



UTS COMMITTEES

**SECRETARIAT
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UTS COMMITTEES – PURPOSE, STRUCTURE AND PROCESS

Committees are established to address policy or management issues through specific terms of reference and membership. The committee's terms of reference sets out its core functions and levels of authority as well as any referral and reporting obligations to a higher authority. Each committee consists of a number of members, with one appointed as the chair and a committee officer is usually appointed to support the committee. Various officers within the University provide specific information (referred to as agenda material) to the committees as required.

This explanatory guide provides information about the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the conduct of committee business and the governance framework within which the key UTS committees derive their authority and operate. Whilst not comprehensive it provides essential information about committees at UTS.

UTS governance framework

UTS Council is the governing body of the University and is constituted in accordance with the provisions of the University of Technology, Sydney Act 1989 (NSW) (the Act). A number of other committees derive their authority from UTS Council, including Academic Board. These committees are formally constituted, operate in accordance with formal standing orders or terms of reference and conduct business through a scheduled meeting and minute recording framework. Their relationship to one another and the standing orders for Council, Academic Board and Faculty Boards, as well as the UTS Act, can be viewed online at UTS Calendar <http://www.gsu.uts.edu.au/publications/official.html>.

Council and Academic Board have adopted different operating procedures to meet their individual standing orders and business priorities. Authoritative information on Council and Academic Board can be viewed online at <http://www.uts.edu.au/about/governance.html>.

Committees of UTS Council

The Committees of Council are focused and skills-based bodies with the necessary technical expertise to deal with matters efficiently and effectively, and promote discussion of the relevant strategic issues at Council meetings. There are a number of committees which report to Council. Some committees meet more frequently than others.

- Audit and Risk Committee
- Commercial Activities Committee
- Equity Reference Group
- Finance Committee

- Governance Committee
- Honorary Awards Committee
- Nominations Committee
- Physical Infrastructure Committee
- Remuneration Committee
- Student/Council Liaison Group

For a detailed explanation of the main purposes and responsibilities of each committee, refer to the individual committee pages on the UTS [website](#).

Academic Board and committees

Academic Board, which is constituted under [Division 1](#) of the Rules relating to Academic Board (G3), is the principal advisory body to Council on academic matters. As such, it is concerned with policy development as it relates to the University's academic programs in education, scholarship and research, and community service. It refers recommendations to Council and considers matters referred to it by Council.

Academic Board has specific delegations from Council for determining academic matters. Academic Board advises Council on the University's core business of teaching, learning and research. Council works with Academic Board to ensure appropriate quality mechanisms are in place for assuring and enhancing academic provision and standards.

Academic Board plays a key role in the UTS community in providing a forum for the discussion and debate of the academic directions of the University as well as the quality of its academic programs and has its own standing committees and boards of studies that advise the Board on a variety of matters pertaining to the academic programs of the University. These include:

- Academic Administration Committee
- Courses Accreditation Committee
- Teaching and Learning Committee
- Executive Committee
- Research and Research Training Committee
- University Graduate School Board

Faculty boards

Each faculty of the University has a Faculty Board. The Faculty Board constitutes the primary forum in the faculty for the discussion and resolution of academic issues and matters.

The structure of a Faculty Board is approved by Academic Board on the recommendation of the faculty and the Vice-Chancellor and, depending on individual faculty structure, may vary between faculties.

Duties and powers

Subject to the Rules and the resolutions of UTS Council and Academic Board, including the strategic direction and priorities set for the University, a Faculty Board has a responsibility to assess the quality of, and provide direction to, the academic work of the Faculty including teaching, learning, scholarship, research and research training (ref FM-2.1).

In particular a Faculty Board is charged with advising the Academic Board and the Dean and other senior officers of the faculty on matters such as the strategic academic direction of the faculty, academic standards, academic quality assurance and management of academic risk (ref FM-2.2 (i)).

Committees of Faculties and Committees of Faculty Boards

Faculty Committees comprise the following:

- Faculty Board
- Dean's Advisory Committees
- Academic Advisory Committee
- Faculty PEP Committee

Faculty Board Committees

Faculty Board Committees comprise the following:

- Results Ratification Committee
- Student Assessment Review Committee
- Such other committees as it deems appropriate to assist the Faculty Board's work.

