

# **UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS, AKOKA, LAGOS**

**2 DAY TRAINING FOR SERVING SECRETARIES TO BOARDS, PANELS & COMMITTEES IN  
THE OF LAGOS**



**TOPIC:**

**PRINCIPLES OF MINUTES AND REPORT WRITING**





**DATE: TUESDAY, 23<sup>RD</sup> JUNE 2024**

**VENUE: ACADEMIC PUBLISHING CENTRE**

**TIME: 2.30p.m. – 3.30p.m.**

**RESOURCE PERSON      Akinyeye, Adeola (Mrs.)**  
**Deputy Registrar**  
**Council Affairs Unit**

# 1. PROTOCOL

## 2. INTRODUCTION

- Of first importance to any Board/Panel/Committee is the selection of a competent secretary with a sound management approach to his administrative duties.
- The secretary is responsible for seeing that proceedings are adequately prepared as minutes and reports as applicable.
- A secretary's, most responsibilities can be treated in three (3) fold.

### 2.1 PRIOR TO THE MEETING PRIOR

- (a) Have a discussion with your Chairperson and discuss agenda of the meeting.
- (b) Ensure notice of meeting is given and suitable meeting room is arranged.
- (c) Circulate to all members, papers to be discussed.





## 2.2 At the meeting


- (a) Arrive in good time with relevant papers, Agenda, Minutes, Papers.
- (b) Report on matters arising from previous minutes.
- (c) Take notes of the meeting, recording the key points. Ensure decisions and proposals are recorded, as well as the names of the person or group responsible for carrying them out.
- (d) Remind the Chairperson if an item has been overlooked.

## 2.3 After the meeting

- (a) Prepare a draft of the minutes
- (b) Notify persons of concern on decision requiring action
- (c) It is the responsibility of the Secretary to keep past records of its Committee/Board in an orderly manner, that is, easy to fetch and reference when occasions call for it.



## FUNCTIONS OF COMMUNICATION IN THE WORK PLACE

- Communication is the process of transmitting information and common understanding from one person to another.
  - Communicating effectively is an art and must be practiced effectively at workplace for better output and successful achievement of goals of an organization.
  - Communication is a major challenge for administrators because they are providers of information that decision makers depend on. Good communication skill is at the heart of our success as Administrators.
  - The minutes and reports are medium of communication in a workplace and when it is well written and presented very well, it assists those in authority to take decisions with much ease.
- 



➤ Secretaries must therefore hone this vital skills for effectiveness in the workplace. Our Minutes and Reports must be

- - Informative
- - Explanatory
- - Transacting
- - Reassuring
- - Analyzing
- - Persuasive

## 4.0 HOW TO ACQUIRE COMMUNICATION SKILLS

- Communication skills are defined as the ability to listen, speak, read and write effectively. Strong communication skills enable us to receive information through reading and listening and share information with others through writing and speaking.

### 4.1. Active listening

- Active listening means paying attention to the person who is speaking at meetings. While it seems simple, this is a skill that can be hard to develop and improve. You can be an active listener by focusing on the speaker, avoiding distractions like cell phones and side talk at meetings.





## 4.2 Reading

There are four (4) types of reading skills used in every language.

- Skimming – Used to understand the ‘gist’ or main idea. Run your eyes over the text noting important information e.g. Newspaper
- Scanning – Used to find a particular piece of information. Run your eyes over the text looking for the specific piece of information you need. If you see words or phrases that you don’t understand, you don’t worry

### ➤ Extensive Reading

Extensive reading is used to obtain a general understanding of a subject and includes reading longer texts for pleasure, as well as business books.

- A novel you read before going to bed
- Magazine articles that interest you



## ➤ Intensive Reading

Intensive Reading is used to extract specific information. It includes very close accurate reading for detail

### Examples

An insurance claim

A contract.

## What to do?

- As Administrators/Secretary we need to engage more in extensive reading in order to increase our vocabularies and pick up writing skills.
- Listening and Reading - Input
- Speaking and Writing - Output
- Writing skills influence the quality of your work and how others perceive your professionalism.
- It is a skill that can be learned just like driving or singing.  
Practice writing in some way every day and do not shy away from Committee work.

## 5.0 MEETINGS AND MINUTES WRITING

### ➤ “Meeting”

By definition is an assembly of people for a particular purpose, especially for formal discussion.

### ➤ “Minutes”

Minutes are a method of recording discussion and decisions in a clear and concise form that the write-up must be in plain language.

Better still, Minutes represent the record of the matters that the Board/Meeting/Committee had discussed and decisions and actions taken, which are regarded as the representation of the proceedings of meetings in plain written language for record keeping and future reference.

## 5.1 TYPES OF MEETINGS

### Formal Versus Informal

- A formal meeting is any pre-arranged meeting between two or more people which:
- Takes place for the purpose of achieving a common stated objective
- Takes place at a designated date, time and location
- Follows a clear meeting agenda
- Recorded in meeting minutes to recount discussions, votes and action items.

Therefore, an informal meeting is any meeting between two or more people which does not satisfy all of the above criteria.



## FORMAL MEETINGS IN THE UNIVERSITY

- Management Meeting
  - Senate Meeting
  - Board Meeting
  - Governing Council Meeting
  - Faculty Board of Studies
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## 5.2 PRINCIPLES OF MINUTES WRITING

- Being a secretary is an important role in a meeting and making sure you accurately record what was said and decided, using detailed rather than broadly generalized statements.

Examples:

### Generalised statement

- (a) The meeting shall hold in the auditorium in the University
- (b) Students were advised to pay their obligatory fees, promptly.

