



Committee Skills

Know your committee

- Don't underestimate the influence that committees have on the University of Cambridge.
- Attend briefings with the Chair and/or Secretary to discuss your role, the agenda and meeting protocol.
- Read the 'Terms of Reference' and list of members before your first meeting.
- Find out if you're a representative of a particular group or sit on the committee as an individual.

Be prepared

- Ensure that the Secretary has your preferred address for the papers.
- Read the papers early so that you have time to clarify things before the meeting.
- Ask the Secretary for copies of old minutes/papers to get background information.
- Find out where the meeting is, what dress code is (if any) and make sure you're on time.

Committee etiquette

- Get the attention of the Chair by making eye contact or raising your hand/pen to have your turn to speak.
- Ask the questions you'd like answered: be assertive but try not to interrupt, be too pushy or rude.
- Try not to look too bored or use a phone/laptop and always send apologies if you can't attend the meeting.
- Don't be intimidated; make the most of the opportunities to have your say.

Getting your point across

- Think through your arguments, don't repeat too much and speak clearly.
- Back up your arguments with evidence of what your constituency thinks to add weight where needed.
- Papers should be well researched with clear objectives and submitted in advance of the deadline.
- Good presentation counts: proofread papers and speak concisely and articulately.

For help preparing committee papers, speak to the meeting's Secretary, other committee members or a CUSU Officer.

Following-up

- Read through unconfirmed minutes and contact the Secretary with corrections.
- You can ask questions in 'matters arising' to see what's been done (or not done) on previous actions.
- Talk to other members of the committee to gauge their opinions.
- Feedback to your constituency if you're representing it on a committee.

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