b>	Report from Mitchell and Toula on visit to Royal Hotel
<b>3</b>	Business arising from previous meeting
<b>4</b>	Discussion about prizes and raffle
<b>5</b>	Invitations
<b>6</b>	Apologies
<b>7</b>	Letter received from Salvation Army regarding fundraising
<b>8</b>	Next meeting date and time
<b>9</b>	Other issues

## 2C

### Distribute documents to participants

When the meeting documentation and papers are ready, make a final check before placing them in correctly addressed envelopes and/or emailing them. Remember that the smallest detail overlooked can have a significant impact on the success of the meeting. This not only applies to the initial preparations, such as booking the venue, making accommodation and travel arrangements, but also to the preparation of the documentation for the meeting.

For example, you may offend someone if you forget to invite additions to the draft agenda; an incorrect venue address could have serious consequences; or the meeting may have to be delayed if an important report that participants must read prior to the meeting is not sent out with the meeting documents.



#### Distribute documents correctly

If the content of documentation is confidential, make sure that you stamp or print 'Confidential' in bold letters on the envelope. Also ensure that your organisation's return address is marked clearly on the envelope in case the papers fail to reach their intended destination.

Check the various delivery methods used by your organisation and determine the most appropriate method of forwarding the meeting papers so they arrive within the designated time line; for example, standard mail, Express Post, registered mail, courier or email.

Make sure your participants will be at the listed address to receive the papers before you send them, and check later to make sure they have received them. Perhaps use registered mail, which means they (or someone at that address) will need to sign for them. If they have not received a copy within the expected time frame, forward a duplicate copy by alternative means.

For documentation being sent via email, ensure the email addresses of participants are correct prior to sending the information.

## Example: prepare a distribution checklist

Sally and Madison job-share the position of office manager. Each month they need to organise the board meeting. Because they job-share, different tasks often fall to one or both of them, so they need to be very organised and have systems that each can refer to so they know what has been done. One of the ways they do this is to have checklists and other lists they use and keep in a central folder.

Either Sally or Madison completes different lists for the meeting and ticks off items on the checklists as they complete different tasks.

Here is an example of a checklist they use.

Documents prepared	Done	Date	Performed by
Minutes of previous meeting			
Notice of meeting			
Agenda			
Reports			
Other			
Spare sets			
Documents collated	Done	Date	Performed by
Previous minutes			
Notice of meeting			
Agenda			
Reports			
Board members sent documents	Done	Date	Performed by
Bob Mackenzie – Chairperson			

*continued ...*

... continued

Felicia Trimble – Managing director			
Tony Medina – Finance director			
Stacey Yong – Sales and marketing director			
Gordon Yannis – Operations director			
Morgan Cook – HR and admin director			

**Practice task 8**

List five tips for distributing documents correctly.

## 2D Prepare spare sets of documents

It is important that you prepare a number of spare copies of all meeting documents in case some participants don't receive the documentation. In some instances, the documentation may have been sent close to the meeting date and be delayed in the post.

It is also possible that some participants may not bring their documents to the meeting. If you have a few spares, it will ease any embarrassment and ensure the meeting goes ahead smoothly.

Another important reason to make spare copies of meeting documentation is that you need to file a complete set of all documents, either electronically or in a paper-based filing system. You may need to refer to them at a later date. For some meetings, such as an annual general meeting, it is usually a legal requirement to have an official set of meeting documents. Even at an informal staff meeting in a small organisation you may find it necessary to check who attended a meeting or what date the meeting took place.



### Example: prepare spare sets of documents

Rosita is the administration manager for a company that has offices throughout Australia. On the first Monday of every month, a regional managers' teleconference is held. The company's managing director is the chairperson.

It is Rosita's responsibility to ensure that all of the regional managers have received a pack of meeting documentation at least a week prior to the meeting being held. To do this, she photocopies all the relevant paperwork and binds them up using the office's comb-binding machine. She then places the meeting papers for each manager into an envelope marked with their name and writes 'Confidential' across the top of it. The envelopes are dispatched to each regional office, along with other documents and items in the daily courier bag that the organisation uses between head office and each regional office.

