

How 2 Write a Meeting Agenda

Introduction

An agenda is a plan of what will happen at a meeting, identifying the order of what will be discussed.

A good quality agenda can be the difference between an efficient and productive meeting and a disorganised and fruitless one.

This fact sheet contains information and advice on how to produce an effective agenda for your meetings.

Preparation

The Secretary should work with the Chairperson to develop an agenda for each meeting, with other members being contacted beforehand to see if they have any items they wish to be discussed.

Once the agenda is written, it should be sent out at least one week before the meeting to all members who will be attending. This will enable others to prepare for the meeting, which may include gathering the opinions of others, as well as ensuring they know what to expect when they arrive.

Things to Consider

It is important to consider the following points when you are writing your agenda:

- Ensure any items that other members have requested for discussion are included
- Consider the order in which items are discussed, placing either

important items or those that are likely to require a long discussion near the top of the agenda and items that will require shorter discussion near the bottom

- Do not place too many items on the agenda if you don't feel there will be enough time to discuss them all
- Allocate time to each item, as well as a start and finish time for the meeting
- Try to ensure that items are discussed in the order they appear on the agenda.

Additional Information

Once all the suggestions for agenda items have been received and the order has been finalised, it's a good idea to add a short description to explain the purpose of each one, so that everyone will know why it is being discussed. This will also help those people who may be unfamiliar with the topic.

Some items may need background papers, to help those who may be unfamiliar with the topic and enable those attending to have a more informed discussion. Where this is required, the papers should be produced and distributed at the same time as the agenda. Remember to send the minutes from the last meeting too!

A well prepared and thought out agenda will allow you to conduct an effective meeting that gets things done.

Scott, aged 20, from Global Forum 40, explains why he thinks a good agenda makes a better meeting:

"I'm sure we've all sat in meetings that are pretty boring, but a good agenda can really liven up the thought process and the work achieved from the meeting itself. It allows people to be prepared and armed with information which speeds up the meeting.

Any meeting with a good agenda should last no more than an hour, except for certain circumstances where more time may be needed."

A Typical Agenda

Welcome and apologies: the Chairperson should welcome everyone and the Secretary should record any submitted apologies of people unable to attend.

Members should also be given an opportunity to introduce themselves.

Minutes of the last meeting: these should be circulated with papers relating to different agenda items before the meeting. Changes can be identified if some things were wrongly recorded before they are approved by the meeting members.

Matters arising from the minutes: an update on previous actions from the last meeting and any other issues not covered on the agenda elsewhere.

Correspondence: important letters, invitations or emails that the organisation has received.

Areas of youth organisation activity: update reports on the organisation's various activities.

Financial statement: a report on the organisation's finances by the Treasurer.

Reports from committee: updates from the organisation's representatives on external bodies.

Any other business: additional items not on the agenda that have been brought to the Chairperson's attention at the start of the meeting.

Date, time and place of next meeting: these should be finalised in advance of the meeting.

Top Five Tips to Write an Agenda

- Invite agenda items from members
- Ensure the Secretary works with the Chairperson to produce the agenda
- Consider the order of items, ensuring important topics are discussed first
- Don't put more items on the agenda than there is time to discuss them
- Circulate the agenda, with papers, at least one week before the meeting.

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British Youth Council

We empower young people across the UK to have a say and be heard.

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