
Contents

Before you begin	vii
Topic 1: Make meeting arrangements	1
1A Identify different meeting types and their purpose	2
1B Identify and comply with legal and ethical requirements	7
1C Identify the meeting requirements and participants	9
1D Make meeting arrangements	16
1E Advise of meeting details	22
Summary	23
Learning checkpoint 1: Make meeting arrangements	24
Topic 2: Prepare meeting documentation	31
2A Prepare meeting notices, agendas and papers	32
2B Check meeting documentation for accuracy and errors	35
2C Distribute documents to participants	37
2D Prepare spare sets of documents	40
Summary	41
Learning checkpoint 2: Prepare meeting documentation	42
Topic 3: Record and produce meeting minutes	47
3A Take notes that accurately record the meeting	48
3B Produce true and accurate minutes	52
3C Check meeting minutes and submit for approval	56
3D Dispatch copies of minutes	58
Summary	59
Learning checkpoint 3: Record and produce meeting minutes	60

Topic 1

Make meeting arrangements

Effective meetings provide a means of communicating with others to achieve an outcome and help attend to the organisation's business in a systematic way. The primary purpose of any meeting is to communicate with others. A meeting is a time, place and location (including a virtual one) where this can occur, outside of normal business activity.

There are different types of meetings that can be used for different circumstances, depending on the needs of the organisation at the time. Most organisations make use of a wide variety of meetings, each of which facilitates the communication process in different scenarios.

Some meetings require minimal organisation, while others require a lot of time and effort to ensure they run smoothly and meet their objectives. For example, in many work situations, designated people are responsible for organising formal meetings, while in other workplaces, formal meetings never occur. Similarly, in some organisations, meeting organisers are expected to take minutes, while in other organisations this responsibility is rare.

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 1A Identify different meetings types and their purpose
- 1B Identify and comply with legal and ethical requirements
- 1C Identify the meeting requirements and participants
- 1D Make meeting arrangements
- 1E Advise of meeting details

Other types and styles of meetings

Here are further examples of styles and types of meetings conducted by an organisation.

Meetings with other organisations

These meetings between different organisations are commonplace and are usually arranged for a number of purposes. For example, for forming a business alliance or promoting goods or services. These sorts of meetings will need to be held at a mutually convenient venue for all parties, so careful thought needs to be given to location. It is important to plan carefully for these sorts of meetings and ensure that all attendees are well prepared and the meeting is arranged, recorded and followed up in a timely and efficient manner.

Committee meetings

A committee is a group of people elected or appointed from a larger body to investigate, report or act in special cases. Like a project team, a committee may form for a specific period of time or may be a permanent fixture within an organisation. Often, committees are a group of people who work in different areas of an organisation but have a common interest or goal to achieve. Committee meetings can be small and informal or much larger and more formal, depending on the size of the organisation, committee and the outcomes to be achieved.

Teleconferences or videoconferences

These meetings are tools that organisations can make use of to enhance communication among colleagues. These technologies enable you to talk face to face to an expert who works in London from your office in Sydney; for sharing and debating the issues raised in an industry report with your team members located across the globe or for chatting to interstate colleagues about new developments at your workplace.

Annual general meetings

All companies, except proprietary companies, are required to hold an annual general meeting (AGM), at least once every calendar year and no later than five months after the financial year ends. For listed public companies, at least 28 days' notice must be given for a meeting of a listed company's members. This notice period applies despite anything in the company's constitution.

Treasurer

The treasurer is the person responsible for reporting the financial business of an organisation.

Agenda

The agenda is a plan for the stages of a meeting, which includes the opening, acceptance of previous minutes, business arising from the minutes, correspondence, general business and close.

Minutes

Minutes are an official record of what took place at a meeting.

Proxy

A proxy is where a member who is unable to attend a meeting nominates someone else (a proxy) to attend, and/or to vote in their place.

Quorum

Quorum is the minimum number of people who must be in attendance before a meeting is official and business can be transacted.

Standing orders

Standing orders are an outline of the rules for meeting procedures.

Motion

A motion is a proposal that is officially put before a meeting and that goes through several stages before it is accepted or defeated. A motion is always carefully worded and recorded verbatim in the minutes. The person who suggests the proposal moves the motion. A person who supports the motion seconds the motion.

Mover

The mover is the person who moves that a meeting accept a decision, such as the contents of the minutes of the previous meeting or a motion raised.