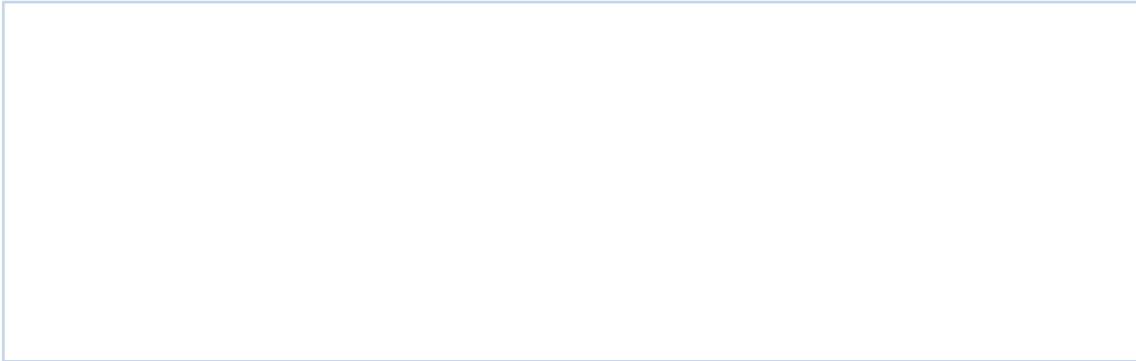
In addition to this, Rosita also sets up a file on her computer that contains all of the documents in order, starting with the agenda. She does this because, on more than one occasion, a regional manager has called in to the meeting from a remote location and has not had the documents. On another occasion, a regional manager had his briefcase stolen at an airport the Friday afternoon before the meeting – with all his meeting documentation in it.

As Rosita has the file already set up, if there are any problems, all she has to do is email it to the manager or their assistant, who can quickly print out a copy of the papers. Alternatively, they can review the papers on the screen of their laptop if they happen to be out of the office at the time of the meeting.



## Practice task 9

What reasons can you think of for having a set of spare hard-copy meeting documents on hand?



## Summary

1. Preparing documentation for meetings has a direct impact on the effectiveness of the meeting.
2. Attendees need to be well-prepared and given information that will enable them to come to the meeting with the knowledge, information and documentation they need in order to participate fully in the meeting.
3. Documents such as the meeting notice, agenda and other papers are sent out prior to the meeting. This may mean that attendees receive the notice first, followed by an agenda and supporting papers (such as reports, correspondence and minutes of the previous meeting) in a pack just prior to the meeting.
4. Attendees may be asked to contribute to the agenda and will probably be asked to provide any supporting documentation to the meeting organiser in advance of the meeting, or to bring enough copies of reports or other documents to the meeting.
5. It is important to check all the documentation you prepare for the meeting for accuracy and errors. Submit drafts of the documents to the meeting chairperson or perhaps ask another staff member to review them in detail in advance of sending them out.
6. Develop a system that allows you to ensure that documents are dispatched to meeting participants on time and well ahead of the meeting.
7. Ensure that spare sets of documents are on hand, so unexpected attendees or guests have copies of documentation, and so any lost or misplaced sets of documents can be quickly replaced if necessary.

## Learning checkpoint 2

### Prepare meeting documentation

This learning checkpoint allows you to review your skills and knowledge in preparing documentation for meetings.

