

Governing Body Meetings and Decisions on Safety and Quality

Standard operating procedure (SOP) | GOV-SOP-001

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Replaces	None (new document)
Standards and criteria supported	Standard 2A, criterion 2A.1 (non-negotiable)
Evidence basis	E-009
Status of this document	Recommended best-practice model. A hospital may adopt, adapt or replace it with an equivalent that meets the same criteria.

At a glance: what to do

1. Circulate the agenda and papers five working days before each meeting.
2. Check the quorum and the declarations at the start.
3. Put safety and quality on every agenda, with a report from the chief executive.
4. Record each decision, its owner and its due date.
5. Circulate minutes within 10 working days.

Stop and get help straight away if: a decision on safety or patient care is taken without a quorum or without a recorded declaration of interest.

1. Purpose

To make sure the governing body meets regularly, takes decisions on safety and quality in the open, and records them so that actions can be followed up [EC].

2. Scope

Applies to	Chair, members, chief executive and the governance lead
Locations	Governing body meetings, in person or by secure video link
When	At each scheduled meeting and any special meeting
Does not apply to	Clinical meetings, which follow the clinical governance SOP

3. Definitions and abbreviations

Term	Meaning in this SOP
Quorum	The minimum number of members needed for a valid decision, set in the terms of reference

Term	Meaning in this SOP
Declaration of interest	A written or spoken statement of any personal or financial interest in an item
Action owner	The named person who will carry out an action

4. Background and rationale

The governing body is accountable only if its decisions are taken properly and recorded. This SOP sets how that is done, so that criterion 2A.1 can be evidenced at every meeting.

5. Responsibilities

Role	Duties in this SOP	Competence needed
Chair	Runs the meeting, checks the quorum and declarations, signs the minutes	Chairing competence
Governance lead	Prepares agenda and papers; takes minutes; tracks actions	Minute-taking and governance administration
Chief executive	Presents the safety and quality report; implements decisions	Executive reporting
Members	Prepare papers; declare interests; take decisions	Induction

6. Equipment, materials and resources

Item	Specification or standard	Check before use
Agenda template	Standard headings, including safety and quality	Current version
Minutes template (GOV-FRM-003)	Standard headings	Current version
Action log	Owner, due date, status	Updated after each meeting

7. Safety and infection prevention

- Confidential patient or staff information is discussed only in anonymised form, unless needed for the decision.
- Papers are stored securely and returned or destroyed after the meeting if marked confidential.

8. Before you start

- Confirm the date, the venue or link, and the quorum.
- Prepare the chief executive's safety and quality report using the quality dashboard.
- Send the agenda and papers five working days before the meeting (EC).

9. Procedure

Follow the steps in order. Where a step says "If", take the action for the case that applies. Do not skip a step. If a step cannot be done, use section 11 and section 12.

Step	Action	How to do it	Key point
1	Open the meeting and check the quorum.	- Confirm the names of those present and the quorum. - Ask for declarations of interest and record them. - Approve the minutes of the previous meeting.	No decision is valid without a quorum and recorded declarations.
2	Review safety and quality.	- Receive the chief executive's report covering incidents, serious harm, complaints, audit results and staffing. - Ask questions and record each question and the answer. - Agree any action needed, with owner and date.	Every safety report is a question: what has happened, what is being done, and who is accountable.
3	Take the other business	Take decisions on the agenda items, recording the	The reasons are as

Step	Action	How to do it	Key point
	decisions.	proposal, the vote or consensus, and the reasons. • If a member has declared an interest, they leave the discussion and the minutes record it.	important as the decision. They show the decision was considered.
4	Record actions.	• Enter every action in the action log with owner, due date and the link to the decision. • Review overdue actions at each meeting.	An action without an owner and a date will not be done.
5	Circulate and approve the minutes.	• Complete GOV-FRM-003 and circulate the draft within 10 working days. • Approve the minutes at the next meeting, and sign them. • File the signed minutes and the papers.	Signed minutes are the evidence that the decisions happened.

Decision points

- If the quorum is not met, the meeting receives information only, and decisions wait for the next quorate meeting or written resolution where the terms allow (EC).
- If a safety issue needs an urgent decision, the chair may call an extraordinary meeting within 48 hours.

10. Special situations

Situation	What to do
Urgent decision between meetings	Follow the delegated authority in the terms of reference and report it at the next meeting (EC).

11. Problems and escalation

- Serious safety concerns go to the chair within 24 hours.
- Concerns about a governance decision go to the chair or, if involving the chair, to the vice chair.

12. Monitoring and compliance

What is checked	Target	How often	Who	If the target is missed
Meetings held with a quorum	100%	Each meeting	Governance lead	Escalate to chair
Actions completed by due date	90% (EC)	Monthly	Governance lead	Review at next meeting
Minutes approved within two meetings	100%	Each meeting	Governance lead	Chair reviews

13. Records

Record	Where it is kept	Kept for
Agenda and papers	Governance file	{{facility.records_retention_years}} years
Minutes (GOV-FRM-003)	Governance file	{{facility.records_retention_years}} years
Action log	Governance file	{{facility.records_retention_years}} years

14. Training and competence

- Chairs and governance leads are trained in running meetings and minute-taking (EC).
- Members receive a briefing on declarations and decision records at induction.

15. Related documents

ID	Title	Relationship
GOV-POL-001	Governing Body Terms of Reference	Authority for the decisions
GOV-FRM-003	Governing Body Minutes Template	Used in step 5
GOV-REG-001	Register of Governing Body Members	Quorum check in step 1
INC-POL-001	Incident Reporting and Management	Source of safety report items

16. Evidence

ID	Source and status
E-009	ASF Expert Committee consensus. Quorum and timing are EC decisions.

EC = ASF Expert Committee consensus. Items marked EC are reviewed by the Committee each year.

17. Change history

Version	Date	What changed	Approver and signature
1.0	{{document.effective_date}}	First version	Approved by the ASF Expert Committee
1.1	{{document.effective_date}}	Internal quality review: corrected cross-references, status wording and document control	Approved by the ASF Expert Committee