

Secretary's Handbook

"You spend so much time as Secretary doing everyone else's job, you never have time to figure out what your own job is".

Ethan Van Roo Douglas, 2019 Union Secretary

Purpose of this Handbook

Congratulations on your role as a club or society Secretary. The role of Secretary is crucial to the functioning and running of a club. While some students have an advantage, due to studying/have studied finance or accounting, many students do a great job in the Secretary role. This handbook has been designed to help individuals who need support in equipping themselves with the right information, skills and knowledge to ensure they feel confident in time for the AGM in October.

This handbook can also be used in conjunction with the 'Executive handbook' which can be found on the UQU website.

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DUTIES

Role purpose: The Secretary provides an important link between the President, club members and the Clubs and Societies Committee. You can consider it from the angle that the President runs the club as a whole and the Secretary runs the executive. The role primarily concentrates on the administration of the club and assisting the President in running meetings, minute taking, and taking on the role in an acting capacity when necessary. The Secretary should work closely with the President and deal with all correspondence that the club receives. The executive understand the Constitution, but the secretary knows the Constitution inside and out.

- Prepare and distribute an agenda and previous minutes, which include the actions requiring follow up from the previous meeting;
- Distribute minutes following a meeting and consolidate all actionable items;
- Keep membership lists up to date (new members);
- Advise the C&S office of any changes to President, Secretary or Treasurer to update C&S database;
- Ensure the webpage on the UQ Union C&S page is up to date and correct;
- Inform the President of any correspondence requiring urgent attention;
- Advise members the date of a scheduled AGM at least fourteen days prior to the meeting and the C&S Vice President and/or C&S Manager at least seven days prior to the meeting (as per constitution); and
- Submit minutes from the Annual General Meeting to the Clubs and Societies Department within fourteen days. Failure to do so may result in disaffiliation.

AGENDAS AND BUSINESS PACKS

Prior to each executive meeting, the Secretary must send out an agenda for the upcoming meeting and minutes from the previous meeting, which will also highlight the actions that require follow up. Once a date is decided by the executive, the agenda, which includes the time and location, should be distributed in advance of the meeting (five days). Note that the notice periods for Special General Meetings and Annual General Meetings are different, and that five days' notice qualifies for regular executive meetings only.

You may also need to send a business pack to accompany the agenda, depending on the substance and content of the meeting. Its purpose is to reduce the amount of time spent in the meeting, by providing relevant documents for participants to read beforehand. This might include the Treasurer's financial report or a written complaint/concern that needs to be addressed and resolved in the meeting.

An agenda lists the discussion points of the meeting. It will likely have common sections such as:

Attendance, apologies and quorum (see your club constitution for quorum details);

Approval of previous minutes – the executive must confirm that the minutes of the previous meeting are correct. Only those present at the previous meeting can vote to pass these minutes. Corrections and clarifications can be added, then accepted with these alterations.

Business arising – any follow up on topics from the previous meeting.

Reports – some of the executives should give a report on their portfolio since the previous meeting. The club Treasurer will usually give a financial report.

General Business – The main part of the meeting, where every other topic that doesn't belong in the previous categories gets discussed. Any topics that have been proposed beforehand should be listed here by decreasing importance. The last item should be "other business", where topics that weren't proposed beforehand can be discussed.

An agenda may look like this:

Item number	Item	Person
1.0	Welcome, apologies and quorum	Chair
2.0	Confirmation of previous (AGM) minutes	Chair Approved by: Seconded by:
3.0	Business Arising	
3.1	Action items	List action items from previous minutes here. Action item 1 – Action item 2-
3.2	Constitutional changes	Sai
3.3	Budget for XX event	Bill
3.4	Complaint from member	Sue
4.0	Reports or updates	General updates from the floor if necessary or if there is a pending issue needing to be resolved i.e. payment for an event.
5.0	General Business	Any
6.0	Close	

You can use a similar template for the minutes, by simply adding an additional column to document the discussion and including any action items that need to be completed and followed up in the next meeting.

MINUTES

Minutes are the official written record of your club's meetings. They should summarise any discussions and record the outcome of any decisions. A verbatim transcript is unnecessary but rather should capture the main point, concerns raised or decisions made. They must also capture the action items or updates on action items. The minutes of a meeting will usually have the same headings as the agenda for that meeting, and as mentioned above, can use a similar template to above.

MEMBERSHIP LISTS

As Secretary, you are responsible for the club's membership list. This should list the names and contact details (usually email addresses) of every person who has paid membership for the current year. If they are a student, you must also record their student number. You may also keep a secondary list of people who are interested in your club, and have provided their details, but have not paid for membership.

The last digit of a student number is a checksum, which can be used for validation. The final digit should be the last digit of the sum of first seven digits each multiplied by 9, 7, 3, 9, 7, 3 and 9, respectively. For example, with the student number 43214130,

$$\begin{aligned} & 9 \times 4 + 7 \times 3 + 3 \times 2 + 9 \times 1 + 7 \times 4 + 3 \times 1 + 9 \times 3 \\ &= 36 + 21 + 6 + 9 + 28 + 3 + 27 \\ &= 130 \end{aligned}$$

The last digit of this result, 0, matches the last digit of the student number, and so is valid. After the semester one market day, you must submit your membership list to the C&S Department. A late submission will result in a reduced grant.