#### Part A

1. List the details to be included on a meeting notice.

2. List the details to be included on a meeting agenda.

3. How can you ensure meeting documents are accurate and free of errors?

4. Explain how a checklist can assist in distributing meeting documents correctly to participants.

## Part B

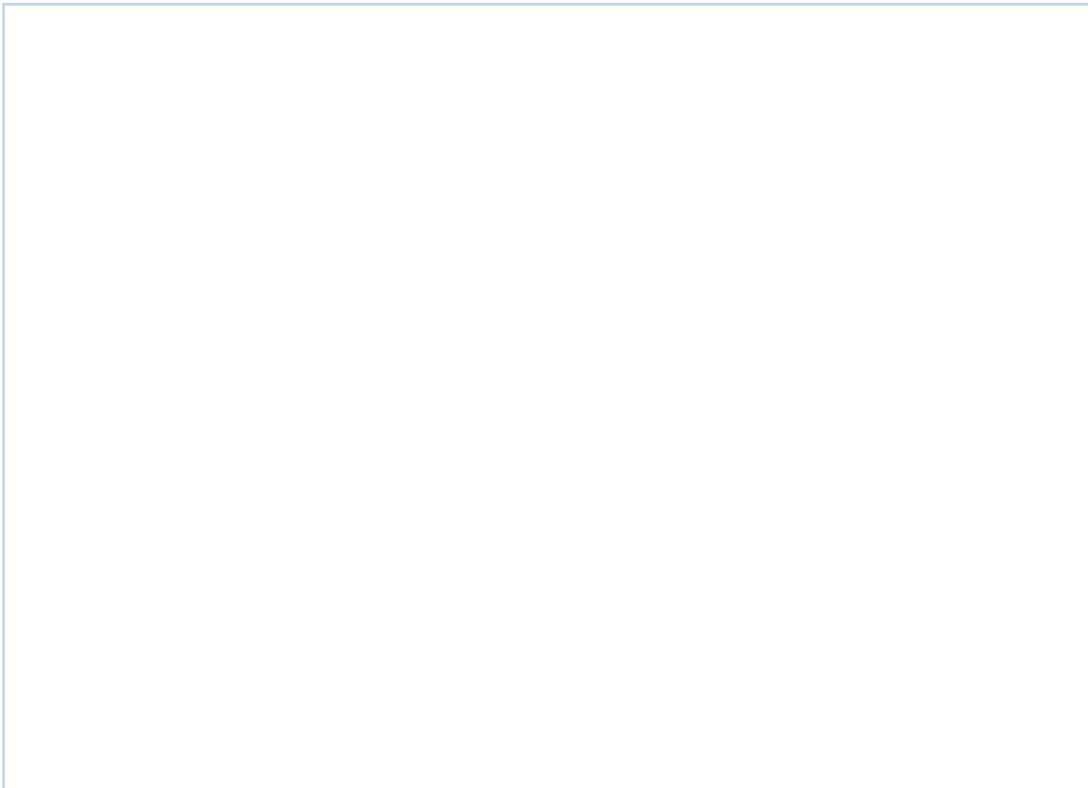
For your organisation, identify a meeting (preferably a large and/or regular meeting) that is to be held in the future or has been held in the past. If you are not currently working within an organisation, select an organisation you are familiar with (perhaps a club or association, or your local council) to answer the following questions.

1. Is a meeting notice usually prepared? When is it advisable to prepare a meeting notice? How is it created and by whom? How long prior to the meeting is it issued? Who is it sent to? What is the purpose of sending the notice?

2. How is the meeting agenda created? How much input do meeting attendees have in creating it? Is a template used? When is it sent out? How detailed is the information on it?



3. What other papers and documents are routinely prepared for attendees? Why are these documents required? Who prepares them?



4. When and how are meeting documents sent out? What procedures are, or should be, in place to ensure that attendees receive information in time?

5. Are spare sets of documents prepared? Why should spare documents be prepared?

6. What processes are in place to check the documents for accuracy and errors? How effective are these steps and how could they be improved?



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## Topic 3

# Record and produce meeting minutes

Minutes record the decisions made at a meeting and the progress on activities. They are a working document and keep an organisation moving towards its objectives. They must be accurate, clear, consistently structured, brief and to the point. By keeping written records of meetings, all participants can see the outcomes and the decisions made.

People who were absent from the meeting receive a record of the outcomes, and an historical record of the meeting is readily available if required in the future.

Systems must be in place to ensure that minutes are recorded effectively during the meeting as items are discussed, debated and a way forward is determined.

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 3A Take notes that accurately record the meeting
- 3B Produce true and accurate minutes
- 3C Check meeting minutes and submit them for approval
- 3D Dispatch copies of the minutes

# 3A

## Take notes that accurately record the meeting

The role of the minute taker is an extremely important one. They must listen carefully to the meeting proceedings and note down the crucial aspects of each item discussed, discussion points and the action decided upon.

In fact, the ability to listen well is perhaps the most important skill a minute taker can possess. In a busy or noisy meeting, it can be very hard to really listen to what's going on and write a clear record of what's happening. It is a skill that might take you a while to develop, so you may need some practice to ensure that you are as prepared as you can be to write the minutes up.

People who take notes at meetings often use shorthand (either their own system or a recognised system such as Pitman shorthand). This is faster than normal handwriting and is useful when there is a lot of information being discussed. Some people like to record meetings on a digital device such as an iPhone or speech recognition software, take minimal notes as a backup and then transcribe the audio file later, checking their notes for anything they were unable to decipher in the file.

