NCH Committee Handbook

ACADEMIC YEAR 2017/18

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION TO COMMITTEE WORK AT THE COLLEGE

PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK

This Handbook is designed to help all staff and students involved in the College's committee work. It aims to provide an overview of committee work, identifies good practice, and details specific guidance for committee Chairs and secretaries.

A major benefit of committee work is that it brings together staff and students from across the College to allow consensus and ownership in decision-making. Committees combine expertise gathered from several areas and stimulate new ways of thinking, and are often required to take difficult decisions. The committee structure is an essential part of College life.

Throughout the Handbook, the term 'committee' is used to mean Board, Team, Group, committee or sub-committee unless the context clearly shows otherwise.

DECISION-MAKING PROCESS AND COMMITTEE STRUCTURES

Two separate bodies have ultimate responsibility for the character, organisation and function of the College.

These are: Academic Board and Tertiary Education Services Ltd (TESL) Board:

ACADEMIC BOARD

The Academic Board is the academic authority of the College and shall take such measures, as required, to best promote the academic and professional work of the College, safeguard standards and to ensure that students receive a high quality academic experience whilst studying at the College. This academic authority is exercised within a budgetary and strategic framework set by the TESL Board.

Therefore, it is responsible for regulating and directing the academic work of the College, including the curriculum, teaching, assessment and research. It has oversight of the College's academic management and all aspects of quality and standards associated with the College, including academic related policies and procedures. It has the powers to make regulations and policies affecting academic practice.

TESL BOARD

The TESL Board of Directors ('TESL Board') is the statutory board of the legal entity (Tertiary Education Services Limited) that owns the brand 'New College of the Humanities' as well as its subsidiary New College of the Humanities Limited ('NCHL') and through which the College operates, including its relationship with regulatory bodies and partner organisations. TESL Board is a limited liability company established under English and Welsh law. Where applicable, the TESL Board's meeting can also constitute a meeting of the NCHL Board as the Boards' membership is the same.

Structure diagrams and terms of reference for these committees are available here.

The way in which these two Boards operate and connect with each other is fundamental to securing and improving quality and standards within the College.

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THE KEY PLAYERS

COMMITTEE CHAIR

The Chair is the Presiding Officer of a meeting, committee or board, etc.

The Chair manages committee business in consultation with the Secretary, committee members and other colleagues. The Chair works with the Secretary to ensure appropriate action has been taken on the basis of the committee's decisions. The Chair will support the Secretary in obtaining the required documentation, and approve agendas and draft minutes in good time. A key responsibility is to ensure that meetings are conducted in a manner that draws upon the full range of expertise and opinion of committee members. The Chair should ensure that there is open and constructive dialogue between committee members resulting (where appropriate) in an agreement on the action(s) that needs to be taken.

Senior members of staff usually act as Chair for College-level committees. The Chair has an important role to play in putting the Secretary, and committee members, at ease, and providing an appropriate welcome and induction to the role.

COMMITTEE SECRETARY

The responsibilities of the Secretary are to:

- Publish the date, time and venue of meetings, taking into account any reasonable adjustments required by members;
- Call for agenda items and set agendas in consultation with the Chair;
- Investigate the status of actions agreed at previous meetings;
- Ensure that all relevant documentation is received within the agreed deadlines;
- Check that committee papers are complete;
- Compile and distribute agenda and supporting papers;
- Record a register of all members in attendance at each meeting;
- Take notes during the meeting;
- Draft minutes and matters arising documents of meetings;
- Ensure (with the Chair) that the terms of reference and membership records of the committee are upheld and regularly reviewed.

> **Good Practice**: Secretaries are encouraged to liaise with other committee secretaries from time to time to ensure consistency across the College.

For larger committees a second Secretary, called 'Minute Secretary', may be appointed who is responsible for some of the duties normally the responsibility of the Secretary. These can include:

- Distributing the agenda and supporting paperwork to members;
- Taking notes during the meeting and drafting minutes and matters arising documents;

- Other duties of the Secretary as outlined above if they are absent or indisposed.

The relationship between the Chair and Secretary is key to the success of a committee. The majority of committee business and how it is conducted will be decided through the interaction between Chair and Secretary. The members of staff occupying these posts will change over time, but the benefits of a solid partnership between the two should never be underestimated. Secretaries and Chairs must work as a team, organising, conducting and recording committee business.

Servicing of the key College-level committees, i.e. Academic Board and its sub-committees, will normally be co-ordinated by the Quality Assurance Team (QAT) in liaison with those responsible.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Members are expected to:

- Submit agenda items and papers in line with the rolling agenda items;
- Read the agenda and papers thoroughly ahead of the meeting;
- Contribute to the discussion appropriately;
- Undertake any actions that have been assigned to them by the committee;
- Disseminate information to and represent the views of their colleagues.

It is important that committee members prioritise attendance at meetings to enable proper discussion to take place. However, if a member cannot attend, for good reason, they should notify the Secretary in order for apologies to be explained and recorded at the meeting.

ALL STAFF AND STUDENTS

All members of staff and students are able to contribute to the committee structure. The College has a duty to ensure that the views of its staff (academic and professional staff) and its students are represented through the relevant committees.

There are a number of ways in which staff and students can become involved in committee work including:

- Standing for election to a role, such as a Student Representative;
- Encouraging colleagues and students to stand for election;
- Accepting an invitation to attend;
- Attending as an observer;
- Submitting agenda items and papers for consideration;
- Providing feedback to Chairs, secretaries or QAT on the effectiveness of the committee system.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The College is committed to celebrating diversity and promoting equality of opportunity across all the 'protected characteristics' as defined by the Equality Act 2010. This commitment underpins many of the principles outlined in this Handbook.

