

Guide to Completing an Agenda Item Coversheet

The Agenda Item Coversheet is used for each matter to be considered by Council or a Committee.

Purpose:

- to ensure consistency of material presented to all Committees;
- to clearly present the Draft Resolution/s (or Recommendation/s when the outcome is not known);
- to place the matter to be considered in context (why is it needed and does it need to be approved by any parent Committee);
- to summarise key issues;
- to draw the members' attention to significant matters; and
- to confirm what the Committee is being asked to do.

Format/Length:

- use plain English to concisely communicate relevant information;
- avoid unnecessary repetition;
- include sufficient information so that an informed decision can be made by members. However, avoid over lengthy cover sheets. Ideally, a cover sheet should not exceed two pages;
- links should be inserted into cover sheets for web-based documentation, presentations, or in place of bulky attachments;
- acronyms and abbreviations* should be spelt out the first time they are used – for example: Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA). The acronym or abbreviation can then be used thereafter, within the coversheet; and
- clarify what the Committee is being asked to do under the "Recommended Action" heading in the Background and Considerations section. For example: *The Committee is requested to consider approving the proposed amendments to the Vehicle Fleet Policy.*

When to use "Recommendation" rather than "Draft Resolution" – a draft resolution sets out what will be recorded as the resolution in the minutes should the Committee agree with what is being proposed by the paper's author. This provides a focal point for members when reading the paper as well as assisting the meeting Chair and Secretary in the conduct of the meeting. Sometimes, however, the outcome of an item may not be known e.g. when the Committee has no Deputy Chair and nominations are called for from the floor during a meeting. In this case a name can't be included in the draft resolution so a recommendation should be used – "that the Committee elect a Deputy Chair".

Explanation and Example of Common Committee Terms used in Agenda Coversheets

Endorse	The Committee is being asked to support a recommendation made to another body/action taken, where the recommendation/action did not require the Committee's formal approval. <i>Example of a Draft Resolution:</i> that the development of the Full Course Proposal, be endorsed.
Approve	The Committee is being asked to approve a recommendation – this should only be used if the Committee has the appropriate delegation (refer to Committee Charter or Terms of Reference) <i>Example of a Draft Resolution:</i> that the proposed Child Safety Policy, be approved. NB: Advisory Committees cannot approve any resolution apart from matters which relate to itself or Sub-Committee. As the name suggests they are advisory only.
Consider/Review	The Committee is being asked to consider or review a particular issue, and provide feedback. <i>Example of a Draft Resolution:</i> that the report dated 30 March 2019, was considered/reviewed and feedback provided.
Note	The Committee is being provided with information that does not require a decision but should form part of the record of meeting. This could be a routine matter, which can be included in a Circular. <i>Example of a Draft Resolution:</i> that the expenses report, as at 30 June 2019, be noted.
Recommend	The Committee supports, but does not have the power, to resolve the issue/proposal, and has to refer it to another Committee or Senior Officer. <i>Example of a Draft Resolution:</i> that the proposed Minor Works Program, be endorsed and recommended to the Vice Chancellor, for approval.
Adopt	The Committee is being asked to adopt a document (generally an operational document of the Committee, such as Minutes or Terms of Reference) <i>Example of a Draft Resolution:</i> that the proposed Terms of Reference and Schedule of Business, be adopted.

* an acronym is an abbreviation consisting of the first letters of each word in the name of something, pronounced as a word (e.g. "PIN" for "Personal Identification Number") whereas an abbreviation is a shortened form of a word or phrase (e.g. "ITV" is the abbreviation for "Independent Television" and the letters are pronounced).