Resolution

Resolution is the name given to a motion once it has been agreed to by a meeting.

1B Identify and comply with legal and ethical requirements

For board meetings, general meetings, extraordinary meetings and annual general meetings, there are a number of legal and ethical requirements that need to be considered before you make any arrangements. Further information can be obtained by referring to the *Company Law Review Act 1998* (Cth), the constitution of the organisation and the relevant codes of practice relating to the industry in which you work.

You can access the *Company Law Review Act 1998* (Cth) at the Australasian Legal Information Institute website, which can be found at: www.austlii.edu.au.



Legal requirements

Legal requirements of holding a meeting include compliance with work health and safety regulations and the provision of public liability insurance. For example, a public meeting at which food will be served needs to comply with safety standards and safe food-handling practices. Those holding the meeting must be aware of insurance needs.

Ethical requirements

Ethical requirements cover meeting protocol and the behavioural expectations of those attending a meeting.

A meeting's code of conduct may include:

- honesty
- integrity
- respect
- accountability
- confidentiality
- essential disclosure
- lawful compliance.

Identify and comply with legal and ethical requirements

When arranging a meeting, you need to be aware of the requirements relevant to that meeting. The company's constitution normally outlines the voting rights and procedures for a company. Where no provision is made, each member will be deemed to have one vote on a show of hands and one vote per share on a poll; that is, for every share they hold in a company, they are entitled to one vote. Where the company does not have share capital, each member has one vote.

1C

Identify the meeting requirements and participants

For any kind of meeting, you need to clarify how many people are expected to attend so you can determine their requirements, the size of the venue and quantity of materials that will be needed. The following examples demonstrate why this is important for all types of meetings, regardless of how formal or informal they are and the number of attendees.

A board meeting

In addition to a list of board members, there may be additional participants, such as senior staff members or external people, who have been invited to attend for part of the meeting for some reason.

Informal lunch meetings with team members

You will need to know how many people are invited and whether everyone can make it so that you can book a table at a local venue.

Annual general meetings

You will need to obtain a list of all directors, shareholders or company members. In very large corporations that have private and institutional investors that number in the thousands, external consultants usually handle the complex task of arranging all or part of the annual general meeting, and will maintain databases of shareholder information on behalf of the company.

Formal meetings

These will require attendees to undertake reading beforehand and documentation will need to be distributed at the meeting, so it is important that the number of both invited participants and actual attendees is known in advance. Even people who are unable to attend will most likely still need to have documentation provided to them for their information or so that they can lodge a proxy vote.

Staff meetings

You will need to ensure that the space you have booked will fit the number of attendees comfortably, and that adequate seating is available so at least some attendees can sit down during the meeting. You will also need to make sure that you have enough handouts and/or that any presentation material can be viewed by all staff members.

Meeting with an external organisation

You will need to know who is attending (their names as well as their titles) and ensure that all attendees are clear on the location of the meeting as well as who is chairing or running it.

Structure of the meeting

Some meetings are highly structured and, by law, have to include certain components and steps. Others are more of an opportunity for people to have an unstructured chat about certain issues or simply catch up with colleagues they don't often get to talk to.

More formal styles of meetings (such as AGMs or board meetings) will require more preparation in terms of ensuring the meeting runs smoothly and is structured well, so advance planning and knowledge will be essential in these situations.

Ensure that you are aware of what structure the meeting you are organising will take. Find out how it will run, who will be in charge of proceedings, what topics will be discussed and in what order and any other information you will need.

Much of this information will be available from the person who has called the meeting or you may be able to adapt or work from agendas and meeting papers from similar meetings that have previously been held.



Voting protocols and procedures

It is vital to know whether your meeting is to have a session where issues are voted on. If this is the case, ensure you are completely aware of the processes and rules that apply for the vote to be held legally and for a true record to be held of the outcome of any decisions put to the meeting's attendees.

Special needs of the participants

Ensure you find out participants' requirements when you are planning the meeting because they could impact your time lines or be easily overlooked and have to be completed in a rush at the last minute.

Here are examples of other needs that a participant in a meeting environment may have.