All College committees should operate in accordance with the College's founding principles, which are: "New College of the Humanities is a place of learning, discussion, enquiry and discovery. As the word 'college' implies, we are a community of colleagues, staff and students alike, together engaged in the adventures of ideas."

All committees and meetings should have a clear purpose and involve the right people, who are thoroughly prepared for the meetings.

Committees should review their effectiveness annually and consider their terms of reference and membership as follows:

- At the last meeting of the academic year to propose any changes

- At the first meeting of the academic year to confirm membership and remit

> **Good Practice**: Before the final meeting of the year the Chair and/or Secretary may wish to circulate a committee effectiveness questionnaire to members to identify any gaps in the work of the committee.

The following may be found on the College website:

- Terms of Reference

- Current membership

Unconfirmed minutes will be published internally and circulated to any staff who request them as soon as possible after the meeting.

College committees should take account of equality and diversity considerations in relation to the operation of meetings. This includes, but is not limited to:

SCHEDULING

A calendar of meetings will be set and published in advance by the College to enable members to plan ahead. Changes to the schedule should be limited and communicated to QAT to ensure that the calendar can be updated.

Care should be taken where possible to avoid scheduling meetings that coincide with significant or major religious festivals and feast days that fall outside holiday periods, e.g. Christmas, Easter, Eid-Ul-Adha, Eid-Ul-Fitr, Purim, Yom Kippur. The Interfaith Calendar can be used to check specific dates to identify potential clashes.

TRAVEL

To reduce unnecessary travel, meetings should take advantage of video or telephone conferencing capability as appropriate.

ACCESSIBILITY

Consideration should be given to the location of the meeting to ensure that any accessibility issues can be arranged, e.g. staircases etc. These should be identified during the induction of a new member of the committee.

FILING OF COMMITTEE DOCUMENTATION

Agenda and paperwork will normally be emailed to the committee members at least five working days in advance of the scheduled meeting, but in special circumstances this can

be reduced. Committees should seek to avoid the tabling of papers at a meeting to ensure members can read them in advance. Once submitted to the Secretary, papers should not be amended unless there are exceptional reasons for doing so.

TIMING / LENGTH OF MEETING

Meetings should have a clear start and end time to enable members to make appropriate arrangements to attend, and should be considerate of normal working hours.

Scheduled College meetings should be prioritised over other work commitments, except for teaching.

Members should attend for the meeting's published duration. Apologies for absence should be used sparingly and only in exceptional circumstances.

The College community should accept and abide by the decisions of committees with the relevant remit. This demonstrates trust in the decision-making process and in the committee structure and membership.

> **Good Practice**: Chairs should agree a communication strategy for updating the wider College community on issues being taken forward by the committee.

Members and the wider College should feel that committees / groups are useful, necessary and achieve workable outcomes.

PURPOSE

All committees and groups must have a clear purpose or goal which clearly defines their remit ensuring:

- They are distinct from other committees;
- Their purpose is articulated to all members so that they can work collectively to achieve them.

A committee or group should only be constituted if delivery of the purpose / goal requires a committee or group to achieve it. A committee or group should not be created if the purpose or goal can be achieved by one or two individuals.

Committees should NOT be 'talking shops' – they should have clear objectives to be achieved, and consideration should be given by the Chair and Secretary how best to enable the objectives to be met during the meeting.

PEOPLE

Membership of committees and groups should be derived from as wide a spectrum of the College community as possible (academics, professional staff, and students).

Committee members should be carefully selected. Members need to be willing participants and interested in achieving the purpose / goal of the committee. Members should normally be reasonably knowledgeable in the area of the committee's remit and responsibility.

It should be clear as to the capacity in which an individual is serving on a committee or group as representing:

- • Their Department or Faculty
- • The staff view (academic or professional service)
- • The student view
- • Their informed or expert view (i.e. normally relating to their role within the College)

Committee members should be receptive and open to new ideas and others' opinions as objectives will be accomplished through the give and take of open discussion.

There is an expectation that work is undertaken by members (and others) outside of the meeting, i.e. preparing policies, discussion papers, etc.

PREPAREDNESS

All committee members are expected to prepare thoroughly for a meeting including:

- • Reading all papers and familiarising themselves with the supporting material;
- • Discussing aspects with their colleagues in order that they can give the Faculty / staff / student view or take appropriate action prior to the meeting;
- • Taking notes, asking concise follow-up questions, listening actively and looking for opportunities to build on the thoughts and ideas of others.

All committee members are responsible for proactively feeding back information from the committee to their respective Faculty, Department or equivalent.

MEETINGS PROTOCOL

The College has a Meetings Protocol, which is included below and reiterates many of the principles referred to above:

- • **Be punctual** – meeting attendance is an indicator of the way people view the importance of others' time
- • **Be prepared** – the key to a successful meeting lies in the preparation of the facilitator and the attendees
- • **Be participatory** – a good meeting involves positive interaction among the facilitator and the attendees
- • **Be positive** – share ideas, shape and challenge opinions, and propose new approaches to solving problems
- • **Be productive** – every meeting should have goals or objectives, to work toward
- • **Be polite** – show respect for other meeting attendees
- • **Be proactive** – ensure the meeting ends with a successful conclusion.

STANDING ORDERS

INTRODUCTION

The Standing Orders described in this Handbook are intended to apply to all College committees and explain the rules of behaviour that apply to all committee members.