You need to weigh up the advantage of knowing that you have recorded every word that was said, against the time it takes to transcribe an audio file (this process is often longer than the time the actual meeting took).



### Note details during the meeting

It is important that the notes taken during a meeting are comprehensive and reflect what actually happened. As well as an official record of what happened, minutes should also reconstruct the meeting for people who were absent.

Here are some things to consider when raising issues at a scheduled workplace meeting.

#### Raising important issues

A summary of what the issue, point or suggestion was (often used as a heading)

Who raised the issue

What was said – a brief overview is enough, but you may also need to attach a document to the meeting minutes if a document was tabled at the meeting

What was said in response (again a brief overview is fine; for example, attendees unanimously agreed that this issue needed to be resolved)

Any resolutions, decisions or actions agreed upon as a result of the discussion

## Identify what should be recorded

The following information is a guide to what should be recorded during the course of a meeting. Remember that each organisation will have additional agenda items to include or formalities that are undertaken during the meeting that also need to be recorded.

### Quorum

Some meetings require a quorum. Having a set quorum ensures that participants will not make any decisions that are contrary to the overall group opinion. If a quorum is necessary, you need to check and confirm the numbers required. The chairperson will defer the meeting to another date if insufficient members are in attendance. The minute taker should record this decision.

### Meeting attendees and apologies

Depending on organisational protocol, you may also wish to record the reason why apologies were given such as illness, carers or annual leave or conflicting business commitments. This section of the minutes might be presented in two parts or in a single section, perhaps in a box so readers of the minutes can easily see who was there and who wasn't and why.

### Points discussed during meeting

The purpose of minutes is to keep a record of what occurred during the course of a meeting, which means that any points that are discussed (other than small talk) need to be recorded. This could include suggestions, issues or decisions that are made as well as general observations, reports, feedback or general sharing of information.

### Suggestions raised at the meeting

It is very important to make sure that any suggestions attendees make are accurately recorded. Make detailed notes during the meeting to ensure that when the minutes are being prepared afterwards, the key aspects of the suggestion can be simply and clearly noted.

## Other things that need to be recorded

Here are more examples of things that need to be recorded during a meeting and added to the minutes accordingly.

### Issues raised at the meeting

It is particularly important to record issues raised because they often reflect problems or opportunities for improvement that meeting participants have identified. As with other points and suggestions that are raised, it is vital to accurately record who originally brought up the issue, as well as the ensuing discussion or debate, and who raised supporting or conflicting facts and opinions.

### Decisions taken at the meeting

The minutes of a meeting act as a formal record of decisions and give authority to a person to take action; for example, who will complete a task and when. Some minutes record only the proposals and decisions of the meeting, others contain a summary of discussion followed by the motion and decision.

Decisions may arise as a result of a suggestion, issue or point that was raised. A decision may also be made after a long period of evaluation or after a series of recommendations have been presented to and considered by meeting participants. Record the lead up to the decision as well as what was resolved and by whom.

### Action items

Action items are things that the group of participants discusses and then decides to take action on. As well as an overview of what the item is, and some background, it is important the person who is going to undertake the action is clearly recorded as well as a time frame within which they need to accomplish it.

### Formal motions

Some organisations have a more formal meeting format and use protocols such as motions, which are essentially recommendations for a course of action. Motions are usually seconded or supported by another attendee and, if there are no objections, they are then passed.

If your organisation uses such protocols, or the meeting you are taking notes for is particularly formal in nature, then it is important to record what the motion is, who raised it, who seconded it, whether any objections were raised and whether it was ultimately passed.

### Future actions

In addition to recording the formal decisions that are made, you also need to take notes on any issues raised or suggestions made. Some of these items will possibly require future action by specific participants or by others external to the meeting. You should also record who is responsible for each task in the minutes. An 'Action' column is sometimes added to minutes to record the names or initials of those required to follow up a decision agreed to at a meeting. When discussing the previous minutes of a meeting, the chairperson will often refer to this column to ensure that all required actions have been followed up.

### Arrangements for next meeting

Meeting attendees should always bring along their diaries so a subsequent meeting date, time and place can be agreed upon. This should be noted in the minutes so attendees have plenty of advance warning and can assign time, make travel plans, book meeting rooms or audio/visual conferencing equipment in preparation for the meeting.

