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# How to take effective minutes Tutors’ notes

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## Introduction

This is the new reps training course for 2022 which is designed to be run either online or face to face as a short bite size course. The course can be run for one branch or representatives of different branches.

## How these notes work

There are four core resources associated with the course:

1. The PowerPoint presentation, which includes visual aids, but also maintains the structure/order of the course
2. The participant’s workbook, which covers logistics, background information and activity sheets
3. The tutor’s notes which explain the activities, suggest discussion-prompts, give (loose) timings, and ‘index’ the other resources, tying the whole thing together. The words in red are the changes from online and face to face delivery.
4. As tutors who’ve committed to delivering this course, we would suggest a small amount of preparation time ahead of the course to ensure you’re familiar with the session, activities and tutor instruction.

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| **Session** | **Slide no/ WB page** | **Notes** | **Resources** |
| **Preparation** |  | Have the PowerPoint presentation open have with printed workbooks ready to handout. | PowerPoint and workbook  Name cards, pens |
| **Welcome**  5-10 mins | No Slide | * It depends on how you are using this course; it could be delivered as part of a branch meeting where no introductions are needed but if it is being used as a stand-alone course then it best that to get everyone to introduce themselves and to say if they have a current role in their branch. |  |
| **Workbook Learning outcomes**  Introductions and objectives | Slide 1-2/  Page 3 | * Introduce tutor here if stand-alone course. * Pronoun to be mentioned * Go over housekeeping: muting mics until speaking and trying to not talk over people if online   Go through learning outcomes page 3/slide 2   * To be able to prepare for the meeting * To be able to use common phrases to reduce the amount of writing needed * To be able to structure how you write the minutes * To know what to do with the minutes after the meeting   Interactive course and reps are encouraged to discuss, raise items and participate in the course |  |
| **Minutes why take them?**  15 mins | Slides 3-10/ Page 3-9 | Slide 3: Minutes – why do we take them?Go through slide It is very unusual for a branch to have every member attend any meeting and certainly not all of them. For those that missed a meeting, for whatever reason, having taken and distributed the minutes from that meeting keeps members up to date and involved.  It reminds everyone who attended what were the outcomes of the meeting and when they were assigned a task to complete, what is was and when the deadline is.  The minutes from any meeting should give a true and accurate recording of the meeting. This could be used as evidence that someone was informed of a particular thing that happened and what was or is expected to happen. Slide 4: What could go wrong? Go through slide  Everybody worries when they are first asked to take minutes  Don’t worry, all these things can simply be sorted.   * If there is an agenda for the meeting use that as your guide to writing the minutes for the meeting * It is important to make it clear to those attending the meeting that it is stated what needs to be recorded in the minutes during the meeting. * If you work closely with whoever is chairing the meeting you should be able to keep up and get the necessary points. * If you have the Chair check the minutes before they are distributed, another pair of eyes should be able to spot most mistakes * At the end of the meeting agree when the minutes need to be distributed by and who the minutes need to be distributed to.  Slide 5: What are the important facts that need to be recorded? Go through slide  All that is required from the minute is try and give a flavour of what was discussed at the meeting. The rest is just the basic facts of what happened. The following facts are required:   * When and where the meeting took place * Who attended the meeting and in what capacity (chair, investigating officer, guest, observer etc.) * Was the meeting quorum? * Who didn’t attend (gave apologies) * What topics were discussed (allegations, grievance, pay deal etc.) * What was agreed (was there a vote to do a particular thing, date of next meeting etc) * Who is actioning what (the committee as a whole, the manager, the member an individual etc.) * What time limits have been set (to be completed by next meeting, by the end of the month etc.) * What time the meeting ended * If a further meeting has been agreed, when and where.   **It is important to remember that not every word need to be recorded.** Slide 6: Preparation Go through slide Lay the groundwork Make sure everyone has the relevant paperwork for the upcoming meeting in advance such as minutes from the previous meeting and the agenda for the next meeting. Create a minute templateIn quorum In most trade union meetings, there is a requirement to have a minimum present for a decision made at that meeting to be considered democratically binding as per the trade union rulebook. This is known as being in quorum and should be recorded in the minutes if the required number has been reached or not.  