Whilst it is expected that the majority of committees will meet these expectations, there may be occasions where a Chair feels that elements of the Standing Orders are not appropriate for their committee; in such cases, matters should be discussed with QAT.

The membership of a committee refers to the composition and terms of reference of a particular committee. Each committee has specific 'Terms of Reference' that determine the nature of its work, including its powers, duties and responsibilities.

PLANNING COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The College Governance Calendar (Calendar of Meetings) is devised and managed by QAT in consultation with other departments and faculties. The Governance Calendar is published on the College website and calendar invitations are sent using the College's online calendar. Members of the committee are required to reply to the calendar invitations so that the committee Secretary can ensure that the committee is quorate.

COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES AND GROUPS

All committees should be clearly defined and categorised as per the following classifications:

- **Standing Committee**: Created by Standing Orders, rules, by-laws or regulations of an organisation i.e. formal College committee, e.g. Academic Board and its sub-committees.

- **Non-standing Committee**: A Non-Standing Committee is a committee that meets intermittently or only when needed, e.g. Student/Staff Disciplinary Panels. Non-Standing Committees normally report to Academic Board or TESL Board.

- **Sub-group**: A sub-group is a subordinate entity of a Standing Committee normally set up to discuss specific topics, e.g. a Programme Approval Committee is established to approve a particular programme.

- **Working Group**: Created for a particular purpose and timeframe. The group is dissolved once the job has been completed.

Standing Committees and sub-committees

Academic Board establishes its committees and sub-committees to assist it to fulfil its responsibilities and to function effectively.

A committee of Academic Board may propose the establishment of a sub-committee, subject to the approval of Academic Board. In all cases where the creation of a sub-committee is proposed, the Constitutions (membership / terms of reference) must be provided. In preparing the constitution consideration should be given to the following:

- The functions of the committees and sub-committees should be distinguished in terms of their respective 'strategy / policy and operational / specialist' responsibilities;

- The decision-making powers of a committee or sub-committee and general duties and responsibilities should be clearly specified;

- It is advisable that the Chair of a sub-committee is a full member of the 'parent' committee.

In approving the establishment of a committee or sub-committee, Academic Board should give careful consideration to the following:

- Is there really a need for this committee?

- Are the objectives of this committee clear and achievable?

- Do the terms of reference overlap with that of another committee?

- Is the composition appropriate for the terms of reference?

- Is the membership sufficiently representative (including student membership)?

- Are there any omissions from the membership?

- Is the proposed membership larger than is necessary?

- Do the proposed terms of reference and membership reflect the principles of equality and diversity?

Working Groups

A committee may set up a working group to review, investigate, assess, evaluate, audit, consult, develop or implement a specific issue/development. Where this occurs the committee is responsible for determining:

- the remit and membership of the working group and setting a time limit for the group's existence

- the membership which can be drawn from the wider College community, although each group should be chaired by a member of the committee

- who from the membership will have responsibility for the production of notes and final reports (working groups are not normally serviced by secretaries)

- the establishment and remit of the working group to minimise the proliferation of such groups.

MEMBERSHIP

There are five categories of membership at any given meeting:

- **Ex-officio**: A member of staff automatically becomes a member of a committee because of their title or role within the College, for example the Registrar is a member of the Senior Management Team. Ex-officio members continue in membership as long as they hold their qualifying post.

- **Representative**: A member of staff who is nominated as a member of the committee to represent a particular area, e.g. a particular Faculty or Department. A representative member is normally appointed for a period of two years.

- **Co-opted**: A member of staff or a student is asked to become a member of a committee because of expertise in a given subject. The co-option of a

member is at the discretion of the committee, and co-opted members will attend for as long as the committee deems necessary.

- **Student representative**: Students chosen or elected from among the student body to represent their fellow students, normally for a particular course / programme of study. Student representatives are confirmed annually.

- **In attendance**: Member(s) of staff with responsibilities in the areas of the work of the committee may choose to attend, or be requested to attend. Those in attendance do not have voting rights.

Standing invitations and occasional invitations are also at the discretion of the committee to prevent the unnecessary co-option of members.

Membership of College committees is managed by QAT in consultation with other departments and faculties. Details of membership are published on the College website.

Appointment of committee Chairs

The Master will act as the Chair of Academic Board and may nominate a Deputy Chair from the members of Academic Board to take the Chair as necessary. This role is normally taken by a Head of Faculty.

The appointment of committee Chairs is informed by a set of principles agreed by Academic Board. In each case, there is a need to balance:

- The independence of the deliberative structure with the need to strengthen its relationship with management and executive functions. Committees of Academic Board are normally chaired by senior members of staff.

- Potential conflicts of interest with the possession by a committee Chair of the expertise and experience necessary to discharge their responsibilities.

- The inclusion of a wide range of staff in the work of sub-committees with the desirability of establishing a group of committee Chairs who are capable of co-ordinating work within the deliberative structure.

The accountability of Chairs to 'parent' committees is secured through ex-officio membership of the 'parent' committee.

Appointment of committee secretaries

The Faculty or Department with responsibility for managing the committee is responsible for appointing the Secretary in liaison with QAT. Secretaries may need to delegate their responsibilities to other members of staff on occasion and this should be managed locally.

Appointment and election of committee members

The committee session or term will run from 1 September to 31 August each year unless specified differently in individual constitutions.

The Chair and Secretary will review composition / membership before the first meeting of the academic year and the Chair will invite nominations for co-option to be presented. Membership should be an agenda item for each committee at the first meeting of the academic year.