## Practice task 10

1. What skills are required to take note and accurately record a meeting?

2. Why is it important for notes taken to be comprehensive and accurate?

3. What items must be noted and recorded when raised during a meeting?

## 3B

### Produce true and accurate minutes

The minutes you produce from your notes must reflect a true and accurate record of the meeting. It is wise to finalise the minutes of a meeting within 24 hours of the meeting's completion, while it is all still fresh in your mind. The format of the minutes you produce will depend on the degree of formality of the particular meeting for which you have taken notes. Generally, your organisation will have its own desired format for its minutes.

#### Example: produce true minutes

Jane is the personal assistant to the manager of a regional local government council, which has 45 employees. She is responsible for taking the minutes at each monthly staff meeting, finalising them by the end of the day and distributing them to the staff via email.

As usual, Jane attends the August meeting and takes notes. Generally, she only includes major points and expands on them later by recalling what has taken place. However, after the meeting, three extremely urgent tasks take priority over the minutes. Jane does not panic because she knows she can complete the minutes quickly. But then, a serious matter arises that she has to devote the rest of the day to and the minutes are neglected again.

By the time Jane is back on track, she has forgotten some of the points she needed to make. Her habit of relying on her memory when producing the minutes proves to be a very risky strategy this time.



#### Format of minutes

Typically, organisations use the format of the minutes of the previous meeting as a guide or template for how the minutes should look and what they should contain.

If a new meeting is being held, the style of meeting minutes could be adapted from another meeting or created from scratch. Remember to evaluate how formal the meeting will be, who will be attending, the level of seniority of the meeting (which isn't always an indication of how formal the meeting will be or the most suitable minutes structure to use) and the purpose of the meeting in determining how formal the minutes should be.



## Meeting minute requirements

Here are examples of the types of sections that can be found in an organisation's meeting document or minutes.

### Meeting minute sections

1

#### Meeting details

The title, date, time and location of the meeting should be recorded at the top of the document and can form the heading of the document.

2

#### Welcome

The chairperson usually commences the meeting by welcoming participants and briefly stating the purpose of the meeting. If the welcome is listed as part of the agenda, a note should be made in the minutes. Sometimes the welcome is given prior to asking for apologies.

3

#### People present

The list of members in attendance, including the names of any proxies, should appear next. Follow your organisation's format for the order of listing members; for example, in alphabetical order or according to position held.

4

#### Apologies

It is the responsibility of all those invited or eligible to attend a meeting to advise the chairperson or secretary if they are unable to attend. The chairperson will advise attendees at the meeting of formal apologies received prior to the meeting, and will ask members for any further apologies.

5

#### Approval of minutes from previous meetings

The minutes of the previous meeting are to be confirmed by the current meeting. If there are any amendments to the minutes recorded at the previous meeting, the amendments are to be recorded at the current meeting.

6

#### Matters arising from previous meetings

Any discussion on matters raised from the previous minutes should be recorded. If there is no discussion, you should record 'Nil matters arising'. If matters are ongoing from the previous meeting they may already be listed as separate agenda items for further discussion.

**7**

**Correspondence**

If relevant letters, notices or other correspondence have been received since the last meeting, they can either be read out at the meeting and discussed, or copied and distributed for inspection.

**8**

**Agenda items**

Items on the agenda are discussed and dealt with in order. You should note any items of relevance and record decisions taken. Take particular note of any action required and the name of the person who is required to carry out the action.

**9**

**Reports**

Some reports may be provided to participants for information only, while others require discussion and further action. If they are for information only, the minutes should record them as 'report noted' or similar wording.

**10**

**Other business**

The chairperson provides members with an opportunity to raise any other matters of business that might be relevant. At some meetings, because of time constraints, only new items of business that have been listed with the chairperson prior to the commencement of the meeting will be dealt with.

**11**

**Date of next meeting**

Sometimes meeting dates are set well in advance, particularly for regular formal meetings, such as board meetings or sales meetings, and all participants should have them listed in their diaries. In such cases, the date of the next meeting will merely be a confirmation and/or reminder.

