

Managing Meetings

Meetings are the most effective way for clubs to communicate and solve issues that may have arisen. For a meeting to be effective it must be conducted properly and the following are a number of guidelines to assist you in the proper management of club meetings on both a formal and informal level. UCD Sports club committee members must make themselves aware of, complete and submit the online UCD AUC Code of Conduct for Sports Clubs Committee Members.

All students have Zoom accounts assigned to their UCD Connect email account which enables them to host online meetings in addition to in person meetings. Tips on hosting zoom meetings and also zoom etiquette can be found [here](#).

12.1 Appoint a chairperson for the meeting

The role of chairperson may differ between clubs. Where a President or Chairperson is an elected member of the committee they chair the meetings. However, where such a position does not exist it may be the club captain that chairs the meeting. The success of a meeting can often depend on the ability of the Chair. Discussions can be heated and if the meeting is not run well, business is not finished and decisions are not clear. It is important that the Chairperson is able to keep control of the situation, and each person's point of view needs to be listened to and accepted. Agendas should be adhered to and sent out to the committee before the meeting.

- The Chairperson indicates when a person may speak.
- The Chairperson should keep the discussion firmly focused on the topic.
- The Chairperson should have a time limit as to when the discussion should be brought to an end.
- The Chairperson should remain neutral to the

conversation unless the group seeks an opinion or guidance.

- Following discussions the Chairperson should summarise the points of the meeting and make key points.
- If the matter cannot be decided on, the matter should be referred to a working party for report at the following meeting.

Remember: "If you fail to prepare, you are preparing to fail".

12.1.1 Set Objectives

Before planning the agenda for the meeting, write down a phrase or several phrases to complete the sentence:

By the end of the meeting, I want the group to...

Depending on the focus of your meeting, your ending to the sentence might include phrases such as:

- ..have given three ideas for fundraising.
- ..have generated three ideas for increasing memberships.
- ..have generated three initiatives for retaining members.

One benefit of setting objectives for the meeting is to help you plan the meeting. The more concrete your meeting objectives, the more focused your agenda will be. A second important benefit of having specific objectives for each meeting is that you have a concrete measure against which you can evaluate that meeting.

- Were you successful in meeting the objectives?
- Why or why not?
- Is another meeting required?

Remember: Setting objectives allows you to continuously improve your meetings effectiveness.

12.1.2 Assign Meeting Preparation

These tips are sure-fire ways to warm up the group and direct participants' attention to the meeting objectives.

- Try to give all participants something to prepare in advance. This will give the meeting a new significance for each member.
- For problem-solving meetings, have the group read the background information necessary to get down to business in the meeting.
- Ask each group member to think of one possible solution to the problem to get everyone thinking about the meeting topic.

Remember: *Try to involve all members of the group in some way. This will ensure that they take ownership of the group creating a more constructive environment.*

12.1.3 Assign Action Items

- Don't finish any discussion in the meeting without deciding how to act on it. Listen for key comments that flag potential action items and don't let them pass without addressing them during your meeting.
- The following statements are examples of comments that should trigger action items to get a task done, hold another meeting or further examine a particular idea.
 - » We should really...
 - » That's a topic for a different meeting...
 - » I wonder if we could...
- Assigning tasks and projects as they arise during the meeting means that your follow-through will be complete. Addressing off-topic statements during the meeting in this way allows you to keep the meeting on track.

Remember: *By immediately addressing these statements with the suggestion to examine the issue outside the current meeting, you show the participants that you value their time and input.*

12.2 Formal Meetings

A formal meeting is one in which major items will be discussed and decided on and following the meeting will be put into operation.

12.2.1 Prior to the meeting the following must be done

- The Chairperson (President) must call for and decide on the agenda items with the Secretary.
- A notice of the meeting and agenda must be distributed to all involved with the meeting (in the case of the AGM, to all members of the club).
- Committee members should be reminded of any tasks, which they may need to complete before attending the meeting.