Committee planning and decision making

Five stage plan for shorter and more productive meetings

(AVCC Course for Members of University Senates, Councils and Boards of Governors)

1. Plan

- Be clear about precise objectives
- Be clear why you need the meeting
- List subjects/items

2. Inform

- Subjects/items for discussion
- Why those subjects
- Aims of discussion
- Anticipate needs and information for people
- Make sure they are there

3. Prepare

- Read the agenda and papers before the meeting
- List subjects/items in logical order
- Allocate time for discussion on basis of importance not urgency

4. Structure and Control

- Evidence before interpretation
- Interpretation prior to action
- Stop members jumping ahead or going over old ground

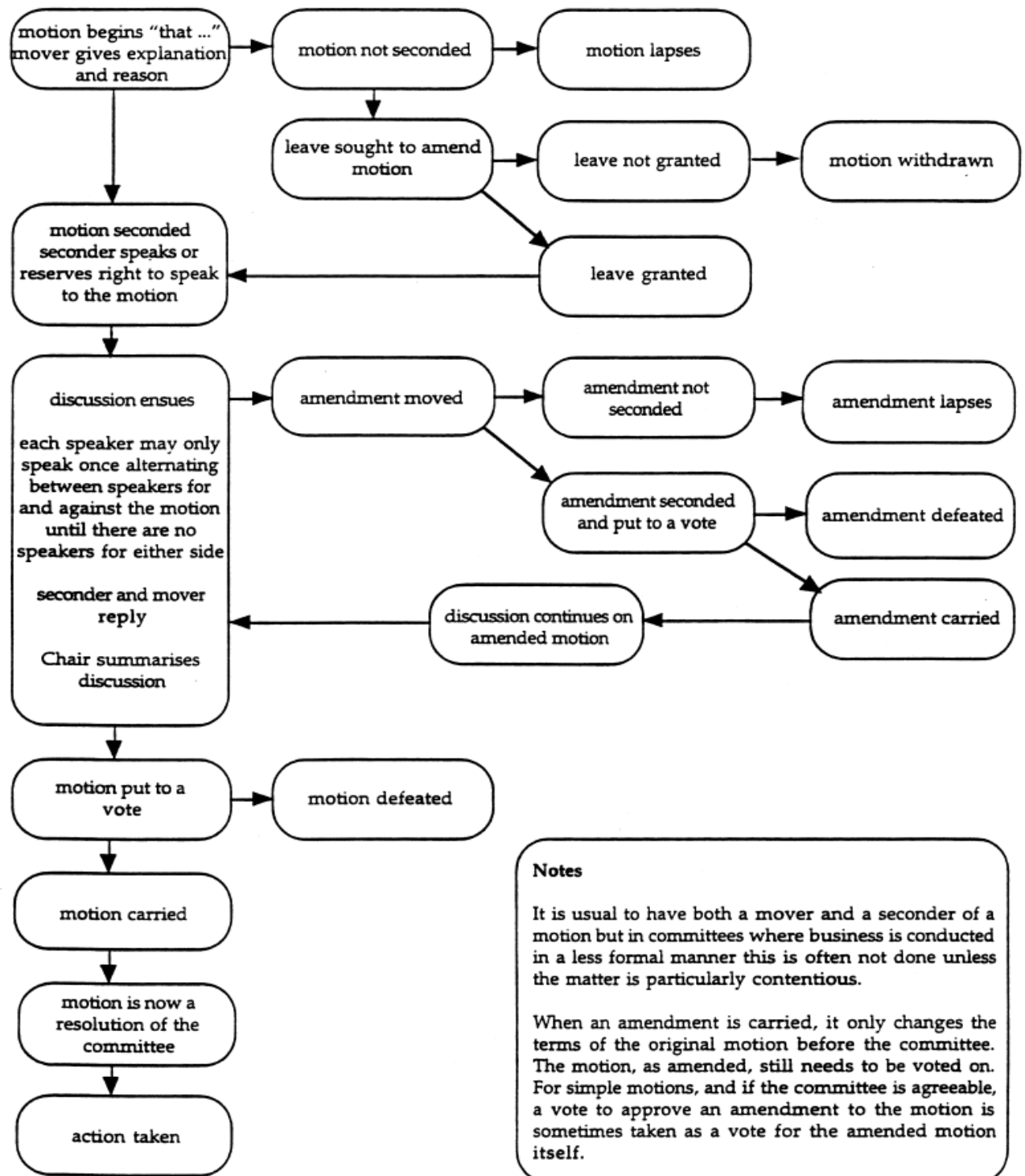
5. Summarise and Record

- Summarise all decisions
- Record immediately
- Identify person/s responsible for action

How does member voting work?

Every member present at a meeting (including those acting on behalf of a member or co-opted member) is entitled to one deliberative vote and any question shall be decided by a majority of the members present. The Chair of the committee shall have a deliberative vote, and, in the event of any equality of votes, a casting vote. (Council ref SO-17 (a) and (b)).

How are decisions of a committee made?