Induction of new committee members

Wherever possible, newly appointed members will be invited to meet the Chair and / or Secretary before their first meeting. Each new member should be provided with an induction pack. As a minimum, the pack should include the following relevant documents:

- The Committee Handbook
- Terms of Reference and current membership list
- Contact details for the Chair and the Secretary
- Minutes of the previous meeting
- Dates and venues for future committees and meetings

The Secretary should check whether new members have any accessibility requirements and make provision as necessary to enable everyone to fully participate in meetings.

Status of members, members' nominees and student representatives

Subject to the exception below all committee members have equal status, regardless of their membership category. With the approval of the Chair, a member may nominate a substitute; any such substitute will attend with full membership rights.

The only exception to this rule is where student representatives may be required to withdraw for some items of reserved business, particularly items that relate to the consideration of individual students.

Termination of membership

There are occasions when a committee member will need to be replaced part way through a term of office (including research leave, maternity leave, illness, change of circumstances or teaching pattern, leaving the employment of the College). The Head of the Faculty or equivalent can put forward a suitable nominee. The new committee member will only serve until the end of their predecessor's term of office, and will then need to be replaced, or renewed.

The Chair is also permitted to ask QAT to arrange for a member to be replaced when the Chair considers that the member is unable to perform their duties on the committee due to a conflict of interest with the committee or, in extreme circumstances, when a member's performance is not in accordance with the expectations of the College, despite training and support from either the Chair or QAT. If a member of staff is requested to leave the membership of a committee, due to their performance, the Chair of the committee is responsible for informing the HR and Operations Manager, where further action will be taken, if appropriate.

Observers

Observers may attend committee meetings at the discretion of the Chair but must withdraw from the meeting room during discussion of reserved business.

Observers will normally remain silent for the duration of the meeting and may only contribute at the invitation of the Chair.

ORGANISATION OF MEETINGS (INCLUDING RULES ON QUORACY)

REGULAR AND EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS

Academic Board and its committees will meet as often as necessary to execute their powers, duties and responsibilities. This will be at least once every term. The Secretary should post or email notice of a committee meeting to members at least five working days before the date of the meeting, unless the Chair decides that the circumstances justify shorter notice.

Exceptionally, planned meetings may be cancelled, brought forward, adjourned or postponed by the Chair. Members will be given as much notice as possible.

The Secretary will convene an extraordinary meeting at the discretion of the Chair and the agenda for such meetings will only include the specific items for which the extraordinary meeting has been convened. Extraordinary meetings will not consider and approve the minutes of the previous regular meeting and will not take any other business.

LENGTH OF MEETINGS

It is advisable to plan meetings for no longer than three hours. Meetings in excess of three hours may occasionally be necessary but should be subject to members' agreement and the Chair should provide the opportunity for a break.

> **Good Practice**: Meetings in excess of three hours should be avoided wherever possible as they can become ineffective.

ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

If a member cannot attend, they should submit apologies and reasons for absence to the Secretary prior to the commencement of the meeting.

The Chair and Secretary should review attendance at the end of each academic year. The Chair should deal with individual concerns over attendance as they arise during the academic year.

QUORACY RULES

A quorum is the minimum number of people required to be present at a meeting in order to conduct the business of the meeting.

The quorum for all committees is 50% of the membership including the Chair and Secretary(s). If a quorum is not present after 30 minutes of the meeting have elapsed:

- The meeting will be adjourned; OR
- The meeting will go ahead but no decision can be ratified.

If during the course of a meeting attendance falls below quorum the meeting should be adjourned. The Chair should consider whether remaining business can be dealt with by Chair's Action.

If a meeting proceeds on an inquorate basis, official minutes cannot be written. In this case, **notes** are prepared which inform the next quorate meeting. The notes should be careful not to record any decisions, but to 'suggest' and 'advise' the next meeting or

'support' or 'recommend' a Chair's Action as appropriate. Notes should be approved by the Chair as an accurate record of the inquorate meeting but they will only be published internally. Numbering of items should carry on from the previous set of minutes.

DELEGATED AUTHORITY OF SUB-COMMITTEES

Provided they are acting within the remit of their terms of reference, sub-committees (but not working groups or other groups) have delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of their 'parent' committees. Decisions taken by sub-committees should be reported to 'parent' committees. Each sub-committee must be able to provide evidence (through the minutes of meetings and other documents as appropriate) to show that it has exercised its delegated authority.

AGENDA SETTING AND PREPARATION

AGENDA SETTING

In consultation with the Chair, the Secretary will prepare an agenda for each meeting in line with the committee's terms of reference. Other matters may be introduced and considered at the discretion of the Chair.

Members should normally receive the agenda and papers at least five working days before the meeting. Committee agendas and papers will be sent to the email accounts of the committee members.

The usual order of business for a regular meeting shall be as follows:

- To receive apologies for absence

- To declare any conflicts of interest

- To receive, correct if necessary, and approve the minutes of the previous meeting

- To consider any matters arising from the minutes which do not appear elsewhere on the agenda

- To endorse any decisions approved by Chair's Action since the previous meeting

- To receive a report from the Chair on any news of significance (as necessary)

- The bulk of the agenda can then be ordered by themes or categorised as follows:

  o Items for approval, recommendation or endorsement

  o Items for consideration (and occasionally approval) through debate and resolution

  o Items for note and receipt, e.g. minutes from sub-committee, advisory groups and / or working groups

- To consider any other business (at the Chair's discretion)

- To confirm the date and time of the next meeting

The order of the items on the agenda may be changed with the consent of the meeting.

