THE ROLE OF THE SECRETARY

A committee secretary has a wide ranging role which includes the following responsibilities:

- to manage the committee's business. This involves preparing agendas in liaison with the chair and/or an agenda committee, monitoring the progress and scheduling of the committee's business, and ensuring that meetings run smoothly according to the guidelines set out below. (Committee secretaries should maintain a "rolling schedule" of business for the forthcoming session and beyond. This will include recurrent items, and one-off items which a committee has specified should be reviewed again at a particular time. This system will enable draft agendas to be drawn up in advance and help identify papers which may require early planning and extensive preparation).

- to ensure that the committee operates in accordance with these guidelines;

- to be thoroughly familiar with the committee's terms of reference so that appropriate advice on the committee's business in relation to them can be given on them when needed;

- to advise the chair on issues relating to the committee and to ensure that the chair is well informed;

- to be aware of the wider context in which the committee operates and in particular being able to relate its business to the School's strategic priorities;

- to brief the committee chair before the meeting to ensure that any difficulties in transacting business are anticipated and appropriate strategies for handling them identified. For some larger committees with a wide range of business, briefing may best be undertaken by means of a written brief prepared by the secretary in advance of a briefing meeting, for other committees the briefing meeting itself may be sufficient – each committee may set its own practice in this regard;

- to be familiar with the membership of the committee, when the periods of office of the members expire, and the procedure for replacing members;

- to take the minutes of the meeting according to agreed conventions and ensure that the necessary follow up action is taken.