The steps outlined in the flowchart above are illustrative of the formal approach to committee decision making. Committees may take a different approach depending on the nature of the committee, however the intent and outcome is always the same as the more formal approach.

Who do UTS committees report to?

When decisions are made within a committee, these decisions or outcomes may need to be reported or referred to another body for further action (e.g. for endorsement or approval of Academic Board or Council). This report of the committee is usually drafted by the committee officer who, after liaising with the chair concerning the details of the report, forwards it to the other body.

Committee roles and responsibilities

Various officers in the University will sometimes be requested to provide information (agenda material, reports etc) and may be required to act in accordance with actions decided upon by the committee.

The following information sets out the roles and responsibilities of participants on the committee.

Role of the Chair

As Chair of a committee, you:

- liaise with the committee officer in framing and confirming the agenda for each meeting in accordance with the committee's terms of reference
- preside over meetings of the committee impartially, preserving order and ensuring that proceedings are conducted in a proper manner
- conduct the meeting so that the business before it is dealt with efficiently and effectively by:
 - staying within the committee's terms of reference or standing orders;
 - ensuring that a quorum is present at the meeting, where possible;
 - calling on members who wish to speak in order and ensuring fair and proper conduct of debate;
 - keeping debate focused on the topic under discussion;
 - summing up, at appropriate stages, where the committee has reached a decision;
 - ensuring that, as far as possible, all members present have an understanding of proposed course(s) of action;
 - putting motions and amendments to a vote and determining the result;
 - declaring the meeting closed when the business is concluded.
- sign the minutes of the previous meeting when they are confirmed by the committee
- check draft minutes before these are circulated to members as unconfirmed minutes
- undertake subsequent action on behalf of the committee as appropriate

- report to the next meeting on any (duly permitted) executive action taken on behalf of the committee
- report to a governing body (such as Council or Academic Board or Faculty Board) or other committee on matters considered by your committee (a report may cover one item or many items, as in the case of an annual report to a governing body; the Chair would normally be invited to speak to the report where it is considered by another body)
- provide advice and guidance to the committee officer in order to finalise committee business, such as confirming the agenda and preparations for a meeting, acceptance (or not) of late papers, checking the draft minutes and any report from the committee to other bodies, and advising on subsequent actions.

Role of committee member

As a member of a committee, you:

- should understand the committee's terms of reference
- should read all agenda papers before the meeting and clarify any matters necessary with either the chair/convenor or the committee officer
- attend meetings and participate in discussion in an orderly manner, respecting the chair/convenor's right to call on speakers and move discussion along
- may speak on issues being considered, give opinions and/or advice, and move or second motions
- vote on matters as necessary
- undertake any work necessary to assist the committee – for example – conduct research, write a paper, or undertake subsequent action as agreed by the committee during the meeting (for example, participate in a working group)
- should be aware of the reason you are a member of the committee – for example – you may have expertise in a particular area or be a representative of another body or constituency
- consult and report back to your constituencies as appropriate when representing a constituency; in this role you will need to maintain confidentiality where required
- should be aware when you are required to consider the interests of a particular group or constituency or of the organisation as a whole (actions taken for the good of the whole may not necessarily be to the benefit of some of the parts)
- should inform the committee officer as soon as possible if you are not able to attend a meeting (given sufficient prior notice, it may be possible to reschedule the meeting to allow for a quorum).

Role of authors of agenda item material

When you are responsible for submitting material to a committee for consideration, you:

- identify the committee relevant for the proposed matter (for advice on submitting items to Council or Academic Board or other central UTS committees, you should consult the clerk to Council or Academic Board or the Manager, Policy and Secretariat; for Faculty Board or Faculty committees, consult the relevant Faculty Manager)
- liaise with the relevant committee officer in order to ascertain the appropriateness of the committee that is to consider the item as well as the required outcomes and appropriate recommendations;
- seek advice from the committee officer as necessary, particularly regarding the date for submission of material (where matters need to go to Council or Academic Board via their committees, you will need to meet the submission deadline for the relevant committee)
- prepare the agenda item material in accordance with the appropriate report format (note that Council, Academic Board, Committees and Faculty Boards have their own report format)
- where you are preparing agenda item material on behalf of a member of the committee, ensure you have allocated time for that person to consider the draft, advise you of any changes and authorise the final version before it is submitted to the committee officer for circulation as part of an agenda (you will need to schedule this to meet the submission deadlines for agenda item material)
- submit the authorised agenda item/s to the committee officer within the timeframes for processing material for the particular committee, usually at least 10 days prior to a meeting. This is important if the paper is to be included in the main despatch of agenda papers which usually takes place seven days prior to meeting (you may need to obtain special permission from the chair if there are extenuating circumstances requiring that your paper be received and despatched late; if this is necessary, you may need to take responsibility for the paper's copying, despatch and related costs)
- avoid tabling papers at a committee meeting – some committees may not permit this – you will need to obtain special permission from the chair if there are extenuating circumstances requiring that a paper be tabled at the meeting (if you believe it important that a paper is tabled, then you need to consult the committee officer or chair as soon as practicable; in some cases, the chair may ask the committee whether it wishes to consider a tabled paper or leave it for the next meeting)
- keep the committee officer informed in the course of preparing papers for a meeting so that they may make any necessary arrangements regarding your paper, including listing it on the agenda for the meeting (in some cases you may need to refer a draft of the proposed paper to the chair for review and approval prior to the matter being considered by the committee).