> **Good Practice**: Where items are for receipt only, e.g. minutes for a sub-committee, it can be good practice to identify these at the outset and take those items as read unless any member has a specific comment in relation to their content.

PROPOSING AGENDA ITEMS AND SUBMITTING PAPERS

The Secretary will invite members to submit agenda items, and provide a deadline for the submission of papers. Members should send proposed agenda items to the Secretary no later than two weeks prior to the meeting to enable the agenda to be set in good time.

> **Good Practice**: The Chair and Secretary should establish an annual business cycle for the committee to help the committee to plan ahead.

Agenda-setting meeting: the Chair will decide which items are to be included during an agenda-setting meeting with the Secretary. When making this decision the Chair will bear in mind the committee's terms of reference, existing business, planned priorities, and the strategic aims of the College. If a Chair rejects an agenda item, they will report the reasons for this to the individual concerned. The agenda-setting meeting should occur at least two weeks before the meeting.

> **Good Practice**: Normal practice will be for the Secretary to draft an annotated agenda accompanied by explanatory notes in preparation for discussion with Chair.

The submission of late papers is bad practice and should be rejected by the Chair under normal circumstances. In exceptional cases, however, late papers should be made available to members as soon as possible and confirmed by email. The agenda should clearly state which papers are attached and which are 'to follow'.

Tabled papers will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances. If a paper is tabled, the Chair should either allow suitable reading time or ask the presenter for a detailed introduction.

Items of 'any other business' must be approved by the Chair before the start of the meeting. Consideration is at the Chair's discretion.

Papers should include an introduction summarising the key issues and specifically the action required from the committee.

To provide consistency across the College, the following actions should be used for agenda items:

ACTION	DEFINITION
To note	To acknowledge information given. Generally there is no need to discuss the particular item.
To receive	To formally receive the document or piece of information. The committee is not being asked to make a decision.
To discuss	To discuss the topic / document. The committee is not being asked to make a decision about it, but is being asked for its views and any follow-up actions.
To approve	To discuss and reach a decision about something wholly within the committee's remit. This may take the form of straightforward acceptance or it may require substantial discussion.
To recommend	To discuss an issue and recommend action to another body.
To endorse	To support a decision approved elsewhere by an authorised body. Endorsement signals reinforcement and full support for the decision to approve.

REFERENCING PAPERS

All reports and papers, with the exception of the agenda, should be given a reference number. This should be quoted on the agenda and in the minutes.

All papers submitted to the committee should be copied and pasted into the Word document underneath the agenda, in corresponding order to the agenda items. The title of the papers, using the reference format below, should be written using "Heading 1" of the agenda template document. The paper reference in the agenda can then be hyperlinked to the paper within the document, enabling committee members using electronic copies to navigate the papers easily.

Good practice: At the end of each paper, in the agenda document, a hyperlink back to the "Agenda" title should be used.

Reference numbers indicate the academic year, committee initials, month of meeting, and agenda item e.g.

See Committee Initials table for reference.

ACADEMIC YEAR	COMMITTEE INITIALS	MONTH OF MEETING	AGENDA ITEM NO.
17/18	AcB	May	3
17/18	AIC	September	5.2

The reference should be written as follows:

17/18/AcB/May/3

This should then be hyperlinked to the location of the paper within the agenda document, as stated above.

FORMAT AND ACCESSIBILITY OF DOCUMENTS

Templates of committee documents are available in the designated shared committee folder.

Documents should also be made available in other formats on request. Where possible, documents should be made available electronically so that whoever receives them can choose their preferred format.

DURING THE MEETING

PARTICIPATION

Subject to the Chair's duty to manage the meeting and make sure it is conducted properly, committee members can speak freely and openly on any subject of discussion. In carrying out their duties on behalf of the committee, members are expected to act in the best interests of the College.

Members may speak on more than one occasion on any item. The Chair may, however, with the consent of the meeting, impose a time limit on any item or speech.

Members are expected to behave respectfully and courteously to one another and to make sure that their behaviour and contributions respect the purpose of the meeting.

SPEAKING FOR THE COMMITTEE AND CHAIR'S AUTHORITY

No-one apart from the Chair should speak on behalf of a committee without the committee's permission. On matters of procedure or conduct, the decision of the Chair will be final.

MEMBERS' INTERESTS

If a member has an interest in an item being discussed that is greater than the interests of other members of the committee, they should tell the Chair. The other members at the meeting will decide whether the member in question should withdraw from the discussion or decision.

RESERVED BUSINESS

Reserved business is any business that is of a sensitive nature that is likely to cover one or more Freedom of Information exemptions, i.e. typically items which have been received in confidence, refer to commercial interest or relate to individual or identifiable staff or students. See Freedom of Information exemptions and the consideration of Reserved Business for more information.

A Reserved Agenda will normally be produced if a committee is likely to consider reserved business for that part of the meeting. This will be recorded separately and the reserved minutes will be withheld from general circulation.

If reserved business is discussed, the Chair will ask any observers to leave the meeting. Depending on the nature of the reserved business, student representatives may also be asked to leave.

DECISION-MAKING, VOTING AND CHAIR'S ACTION

All papers, motions and amendments will be formally proposed and seconded by a member present. A paper, motion or an amendment may be withdrawn by the proposer with the consent of the meeting.

For most meetings decisions will be taken by consensus with no need for a formal vote. Where there is no obvious consensus, or where there is a particular reason, decisions will be agreed by the majority of members present who will be asked formally to vote on the proposal. The Chair will be able to vote normally.