Special needs of the participants



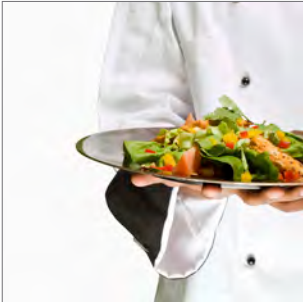
Equipment

Participants who are presenting reports at a meeting may have particular equipment needs; for example, to play a DVD, deliver an electronic presentation using Microsoft PowerPoint, use a data projector or to demonstrate how a computer system works. Knowing in advance what these requirements are is essential because you may need to hire, set up and help operate the equipment.



Parking facilities

Attendees may not be familiar with the meeting venue, so it is a good idea to include parking instructions for attendees so they know where they can safely leave their cars. If they need to pay for parking then ensure they are aware of this as well as any other costs involved.



Special dietary requirements

Some people are allergic to wheat-based products, so arranging a plate of sandwiches to share for lunch will not be suitable for them; pregnant women are unable to safely eat certain foods; others will simply prefer not to eat certain foods so ensure you are familiar with the dietary requirements of the attendees.



Meeting times

Be aware that meeting times need to be carefully planned in order to maximise the effectiveness of the meeting, as well as to avoid any issues arising because the meeting falls on a culturally or religiously sensitive day or time (such as on certain days during Ramadan, Easter or during Chinese New Year). For meetings involving participants from different time zones, the selection of a suitable meeting time can be problematic, so ensure you take this into consideration.

Resources that are required

Once you have determined the meeting method that best suits the circumstances, you need to find out any special resources and equipment that is needed.

Although items such as pens or having water available can seem trivial, making sure that all the items attendees could possibly require are on hand will result in a meeting that is more effective and runs smoothly. If attendees have all the necessary tools and comforts on hand, they will be less distracted because they aren't thinking about how much they want to get a drink, that their pen has run out or that their presentation won't work because a data projector isn't on hand.

... continued

<p>Equipment ordered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic whiteboard • Overhead projector • Video player • Television monitor • Flip chart • (add others) 		
<p>Catering organised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning tea • Lunch • Drinks • Special dietary needs • Serving/break times agreed • (add others) 		
<p>Travel and accommodation requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hotel bookings • Air travel • Car hire • Taxi vouchers etc. • (add others) 		
Video or teleconference organised		
Other arrangements		
Comments		

Practice task 3

Identify five meeting requirements.

Here are examples of physical characteristics that may need to be considered.

Physical characteristics of meeting venues

- Lighting (natural or artificial, room with or without windows)
- Ventilation and room temperature
- External distractions such as movement and noise
- Furniture layout and comfort
- Equipment availability and placement
- Proximity to participants' work areas
- Availability of space for workshops
- Location of toilets
- Parking facilities
- Wheelchair access
- Signposting the location for easy access

Organise catering

Whether the meeting is held internally or externally, catering may be required. If so, the following questions need to be considered:

- Do you have a budget allowance for catering?
- What type of catering is required; for example, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea?
- What level of catering is required; for example, do you offer biscuits or cakes with morning tea?
- Are there any special requirements; for example, vegetarian or kosher meals?
- What is the timing for the catering; for example, tea and coffee on arrival, morning tea at 10.30 am, lunch at 1 pm?
- Is there to be a meal break or is perhaps a working lunch planned?
- Will you require catering staff?

Organise accommodation and transport

As soon as you have established a participant's availability for the meeting, you should determine their accommodation and transport requirements and, if necessary, make these arrangements for them immediately.

Your organisation's policies and procedures may indicate the level of accommodation and travel participants are entitled to. Transport arrangements may include air, rail or road travel. Participants may need a taxi from the airport or a hire car.

Web conferencing and other tools

There are a many web conference tools available. Most have the ability to share the screen, and to connect via webcam and microphone and most also allow for some degree of file-sharing. It's important to bear in mind that these tools tend not to be compatible with one another, so you can't use Skype to connect to an Adobe Connect session, for example. ITS Research Services have provided this useful round-up of a variety of web-conferencing tools.

Here are descriptions of three particular tools.

Skype

Skype is undoubtedly the most well-known and most popular web-conferencing tool currently available. Even if you haven't used it in a professional setting, you've probably used it to contact friends and family. Signing up for an account is free and very easy: just enter your details and download the software, which is available for Windows, Mac and Linux.

Adobe Connect

Adobe Connect gives you the option to share your whole desktop with the meeting or just one application and it is also possible for the attendees to view the application you are sharing in full screen while you're doing something else on your desktop. Unlike Skype, Adobe Connect does not require your attendees to have an account; you just share the URL of your session.