Role of the committee officer

As committee officer to a committee, you:

- manage all logistical arrangements to ensure the committee is able to meet, including: liaising with members concerning attendance (e.g. venue, parking, transport, specific presentation, catering or other special needs); booking the venue and any catering requirements or presentation needs (media or other information technology) and ensuring the venue is set-up prior to the meeting and left tidy after the meeting
- should understand the committee's terms of reference, composition and membership, and any standing orders, rules or agreed timeframe applicable to the committee
- provide the notice of meeting in accordance with the standing orders or rules and agreed timeframe (whilst standing orders for Council and Academic Board specify at least one week's notice UTS practice has been to notify members between two to four weeks prior to each meeting and require submission of agenda item material at least two weeks prior to a meeting)
- draft the agenda in consultation with the chair; the agenda should be planned well in advance and you should be aware of the standard business of the committee, including any items which recur annually, or regularly and any items from a previous meeting which require further consideration or action
- ensure that the membership list for the committee remains up to date and that action is taken to have any membership vacancies filled (vacancies may arise where a member's term of office expires, where a member resigns or takes leave such as Professional Experience Program, during which they are obliged to suspend committee membership, or some other extended leave)
- inform committee members, especially new members, of all necessary information about the committee, such as its terms of reference, standing orders, the names of other members and the term of office, relevant policies and major business activities
- liaise with authors of agenda material to ensure agenda item material meets the format and timeline for agenda papers
- complete a governance review of committee papers to:
 - ensure each paper provides sufficient information to enable resolutions to be made
 - ensure each paper accurately reflects previous resolutions, addresses outstanding actions, aligns with content/messages of other papers, etc
 - ensure that the recommendations set out in each paper accurately and fully reflect the intention of the business
 - ensure that the recommendations set out in each paper align with governance requirements and the exercise of appropriate delegations
- arrange for the electronic and/or hardcopy circulation of the agenda item material at least one week prior to the meeting (unless the committee has determined otherwise)

- brief and advise the chair as necessary prior to and during the meeting
- record the proceedings of the meeting without entering the discussion (there may be times where you provide advice to the chair in order to clarify a matter under discussion, such as a constitutional, procedural or governance related issue)
- draft the minutes so they are an accurate record of what was decided at the meeting (minutes may be brief or more detailed depending on the accepted style and practice of minute recording for a particular committee)
- refer the draft minutes to the chair as soon as possible after the meeting – UTS Secretariat practice has been to refer the draft minutes to an appropriate senior officer for checking prior to submission to the chair (this will need to be considered when prioritising actions following a meeting)
- disseminate decisions made by the committee – this is generally achieved by forwarding a sub-action advice, such as an email or paper memorandum – to the people who need to know about particular matters; other forms of sub-action advice include: highlighting the action or information item within the minutes when they are circulated; by promulgating via an Official Noticeboard or Broadcast Email, or a publication e.g. Staff News; by referring the action to another committee or body; or a combination of these
- maintain a minute registered file with signed minutes, an agenda item registered file for documents submitted to the committee and other appropriate files, such as a membership and correspondence or administration file
- maintain:
 - an annual committee Forward Plan/Work Plan showing a schedule of business items for consideration by the committee and a running record of matters completed
 - a Resolution Register showing a progressive record of major decisions, and
 - an Actions Register showing the officer/s responsible for any sub-action and relevant status reports and dates of progress and completion
- ensure all tabled papers are retained in both hard copy and electronic form and any relevant online resource (e.g. committee website, resolution database) is regularly updated.

Common terms and definitions

Agenda

Contains the items of business to be considered during the meeting, listed in the order in which it is proposed to deal with them.

