

# MINUTE TAKING



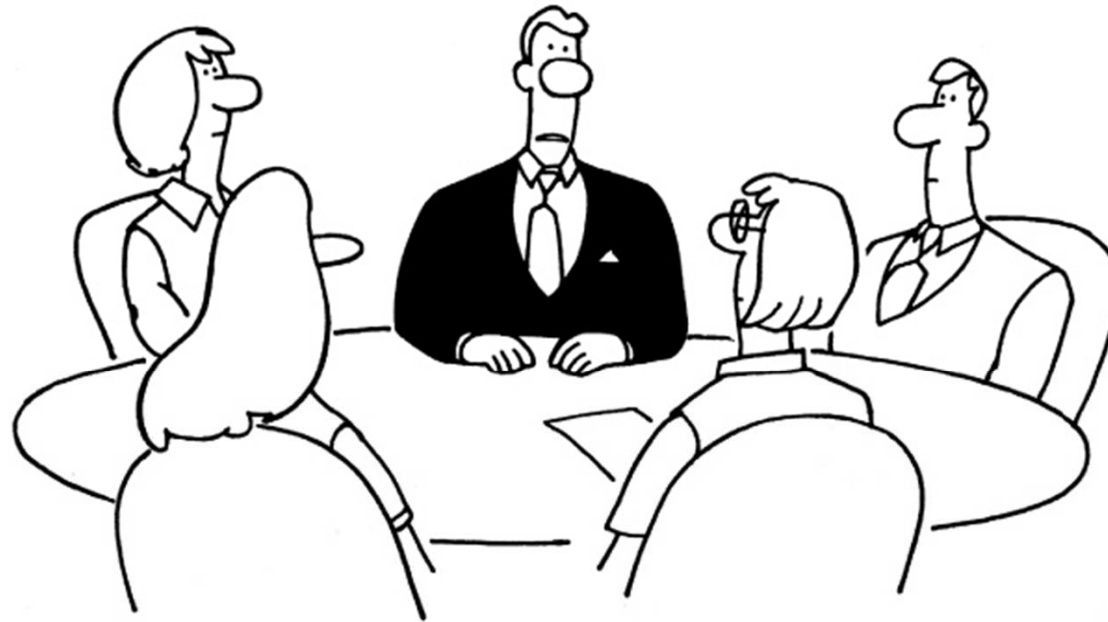
Sarah Johnson  
Programme Portfolio Manager  
Faculty of Technology, Design & Environment

# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To understand the reasons why minutes are important at Brookes.
- To identify the challenges of minute taking.
- To list the characteristics of good minutes and what to avoid.
- To practice minute taking and receive positive and constructive feedback.

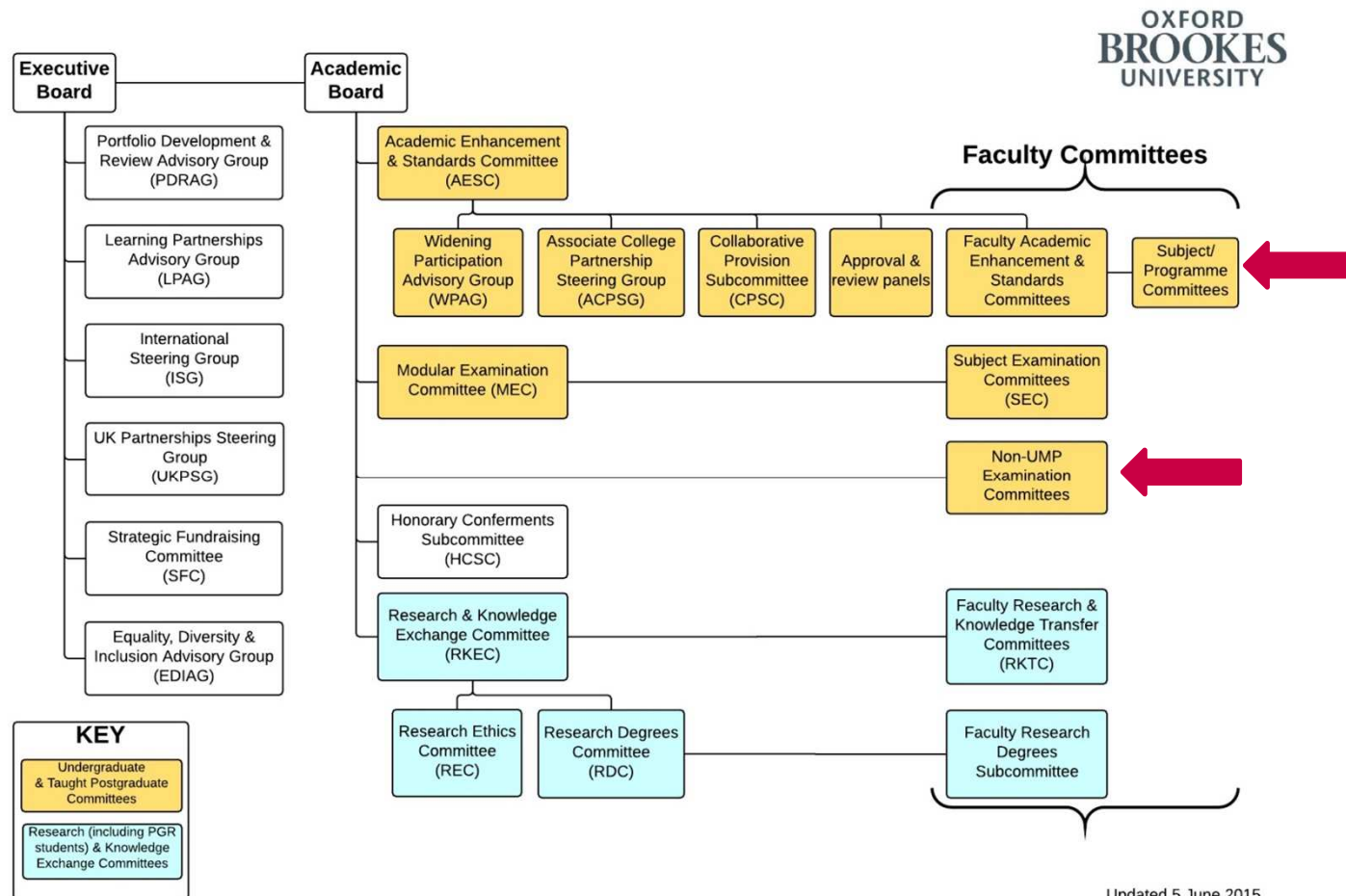
## WHAT ARE MINUTES?

