



## TAKING AND WRITING MINUTES

### Some helpful checklists for minute takers

#### Before the meeting

- Have I read the minutes of the last meeting?
- What other reading do I need to do to prepare for the meeting?
- Do I understand the subject matter on the agenda?
- If not, where can I get help?
- Do I have enough copies of all the papers for the meeting including the minutes of the last meeting?
- If the chair signs the minutes, have I prepared a copy for her/him to sign.
- Are my papers in good order, in a ring-bound file with the agenda items clearly marked?
- Is the room set out as the participants want it?
- Do I know the chair of the meeting?
- If not, what can I do to enhance my professional relationship with the chair?
- Have I arranged to sit next to the chair? If not, where will I sit?
- Have I asked the chair for a few minutes briefing on the agenda?  
When will this happen?
- Have I diarised time to write the minutes up after the meeting?
- Have I prepared an attendance list for circulation at the meeting?
- Do I have all the stationery I need for the meeting including paper and at least two pens.

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The Centre for Strategy and Communication 140 Old Street, London EC1V 9BJ  
Tel. 0207 490 3030 email [info@the-centre.co.uk](mailto:info@the-centre.co.uk) [www.the-centre.co.uk](http://www.the-centre.co.uk)

## **During the meeting**

- Have I circulated the attendance list and has everyone signed it?
- Do I have an accurate record of all those who have given their apologies?
- Am I using the chair's opening summary in each agenda item to alert me to the likely nature of the decision?
- Am I aware of the speakers in the discussion and am I helping the chair ensure that anyone who wants to speak can do so?
- Am I focusing on the key points made by each speaker and how these relate to the decisions to be made?
- Are my notes brief and abbreviated and do they relate to the decisions the group is making?
- Am I remembering to concentrate on the meeting and continuing to make notes throughout for this purpose?
- Am I clear about the decision on each agenda item and, if not, can I ask the chair to clarify?
- Have I noted all action points carefully with the name/initials of the person responsible and a deadline where appropriate?
- Have I made a note of the date, time and venue of the next meeting?
- Have I gone through my notes ensuring I can understand and read back all key words and highlighting the main points in each agenda item?

## After the meeting

- ❑ Have I got the chair's signature for the minutes of the previous meeting (where necessary) and have I filed and archived these carefully as the approved record?
- ❑ Have I started to write up my first draft of the minutes within 48 hours of the meeting?
- ❑ Are the minutes formal or informal?
- ❑ What numbering and house style will be used? Is there a template for this?
- ❑ If the minutes are formal, am I remembering to use the passive voice and to use the correct verbs when recording discussion points?
- ❑ Am I summarising discussions in concise form, using longer sentences to wrap up several related discussion points?
- ❑ Have I read the minutes over before sending them to the chair for their approval?
- ❑ Have I given the chair a clear deadline for their approval of the draft minutes?
- ❑ Will the minutes go out as soon as the chair has approved them or with the papers for the next meeting?
- ❑ If the minutes are going out straight away, have I highlighted action points for individual recipients?
- ❑ If the minutes are going out with the papers for the next meeting, do I need to prepare a separate Action Sheet?
- ❑ When the minutes are filed, which of the background papers need to be filed with them?