12.2.2 During the meeting:

- Always endeavour to start the meeting on time.
- The Chairperson should welcome all in attendance and **declare the meeting open**.
- **Apologies** are called for and read out. All of those present are recorded. The Chairperson may then put a motion forward to accept the apologies. A vote may be taken and the result recorded.
- The accuracy of the **previous meeting's minutes** are confirmed by those present at the meeting. (Minutes should have been circulated with the agenda and notice of meeting). The motion of acceptance has to be nominated and seconded.
- **Matters arising** from the previous meeting are briefly discussed but if a discussion develops the Chairperson should move these on to general business.
- **Correspondence** (inward and outward) may be listed. Those items which are considered important may be tabled as a separate agenda item.
- **Financial statements** are the next item to be tabled. This may include items for payment as well as an up-to-date statement of accounts (monthly). All financial reports presented and discussed require a formal motion of acceptance.
- Reports of the **Committee** should be distributed prior to the meeting and discussion should be kept to recommendations on those matters requiring approval or further action.
- **Other reports** are dealt with next. Again, discussion should be brief.
- **General business** is the opportunity for minor items of discussion to be raised. The Chairperson should encourage members to submit major items of business prior to the meeting so as they may be placed on the agenda. The Chairperson will ultimately have the decision as to whether or not the item is to be discussed.
- **Action items** – this is the confirmation that items delegated to individuals have been completed or will be completed within the specified time frame.
- **Next meeting** – date, time and venue to be confirmed.
- **Close of meeting** – The Chairperson will thank members for attending and declare the meeting closed.

12.2.3 Post-meeting:

Upon completion of the meeting and in the ensuing period, the Chairperson will be required to liaise with the Secretary on the discussed action items, the meeting

minutes, timeframe and circulation date, any special items and the schedule for the next meeting.

12.3 Informal Meeting

An informal meeting would ideally encourage all members of the club to participate in discussions so as to build morale, solve problems, discuss and trade ideas, gather opinions on various issues and brainstorm.

In order for an informal meeting to be effective, it too must be run correctly with a Chairperson in place. The Chairperson will need to ensure that:

- The purpose of the meeting is established from the outset.
- Ensure that everyone understands the topics which are to be discussed.
- Ensure that people are not judgemental in the initial stages and take in what each person is saying.
- Ensure that only one person is speaking at any time.
- Encourage everyone involved to be objective and keep discussion focused on the topic.
- Examine each option individually and make sure that a conclusion is reached.

12.4 Motions

A motion is a formal proposal put to a meeting for consideration. In order for a motion to be discussed at a meeting it must first be seconded by another member.

The Chairperson will then ask the proposer to speak on the motion and other committee members may add to the discussion. After the discussion the motion is then put to the committee for a vote.

All motions which are passed then become a resolution. Regardless of whether they are carried or not, they must be minuted.

12.5 Voting at Meetings

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, the Chairperson must have a clear understanding of the voting rights of the members. For this reason it is useful to have a copy of the club constitution on hand at every meeting.

The Chairman must decide which the most appropriate way of taking a vote whether it be:

- a. A show of hands.
- b. A verbal vote.
- c. A ballot vote.

12.6 Example of Annual General Meeting Agenda

UCD ABC Club CLUB

Fifth Annual General Meeting

Friday 15th August 2017

1. Welcome and Introductions
 - Present
 - Apologies
2. Confirmation of Minutes of fourth Annual General Meeting 5 August 2016
3. Adoption of Annual Accounts for year end 30th June 2016
4. President's Report
5. Notices of Motion
6. Treasurer's Report
7. Committee Reports
8. Election of Officers
9. Report of Honours Award Committee (presentation of honours, life membership etc.)
10. General Business
11. Close of Meeting

12.7 Common Problems with Meetings

Meetings can be plagued by problems. Some of the most often recurring problems are easily avoided if you know what you are looking for:

- **Lack of clarity:** The chair should clarify or sum up all issues, for the purpose of the attendees and the minute taker.
- **Decisions delayed:** Putting off a decision won't make it go away. Only do this if you genuinely need more information or wider consultation.
- **Too little involvement:** Make sure everyone gets the chance to share their point of view. If someone is being overbearing ask them to be quiet and let others have some input.
- **Meetings go on too long:** Agree a rough finishing time at the beginning of the meeting and don't let people ramble on.
- **Lack of understanding of the issues:** Make sure people are given the information they need to make a decision on an issue.
- **No real follow up:** Make sure actions are clearly identified. If work is not done then it is easier to find out where the problem is.