CORRESPONDENCE

As Secretary, you are responsible for the delivery of internal and external correspondence. As such, you should regularly check the club's email inbox, collect mail from the C&S Office, produce an agenda for any SGMs and AGMs, provide the C&S Department with this relevant paperwork post AGM and relay relevant information to club members. You should also ensure the club has a profile on the C&S page of the Union website.

Any correspondence received should be forwarded on to the relevant member, or presented at the next executive meeting. You are not necessarily responsible for writing outgoing messages, but you may be required to send off the final version, especially if there are multiple recipients. You should also ensure that your members receive vital information in a timely manner.

CONSTITUTION

While all your fellow executive must have a working knowledge of your club's constitution, the Secretary is the designated expert. You should know your club's constitution forwards, backwards and upside-down.

If you wish to amend your club's constitution, you will have to do so at a General Meeting, and ensure your members have been adequately notified of the proposed changes.

DEPUTY PRESIDENCY

If your club doesn't have a Vice-President, or has numerous Vice-Presidents, then the Secretary is the quasi-official second-in-command. As such, you will need to undertake the President's responsibilities in their absence. Additionally, any duties that the President is unable to handle will fall to you. To a lesser extent, this applies to every other executive position.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

Timing and Notice of AGM

To conduct a valid AGM, sufficient and proper notice must be given to your members. This is similar to the notice for a committee meeting, but the requirements cannot be relaxed by mutual consent of the executive. The exact requirements will be in your constitution, but will usually require fourteen days' notice. Furthermore, your AGM cannot be conducted until your club has submitted and passed their audit, and the AGM should occur in October. This may require vigilance to satisfy all three of these requirements. The C&S Department must also be given notice of your AGM. If there are any proposed constitutional amendments, these often have an independent notice requirement, which may be larger than that for the AGM.

The AGM agenda should include:

- Attendance & quorum – check who is present at the AGM, and who isn't, ensure quorum is met, and note any proxies.
- Confirmation of minutes – the members must confirm that the minutes of the previous AGM are correct. Corrections and clarifications can be added, then accepted with these alterations. If you have had any SGMs since the last AGM, the minutes for those also must be confirmed.
- Reports – All of the officers must give a report of their activities over the past year. The members can also ask questions about the reports here.
- Constitutional Amendments – (if any).
- Elections – Including selecting a Returning Officer.
- General Business – This is where the members can publically raise any issue they feel need addressing.

In the AGM business pack, as well as the agenda, you should include

- Time and date and location of the meeting;
- A copy of the minutes from the previous year's AGM, and any SGMs since;
- A copy of your club's constitution, especially if there is nowhere it is easily accessible to members;
- Details on how proxies will work at the AGM; and
- Election details, such as position descriptions, method of nomination, and nomination forms.

AGM Minutes

At the AGM, you will need to take minutes of the proceedings. These minutes, along with the club's current membership list, and details of the incoming executive, must be submitted to the C&S Department in a timely manner. The minutes must include the meeting attendance, and should include the officers' reports, either in line or as an appendix. These minutes are also needed to transfer signatory rights to the incoming executive, and it is convenient to submit the *Business*

Authority Form to the C&S Department at the same time. It is nominally the responsibility of the incoming Secretary to do this, but they will be relying on your experience to ensure it is done correctly.

Secretary's Report during AGM

During your AGM, you will have to present your Secretary's report to your club's members so that they are informed about the club's activities. Your report should summarise details of the club's membership for the year; growth or loss compared to last year; and, if you have it, demographics of membership (year level, faculty, students or not, domestic or international, gender, returning members and new members, etc.)

If you have received any noteworthy external communications, you can include that in your report.

RECORDS

You should have access to executive meeting minutes from previous years. If you can, you should look over them, and make yourself familiar with the broad topics of discussion. Ideally, they should be easily searchable in bulk. This means that if a topic comes up during a current executive meeting, you can refer back to the decision of a previous executive, and see any reasons they had for their decision at the time. The current executive can then use these reasons to inform their current decision.

HANDOVER

After your club's AGM, there may be a changeover in secretaries. Sometimes key information, knowledge and documentation is lost during this change over. It is important for all incoming and outgoing secretaries to ensure that knowledge is transferred by following the Handover checklist in the AGM guide.

Handover of Secretary

- It is important that you transfer all documents and recordings to the next Secretary. For a smooth handover, ensure that all documents are up to date. All records and documentation should be accessible to the incoming Secretary.
- Club records such as executive meeting minutes should also be handed over to the new Secretary. An easy way to do so is to upload minutes to a Google Drive account or similar, using the club email address, and then just hand over the password to the incoming executive.
- Make sure your new executives complete a CBA 'Business of Authority' form if any signatories are changing.

CLUBS AND SOCIETIES CONTACTS

Resources

Visit the UQ Union website to obtain further information about C&S related information including the Executive Handbook.

Location

The C&S Office is located at Level 4, Union Building 21A, Union complex – opposite the Lolly Shop.

Walk-In hours:

Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9:00am – 1:00pm.

Appointment Times:

If you are unavailable during walk-in hours, please email us or schedule an appointment with us with us at clubs@uqu.com.au. We will reply within three business days. Should your matter be more urgent, please phone 3377 2200. If the matter is of a confidential nature and you'd like to organise an appointment please contact the C&S Manager, Emily Ryan at emily.ryan@uqu.com.au.