Agenda item material

An agenda item may consist merely of a cover sheet, which places the matter in context, summarises key issues and draws members' attention to significant matters or to particular timeframes and deadlines that they need to be aware of. The cover sheet ends with a recommendation or a set of recommendations. In another instance, the cover sheet may act merely to identify the item and to present recommendations with the major subject matter being detailed in an attached report. Agenda item material should be focused and brief with the cover sheet comprising not more than two pages. Some material might be mentioned in a cover sheet as being available on request from the Committee Officer or at the meeting, rather than circulated to the whole committee. Sometimes only the key part of a document is circulated, such as an Executive Summary or Table of Contents. Each agenda item document is numbered sequentially from 1 through to the last page of the last attachment.

Specific cover sheets and templates are used for reports to Council and its committees, Academic Board and its committees, for Course accreditation or planning submissions, and for Policy submissions (including new or revised policies).

Amendment

An alteration or proposed alteration to the terms of a motion designed to improve the motion without contradicting it; when an amendment is before the Chair, discussion shall be confined to that amendment, and no further amendment shall be proposed until the amendment before the Chair is dealt with. An amendment to an amendment is not usually permitted, but may occur via a foreshadowed further amendment.

Chair

The person nominated, elected or otherwise agreed to convene the meeting. The constitution or terms of reference for a given committee or group meeting should specify who will be the Chair. Some committees or groups may prefer to use the term 'Convenor' rather than 'Chair'.

Committee types

Committees may be described by the use of one or more of the following terms. Most committees or boards at UTS however, do not necessarily fit neatly into one particular category.

- **Decision-making** - They may have been given the power to make decisions and act on behalf of the main body. These powers can be called 'delegated authority' and are outlined in the committee's 'terms of reference'. Delegated authority on some matters

has been given by Council to Faculty Boards, Academic Board and the University Graduate School Board, for example.

- **Advisory** - These committees provide advice to a higher body or to someone in a particular position. Examples at UTS would be the Dean's Advisory Committee in a faculty, one of the Vice-Chancellor's committees or the Teaching & Learning Committee of Academic Board.
- **Working Party/Task Force/Ad Hoc Committee/Special Committee** - These committees are set up for a specific short-term function. These cease to exist once their task is complete which is usually marked by submission of a report to the establishing body. They may be re-convened at a later date if required.
- **Standing** - These committees are set up for regular and continuing functions. These committees make recommendations to a higher body. Council, Academic Board and most faculties have standing committees. A standing committee may also be an advisory committee.
- **Subcommittee** - A committee that reports to a 'higher' committee.

Composition

The composition of a committee will be influenced or determined by what the committee has been set up to do, as this will indicate the 'skills' or 'interests' that will need to be represented. The 'types of membership' (see below) of the different positions are detailed in the composition of a committee. For example: *the undergraduate student member of Council; two elected support staff; Director, Financial Services.*

Conflict of interest

Any instance in which a committee member has a potential conflict of interest in relation to a matter or matters for discussion by the committee with the implication being that by influencing the decision of the committee, the member will receive some personal (including family related) gain or benefit which is beyond their normal employment and legal entitlement with the University (see also: Declaration/Disclosure of Interest).

Constitution

Set of written rules, designed to govern an organisation/committee/board. At UTS a committee's constitution consists of the terms of reference, composition/membership and, in some cases, standing orders (including 'functions and powers' for Council and Academic Board).

Convenor

The person who convenes the initial meeting. Some committees or groups may prefer to use the term 'Convenor' rather than 'Chair'.

Declaration/disclosure of interest

To avoid any potential or perceived conflict of interest, a committee member should declare or disclose their potential conflict of interest as soon as they are aware that such matters of conflict will be discussed by the committee (see also: Conflict of Interest).

The UTS Act requires that members of Council or of Council committees declare any material interest as soon as they are aware of the potential for a conflict of interest (refer UTS Act, Schedule 2A, part 5).

Draft recommendations

A document usually prepared by the Committee Officer setting out all recommendations to be considered at a particular committee meeting. The draft recommendations list is useful for those committees that star items for discussion, as it allows members to quickly focus on the recommended outcome for particular agenda items.

Executive action

For some committees, the Chair may take executive action on behalf of the committee. This is action which would normally be taken by the committee but it is unable to do so because a meeting does not reach a quorum, or may be taken between meetings because no meeting is scheduled in good time and the matter does not warrant a special meeting. All executive action must be reported for confirmation to the next meeting of the committee on whose behalf it is taken.

Foreshadowed motion

When, during debate of a motion or amendment, notice is given of a further motion dealing with the same subject matter but different in purpose to the motion before the Chair, such motion or amendment is said to be foreshadowed.

Lie on the table

If a matter has been moved, seconded and discussion commenced but it is considered the matter will not be resolved at the meeting it may be agreed to let the matter 'lie on the table' usually 'until the next meeting'. The meeting then moves on to the next item of business. This allows more time for additional information to be obtained or for resolution of the issue in some other way.