## Practice task 11

Create a template for meeting minutes that could be used within an organisation.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin blue border, intended for the student to create a meeting minutes template. The box is centered on the page and occupies most of the available space below the instruction.

# 3C

## Check meeting minutes and submit for approval

Meeting minutes, like any other document you produce for your organisation, should be of the highest quality possible. As well as ensuring they are error free, minutes should be useful to attendees and representative of what happened during the course of the meeting.

Tips for taking meeting minutes:

- If you use any abbreviations, ensure that you include a table or reference to this in the minutes so that readers can quickly understand what you mean.
- As you record minutes, have a separate sheet where you can also note any items that are going to be discussed in greater detail at the next meeting.
- Write up minutes as soon as possible after the meeting.
- Use a template to help you keep good notes and help you remember to record key items.
- Take a copy of the minutes from the last meeting, your diary, a set of meeting papers, copies of any reports or presentations that are being made and a list of attendees and apologies with you, as well as your notebook, some pens and a hard-copy blank minutes template.
- Discuss with the chairperson before the meeting whether any sessions or discussions will be held where minutes will not be required (these are called 'in-camera' sessions).
- Don't be too brief in the way you note discussions – ensure that anything that is written is clearly understood and cannot be misunderstood or have several meanings.

### Check meeting minutes

Before forwarding your draft minutes to the chairperson for approval, you may need to have it checked by someone in your office; for example, your supervisor, the chief executive officer or the company secretary. The chairperson may ask you to make alterations to the draft or they may give approval for you to dispatch copies to the relevant people.

Before sending out copies of the minutes, check whether you are required to forward any other documentation. For example, your minutes may refer to a document that was discussed at the meeting but was not available at the time, or someone may have promised to forward information on a topic with the minutes.



## Example: meeting minutes checklist

You can use the following example checklist, or adapt it to ensure that your minutes are error free and of a high quality.

Meeting minutes checklist
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Use a spell checker to ensure there are no spelling errors.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Confirm spelling of people's names.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Print out draft copy and review for errors including spelling, grammar and poor formatting.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Submit to supervisor or others for approval and/or checking.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Copy and attach documents that support minutes.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Follow up with meeting attendees for copies of any documents, reports, etc. you need to include with minutes.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Check with the chairperson who should receive the minutes.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Perform a final check that all advised changes have been incorporated.</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Submit draft to meeting chairperson.</li></ul>

## Practice task 12

1. Why is it important to prepare a draft of minutes before distributing them?

2. What are five things you can do to check minutes for accuracy?

## 3D Dispatch copies of minutes

Your organisation may have a specified time line for dispatching the minutes, which should always be followed. If not, meeting minutes should always be sent out as soon as possible after the meeting, as recipients may be required to undertake some follow-up action before the next meeting.

Your meeting minutes checklist should include a section to indicate when you sent the minutes and how they were sent. Then you will be able to trace the minutes if a recipient informs you that they have not arrived.

Here are examples of questions that might need to be posed when dispatching meeting minutes.

Meeting minute criteria
Did you email them to everyone?
Were they placed on the organisation's intranet?
Were they sent by post using ordinary mail?
Did you use an express post service?
Did you send the minutes by courier?

### Methods of dispatch

On some occasions, more than one of these dispatch methods may be required, depending on who you are sending the minutes to, and how urgently they are required. You may need to email a copy and send a hard copy via your company's internal mail system, with hard-copy attachments.

Remember, if you produce a draft of the minutes as soon as possible after the meeting has ended, you are more likely to meet your deadline. Always take into account that there may be unforeseen work priorities that arise, or the person who has to approve the draft prior to sending out the minutes may be unavailable.



## Practice task 13

1. How can meeting minutes be dispatched?

2. Generally, when should minutes be dispatched?

## Summary

1. Good note-taking practices will result in good minutes that are useful and provide an accurate record of what happened during a meeting.
2. Good, accurate minutes are an important record of business for many organisations, so it is critical that the meeting is recorded in a professional manner.
3. Most meetings follow a similar pattern or sequence – ensure that your minutes have all the basic information and follow the order of items as they are discussed at the meeting.
4. It is a good idea to review a range of different minutes to help you develop a minutes template for any meetings you need to take minutes for.
5. Make sure that the minutes are as high quality as possible. This means being well prepared to take the minutes in the first place, getting practice at noting and preparing minutes and learning from others.
6. Create a quality checklist that helps you make sure the minutes are of a high quality.
7. Ensure that meeting minutes are dispatched using the appropriate means; for example, by email, fax, courier or mail as soon as possible. Find out from attendees which method suits them best. Try and get attachments in soft copy or scan them in so you have the flexibility to send documents any way you like.

