A: The Governance Office – Committee Secretariat

The Governance Office provides an "end to end" secretariat function to the committees that it supports. The Governance Office takes responsibility for the preparation and delivery of the following:

1. the setting (date/time) of committee meetings in liaison with the chair of committee, and other key colleagues, and the preparation of an annual schedule of committee meetings;
2. venue booking/provision of virtual or hybrid meeting options;
3. formal communication with committee members via the Deputy Secretary e-mail account;
4. the preparation of a forward agenda for the committee, which supports the coordination of business across the University's committee structure;
5. the drafting of agendas for consideration and sign off by the committee chair;
6. providing definitive advice and guidance to colleagues regarding the preparation of papers and reports for the committee, and clarifying the expectations of the committee chair and members regarding the quality of papers and reports;
7. collation of papers/reports, and their timely circulation (normally 7 calendar days prior to the meeting);
8. collation of attendance/apologies at committee meetings, including colleagues attending in support of specific agenda items;
9. venue arrangements (including catering arrangements where required) on the day of the committee meeting;
10. the drafting of minutes for sign off by the committee chair, or the RSCOO;
11. drafting of actions, and their timely circulation (usually following the sign-off of the draft minutes of the committee meeting) to relevant committee members/attendees/colleagues;
12. relevant follow up activity that may arise after/between committee meetings;
13. as appropriate, liaison with the committee chair and members to expedite decision-making required between meetings;
14. the maintenance of an archive of past agendas and papers for the committee, and service provision to colleagues requesting access to, or information from past agendas and papers;
15. provision of governance advice to the chair of the committee re: aspects of decision-making, compliance with the University's governing instruments, quoracy and scheduling;
16. induction and support to incoming members of the committee.

B: Working with the Governance Office

To enable the Governance Office to discharge its responsibilities, and to support the effective functioning of the University's major committees, colleagues are asked to:

for business scheduling:

1. make contact at the earliest opportunity with the relevant Governance colleague who supports the committee to discuss scheduling options. Please note that proposals may also need to be considered prior to a formal committee by groups such as SLT, PSLT, SPG, Radar. The Governance Office can advise and signpost on such matters;
2. ensure that the report/paper sponsor is updated regarding the development of the report and its scheduling. The sponsor must be a member or permanent attendee at the committee, and they will be expected to introduce the paper to the committee;
3. appreciate that it is not always possible to include a paper/report as an agenda item onto your first preference of a meeting. This may be due to the anticipated volume of business at the meeting, or due to the item needing to be considered by several committees prior to a final decision.

for the submission of papers:

4. prepare your report using the standard committee template, and follow the guidance for report authors. Committee chairs have made clear their expectations regarding papers, and the importance of good quality executive summaries, and recommendations, which make clear:
   a. the purpose of the report, and why it is being presented to the committee;
   b. any request for the deployment of finance resource, how much, and whether it is already budgeted, or not;
   c. the decisions requested of the committee. Committees should be asked to **note**, **recommend to** a parent/superior committee, or **approve**. You should assume that committees will "consider" and/or "discuss" the agenda items they receive, and recommendations inviting this are not required;
5. ensure that report's sponsor is content with the final version, and has signed it off for submission to the Governance Office;
6. please do not e-mail the Governance Office the "*latest version*" or "*final draft*" paper which is still awaiting sign off;
7. e-mail the final, signed-off report to the Governance Office by the date requested (this will usually be 8-12 calendar days prior to the committee meeting. Submitting reports on this timescale will normally allow the main circulation of the agenda pack to the committee to take place 7 calendar days prior to the meeting);
8. if the final, signed-off report will not be ready for inclusion in the main agenda circulation, please keep the relevant Governance Office colleague updated.

   The Governance Office will refer reports which do not meet these standards back to their author and sponsor.