Meeting dates

Pre-scheduling meeting dates, up to one year in advance, enables committee members to organise their diaries, ensures good planning for all concerned and reduces the possibility of inquorate meetings. Most UTS committees and boards schedule their meetings in advance usually in the second half of the preceding year. Each Committee Officer prepares a standard agenda item proposing meeting dates for the following year and is usually considered at a meeting in the August - October period. Once adopted, those dates are recorded in the

minutes of that committee meeting, circulated to members for listing in their diary, and published at the relevant committee website.

Membership

This term may also be used interchangeably with composition, however the Secretariat usually uses the term when the names of members on a committee (and the positions they hold) are listed. The following are the main types of membership:

- **Elected member** - At UTS elected members are normally elected by a ballot vote.
- **Appointed or nominated member** - This may be someone who is nominated by a work unit or group of people to represent that unit/group, or someone appointed for their particular skills. The specific nominee is recorded as the member and is not interchangeable with another nominee on an ad hoc basis. For example: *one nominee of the Vice-Chancellor; three external persons, not members of the Council, appointed for their expertise; nominee of the Registrar.*
- **Ex Officio member** - Someone who is on a committee because of the position they hold. For example: *the Dean, the Vice-Chancellor, President, Students' Association.* So the position, and not the person, is the member. When an ex-officio member is absent and another person is formally appointed to act in their position, then the person acting is a full member whilst in the acting position.
- **Co-opted member** - For some committees, where they require additional skills or information, they may 'co-opt' a new member to assist the committee's work. This may be on a temporary basis, to participate in discussion for particular items or perhaps to be a member of a working party the committee has established. Unless otherwise stated in the committee terms of reference, a co-opted member has voting rights on the committee.
- **Alternate members** - The composition of a committee may specifically include the provision for an alternate member to stand in place of the usual member when the member is unable to attend. Normally an alternate member is required to have been appointed in advance and should not change from meeting to meeting. If someone attends in place of a member who is unable to attend, but is not the nominated alternate or there is no provision for alternate members, then that person is not counted as a member in the quorum, has no voting rights and may only attend and speak with the permission of the Chair. In recognition of their student obligations, student members of Council committees are permitted to nominate an alternate member.
- **Advisers** - The composition of a committee may nominate people to attend meetings and provide advice to a committee on specific matters without including them in the membership of the committee.
- **Observers** - With the permission of the chair, people who are not members of a committee may attend meetings if they have a particular interest. Some committees, such as Council, have particular procedures for dealing with observers, usually for reasons of accommodation (Council Standing Orders 27 - 30, Academic Board Standing Order 42).

Minutes

Minutes are a formal summary of decisions made at meetings. A complete set of the confirmed minutes should be kept by the Committee Officer. The main reasons for keeping minutes are to:

- Provide an authoritative and permanent record of proceedings for future reference;
- Provide formal evidence of appointments made and of expenditure and actions authorised;
- Provide a record of policy decisions made;
- Provide a starting point for action to be taken in the future;
- Create an official record as evidence in legal proceedings;
- Inform members, and others, not present at the meetings;
- Assist the conduct of subsequent meetings;
- In the case of rulings from the Chair, to set out precedents for future occasions;
- Provide documentary evidence for audit purposes;
- Gather data useable by future historians.

The first version of minutes prepared by the Committee Officer is referred to as “draft minutes” until it is approved by the Chair for circulating to the members. The version of minutes circulated to members is referred to as “unconfirmed minutes” until it is confirmed by the committee when it becomes known as the “confirmed minutes”. Only the “confirmed minutes” are part of the public record of the committee and earlier versions should remain confidential.

Minutes - confirmation

One of the first items of business at a meeting, usually after apologies and declarations of interest, is the confirmation of the minutes of the previous meeting as a true record. Confirmation of the minutes only vouches for their accuracy as a record of proceedings and the only discussion that is permitted on the motion for confirmation of the minutes is concerning their accuracy as a record. Members may suggest changes/amendments to the minutes and they are then signed by the Chair. If someone wishes to report on an item of business or ask a question concerning an item of business recorded in the minutes of the previous meeting, this should be raised under the item ‘business arising from the minutes’.

Minutes - Out of Session business, Flying Minute

In some cases, items of business of the Committee can be considered between meetings. This is usually applied for matters of particular urgency. For items to be considered in this way requires the approval of the Chair. Determination of an outcome in such matters requires committee members to advise their approval or otherwise, where the majority decision (according to the committee’s **quorum** – see below) will dictate the outcome. The matter is then recorded at the following meeting of the committee.