## Learning checkpoint 3

### Record and produce meeting minutes

This learning checkpoint allows you to review your skills and knowledge in recording and producing meeting minutes.

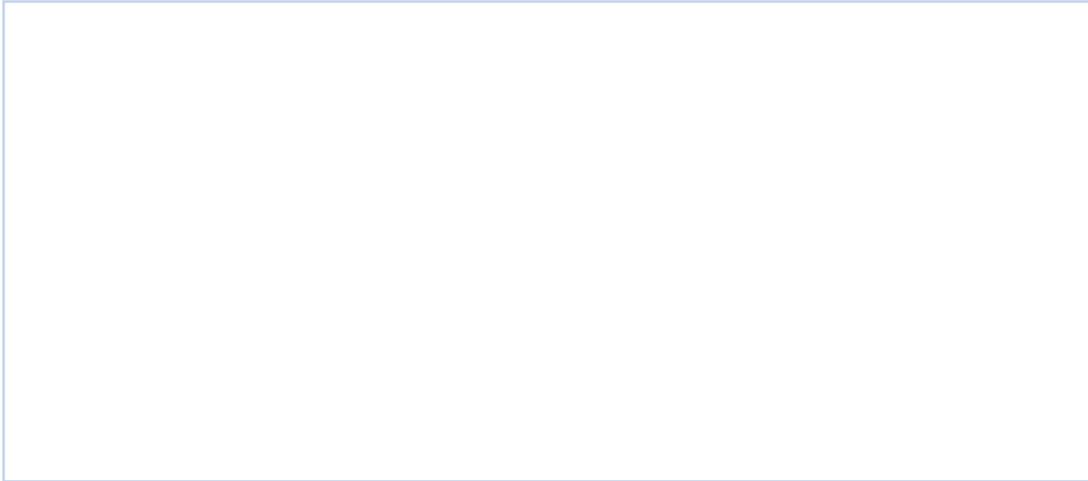
#### Part A

1. What steps should you take to prepare for recording and producing minutes?

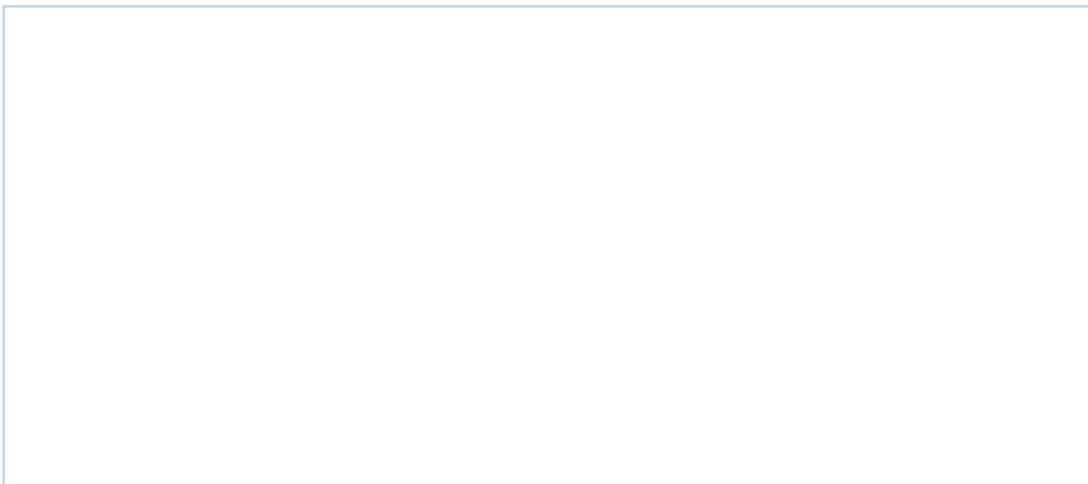
2. What items might you need to take into the meeting with you in order to record all relevant information?

