

## Chairing Meetings

### *What is a Chair?*

A **chair** is the person who runs a meeting. They're there to make sure the meeting is as easy and effective as possible. Staff-Student Committee meetings should be productive and positive spaces, and it'll be your job to ensure this happens.

### *What does a Chair do?*

A chair:

- Has overall control of the meeting, including its progress and conclusion
- Ensures members don't interrupt each other
- Refocuses the meeting when conversations get off-topic
- Ensures the meeting runs on time and sticks to the agenda
- Allows everybody to get a chance to speak
- Understands people's roles and what they are bringing to the table

### *Isn't this a big responsibility?*

Short answer: yes! However, there's nothing to be worried about. You'll be surprised at how many chairing skills you already have. Just remember that everybody else in the room also has a responsibility for ensuring the meeting is productive and participatory – it's just your job to take the lead on this. The academic staff in your Department will work with you to prepare you for SSC meetings.

### *How should I prepare for a meeting?*

Make sure you've read the agenda and any papers you're sent so you're clued up on what the meeting's about. It's helpful to ask yourself a series of questions beforehand:

- Who will be in the meeting and what are their roles?
- What do I already know about the topics at hand and what do I need to research?
- What am I going to say at this meeting?
- How will I ensure that everybody has a chance to speak?
- How will I feed back the outcomes of the meeting to the students I represent?

This last one is really important. As a Rep, it's part of your job to 'close the feedback loop' – to let students know how the feedback they've given has been acted on. Maybe you'll post on your Department's Facebook group, pin up a summary of the minutes on your Department's noticeboard or send out an all-student email – it's up to you, as long as you make sure that as many students as possible will receive the information.

### *How should I conduct the meeting?*

- Be assertive if necessary to help people listen to others

- Notice differences in who contributes
- Call on speakers in an appropriate order to regulate the flow of discussion
- Pay attention to both the content of the discussion and the process
- Help everyone to participate by asking questions like 'What do you think?' and 'How can we achieve this?'
- Don't be afraid to move the discussion on if you notice the meeting is running out of time
- If necessary, summarise the discussion at the end of an agenda point to ensure everybody is clear on what's just been said

*Is there anything else I need to know?*

You'll be sent the meeting minutes (a summary of what you've talked about at the meeting) afterwards by the meeting's Secretary. Sometimes there'll be an *action*, which details what you have to get done by the next meeting. Make sure you do it! It's important to be reliable so that you can utilise your Rep position effectively.