Motion

A motion is a proposed resolution before it has been passed or rejected by the meeting. A recommendation is a proposed written resolution. Once a recommendation has been verbally 'put' to the meeting it is described as a motion.

Point of order

A point of order is taken when a person officially draws the attention of the Chair to an alleged irregularity in the proceedings.

Procedural motion

A procedural motion deals with the conduct of the meeting, rather than with the substance of a matter. (For example, 'I move that the motion be put', 'I move that the speaker no longer be heard'). Consideration of procedural motions takes precedence over substantive motions and amendments under consideration.

Promulgate

To make known by open declaration; to publish.

Quorum

Ideally, the quorum is the point of balance between ensuring full representation and getting some work done. A quorum is the minimum number of members who must be present for the meeting to (legally) conduct its business. The quorum is usually stated in the constitution or in the terms of reference. At UTS, this may be either one-half the number of committee members or a majority of committee members - (excluding positions which are vacant) and this information is provided in the Standing Orders for Council (ref SO-10), Academic Board (ref SO-10), and the Faculty Boards (ref FM-4.4). The meeting cannot start unless there is a quorum. If people leave during a meeting and it loses a quorum, and the lack of a quorum is brought to the attention of the Chair by a member, then the meeting is adjourned. Sometimes members may agree to discuss the agenda despite the lack of a quorum. Whilst this might be useful for updating members on the progress of matters, such inquorate meetings are to be avoided or else risk the perception of progressing matters without due authority. Where they proceed, members present need to decide whether a record of the meeting is necessary. Records of inquorate meetings are referred to as 'notes' or 'notes of a discussion of members' rather than 'minutes' and do not form part of the formal record of the committee. Such notes are sometimes used as a means of presenting informal decisions to the next formal meeting for ratification (approval) and incorporation into the formal record. This practice is also discouraged and it should be noted that such informal decisions have no authority until ratified by a quorate meeting.

Recommendation

A recommendation is a clear and formal indication of the intended outcome of an agenda item for consideration by the committee. The recommendation should be specified on the cover sheet of the agenda item or business paper. Each agenda item to be considered by a committee must have a clear recommendation or set of recommendations. The committee may decide to amend a recommendation before it will make a determination. Where a committee makes a determination against a recommendation, the recommendation (be it amended or otherwise changed) is 'resolved as agreed' and becomes a resolution of the committee. Terminology to be used in a recommendation can be seen under 'Resolution' below.

Rescission

Notice of a motion to rescind, delete, or supersede a previous resolution should be given in advance. Such motions are sometimes moved to clarify a matter or to emphasise a new policy or a firm decision opposed to a previous position. In most cases a new resolution on any matter, even if it contradicts a previous one, is adequate because the most recent position is accepted as the valid one. If there is likely to be confusion, the new resolution should include reference to the resolution which it is superseding.

Resolution

A resolution is a formal determination by a properly constituted meeting. A resolution:

- usually commences with a specific action such as 'receive and note', or 'endorse' or 'adopt' or 'approve'. Where a committee is receiving and noting a report, this does not mean that it has adopted the recommendations contained in the report. If the recommendations are extensive (comprising more than one page) the resolution might be worded "adopt the recommendations contained in the report entitled "...", as detailed in Document X.X". However, it is preferred that resolutions stand alone and that a resolution includes the recommendations of a report in the wording of the resolution.

Generally, this would be a resolution in two parts:

.1 receive and note the report entitled "...", as detailed in Document X.X; and

.2 adopt the following recommendations contained in the above report:

(a) ...; and

(b) ... etc.

- may recommend action to a higher authority, for example, to recommend to Faculty Board; to recommend to Academic Board; to recommend to Council. Where a committee has supported a matter and is resolving to refer the matter to another or higher body, it should indicate in-principle support in the resolution by stating its

endorsement/support for the matter and refer it to (the other/higher authority) for adoption/approval (depending on that other/higher body's level of authority).

- must be quite specific, conveying a clear meaning even when read out of the context of the minutes. A resolution such as: “adopt the above policy” is not specific, and should specify the full name of the policy and indicate the document in the agenda where that policy is fully iterated;
- must be unambiguous;
- in general will not contain more than one sentence;
- may be in parts – .1, .2, .3 (these may each be broken into further parts: (a), (b), (c) etc, and these into further parts (i), (ii), (iii) etc);
- may incorporate an explanation by way of preamble: most often this refers to receiving a specific document to be discussed;
- may be in the negative.

It is important to remember that Committees have limitations to what they can consider and approve, as determined by their Terms of Reference and their place in the governance framework at UTS. The standard committee resolutions (‘receive and note’, ‘endorse’, ‘adopt’ and ‘approve’) should be used in accordance with the Committee’s level of authority.

