

Role of the Chair

What is the role of the Chair?

The main job of the Chair is to manage your group meetings and make sure they run smoothly and fairly. This will make it far easier for your group to make decisions and get things done.

Other parts of the Chair's role can vary greatly depending on their individual personality and experience, for example, part of the Chair's role could be to represent your group at events. It is important that your group as a whole agrees what they expect the Chair to do and select a person to be the Chair who is able to meet those expectations.

It is important to remember that the Chair of your group has no more power than any other member of your group.

The tasks your Chair might be expected to perform include:

Before a meeting

It is part of the job of the Chair to help the Secretary put together an agenda for each meeting. It is a good idea for the Chair to:

- Make sure they know about each item to be discussed at the meeting. (For example if a guest speaker is coming to a meeting the Chair should know their name and what they will be speaking about.)
- Work out how much time will be needed to cover each item on the agenda and try not to let the discussion of each item go over that time.
- Decide what result is needed from each item on the agenda. (For example is an item on the agenda there for information only? Or is a decision needed on that particular issue?)

During the meeting

It is an important part of the Chair's job to make sure meetings run efficiently and fairly. In order to do this the Chair should:

- Stick to the meeting agenda, so that everything that needs to be discussed at the meeting is covered and all decisions are made.

- Always be aware of the time. Make sure the meeting stays on schedule and does not overrun its planned finishing time.
- Always aim to be open-minded, fair and impartial, never letting their own views on a subject, organisation or person affect how they run the meeting.
- Make sure everyone who wants to gets the opportunity to speak and play an equal part in any decisions made. No one person, in particular the Chair, should dominate the discussions.
- Keep good order and make sure everyone can hear what other people have to say. (For example ensuring there is only one person speaking at any time.)
- Helping to sort out conflicts and differences of opinion.
- Sum up any important points or decisions as they are made (this helps the person taking the minutes).
- Make sure people have done things they agreed to do at earlier meetings.