3. What details are generally noted when recording meeting minutes?

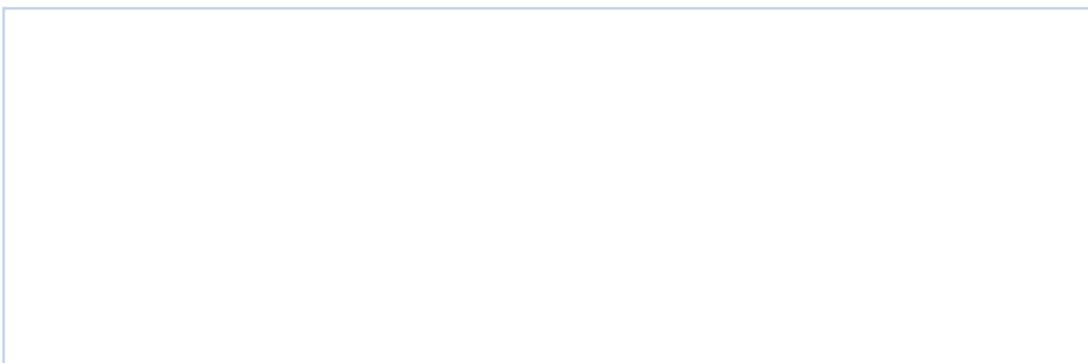
4. What format do meeting minutes generally take? What are the major sections?



5. What are some of the potential difficulties in recording the events of a meeting?



6. What are some strategies you can use to overcome the difficulties encountered from the previous question?

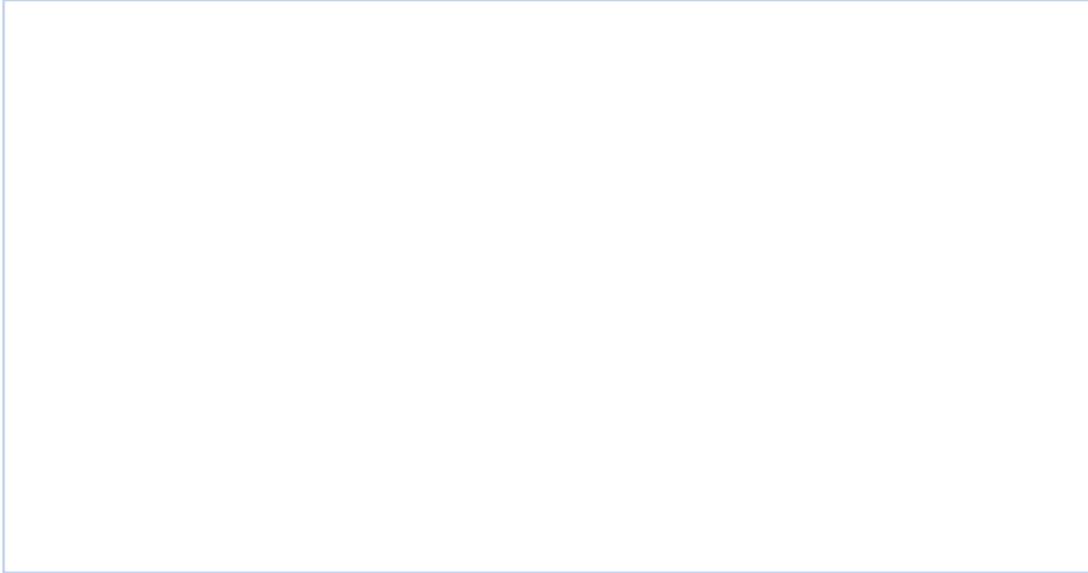


7. Why is it important to review and record the details you have taken for a meeting very soon after the meeting?

8. What are some tips or guidelines to follow when reviewing and recording the minutes you have prepared for accuracy of content and error?

9. Who are some of the people within the organisation who may be required to authorise the content and accuracy of the minutes you have produced?

10. What are some of the methods for dispatching minutes to relevant people within the organisation? What are the pros and cons of each method? Which method/s does your organisation use?



## Part B

Take and transcribe the minutes of a formal meeting in your organisation (for example, a team/department meeting, WHS committee, executive group or management meeting) or organise a meeting among your class from which you can prepare minutes.

Evaluate the minutes you have prepared with several meeting participants to identify the accuracy of the minutes. How well did they rate your performance? What did you do well? What areas could you improve on? What advice or suggestions did they provide?

