



Information Sheet Committee Meetings How to Take Good Meeting Minutes?

What is the purpose of meeting minutes?

- Meeting minutes are the **most** important part of any meeting
- Minutes are used to record decisions and action items and also lay out the next steps.

They have **three separate functions**:

- To make sense of meetings and remind meeting participants of what was decided
- Share meeting information with people who didn't attend
- Record meeting information for future reference.

Meetings need to be as effective as possible and keeping track of minutes is crucial.

The Action-Steps

a. Planning Meeting Minutes

1. Step 1: Plan beforehand to ensure meeting minutes are effective.

The first step to successful minutes is not sitting down at the table and taking notes- it starts way ahead of the meeting. You organise most of the work before the meeting- during the meeting, you can then focus on capturing what's being said and important meeting decisions.

Use your meeting agenda

Your agenda is an outline of your meeting so you don't have to make it vague.

The questions you should answer in your agenda:

1. *What's the purpose of the meeting?*
2. *Where is the meeting held?*
3. *Who will attend the meeting?*
4. *What are the goals/objectives?*
5. *What will be discussed at the meeting?*

Focus on the right things when you take notes and write your minutes- add all those details, like talking points and decisions to be made.

A specific agenda will make it easier to take notes during the meeting.

2. Step 2: Take good meeting notes.

In order to take meeting minutes, be prepared. Make sure that you come to the meeting room in time, select a good seat where you can hear everyone, have note-taking paper with pens that you are comfortable writing with. The better the notes, the easier it will be to write the minutes. It can be difficult to take notes during meetings - missing one point could be costly both in terms of time and money.

Use the agenda.

This is where planning makes all the difference. Organize notes under each agenda item and fill in what is discussed during the meeting. Don't try to capture everything. Instead of writing full sentences, use single words.

Structure your notes

- “*Logistical Facts*”-Identifiable at the top- includes the date, the name of the meeting, type of meeting and the meeting attendees (including attendees who were invited but unable to attend).
- Write notes sequentially, structured under the agenda topic headings
- Listen for and capture key points,

A useful strategy is to use a recorder during the meeting. Notes can be taken but listening to the recording ensures that nothing is missed when creating minutes.

Ask if something’s unclear-ask meeting participants to clarify items.

Step 3: Write and fine-tune effective meeting minutes.

i. What information should you include in your minutes?

Use the agenda in the minutes.

1. *What was the purpose of the meeting?*
2. *Where was the meeting held?*
3. *Who attended/didn’t attend the meeting?*
4. *What was the goal/objective?*
5. *What was discussed at the meeting?*
6. *What’s the date, time, and location of the next meeting?*
7. *What items will be discussed at the next meeting?*

For **each agenda item**, answer these questions:

1. *What was the agenda item?*
2. *What was discussed?*
3. *Who said what?*
4. *What was agreed as the next step(s)?*
5. *Who is responsible for any action-items/tasks?*
6. *What is the deadline?*
7. *Who’s responsible for following up?*
8. *Where are completed tasks recorded?*
9. *What will be discussed in the future in terms of this agenda item?*
10. *What are future tasks and decisions?*

Use this list of questions according to your needs-record all the **important** information.

ii. How do you write minutes?

- Use the **questions** to ascertain what notes to include.
- Keep minutes **consistent**-always use the same words/phrases such:
 - “*Action necessary*”
 - “*No action necessary*”
 - “*No decision taken*”
 - “*No consensus reached*”
 - “*Deferred to*”
 - “*Referred to*”
- Check your **grammar**.
- Use **past tense**. “The meeting was held...”
- **Delete** unnecessary words.
- Minute **turnaround** needs to be fast.