

UNIVERSITY SECRETARIAT

Effective Minute-Taking

Minutes of meetings are part of Carleton's history and serve an important purpose for the institution's historical record. It's important that they are accurate, accessible and consistent.

BEST PRACTICES

- Write the minutes the week the meeting occurred or as soon as possible
- Use plain language
- Follow the agenda and use chronological order of information
- Do not use acronyms, but if required, spell out in full first
- Use a consistent design and layout
- Not verbatim or transcripts
- Use passive voice (it was moved, seconded and carried that...)
- Minutes should stand on their own without need to refer to the circulated materials
- Have a consistent file name and procedure for review/approval

WHAT TO INCLUDE

- Meeting date, time (start and adjournment), and location
- Name of committee or other group holding the meeting, the Chair and Secretary
- List of those present, including Chair and Secretary, members, guests in attendance, and any recorded regrets/absences.
- Quorum
- Approval of minutes and a record of formal motions and outcomes
- Associated materials and documents that were circulated
- Deferred items
- Requests for information

WHAT TO LEAVE OUT

- Avoid directly quoting individuals or providing transcripts
- Don't include unsubstantiated or subjective information or opinions
- Leave out expressive adjectives, embellishments, buzzwords and jargon

RETENTION AND DISPOSITION

Together with the agenda and associated documents, minutes provide a long-term or permanent record of the proceedings. Once approved, they are an official record of the university and are required to be retained and preserved. Only keep the final version and send to the appropriate department for storing. All personal notes, drafts and recordings should be shredded/destroyed.

At the end of their retention period, minutes and associated documentation must be (in most cases) transferred to the University Records and Archives.