The default number to be in quorum is equal to one-half of those called (invited) to the meeting. This can be set to a different amount by the branch by using what is known as a byelaw. Normally the branch secretary and the Chair has access to any byelaws the branch has. Prepopulating the minute template There are some things that have already been submitted before the meeting such as a motion to vote on at the meeting. This can be written in the minute template beforehand, and space left to add any amendments and any points raised and the outcome of the vote. There could be a submitted written report that could be referred to as the report was discussed and accepted by the committee for instance. Apologies given prior to the meeting could be written into the template before the meeting.  If you plan on using abbreviations during the meeting, make a key of what they are before you start. Slide 7: During the meeting Go through the slide  It is always worth arriving in plenty of time before the meeting start time.  The chair can clarify that when something has been said or actioned that it needs to be noted and something that is agreed to be off the record, so not to be put in the minutes. The chair may wait to move on to the next item on the agenda until the minute taker has caught up. Attendance sheet Asking attendees to sign in at the door of the meeting room on entry or sending around the room the attendance sheet at the beginning of the meeting is a good way to capture the names of those attending. At a large meeting this might only need to be recorded as a total number attending. This information helps quantify what is needed to be sure what number is enough to be a majority vote. It is good practice to get the attendee to print their name to make it easier to read later. It might be worth asking for emails so they can be sent the finished minutes. It needs to be stated on the sheet or at the meeting what the emails will be used for and only to be used for that stated use to comply with data collection regulations. Seating chart/plan Making a seating chart or plan helps the minute taker to recognise who is talking at the meeting. It could be just the initials of the person and where they are sat in the room. Noting motions Throughout meetings, it is likely that participants will make motions. The recorder must write down not only what the motion is but also who made it. It is not necessary to write down the name of the person who seconds a motion. Motions made by a committee do not require a second since the committee itself is made up of two or more people already.  In addition to the motions that are made, seconded, discussed, and voted on, there will be occasions when subsidiary motions are made to postpone taking a vote. When voting on a motion is postponed, the recorder needs to indicate this has happened and offer whatever information is available about when a vote might be taken on the motion. Slide 8 Use common phrases to describe what has happened Using common phrases through the minutes is a quick way to capture what happened such as ‘after a lengthy discussion in which everyone aired their views’ describes what could be a very lengthy part of the meeting where nothing was necessarily settled. The list below are some examples:   * It was reported * It was agreed that * The report was noted * The matter was deferred until * Mr….. (or initials, but it needs to correspond with attendee list) proposed that * This was seconded by Mrs…. And agreed unanimously * The motion was carried by six votes to four, with one abstention * The Chair asked for their views on * After a lengthy discussion in which everyone aired their views * The Chair summed up by saying * In reply to a question by Mrs…. The Secretary intimated that * The Chair referred to the previously circulated report on * Recommendations from the treasurer were approved in full * There being no further business the Chair thanked everyone for attending and concluded the meeting at  Slide 9: Can you make a recording of a meeting? Go through slide Slide 10: After the meeting Go through slide  Brevity is key to good minutes otherwise very few people will read them.  The minutes should have a structure to them, so they are clear.  **Slide 11: Taking minutes for an online meeting**  Go through slide |  |
| **Activity A**  15 mins | Slide 12-13/ Page 11-12 | **Activity A: Putting it into practice**  Watch the video in the link below and take minutes using the template on page 6  **Slide 13: The filled in template**  Go through slide | Show video  <https://vimeo.com/showcase/prospect-ed>  Password: education |
| **Any questions** | Slide 14 | **Take any questions and advertise about the other short courses**  How to have an effective branch  How to have an effective union meeting  How to give an effective speech (public Speaking)  How to write an effective motion?? Idea for the future?? |  |
|  |  | **End of training** |  |

## Tutor Notes/Course Structure