### Detailed Statement.

Examples:

- (a) The meeting shall hold on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2024 in the J. F. Ade. Ajayi Auditorium at 9.00a.m.
- (b) Students were advised to pay their obligatory fees through their personal portals on the University's Premier ERP.

## ➤ **WHEN TO PRODUCE DRAFT MINUTES**

Minutes should be written as soon as possible, not more than forty eight hours (48) after the meeting.

After forty eight (48) hours, for many people, it could become difficult to recall the proceedings of meetings.

**“How about the use of Recorder?”** Technology can come to our rescue, when we are unable to turn in minutes in 48 hours, you might need to discuss with the Chairman/members. However, for Investigative panels, you will require to have your proceedings recorded. Minutes are written in the past tense, while reports should be in present tense.

## ➤ **USING ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS**

Please make sure you use abbreviations and symbols known to you in your notes. It is importantly you use these abbreviations to gain speed while writing. The secretary needs to be fast in taking notes.



## ABBREVIATION USED IN OFFICIAL CORRESPONDENCE

B.U. Bring Up

F. N. A. For Necessary Action

Hr Hour /ASAP – As soon as possible

### SYMBOL

Agenda <

-Acronyms

An Acronyms are shorter versions of existing words and phrases. They are designed to Save time and take up less space

School of Foundation Studies SFS

Joint Universities Examination Board JUPEB

Faculty of Social Sciences FSS

-The principle

Abbreviations/Acronyms should be defined at first mention in your write up, then subsequently Abbreviation/Acronyms can be used.

As secretaries, we must ensure that we are familiar with abbreviations and symbols used in our notes, nothing can be worse than looking at your notes the next day and trying to remember what it all means.



## PRESENTATION AND LAYOUT

Minutes of the University are formal and are public document.

It should, therefore, be written using business – like language in a clear, concise and simple way without pompous or stuffy vocabulary. They should be typed using formal layout with headings for each item.

Numbering of minutes is very important to avoid complications and waste of time. Attention should be paid to spellings, grammar and punctuation.

### Summaries

A summary gives a general picture of the report for this who want to be reminded of what they have read or those who will never read the whole report.

It is the section that is read by the majority and the decision makers who might not have the time or interest into the details.

## EDITING & PROOFREADING


### Questions

What kind of editor are you?

- I usually don't have much time for editing after I complete my first draft.
- I usually focus on grammar errors.
- I usually focus on the organisation of my write up before I look for grammar and spelling errors.
- I know the difference between editing and proofreading.

Editing is a process that involves revising the content, organization, grammar and presentation of a piece of writing. The purpose of editing is to ensure that your ideas are presented to your audience as clearly as possible.

Proofreading focuses on accuracy in smaller details of your work. It is a part of the overall editing process and it is best done at the final state.



When your minute is written, it is referred to as Draft minutes, which could be improved upon by the Chairman and members of the Committee. It is ideal for the Chairman/members to have sent copies of the draft minutes prior to its consideration for adoption at a subsequent meeting, to the Chairman, and then members.

At this point, the draft could be edited and proofread to eliminate all errors in spelling, grammar etc. and also to ensure that the document truly represents the proceedings of the meeting.

## 6.0 Editing and Proofreading

### Things to look out for

#### 6.1 Spelling

When you've completed a section of the Report. Check it for spelling errors

#### 6.2 Commas

(1) Let's eat Grandpa

(2) Let's eat, Grandpa

or

I like cooking, my family, and my pets

I like cooking my family and my pets

Let's go get a little Italian, baby

Let's go get a little Italian baby

#### 6.3 Sentences

Short sentences provide a clear, easy-to-read style.

## 6.4 Paragraph

Paragraph should unify content, and can also be used to make document readable. Several paragraph on a page with resulting spaces encourage reading, while long block of text is off-putting.

## 6.5 Formality

Reports are formal documents but that does not mean you have to use overly complex words or grammar. Use simple words that you would in everyday conversation if you choose more complex language, readers would be unnecessarily distracted by it.

Spell out acronym before using it

Break up text into shorter sentences and paragraphs for ease of reading.

## 6.6 Adoption of Minutes

The draft minutes is presented at the subsequent meeting for consideration. It should be adopted upon a motion moved by a member and another member that must second the motion. Once the adoption is done, the Secretary and Chairman of the Committee should append their signatures.

The minute is therefore an official document and the Secretary would ensure that it is properly kept as official records of the University.





## 7.0 REPORT WRITING

A report is a document or statement that presents information in an organized format for a specific audience.

Reports are organised, commonly with tables of contents, headings and sub headings, for readers to scan and obtain information.

Examples of Report

- Academic Mis-Conduct Panel Report
- Investigative Panel Report





## 7.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of a report is to inform, educate and present options and recommendations for future action; therefore, it must be well-written, accurate and efficient.

### **How to Write a Report**

#### ➤ The Title and Terms of Reference

What is the Report about?

What is the purpose?

Why is it necessary?

Setting these terms shall help both the writer and their readers to understand why the report is important and what it hopes to accomplish.

#### ➤ Conduct your research:

(1) Get full details on staff & students being investigated

(2) Research on the roles/conditions/policies of the University on



## Create a report Outline

- Title Page
- Table of Contents
- Introduction
- Terms of reference
- Summary of procedure
- Recommendations
- Conclusion

### ➤ Write the first draft

Writing the first draft of your report is a key step to writing a good one. The first draft is not the perfect document but it is important you get all the main points out of your head and put them in writing. Thereafter, you begin to edit and improve on the first draft.



## Proofread carefully

Nothing ruins a quality report like a missed typo:

Consider the use of these tools

- Grammarly
- Reverso



THANK YOU