The business of Council, Senate and their committees needs to be actively managed in order to support effective oversight and decision-making, and to maximise Council’s time to focus on strategic matters. The following guidance note has been developed to support and assist authors of papers for these committees and University Executive Board.

1. **The Coversheet**

1.1 Each paper (excluding the Matters Arising and previous minutes paper) must have a coversheet. As paper author you are advised to draft the coversheet before writing the paper as it will frame the scope of your paper and identify any steps that you still need to complete before submitting the paper. It is also vital in ensuring that the paper is being presented to the correct committee for the correct purpose, and in helping the committee members understand what they are being asked to do.

1.2 Please allow sufficient time to draft the coversheet appropriately and complete all boxes fully. If you are unsure of any aspects of the approval route/process, please contact the Corporate Governance team via Committees@cardiff.ac.uk for advice.

1.3 The cover sheet template for University committees is available in the Annex A below.

2. **Paper structure and content**

2.1 It is recognised that papers will vary in the breadth of information that will be relevant and necessary for the committee to consider, however, in all cases papers must be as concise as possible. Too much detail can mean that key points/issues are lost and the more strategic nature of scrutiny at this level should be borne in mind. A guideline of six pages maximum for the main paper excluding the cover sheet and any appendices or annexes, is recommended.

2.2 Include any detailed technical information or larger datasets that are relevant and necessary in an appendix, and any other stand-alone reference documents in an annex, with the key points from these drawn out in the main paper to aid decision-making.

2.3 **Avoid abbreviations and acronyms** and use them only if they are already well understood (e.g. HEFCW) or spell them out in full when they first occur in the text.

2.4 Start with a short executive summary so the committee members can readily grasp the key issues before studying them in greater detail, together with a statement of what is being asked of the committee.

2.5 Set out the strategic context so it is clear why this is important to the University and relevant and necessary for the committee to consider.

2.6 Set out the proposals in more detail. The level of background detail should be determined by the information the committee members need to make an informed decision.

2.7 Include information on planned or proposed consultations and wider communication of any proposals.

2.8 Include an analysis of the risks and impacts (on staff, financial, equality and environmental sustainability) of any proposals, and of inaction.

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1 Developed from guidance published by the universities of Exeter and Durham and the Good Governance Institute
2.9 Give a clear and reasoned recommendation, or if the paper is just for noting, a clear statement that the committee needs to note.

2.10 As a paper progresses through its approval route, adjust the messages accompanying the paper so that they are appropriate for the next level and type of approval. In particular you should include any key comments from any previous committee. Where more detailed papers have been through one or more of the major committees you should also consider producing a more succinct summary version instead for Council. The Corporate Governance team can advise on this.

2.11 The use of data visualisation tools such as infographics is recommended and authors are reminded that effective communication is also achieved through focused and succinct PowerPoint/oral presentations.

3. **House Style, Formatting and Submission Guidance**

3.1 To provide consistency across the meeting book, set margins to 2cms all round, use Calibri font (size no smaller than 11pt) and the left alignment formatting feature (which is more accessible than justified text).

3.2 Enumerate the sections and paragraphs for ease of reference by committee members.

3.3 When submitting a document to present amendments please ensure that the changes are clearly shown in the document, using a strikethrough for text to be removed and bold and italics for inserted text. If you wish to use the track changes function in Word (due to the high number of changes required) you are advised to consult with the Corporate Governance Team on formatting, as they will need to receive the document in a PDF format to ensure integrity, with the cover sheet in Word.

3.4 Please avoid the use of embedded/linked files, pivot tables in spreadsheets, and very wide landscape tables where possible as papers will be converted to pdf for use in the meeting book.

3.5 Ensure that all text remains visible within the cells of any spreadsheet or table where you have copied this into the document from another source.

3.6 Ensure that no track changes or editorial comments have been left in the document.

3.7 Please submit all papers for Senate, Council and their major committees to the Corporate Governance team via Committees@cardiff.ac.uk in accordance with your paper commissioning email (due date is normally two weeks before the meeting).

3.8 If your paper is not already expected at the meeting you will need to ensure that you have contacted Committees well in advance of the finalisation of the agenda two weeks beforehand for appropriate authorisation to be received from the Chair.

3.9 The Corporate Governance Team will allocate your paper an official paper number and keep the formal record of each paper presented to the committee.

*Approved by Governance Committee March 2022*
| **Committee:** | Insert committee name and date |
| **Paper Number:** | [To be inserted by Committee Secretariat] |
| **Paper Title** | Insert paper title |
| **Author(s)** | Insert name and title |
| **Presenter(s)** | Please ensure the presenter is aware they will be presenting this item to the Committee. |

**Confidentiality**

- HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL / CONFIDENTIAL / NON-CLASSIFIED
  
  *Delete as appropriate.*
  
  See Publication Scheme pages [link](#) for definitions.

**Purpose of presentation**

1. Briefly summarise:
   - a) the key information the committee needs in order to understand the issues (headlines)
   - b) whether the paper is intended to meet an internal policy or external regulatory compliance requirement.

2. List the action required by the committee as per the following example:
   - The Committee is asked to:
     - a) RECOMMEND ...[the specific itemised proposals contained in the paper] to [Council or other committee as relevant] for approval.
     - or
     - b) APPROVE...[the specific itemised proposals contained in the paper]
     - NB: the committee must have the authority to do this (check with Corporate Governance Team if unsure)
     - or
     - c) DISCUSS/NOTE...[the key message contained in the paper] NB no decision is required of the committee

**Cardiff Data Professional Verified**

Yes/No/ N/A *(delete as appropriate)*

Please confirm if data in this paper has been verified by a Cardiff Data Professional and the confirmation of peer review is included.

**To inform of outcome**

This section should include the names and roles of people who must be informed of the outcome of the committee by the Governance Services Team. This is usually the paper author, presenter, and any other significant contributors.

If this section is left blank it will not be populated and it will be assumed that there is no requirement to inform individuals of the outcome of the meeting.

**Relationship to The Way Forward**

Demonstrate how this links to the achievement of the five Critical Success Factors:
- Priority focus for 2021/22 - student satisfaction and experience;
- the health and wellbeing of our staff and students;
- financial sustainability;
- research grants and contracts;
- civic mission and our contribution to rescue, revive, renew)

**Resource Implications**

What are the resource implications (including financial implications) of doing/not doing?

**Risk and Assurance**

Identify:
- Any links to risks on the institutional risk register and how the risk is affected;
- Any links to risks on another risk register (e.g. operational, departmental) and how it relates to those risks;
- If this paper highlights any new risks or opportunities for consideration by the University;
- What are the risks if the actions proposed in this paper are not agreed and approved

For guidance on risk management please contact the Senior Risk Advisor

### Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

If this paper is a report on a change in Policy or Practice, it is a legal requirement to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA). A template and guidance for EIAs is available here; please confirm this has been carried out and append a copy to this paper. If this is not a change in Policy or Practice, please indicate any identifiable impact (adverse or positive) upon groups who share protected characteristics should your recommendation(s) be accepted or refused.

### Sustainable development

If this paper has the potential to impact on our Climate Emergency work relating to scope 1, 2 and 3 [carbon emissions](#), please detail the impacts of the work and, as appropriate, the proposed mitigations. For issues relating to Climate Emergency, Environmental Sustainability and beyond, please outline the social, economic and environmental value and issues arising from the proposal, including which of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals it addresses - [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/)

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