

## **GUIDANCE FOR DRAFTING PAPERS FOR UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE BOARD, COUNCIL, SENATE AND THEIR MAJOR COMMITTEES**

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 (UEB). All references to 'the Committee' or 'Committees' include Council and Senate unless otherwise stated.

### **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](mailto:Committees@cardiff.ac.uk) for advice.
- 1.3 The cover sheet template is available [here](#). All text which is italicised is to provide guidance and must be deleted or over-written.

### **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 UEB/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 UEB/Committee members can readily grasp the **key issues** before studying them in greater detail, together with a statement of **what is being asked of UEB/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 UEB/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 UEB/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.

- 2.9 Give a clear and reasoned **recommendation**, or if the paper is just for noting, a clear statement that UEB/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 are required to be scrutinised by one or more of the major committees in advance of Council you should 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 and Formatting**

- 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 UEB/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 Vice-Chancellor's Office (for UEB) or the Corporate Governance Team (for University Committees) on formatting..
- 3.4 Papers and cover sheets for UEB should be submitted in their original format (such as Word or Excel). Wherever possible you should submit only one file. If more than one file is being submitted, please indicate clearly the order the papers need to be presented and name sensibly. If Excel files are being submitted, please make sure that only the worksheets that are needed are included and that they are set as 'print ready'.
- 3.5 Please avoid the use of embedded/linked files, headers or footers, pivot tables in spreadsheets, and very wide landscape tables where possible as papers will be converted to pdf for use in the meeting book.
- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 Ensure that no track changes or editorial comments have been left in the document.

### **4. Submission deadlines and guidance**

- 4.1 UEB papers must be agreed by the UEB sponsor before the final version is submitted. Please submit all papers for UEB to the Vice-Chancellor's Office via [hayti4@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:hayti4@cardiff.ac.uk) no later than midday on the Wednesday prior to the UEB the paper is scheduled at (this is regardless of whether UEB is meeting on Monday or Tuesday).

- 4.2 If your paper misses the UEB submission deadline it will go to the next available meeting of UEB with space on the agenda.
- 4.3 The Vice-Chancellor's Office will allocate an official UEB paper number and keep a formal record of each paper presented to UEB.
- 4.4 Please submit all papers for Senate, Council and their major committees to the Corporate Governance team via [Committees@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:Committees@cardiff.ac.uk) in accordance with your paper commissioning email (due date is normally two weeks before the meeting).
- 4.5 If your paper is not already expected at the Committee meeting you will need to ensure that you have contacted the Corporate Governance team well in advance of the finalisation of the agenda two weeks beforehand for appropriate authorisation to be received from the Chair.
- 4.6 The Corporate Governance Team will allocate your paper an official Committees paper number and keep the formal record of each paper presented to the committee.

*Approved by Governance Committee March 2022*

*Amended August 2022 to create one single set of guidance for UEB and University Committees.*