

The Support

The secretary is the administrator of the organisation.

The secretary's role is to manage meetings and correspondence. The secretary will prepare notices, agendas and minutes and follow-up on action items collaboratively with other committee members.

Support the president

Assist the president, vice president and treasurer in carrying out their duties.

Coordinate meetings

Coordinate meetings of the committee and members, including the AGM. Work with the president to draft the agenda, distribute notices and take formal minutes.

Correspondence

Attend to correspondence on behalf of the committee and oversee effective communication with members.

Rules and policies

Have a good working knowledge of the organisation's constitution, rules and policies. Assist the president to drive the implementation of policy updates and good governance procedures.

What does the secretary do?

Along with the responsibilities and duties of all committee members, the following roadmap shows the steps the secretary should take throughout the year.

At the start of the year

1. Familiarise yourself with good meeting procedures and agenda and minutes templates. See the Governance module.
2. Familiarise yourself with the organisation's previous meeting minutes and liaise with the president to establish suitable locations and frequencies for management committee meetings and general meetings.

Make sure members are well-informed about meetings, events and organisation news. Prompt replies to inquiries, clear dissemination of information and an open line of communication with members and the committee will make your job easier and help to keep the organisation running smoothly.

During the year

1. Coordinate committee meetings and general meetings by issuing meeting notices, preparing agendas (in collaboration with the president), taking minutes during meetings and following up on action items between meetings.
2. Maintain organisation records, including the membership register, as well as important information such as meeting minutes, and keep the organisation's compliance documentation up to date.

3. Oversee effective communication with members and conduct official correspondence on behalf of the committee.

At the end of the year

1. Work with the president to draft the AGM notice and agenda and distribute them to members. Organise the AGM location and prepare relevant AGM documents (see the Meeting Management chapter of the Governance module).
2. Ensure the AGM runs according to good meeting procedures, including the committee election process.
3. Provide a handover to the incoming secretary. Provide an overview of what you've learned about coordinating effective meetings and correspondence and share what you've learned from the role and assist the incoming secretary to lodge the organisation's annual return with the Office of Fair Trading.

While the secretary is typically responsible for overseeing communication with members and stakeholders, you should work with other helpers to share the workload of managing the organisation's communication channels. For example, the committee can appoint non-committee volunteers, or even staff or contractors, to assist with social media, managing the organisation's branding and web presence and producing member communications.

Note: Maintaining the membership register is often done by the registrar. The secretary holds an important role in maintaining organisational efficiency and supporting the administrative functions of the organisation. Essential attributes like attention to detail, strong organisational skills and a commitment to accuracy are integral. While skills and knowledge can be developed through training, inherent attributes remain indispensable. Here are some key skills a secretary should possess or be ready to develop:

- Attention to detail
- Organisational skills
- Time management
- Communication proficiency
- Technological aptitude
- Record-keeping abilities
- Flexibility and adaptability