A formal record of the business conducted and the decisions made by a committee



*“Whew! That was close!  
We almost decided something!”*

# GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



## WHO ARE THE MINUTES READ BY?

- **Chair, Secretary and members of the committee**
- **Members of other committees**
  - Sub-committees and parent committees
- **Students**
- **Stakeholders and Partners**
  - Anyone whose work may be affected by the business of the committee
- **Governors and co-opted members**
- **Internal Auditors**
  - KPMG
- **External Reviewers**
  - QAA and PSRBs
- **Investigations**
  - HR cases, Office of the Independent Adjudicator
- **Members of the public**

## THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Freedom of Information Act
- Data Protection Act
- Use of recording devices



# QUALITIES OF GOOD MINUTES

In groups, discuss what are the qualities of good minutes

(5 minutes)



## QUALITIES OF GOOD MINUTES

- Consider your audience
- Not a transcript
- Summarise
- Use full sentences and proper grammar
- Use roles where possible, including for actions
- Chronological order
- Take care with acronyms
- Chair's Action



## STRUCTURE OF MINUTES

Each item of business should be recorded as a separate minute and should include:

- The information received
- The level of consideration
- The main discussion points
- Any decisions taken
- The key factors influencing a decision
- Referrals to other committees
- Any actions agreed, when these should be completed and by whom

# GRAMMAR AND STYLE

- Past tense
- Passive voice
- Collective responsibility – “The Committee decided...”, “Members discussed...”



## PAST TENSE

“The graduation ceremonies **will be** held in January from next year.”

becomes

‘The Committee agreed that graduation ceremonies **would be** held in January in future.’

“At the last meeting **we agreed** that...”

becomes

‘At the last meeting **it had been agreed** that...’

“**We held** graduation ceremonies in December last year.”

becomes

‘The Committee heard that graduation ceremonies **had been held** in December the previous year.’

## PASSIVE VOICE

“Simon made a mistake.”

becomes

‘A mistake was made.’

“The University could not enrol all the applicants to the history programme.”

becomes

‘Not all applicants to the history programme could be enrolled by the University.’

## EXERCISE 1

Fred Smith, Academic Administration Manager:

‘Moving graduation to April is going to cause lots of problems. My staff won’t be able to cope with the extra work at that time of year.’

Chair:

‘We cannot choose when to hold the ceremonies, SMT have made this decision. We will have to find ways of working around any workload issues.’

## EXERCISE 1 – EXAMPLE

The Committee heard that the decision to move the graduation ceremonies to be held in April each year could cause issues with staff workload as this was a particularly busy period. However, this decision had been taken by the Senior Management Team (SMT) and managers would therefore need to consider ways of managing staff time to overcome any problems that may arise.

## EXERCISE 2

Chair (regarding paper EG140322/06b, Faculty of Business Annual Review Report 2012/13):

‘This is excellent! I want to see more annual review reports like this in future. It will serve as an example of good practice for all the Faculty annual reviews. It includes all the relevant information and is well thought out. The ADSEs should be using this as a template.’

## EXERCISE 2 - EXAMPLE

The Committee received and considered the Faculty of Business Annual Review Report (EG140322/06b). The Committee heard the report was comprehensive and should serve as an example of good practice for Faculty Annual Reviews. The Committee agreed for the Associate Deans Student Experience (ADSEs) to use this report as a template for future Faculty Annual Reviews.

**Action: Associate Deans Student Experience**