Special meetings

Special meetings may be convened from time to time to discuss an extraordinary or special matter. The agenda usually consists of only ‘apologies’ and the special item(s). It does not normally include the ‘minutes of the previous meeting’ or ‘other business’. Additional information is contained in Standing Orders for Council (ref SO-7), and Academic Board (ref SO-7) and the Faculty Boards (ref FM-4.7).

Standing orders

Committees operate by certain rules of procedure whereby the business to be considered is brought before the committee, dealt with by the committee, and the result of the committee’s deliberations communicated to those who need to know. Such operating rules are known as standing orders. Standing orders may cover all aspects of the way a committee operates and include:

- the convening of meetings, frequency of meetings;
- the timing of the despatch of notices to committee members;
- the requirement that minutes be taken and be confirmed;
- the conduct of meetings;
- voting at meetings (for example, on voices, or by show of hands);
- duration of individual committee meetings;
- dissemination of decisions of the committee;
- the quorum for the committee;
- starrng of agenda items for discussion.

In many instances meetings will be relatively informal and committees will not have their own formal standing orders. At UTS most committees would draw upon Council or Academic Board standing orders as a precedent. These standing orders are found in the UTS Calendar [ref Council (ref SO-14), Academic Board (ref SO-15)]. The section on Faculty Management in the UTS Calendar describes how Faculty Boards should operate, as determined by Council resolution, but there are no Faculty Board standing orders as such (ref FM-4).

Starring

This is a device used at UTS for Council, Academic Board and some other committees which have a long agenda. Agenda items which require discussion or comment are ‘starred’ to denote that discussion of those items is to occur (that is, an asterisk is placed in the margin of the agenda paper against the relevant item numbers). All remaining recommendations for the ‘unstarred’ items may then be adopted as a whole without discussion. For this procedure to be used there must be clear recommendations relating to individual agenda items and it is preferable that a ‘draft recommendations’ paper be available as a summary of these.

Subsequent action

Actions to be taken subsequent to the meeting, arising from determinations made at the meeting. Following the Chair’s approval of the draft minutes, the Committee Officer will circulate the unconfirmed minutes to committee members and advise other relevant officers of matters decided at the meeting. This advice will refer to subsequent action/s arising from decisions of the committee which are actions that should be taken to promote the business of the committee.

Substantive motion

This is a motion ordering something to be done, authorising some action, expressing the meeting’s opinion in regard to some subject, or otherwise dealing with the organisation’s general activities. Only one substantive motion can be before the Chair at any one time.

Tabled paper

This refers to a paper that is handed out (tabled) at the meeting. Most agenda papers are distributed in advance with the agenda but at times a late paper may be ‘tabled’. Tabled papers over one page in length are generally not welcomed by committee members who wish to read all material before discussion. The Standing Orders of Academic Board provide for an item early on the agenda for it to decide whether it will receive tabled papers at that meeting or defer them to the next meeting. Chairs may decide in advance whether a paper may be tabled and should also consult with the committee at the meeting as to whether it is willing to receive a tabled paper.

Term of office

This is the period of time for which a member is appointed to a committee. The term of office for most elected and nominated members on Academic Board, its committees and Faculty Boards is two years.

Terms of reference

The terms of reference of a committee describe what the committee has been set up to do and indicates the committee's reporting responsibilities, where required, to a higher authority such as Council, Academic Board, or the Vice-Chancellor.

Useful reference material

- (1) The **University Calendar** provides information on all facets of the University's governance and includes (page references to UTS Calendar):
 - University of Technology, Sydney, Act, 1989
 - University of Technology, Sydney, By-law 1995
 - Rules of the University relating to students
 - General Rules of the University
 - Rules relating to Council
 - Rules relating to Academic Board
 - Standing Orders for Council
 - Standing Orders for Academic Board
 - Faculty Management
 - Principal Officers, Council and Committees
 - Calendar of Dates

- (2) **Legislation, Rules and Policy**, including a list of university policies, GSU: <http://www.gsu.uts.edu.au/lrp.html>

- (3) **Elections information**, GSU Secretariat: <http://www.gsu.uts.edu.au/elections/index.html>

- (4) **Recommended books on committee procedures:**
 - Joske, P E (2006) The Law and Procedure at Meetings in Australia and New Zealand, The Law Book Company Limited, Sydney
 - Lang, A D John (2010) Horlsey's Meeting Procedure, Law and Practice; Lexis Nexis,
 - Renton, N E (2005) Guide for Meetings, The Law Book Company Limited, Sydney
 - Valentine, N (1996) Chairing and Running Meetings: All you need to know to hold successful meetings, Penguin Pocket Series, Victoria, Australia