

ASSOCIATION OF COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITIES

Role description and responsibilities of the Secretary to the Council

1. The role

- a) The secretary has a key role to play in the operation and conduct of the Council and its Committees, and in ensuring that appropriate procedures are followed.
- b) The secretary shall be appointed to that post by the Council.
- c) In instances in which the secretary combines this function with a senior administrative or managerial role within the Association, both the Association and the secretary shall exercise care in maintaining a separation of the two functions.
- d) In carrying out his/her role as secretary to the governing body, the secretary shall have a reporting link and be accountable both to the Chair of the Council and to the Secretary General for the conduct of the Council's business (i.e. agendas, papers, minutes etc.)
- e) The Chair and members of the Council and its Committees may look to the secretary for guidance about their responsibilities under the Charter, Statutes, Bye-Laws and Regulations to which they are subject, and on how these responsibilities should be discharged. It is the responsibility of the secretary to alert the Council if he/she believes that any proposed action would exceed the Council's powers or be contrary to legislation.
- f) The secretary shall be responsible, unless otherwise directed, for providing legal advice to or obtaining it for the Council; and for advising on all matters of procedure.
- g) The secretary shall advise the Chair in respect to any matters where conflict, potential or real, may occur between the Council and the Secretary General.
- h) The secretary shall ensure that all documentation is provided in a timely manner with information in a form and of a quality to enable the Council to discharge its duties.

2. The Responsibilities

- i. With regard to *meetings*, the secretary to the Council shall:
 - a) Be responsible for giving due notice of all statutory meetings.
 - b) (With particular regard to General Meetings of the Association) issue notices of such Meeting by post or otherwise not less than twenty-eight days before the Meeting.

- c) Work effectively with the Chair of the Council/Committee and the Secretary General in advance of the meeting to prepare an agenda.
- d) Encourage all concerned to produce agenda papers on time.
- e) Produce, collate and distribute the agenda and papers to ensure recipients receive them two weeks in advance of the meeting.
- f) Record attendance.
- g) Draft minutes of the meeting, indicating who is responsible for any agreed action, and within what timescale.
- h) Submit draft minutes, wherever possible within two weeks of the meeting, to the Chair of the Council/Committee and Secretary General for amendment/approval.
- i) Issue the approved draft minutes to all members of the Council/Committee.
- j) Maintain an accessible paper record of all minutes for inspection and/or reference.
- ii. With regard to *membership* of Council and its Committees, the secretary shall:
 - a) Maintain a database of names, addresses and category of Council and Committee members and their terms of office.
 - b) Maintain a register of interests of the Chair and members of Council and its Committees.
 - c) Prepare and dispatch a welcome pack and letter to newly appointed Council and Committee members including details of terms of office.
 - d) Maintain copies of current Terms of Reference and membership of Council and its Committees.
 - e) Administer the appropriate and timely mechanism for securing nominations and elections to membership of Council and its Committees.

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