



The Royal
Australian &
New Zealand
College of
Psychiatrists



College Committee Operations

April 2020

Guide to Chairing Meetings

Guide to Chairing Meetings

This document should be read in conjunction with the [Regulations for Committee Meeting Operations](#) and *Committee Member Induction Manual*.

One of the most important roles of the chairperson is steering a committee through its business effectively and efficiently.

The Chair should work closely with relevant College Executive/Senior Manager/Management during all stages of the Committee meeting process (outlined below).

The role of senior management and staff present at a committee meeting is to support the Chair and the committee members; to provide, as required, background information pertinent to the topic being discussed; and to offer advice if asked. It is important for the Chair and committee members to respect that the reporting line for a staff member is to management and ultimately to the CEO, rather than to the Chair and/or committee.

Before the meeting

1. In conjunction with the relevant senior management, set the agenda content (refer to the Committee's Work Plan and meeting action list). Include items brought to you by other committee members. Decide the agenda order and discuss the time to be allocated to each agenda item (noting that this may not be specifically recorded on the agenda). Determine if the meeting duration is adequate to address all agenda items. If required, items that are simple in nature can be deferred and/or dealt with out of session via email, particularly if time constraints are identified.
2. Identify which agenda items are for decision, discussion or information/noting.
3. Be well briefed about each item, and actions taken since the last meeting or previous meetings (if relevant).
4. Ensure all necessary background papers (including the last meeting's minutes and any out of session decisions) are sent out with the agenda beforehand.
5. Check with relevant senior management that all required practical arrangements have been made, e.g. room layout, visual aids, etc.
6. Be aware of any Community Member(s) that may be in attendance and that they are seated where they can best contribute and to feel part of the committee (i.e. within your line of sight for face-to-face meetings).
7. Arrive in good time before the meeting is due to start.

During the meeting

Communicate

- An Acknowledgement of Country **must** be the first item on the meeting agenda for meetings held in Australia and to be spoken before the meeting formally commences. Where meetings are to take place in New Zealand, refer to the New Zealand National Office for relevant New Zealand-based protocols. Refer to the *Committee Member Induction Manual* for further information.
- Welcome any new members and make any necessary introductions.
- Ensure a quorum is present and declare the meeting open. If a quorum is not present, refer to the *Regulations for Committee Meeting Operations* regarding managing a quorum.
- Receive apologies for absence(s).
- In relation to any Community Members that may be on the committee:
 - Be mindful that it may be daunting for a Community Member to speak up and/or be heard.
 - Check in with the Community Member when undertaking technical discussions or when using professional jargon and provide explanations as needed.

- Understand that a Community Member can provide their perspective, but cannot take the place of more comprehensive consultation with consumers/carers if that is needed.
- Check for any Conflicts of Interest (COI) relating to any item on the agenda (including raising those relating to you), and ensure that there is an agreed plan of management as per College policy (refer to the *Regulations for Committee Meeting Operations*), and that COIs are documented in the Committee's COI Register and in the meeting minutes.
- Ensure that additions or amendments to minutes are recorded and the minutes of the previous meeting and any out of session decisions are confirmed. A seconder is not required, and the proposer does not need to be recorded in the meeting's minutes. Note: never amend minutes which have already been approved by the Committee, instead record any amendments or additions in the minutes of the meeting where they are discussed/raised.
- Specifically draw out any items that are of a confidential nature.
- Set the scene for each agenda item by stating the outcome that is being sought and invite the relevant speaker to the paper or who is to provide a verbal update to speak.
- Consider any risks and service user/member impacts.
- Try to be brief when making a point.

Control

- Maintain control. Set out any time limits. Be aware of time, and adjust the meeting accordingly.
- Allow flexibility and freedom of expression (ensuring this does not contravene College Policy such as the Bullying and Harassment Policy).
- Keep to the agenda.
- Ensure time is used effectively.
- Ensure that proper minutes are taken. Best practice minutes include providing a summary of the key points discussed and actions required, they are not a narrative of everything said at the meeting.

Encourage

- Ensure full participation by all Committee members, including Community Member(s).
- Draw out quieter members and manage those who are monopolising the meeting.
- Be prepared to initiate discussions in relation to issues that no-one else may be willing to raise or topics that may be sensitive, and to be the one who is able when necessary to ask the awkward/difficult questions.

Compare

- Weigh up contributions impartially.
- All points in favour should be summarised against all points not in favour.

Clarify

- Ensure everyone understands what is being discussed.
- Summarise the discussion and the outcome.
- Ensure that if jargon and abbreviations are used, all present at the meeting understand them.

Decision Making

- Ensure decisions are taken in the context of the College's strategy and that they are recorded, together with who is going to implement them and by when.

Guide

- Remember that above all you are there to guide the meeting.
- Steer members to work harmoniously and purposefully as a team.

At the end of the meeting

1. Summarise the decisions taken and action points (including who is responsible for the action and when it is due).
2. Agree on a date for the next meeting. Many committees will typically agree meeting dates well in advance, noting that the Board and its constituent committees generally agree the following year's meeting schedule in August each year.
3. Officially close the meeting and note the time the meeting closed.
4. Ensure that the minutes are drafted and reviewed by you as Chair within two weeks of the meeting taking place.

Revision Record

Contact:	Legal, Governance and Risk Department		
Date	Version	Approver	Description
21 July 2017	1.0	CGRC	New document
10 July 2018	1.1	Senior Manager, Corporate Governance and Risk	Reviewed and updated with minor amendments and formatting
7 February 2019	2.0	CGRC	Reviewed and updated with minor amendments to ensure a consistent message is applied from the <i>Committee Meeting Operations Regulations</i> .
7 April 2020	2.1	Executive General Manager Education and Operations	Review undertaken by the Legal, Governance and Risk Department with minor amendments made to the date of the document and contact.
2020	NEXT REVIEW		
