

THE ROLE OF THE CHAIR

A committee chair has a worthwhile yet demanding role. To be effective and make the maximum contribution to the School, a chair needs a good understanding of the committee's role and responsibilities and should encourage members to participate fully in its work. In some instances committee chairs may also become ex-officio members of other committees because of their responsibilities.

The key roles of the chair are outlined below:

- to provide leadership and direction to the committee so as to facilitate the work of the School in pursuing its vision, mission and strategic direction within the committee's terms of reference;
- to see that the committee's business is conducted in an orderly fashion and to ensure that members obtain a fair hearing;
- to ensure that the work of the committee is consistent with its agreed remit and terms of reference and that issues of interest to other committees or to the wider organisation are appropriately referred;
- to ensure the committee does not take decisions outside its authorised powers;
- to ensure decisions taken by the committee are clear and unambiguous, and that responsibility for taking forward action points is properly allocated;
- to consult with other committee members and provide advice and support;
- to ensure that decisions represent the collective views of the committee or (in exceptional circumstances when consensus cannot be reached) a majority view;
- to determine in consultation with the committee secretary on the content of meeting agendas, the order in which items are taken and the amount of time to be devoted to each;
- to monitor the implementation of agreements and action points from previous meetings;
- to undertake ad hoc work as the chair of the committee (e.g. through the provision of advice and attendance at other relevant meetings & events);
- to support, on completion of the term of office, the incoming chair through the provision of advice and de-briefing;
- to direct any person to be excluded from a meeting for any item of business, for example, on grounds of confidentiality or a conflict of interest;
- to take decisions by chair's action in any matter which, in his/her opinion, is urgent, routine or not of sufficient importance to justify the calling of a meeting;
- to report chair's action to the next meeting of the committee.

Guidelines on how to chair a meeting can be found in Appendix 5 of the Guidelines for Committee Chairs and Secretaries and the Chair should be aware of the [Committee Effective Behaviours Policy](#) (Appendix 11).

In terms of Chair's action it is strongly recommended that committees should agree the circumstances in which they will grant delegated authority to the Chair to act on its behalf between meetings. Action taken under delegated authority will normally consist of business that would not have merited discussion at a committee meeting such the approval of minor / routine matters). Occasionally, matters may arise which are judged too urgent and important to await the next meeting of the committee and the Chair then has the option of calling a special meeting, consulting the members of the committee by correspondence, or dealing with the matter by chair's action. The chair should be careful not to take decisions by chair's action where it is inappropriate to do so, and not to exceed the scope of the delegated authority granted by the role.