The Chair also conclude that the meeting is not ready to make a decision and that more work is required.

Votes will be by show of hands for all committees except Academic Board where a ballot may instead be requested by at least five members.

Any observers or those in attendance are not entitled to vote.

Abstentions do not count as votes cast against. Where votes are equally split the Chair has a second, or casting, vote.

The Chair may, on occasions, make a decision on behalf of the committee by taking **Chair's Action**. This would normally only take place if a decision on a matter was needed urgently or in the case of routine business delegated to the Chair by the committee. In all cases, the committee should be asked to confirm Chair's Action at its next meeting.

The Secretary should maintain a formal record of decisions taken by Chair's Action using the relevant template.

Business not completed at a meeting will either be adjourned to the next meeting or the committee will determine whether to hold an additional meeting.

At any time during a meeting a point of order may be raised. Points of order will be dealt with immediately and the ruling of the Chair will be final.

AFTER THE MEETING

PREPARATION AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Secretary should aim to prepare draft minutes for the Chair's approval within five working days of each meeting. Chairs should approve the minutes no later than five days after receipt. Following approval by the Chair, the status of the minutes changes to **unconfirmed**. At this point the Secretary may distribute the minutes to committee members, those on the circulation list, and non-members as appropriate.

All actions and approvals should be minuted in bold so they are easily identifiable:

ACTION: Xxxxx

The XX Policy was APPROVED

> **Good Practice**: Secretaries should aim to publish minutes within ten working days of each meeting.

The unconfirmed minutes remain the responsibility of the Secretary until they are **confirmed** by the committee at the following meeting.

Members will be asked to confirm whether the minutes are an accurate record of the discussion and outcomes at the next meeting of the committee.

For sub-committees an Executive Summary will normally be prepared and sent to the 'parent' committee.

RECORDING OF ATTENDEES

All attendees and their job title (for attendance at that meeting) must be recorded in the minutes.

If the Chair and/or Secretary are not present at the meeting, the member of the committee or professional staff stepping in to cover the roles, should be recorded as 'Acting Chair' or 'Acting Secretary'.

If the Chair or Secretary is on sabbatical leave, for continuity, a replacement Chair should be found for length of the sabbatical and they should be recorded as 'Interim Chair'.

NUMBERING AND ORDERING OF MINUTES

'Matters arising' are recorded individually under a 'matter arising' sub-heading. For each item, the previous minute number should be listed to allow staff to refer back to earlier discussion on the issue.

'Any other business' items, where applicable, should be recorded separately and have their own minute number.

ACTION SHEETS / NOTICE

It is considered good practice for the Secretary to circulate an Action Sheet to members (and any other staff who have a specific interest in the discussion) shortly after the meeting. The Action Sheet should provide a record of the outcomes and action required by members / other staff. This will ensure that urgent action is taken swiftly. The Secretary is responsible to updating the status of each action and reporting to the next meeting.

Committee members and general members of staff have a responsibility to investigate the actions allocated to them. If individuals do not understand the action allocated to them, clarification should be sought from the Secretary and / or Chair. Individuals should be prepared to report back on progress at the next meeting of the Committee.

DELEGATING BUSINESS TO OTHER COMMITTEES

Items delegated to committees and sub-committees must receive appropriate consideration at the next meeting. In most cases, the receipt of minutes from the committee or sub-committee will provide evidence of the consideration and the outcomes reached. It is the responsibility of the Chair and Secretary to ensure that delegated business is dealt with in good time, and that outcomes are provided to the Secretary of the delegating committee.

TERMINOLOGY

The non-gender specific term 'Chair' should be used at all committees. The use of the term 'Chairman' as a generic term for both Chairmen and Chairwomen is inappropriate.

GUIDANCE FOR COMMITTEE CHAIRS AND SECRETARIES

This guidance is offered in the spirit of good and best practice, and contains recommendations for conventions that should result in reasonable consistency in practice, with some necessary discretion to adapt to circumstances.

The skill of being a good Chair or Secretary primarily develops from two things: the ability to think clearly, and a commitment to learn from experience and continuously improve. The theme of this guide is that Chair and Secretary need to work as a team organising, conducting and recording the meetings of their committee.

PLANNING IS KEY

The key to a successful meeting is the planning, organisation and structuring of the meeting. This includes considering the scope of the meeting, the aims of the meeting, the volume of business, commissioning the papers required to ensure informed discussion, clarity of tasks for those attending the meeting and the ordering of business. If a meeting is well planned and chaired there is an excellent foundation for useful minutes.

It is a good principle to require that all substantive items have a supporting paper. Oral reports are usually difficult to absorb unless they are short and well delivered. In addition, the Secretary should ensure that the agenda, including all papers, is received by members well in advance of the meeting. Adoption of this practice gives participants the opportunity to prepare their contribution and reasonable confidence that the meeting will be productive. Failure to deliver papers to members on time can seriously undermine the prospects for an effective meeting.

CALL FOR ITEMS

Members value being given the opportunity to be fully participative. The Chair may choose to have a final agenda item requesting business for the next meeting, or the Secretary may invite items from members in advance of the meeting. The Chair should be proactive and commission papers from members (or others with specific responsibilities or interests) well ahead of the meeting. A call for items at least three weeks before a meeting has the further benefit of reminding members of the forthcoming meetings.

