

SAMPLE MODEL ANSWERS

CERTIFICATE IN MEETINGS LEVEL 3

UNIT 1 – UNDERSTANDING MEETINGS

1 Meetings are used for many different purposes and are governed by a range of formality.
For example:

- (a)
- communicating information or instructions
 - deciding on a course of action
 - providing an opportunity for discussion
 - identifying available options
 - monitoring progress
 - making announcements
 - feedback on specific activities

- (b) Formal meetings
- shareholder meetings
 - board of directors' meetings
 - local government council meetings
 - company general meetings
 - tribunals
 - judicial enquiries
 - executive committee meetings

Formal meetings – Procedures/Conventions

- rules
- officials
- official records
- formal documentation
- agenda
- timetabled well in advance
- minutes

- (c) Informal meetings
- task groups
 - quality circles
 - brainstorming sessions
 - interdepartmental meetings
 - working parties
 - team briefings
 - advisory committees

Informal meetings – Procedures/Conventions

- group leader rather than a chair
- no formal rules
- informally documented in note form
- loose agenda
- participants contribute at any time
- one-off meetings

2 The principal advantages of investing in video and audio conferencing facilities are:

- Equipment can be hired or purchased as required
- Meetings can be held in more than one location
- Individuals and groups
- Videoconferencing enables seeing and hearing each other
- Audio conferencing is cheaper, but without the benefits of a visual link
- Loud speaker facility
- Group systems transmit to larger meetings
- Desktop systems enable one-to-one meetings
- Financial savings in travelling time and accommodation expenses
- Time savings for staff
- Speedier response time
- Easier to arrange
- No venue searching
- Urgent matters may be resolved quickly
- Ability to use in-house with links to several other groups/locations at one time
- International links
- Face to face live debate
- Effective use of relevant staff
- Specialist staff on site may be called in for relevant issues only
- Limited time scheduled for meeting makes them more decisive
- Ability to retain a record of the meeting on video tape
- Less stress and fatigue resulting from travelling and tight time schedules
- No weather-dependent cancellations
- No "forgotten" documents
- No barriers to inaccessible locations

3 (a) The purpose of minutes is:

- to create an accurate record of the meeting
- to gain consensus from all participants for that record
- to enable actions to be highlighted

(b) Evaluation of Minutes

Have I

- listed people present in alphabetical order with name, title and initials?
- included apologies for absence and appropriate heading?
- numbered each paragraph the same as the corresponding agenda item?
- summarised discussion under each agenda item recording only the main points?
- included all crucial decisions, statistics, figures, dates etc?
- clarified trouble spots, concerns or areas of confusion?
- used verbatim reporting only where essential to the argument?
- kept it neutral and unbiased except where a specific emphasis is required?
- linked actions to named individuals, highlighted the main action points (in a column or a list)?
- included any other business and date of next meeting?
- ensured content is concise and coherent and free from spelling/grammatical errors?

4 Problem Participants

Some problems found within meetings:

The Problem - Rambling

Possible Solutions

Keep to the agenda. Once direction is lost, quickly get it back.

“We’ve strayed, let’s get back to item 3...”

Listen carefully, giving assenting nods or statements

“That was a very good point”

Test understanding by re-phrasing the content

“Are you saying that.....?”

Summarise when the thread is broken and suggest routes forward

Watch the time and impose time limits if necessary.

The Problem - A Bad Temper

Possible Solutions

Ask why the participant is angry and allow them to leave their anger behind

Acknowledge their anger in a neutral objective manner

“I can see you are getting annoyed.”

Bring in the other participants

“This is obviously causing “X” a problem. How does it affect you “Y”?”

If the argument is between two people ask one to state their case and the other to summarise. That will force them to listen to one another.

Use a “shutting out” movement – stop sign with your hand, say “hold on a moment” – drop eye contact and transfer to another, bringing that person into the conversation.

Many problems could be eliminated by thorough preparation and liaison with the administrator before the meeting to ensure clarity throughout.