

## **GUIDELINES FOR BOARD, BOARD COMMITTEE AND SENATE PAPERS-(Updated October 2021)**

### **Presentation of business to the Board, Senate and other governance committees:**

These guidelines will be reviewed and updated annually by the Governance Office and signed off by the Chair of the Board of Governors and the Registrar, Secretary and Chief Operating Officer, and circulated to relevant staff within the University.

1. All papers must use the standard governance committee report template, and follow the guidelines detailed below. The report template ensures that key subject matter and the action requested of the committee is detailed both concisely and precisely.
2. Senior managers are requested to ensure that reports written for the Board, or its committees, or for Senate, use the report template and the guidelines. Sponsors of papers are responsible for ensuring that reports are of appropriate quality and comply with the template and guidelines.
3. Papers must present business as clearly and as simply as possible. Papers must have an Executive Summary which provides a concise summary covering its purpose and key points.
4. Formal decisions requested of the committee (To Note, To Recommend, To Approve) must be worded in a clear, precise, unambiguous and self-contained manner.
5. In general, papers proposing a particular course of action must include an assessment of risk and/or a high level options analysis. If appropriate, this should also describe any risks arising from taking no action, in addition to the action proposed.
6. Jargon must be avoided, and acronyms must only be used either if they are genuinely in common usage (for example, MP, OfS). If not, they should be spelt out in the first instance.
7. Board and Committee papers for major items of business must be written specifically for the recipient governance committee, rather than be re-cycled papers generated for other internal/management committees or informal groups. Wherever relevant, papers should include options for discussion and consideration, and provide supporting detail regarding action or decisions requested of the committee.
8. Papers must be formatted so that they are readable via Diligent, and ideally be of no more than 2000-3000 words length. It is recognised that occasionally, major complex topics may require greater detail and if this is likely to be the case, report authors should contact the Governance Office ), with a limited number of appendices. Papers must be written as text in Word, with graphics and PowerPoint slides where appropriate. Occasionally there may be a case for providing additional material in the Reading Room but this must be used sparingly and all key points must be contained within the main paper.
9. For major papers which require Senate or Board approval prior to submission to an external stakeholder (e.g. OfS), or publication by the University, the report template must be used to provide a high level summary, and the full paper included as an appendix/in the Reading Room.
10. Requests for approval of revisions to internal policies, and other University governing documents, must explain the need/objective and key points of proposals, and provide as an appendix a tracked changes copy of the policy/document to enable committee members to view changes in their overall context.