ADVICE FOR AUTHORS OF PAPERS / REPORTS FOR MEETINGS

Papers should be concise and purposeful. One to two pages are normally sufficient. Long papers are often counterproductive. When the Chair commissions a paper it may be helpful to give the author a guide length. A report on a project needs to focus on the issues and outcomes. It is advisable to provide a summary followed by recommended actions. The outcomes and the proposed actions must be crystal clear.

STRUCTURING THE MEETING

It is advisable to structure meetings to bring cognate items together. A pattern with a natural flow of items helps the participants and improves the effectiveness of the business. The Chair is advised to identify the most important items that require

committee time and place them early on the agenda so that the members devote their time to the consideration of the item. A committee may evolve a series of thematic headings that can be followed at each meeting. The order of the thematic headings can be varied according to circumstances. The agenda should indicate who would lead the item.

It is advisable to minimise the lead from the Chair – it is all too common for a Chair to overpower the committee and restrict open discussion. The Chair may wish to pass the Chair role to another member of the committee in instances of personal interest.

The greatest risk for a committee is to be overburdened with business. It is therefore essential for the Chair to ensure that there is a realistic schedule. Members expect the meeting to start on schedule and have some indication of the length of the meeting. Meetings of two to three hours are normally acceptable and effective. Meetings in excess of three hours may begin to diminish in effectiveness. A planned meeting of three hours probably needs a short mid-meeting break.

Many Chairs keep a private schedule for the items of business so that they can move the meeting on through the business purposefully. It is necessary to use such schedules with discretion so that the Chair can respond positively to circumstances where participants have deeper concern or where the matter is more straightforward than envisaged. The effectiveness of the meeting depends on the clarity of purpose of each item.

Templates are available in the shared committee folder.

TYPE OF ACTION REQUIRED

The agenda needs to be perfectly clear as to what the task of the committee is with regard to each item. It is not sufficient to just list the project or the subject. Members need to know it they are to receive information, give advice, accept and recommend, approve or endorse a paper or report.

Some committees find it useful to cluster the 'decision items' high on the agenda so that important matters are taken first. However, a Chair may wish to structure the agenda with a thematic cluster.

CONDUCT OF THE MEETING

It is a matter of courtesy that everyone present should either know each other or be introduced. A round of introductions is usual when a new member joins or the committee welcomes a visitor or observer. Normally all papers should be circulated before the meeting. There may be occasions when the tabling of papers is necessary but this should be rare. If a paper is tabled it is good practice to allow a few minutes reading time or ensure that the presenter makes a thorough introduction.

Chairs should ensure that matters arising are no more than brief matters of report. If there is a possibility or expectation of substantial discussion, then the matter should be an identified item on the agenda.

Much time can be lost in committees if the presenter re-iterates the contents of a paper. Participants are expected to read all the papers in advance of the meeting. This enables Chairs to instruct presenters that they should only highlight critically important points or information which post-dates the paper. Introductory comments should be no more than a couple of minutes. The Chair may wish to focus attention on particular points. If the committee is to consider a recommendation from a sub-committee of the committee this should be evident on the agenda. There should be sufficient time for members to

question the recommendations but with the exception of core items of primary concern, the committee should not normally need to discuss such recommendations at great length. The purpose of a sub-committee is to ensure that items relating to its remit have received a full and balanced discussion, thus performing a task on behalf of the parent committee.

Following introduction of the item for discussion the Chair should invite comments from members. It may be useful to gather several comments or suggestions before inviting the presenter to respond. This is more efficient than a response to each question. It is helpful for the Chair to keep a record of those who wish to speak and invite members to speak in turn.

At the conclusion of each item it is essential for the Chair to summarise the discussion and to announce the action agreed. This should match the original task indicated on the agenda.

RECORDING THE MEETING

The task of the Secretary to the committee is to make an informative record of the meeting and the outcomes. Minutes should be concise, informative and accurate but they should not be a verbatim record. The Secretary should understand the general purpose of each business item. This enables the Secretary to ensure that for each substantive item, the minute outlines what the issue was, the principal aspects considered at the meeting and the action agreed. The individual / group responsible for implementing the action should be clearly identified.

The minutes should enable the reader to understand the issues that were discussed and why the particular outcome was reached. The minutes may attribute views expressed by individuals acting in roles responsible for the business under discussion, e.g. 'the Head of Faculty, Chair stated that...' etc. However, minutes should not normally attribute other views expressed by a member by their name. General discussion should be recorded in terms of the views of committee members, e.g. 'the committee agreed that...'

The written style and presentation of minutes is important. Minutes should be accessible and digestible. The members presented should be listed on the front page of the minutes, as well as any absences with or without apologies being received.

Minutes templates are available in the shared committee folder.

TRAINING FOR COMMITTEE CHAIRS AND SECRETARIES

Training for committee Chairs and Secretaries is available from the Head of Quality Assurance, whatever the level of prior experience. All new members will be offered training to support their new roles within the College's governance structure.

SUMMARY GUIDANCE

The Chair and Secretary need to work as a team to plan, conduct and record meetings:

- The agenda should be structured to cluster cognate business;
- It is essential for the Chair to indicate the task for the committee in regard of each item of business;
- Committee members should receive the agenda and papers five working days before the meeting;

- The Chair is advised to prepare an approximate (private) schedule for the meeting;

- Minutes should be concise, informative and an accurate record but not verbatim notes;

- Minutes should outline the issue, the main concerns and the action outcomes;

- Minutes should identify who is responsible for implementing an action.