Big Blue Button

As with other web-conferencing tools, you can share documents and presentations and participants can also make use of extended whiteboard capabilities, such as a pointer, zoom controls and drawing functions. You can record and playback sessions and it is compatible with Windows, Mac OS and Linux. Initial set-up as host is a little fiddly but there is a range of supporting video tutorials on the Big Blue Button website at: <http://bigbluebutton.org>.

Understand costs and operate within a budget

The costs of meetings can vary considerably, so you need to establish whether a budget exists for the meeting you have been asked to organise. Depending on the size and frequency of the meetings, there may be a separate budget for each item or one all-inclusive budget.

It is important that you keep records of actual expenses and compare these with the budget as you make your meeting preparations.

Set up a spreadsheet to keep track of quotes, actual costs and budgeted amounts as you go, so costs can easily be reviewed and kept on top of. Doing this also makes it easier when you need to authorise the payment of invoices or submit expense claims after the event.

When preparing agenda items, make sure that you include:

- the purpose of the meeting
- the date, time and location of the meeting
- a welcome to participants
- a notice of apologies received
- the minutes of the previous meeting
- matters (or business) arising from these minutes
- appropriate correspondence and reports
- major agenda items
- any general (or other) business
- the date of next meeting.

Prepare papers and documentation

In addition to the agenda, most business meetings require the preparation and/or coordination of meeting papers or documents for particular agenda items.

Here are several examples of papers and documents that may be prepared in coordination of a meeting.

Meeting papers and documentation
Minutes of the previous meeting assist attendees to recall what was discussed at the last meeting, as well as providing talking points.
Correspondence is material addressed to the group such as the board of directors, chairperson or that received by meeting attendees.
Financial reports include profit and loss statements, cashflow statements, forecasts or projections and earnings statements.
Chairperson's, CEO's or Managing Director's reports are high-level reports relating to the industry and operations of the organisation.
Research reports relate to new areas the organisation may be moving into, or initiatives that could facilitate growth or cost savings.
Reports from individuals could include slides or more detailed notes, or a formal report in hard copy to accompany the verbal presentation.

Once you have drafted an agenda, send it out to participants and ask for their feedback. Make sure you clearly state when they need to reply by. This provides participants with an opportunity to check the program and to add any other items before a final agenda is prepared. Once you have received any additional items, you can complete and send out the final agenda.

2B Check meeting documentation for accuracy and errors

It is important that documents provided to meeting participants are error free and accurate.

When checking documents, ensure that they:

- reflect the agenda and its order
- are consistent in their format and style and match the corporate style
- are consistent from meeting to meeting
- are free of typing errors, spelling errors or other mistakes, whether superficial or not
- are accurate and up to date.

Check meeting documentation

In organising the coordination and distribution of meeting papers, you need to liaise with the staff responsible for preparing them to ensure they are ready by the set date.

Because they will probably have been prepared by a number of different people, you will need to check the formatting of these documents for consistency and make or suggest alterations as necessary. It is likely that your organisation will have a standard format or template to be used. If not, you should develop one and notify others of the standard so they can prepare their documents accordingly.



Do not rely on others for accuracy. If documents are forwarded to you electronically, run your spell-check through each one, then read it again and make any necessary corrections. Sometimes it is easier to do this by printing the document out and reading it through on hard copy; a lot of people find it difficult to proofread documents on a computer screen.

Remember also that it is not always wise to rely solely on your computer's spell-check function. However, do not make any changes to the content, even if you believe it to be incorrect, without first checking with the author of the document.

... continued

Felicia Trimble – Managing director			
Tony Medina – Finance director			
Stacey Yong – Sales and marketing director			
Gordon Yannis – Operations director			
Morgan Cook – HR and admin director			

Practice task 8

List five tips for distributing documents correctly.

