



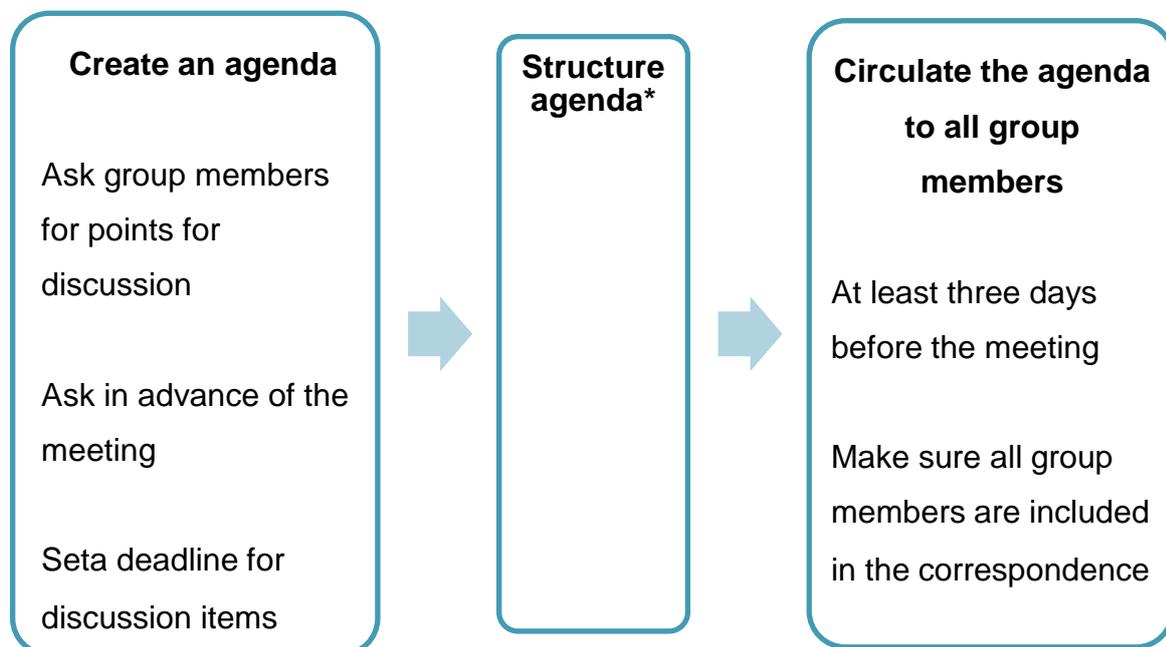
Acting as a group secretary

Introduction

There are a number of different roles that you assume when undertaking group work. One example is group secretary. There are key responsibilities associated with being a secretary – such as setting agendas and taking minutes (a set of notes which outline what was agreed). This resource details how to undertake each part of the secretary role.

Creating an agenda

A key secretarial role is creating an agenda – this will help to ensure that group meetings run efficiently. How to create an agenda is detailed below.



*Six main areas typically included in an agenda:

- 1) **Date; title; location of the meeting**
- 2) **Welcome and apologies** - introductions; record of those present and absent
- 3) **Review minutes of the last meeting** - Confirm tasks completed and actions agreed since the last meeting
- 4) **Standing items** – Sometimes it is appropriate to have an agreed set up topics that will always be discussed during team meetings.
- 5) **Agenda items** - Topics nominated in advance of the meeting are discussed. This section often has subsections (to represent several topics)
- 6) **Any other business** - Topics that were not included in the agenda

Taking minutes

It is important that a record is kept of what has been discussed and agreed during group meetings. These will enable you to check that everyone is working effectively and targets are being kept. A key role of the secretary is to therefore create a set of minutes.

How to structure / format minutes

There is no single way to structure / format a set of minutes. That said, remember:

- **Structure** - Minutes typically follow the same order as the meeting agenda.
- **Format** - Using a table can be one of the most easy to use formatting options.

There are two main areas to address within your minutes:

1. Main topics discussed

Do not try to write down everything that is said. Likewise, remember that during a meeting discussion can be quite repetitive. You should try to avoid capturing circular conversations and instead focus on recording main ideas that have been discussed.

2. Agreed actions

You need to record what group members have agreed to do after the meeting. Equally you should include details of actions completion dates

Minute taking tips

- Only outline broad discussion and key points
- Type the minutes at the meeting – this will save you time. Make sure your laptop / tablet is fully charged (have the charger with you). Have pen and paper as backup.
- Make sure your handwriting is easy to read –if you do decide to hand-write your minutes.
- Use abbreviations – to save time (for example, group members' initials).

Disseminating minutes

After the meeting the secretary should type up the minutes. These should then be circulated to all group members. If any changes are needed these should be discussed in the next group meeting.

Conclusion

A group secretary is essential in order for a group to function effectively and efficiently. This role can be adopted by an individual or you may wish for group members to take it in turns to act as the secretary. Regardless of how you assign responsibility for this role you must remember that being secretary involves quite a lot of work so this should be reflected in how other duties are shared out.

Further information

The Learning Resources Study Hub provides a range of opportunities (such as workshops and drop-ins) for you to enhance your academic skills. For more information visit:
lrweb.beds.ac.uk/studyhub