PUBLICATION OF DOCUMENTATION

The College's aim is to make as much committee information as possible accessible, taking into account confidentiality and privacy requirements. Where necessary, committee proceedings should be structured into open business and reserved business as follows:

- Information should normally be placed into open business as a default

- Information which is likely to be sensitive should be placed on the reserved agenda for the meeting and the discussion recorded in reserved minutes

Noted: Committee minutes will contain information about committee members and other persons (including student representatives and external members) attending meetings (their attendance, reports of their views and opinions, actions upon them), and information about third parties who are mentioned in discussions.

> **Good Practice**: The Information Commissioner's Office has indicated that it may not always be fair to attribute specific comments or opinions to named individuals. Instead, it is generally considered good practice to depersonalise minutes as much as possible.

RESERVED BUSINESS

If you are a Chair or Secretary, this section outlines what you should consider when deciding what should go on the open agenda and what should go on the reserved agenda for a meeting, taking into account the overall aim to make as much business as possible accessible.

An item should only go on the reserved agenda if it is likely to be sensitive. Where papers are produced, these will be printed on blue paper clearly to distinguish between open and reserved business.

Items will generally be of a sensitive nature where they refer to commercial interest or relate to individual or identifiable staff or students.

If during the course of an open part of a meeting information arises which should not be released because it is likely to be exempt, the Secretary should place the record of the discussion in the reserved minutes. The open minutes should indicate that an item has been moved to the reserved minutes, which should indicate the item on the open agenda to which the record of the discussion relates. This may require producing reserved minutes for a meeting where there was originally only an open agenda.

In the majority of instances a meeting will only deal with open business, in which case there is no need to produce a reserved agenda or reserved minutes. Similarly, some

meetings will deal only with reserved business. In both instances the resulting minutes should record that no open / reserved business (as appropriate) was transacted.

COMMITTEE INITALS

COMMITTEE INITIALS	COMMITTEE TITLE
AcB	Academic Board
AsB	Assessment Board
CBLC	College Board Liaison Committee
Col	Collegium
DeC	Destination Committee
ExCo	Executive Committee
FacM	Faculty Meeting
HSC	Health and Safety Committee
DipT	NCH Diploma Team
PCC	Policy and Compliance Committee
RMT	Recruitment and Marketing Team
RCS	Remuneration Committee (Staff)
RC	Research Committee
REC	Research Ethics Committee
RAG	Resource Allocation Group
SMT	Senior Management Team
SAST	Student and Academic Services Team
SSLC	Student : Staff Liaison Committee
TLEC	Teaching, Learning and Enhancement Committee

ABBREVIATIONS AND GLOSSARY

ABBREVIATION	EXPLANATION
Action Sheet	An Action Sheet is a list of actions made by a particular committee and which indicates who is responsible for undertaking those actions. Actions are generally taken outside the meeting and are updated at the following meeting.
Agenda	An agenda is a list of items to be discussed at a particular meeting. A typical agenda is made up of standing and non-standing items. Standing items appear on the agenda for each meeting, while non-standing items represent individual items within the committee's remit.
Chair	The Chair is the presiding authority of an assembly, meeting, committee or board.
Chair's Action	Chair's Actions are actions taken by the Chair outside of and on behalf of the committee, normally to approve or reject a particular document or decision. All Chair's Actions are subject to endorsement at the next meeting.
Committee	Committees are an integral part of every organisation. They are formal bodies with defined membership which act in accordance with and make decisions relating to their remit or terms of reference.
Constitution	The constitution of a committee consists of its membership and terms of reference.
Data Protection Act	The Data Protection Act is a piece of government legislation relating to data and the use thereof. The College is bound by the Act in the way in which it reports data, e.g. through the committee structure.
Executive Summary	An Executive Summary is a report of a meeting completed by the Chair, normally for reporting to another part of the committee structure. Executive Summaries do not represent the complete record of the meeting which is contained within the minutes.
FOI	The Freedom of Information Act is a piece of government legislation relating to information which should be released into the public domain. Information in committee records can be requested under FOI following the receipt of a formal FOI request. See also Reserved Business.
Meetings Protocol	The College has published a Meetings Protocol which it expects its staff to exhibit during all meetings, formal or informal.
Minute Secretary	A Minute Secretary may be appointed to larger committees to support the Secretary. The Minute Secretary's primary responsibilities will be to distribute paperwork ahead of a

	meeting, take notes during the meeting, and draft minutes after a meeting.
Minutes	The minutes are the official record of the meeting in question and should record at a minimum the decisions taken and actions agreed.
QAT	Quality Assurance Team
Quorum	A quorum is the minimum number of people required to be present at a meeting in order to conduct the business of the meeting.
Reserved Business	Reserved Business relates to information within the committee structure which is intended to be withheld from publication. Information is normally placed under reserved business if it relates to one or more defined Freedom of Information exemptions.
Secretary	The Secretary is the main officer of a meeting and is responsible for the administrative side of the committee business. The Secretary may be supported by a Minute Secretary.
Standing Orders	Standing Orders are the set of rules defined in this Handbook which govern how a committee is managed.
Terms of Reference	Terms of Reference define the remit and membership of a particular committee. The Terms of Reference, together with the actual membership, function as the constitution.

Title	Committee Handbook	Author	Head of Quality Assurance Chief Operating Officer
Location	NCH Academic Handbook	Approved by	Academic Board
Version	1.0	Last updated	-
Publication date	October 2017	Review date	October 2018

RECORD OF AMENDMENTS

Date	Summary of Amendment	Page	Approved by:
June 2018	Recording of Attendees – clarification of the recording of acting or interim Chair/Secretary	Page 20	Academic Board June 2018