

Health Professions Council
2 March 2005

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AT MEETINGS

Executive Summary and Recommendations

1. Introduction

Over the past year Council has agreed a number of documents which underpin its corporate governance. The purpose of this document is to bring together the guidance relating to the conduct of meetings which are contained within these documents. This will assist committee chairman and members in the conduct of meetings.

(i) Working as part of the HPC

If a Council member wishes to instigate a new area of work, or tackle an issue which is new for the Council, they should in the first instance contact the Chief Executive, to discuss their idea informally. This will provide an opportunity for discussion, and also reduce the chance of duplicating existing work.

If appropriate, they should arrange with the Chief Executive for a member of the Executive to produce a paper for discussion / decision at the relevant committee

(ii) Raising an item at a meeting

If a Council member wishes to raise an issue at a Council or committee meeting, they should contact the Secretary to the relevant committee. Depending on the nature of the issue, the Executive will need to respond by preparing a paper for discussion.

(iii) Council / committee papers

Council members should read all relevant paperwork carefully, in order to save time during the meeting. Papers will always come from a named member of the Executive, and the contact details of all employees are on the HPC website.

Should Council members have any queries which would not usefully form part of discussion at the meeting, they can contact the member of staff who has written the paper for more information.

(iv) Any Other Business

Extremely urgent items which have arisen after the papers deadline and which cannot be dealt with at the next meeting, can be raised in 'Any other business'. As good practice, and as an aid to accountability and informed discussion, items should generally form part of the main agenda.

(v) Items for discussion

In general, Council members should not raise issues which have already been considered and decided by another committee.

If any Council member wishes to have further information regarding a decision taken by another committee, they should raise the matter with the Secretary to that committee. The decision can then be discussed with the President or chairman as appropriate.

Council members will normally be expected only to raise previous decisions again if since the decision there have been significant new developments that were not apparent during the original discussion, which may seriously affect the decision.

(vi) Chairman's Action

It may be the case that deadlines, and the dates of committee meetings mean that the chairman of a committee is asked to take 'chairman's action' in between committee meetings. A 'chairman's action' is when the chairman is asked to take a decision on behalf of the committee.

Chairman's action should only be taken if the committee has previously agreed that the decision on this matter will be delegated to the chairman between meetings.

Whenever a chairman's action is called for, it always be documented by the committee secretary and presented to the committee for ratification at their next meeting. Wherever possible, the use of a chairman's action will be limited.

(vii) Conflicts of Interests

If Council members are participating in Council business where they might have (or be seen to have) an interest in the outcome, or any interest which could otherwise prejudice their decision, they should declare this.

Council members should remove themselves from discussion or even in certain circumstances from the room if items in an agenda may raise a serious conflict of interest. They should state this to the committee or council, so that it can be recorded in the minutes.

2. Decision

The Council/Committee is requested to note the document. No decision is required.

3. Background information

None

4. Resource implications

None

5. Financial implications

None

6. Background papers

Council Members' Code of Conduct, Council Members' Information.

7. Appendices

None

8. Date of paper

17 February 2005