3A

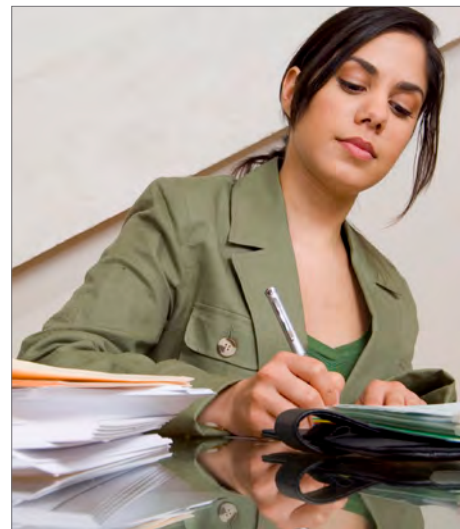
Take notes that accurately record the meeting

The role of the minute taker is an extremely important one. They must listen carefully to the meeting proceedings and note down the crucial aspects of each item discussed, discussion points and the action decided upon.

In fact, the ability to listen well is perhaps the most important skill a minute taker can possess. In a busy or noisy meeting, it can be very hard to really listen to what's going on and write a clear record of what's happening. It is a skill that might take you a while to develop, so you may need some practice to ensure that you are as prepared as you can be to write the minutes up.

People who take notes at meetings often use shorthand (either their own system or a recognised system such as Pitman shorthand). This is faster than normal handwriting and is useful when there is a lot of information being discussed. Some people like to record meetings on a digital device such as an iPhone or speech recognition software, take minimal notes as a backup and then transcribe the audio file later, checking their notes for anything they were unable to decipher in the file.

You need to weigh up the advantage of knowing that you have recorded every word that was said, against the time it takes to transcribe an audio file (this process is often longer than the time the actual meeting took).



Note details during the meeting

It is important that the notes taken during a meeting are comprehensive and reflect what actually happened. As well as an official record of what happened, minutes should also reconstruct the meeting for people who were absent.

Here are some things to consider when raising issues at a scheduled workplace meeting.

Raising important issues

A summary of what the issue, point or suggestion was (often used as a heading)

Who raised the issue

What was said – a brief overview is enough, but you may also need to attach a document to the meeting minutes if a document was tabled at the meeting

Other things that need to be recorded

Here are more examples of things that need to be recorded during a meeting and added to the minutes accordingly.

Issues raised at the meeting

It is particularly important to record issues raised because they often reflect problems or opportunities for improvement that meeting participants have identified. As with other points and suggestions that are raised, it is vital to accurately record who originally brought up the issue, as well as the ensuing discussion or debate, and who raised supporting or conflicting facts and opinions.

Decisions taken at the meeting

The minutes of a meeting act as a formal record of decisions and give authority to a person to take action; for example, who will complete a task and when. Some minutes record only the proposals and decisions of the meeting, others contain a summary of discussion followed by the motion and decision.

Decisions may arise as a result of a suggestion, issue or point that was raised. A decision may also be made after a long period of evaluation or after a series of recommendations have been presented to and considered by meeting participants. Record the lead up to the decision as well as what was resolved and by whom.

Action items

Action items are things that the group of participants discusses and then decides to take action on. As well as an overview of what the item is, and some background, it is important the person who is going to undertake the action is clearly recorded as well as a time frame within which they need to accomplish it.

Formal motions

Some organisations have a more formal meeting format and use protocols such as motions, which are essentially recommendations for a course of action. Motions are usually seconded or supported by another attendee and, if there are no objections, they are then passed.

If your organisation uses such protocols, or the meeting you are taking notes for is particularly formal in nature, then it is important to record what the motion is, who raised it, who seconded it, whether any objections were raised and whether it was ultimately passed.

3B

Produce true and accurate minutes

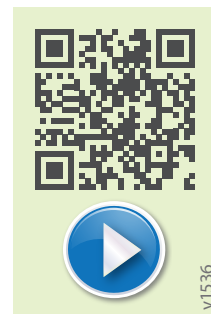
The minutes you produce from your notes must reflect a true and accurate record of the meeting. It is wise to finalise the minutes of a meeting within 24 hours of the meeting's completion, while it is all still fresh in your mind. The format of the minutes you produce will depend on the degree of formality of the particular meeting for which you have taken notes. Generally, your organisation will have its own desired format for its minutes.

Example: produce true minutes

Jane is the personal assistant to the manager of a regional local government council, which has 45 employees. She is responsible for taking the minutes at each monthly staff meeting, finalising them by the end of the day and distributing them to the staff via email.

As usual, Jane attends the August meeting and takes notes. Generally, she only includes major points and expands on them later by recalling what has taken place. However, after the meeting, three extremely urgent tasks take priority over the minutes. Jane does not panic because she knows she can complete the minutes quickly. But then, a serious matter arises that she has to devote the rest of the day to and the minutes are neglected again.

By the time Jane is back on track, she has forgotten some of the points she needed to make. Her habit of relying on her memory when producing the minutes proves to be a very risky strategy this time.



Format of minutes

Typically, organisations use the format of the minutes of the previous meeting as a guide or template for how the minutes should look and what they should contain.

If a new meeting is being held, the style of meeting minutes could be adapted from another meeting or created from scratch. Remember to evaluate how formal the meeting will be, who will be attending, the level of seniority of the meeting (which isn't always an indication of how formal the meeting will be or the most suitable minutes structure to use) and the purpose of the meeting in determining how formal the minutes should be.



7

Correspondence

If relevant letters, notices or other correspondence have been received since the last meeting, they can either be read out at the meeting and discussed, or copied and distributed for inspection.

8

Agenda items

Items on the agenda are discussed and dealt with in order. You should note any items of relevance and record decisions taken. Take particular note of any action required and the name of the person who is required to carry out the action.

9

Reports

Some reports may be provided to participants for information only, while others require discussion and further action. If they are for information only, the minutes should record them as 'report noted' or similar wording.

10

Other business

The chairperson provides members with an opportunity to raise any other matters of business that might be relevant. At some meetings, because of time constraints, only new items of business that have been listed with the chairperson prior to the commencement of the meeting will be dealt with.

11

Date of next meeting

Sometimes meeting dates are set well in advance, particularly for regular formal meetings, such as board meetings or sales meetings, and all participants should have them listed in their diaries. In such cases, the date of the next meeting will merely be a confirmation and/or reminder.

3C

Check meeting minutes and submit for approval

Meeting minutes, like any other document you produce for your organisation, should be of the highest quality possible. As well as ensuring they are error free, minutes should be useful to attendees and representative of what happened during the course of the meeting.

Tips for taking meeting minutes:

- If you use any abbreviations, ensure that you include a table or reference to this in the minutes so that readers can quickly understand what you mean.
- As you record minutes, have a separate sheet where you can also note any items that are going to be discussed in greater detail at the next meeting.
- Write up minutes as soon as possible after the meeting.
- Use a template to help you keep good notes and help you remember to record key items.
- Take a copy of the minutes from the last meeting, your diary, a set of meeting papers, copies of any reports or presentations that are being made and a list of attendees and apologies with you, as well as your notebook, some pens and a hard-copy blank minutes template.
- Discuss with the chairperson before the meeting whether any sessions or discussions will be held where minutes will not be required (these are called 'in-camera' sessions).
- Don't be too brief in the way you note discussions – ensure that anything that is written is clearly understood and cannot be misunderstood or have several meanings.

Check meeting minutes

Before forwarding your draft minutes to the chairperson for approval, you may need to have it checked by someone in your office; for example, your supervisor, the chief executive officer or the company secretary. The chairperson may ask you to make alterations to the draft or they may give approval for you to dispatch copies to the relevant people.

Before sending out copies of the minutes, check whether you are required to forward any other documentation. For example, your minutes may refer to a document that was discussed at the meeting but was not available at the time, or someone may have promised to forward information on a topic with the minutes.



3D Dispatch copies of minutes

Your organisation may have a specified time line for dispatching the minutes, which should always be followed. If not, meeting minutes should always be sent out as soon as possible after the meeting, as recipients may be required to undertake some follow-up action before the next meeting.

Your meeting minutes checklist should include a section to indicate when you sent the minutes and how they were sent. Then you will be able to trace the minutes if a recipient informs you that they have not arrived.

Here are examples of questions that might need to be posed when dispatching meeting minutes.

Meeting minute criteria
Did you email them to everyone?
Were they placed on the organisation's intranet?
Were they sent by post using ordinary mail?
Did you use an express post service?
Did you send the minutes by courier?

Methods of dispatch

On some occasions, more than one of these dispatch methods may be required, depending on who you are sending the minutes to, and how urgently they are required. You may need to email a copy and send a hard copy via your company's internal mail system, with hard-copy attachments.

Remember, if you produce a draft of the minutes as soon as possible after the meeting has ended, you are more likely to meet your deadline. Always take into account that there may be unforeseen work priorities that arise, or the person who has to approve the draft prior to sending out the minutes may be unavailable.

