Standard operating procedure (SOP) · GOV-SOP-001 · Version 1.1 · Approved by the ASF Expert Committee

Supports: 2A.1

At a glance

- Circulate the agenda and papers five working days before each meeting.
- Check the quorum and the declarations at the start.
- Put safety and quality on every agenda, with a report from the chief executive.
- Record each decision, its owner and its due date.
- 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

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

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

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	Responsibility	Competence
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. Materials and equipment

Item	Requirement	Condition
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

- 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

Step 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.

Key point: No decision is valid without a quorum and recorded declarations.

Step 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.

Key point: Every safety report is a question: what has happened, what is being done, and who is accountable.

Step 3. Take the other business decisions.

- Take decisions on the agenda items, recording the proposal, the vote or consensus, and the reasons.
- If a member has declared an interest, they leave the discussion and the minutes record it.

Key point: The reasons are as important as the decision. They show the decision was considered.

Step 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.

Key point: An action without an owner and a date will not be done.

Step 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.

Key point: Signed minutes are the evidence that the decisions happened.

10. 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.

11. Special situations

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

12. 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.

13. Monitoring

Measure	Target	Frequency	Owner	If not met
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

14. Records

Record	Kept in	Retention
Agenda and papers	Governance file	the period set by the facility’s records policy years
Minutes (GOV-FRM-003)	Governance file	the period set by the facility’s records policy years
Action log	Governance file	the period set by the facility’s records policy years

15. Training

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

16. Related documents

ID	Title	Use
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

17. Evidence

Reference	Note
E-009	ASF Expert Committee consensus. Quorum and timing are EC decisions.

18. Change history

Version	Date	What changed	Approval
1.0	the date of approval	First version	Approved by the ASF Expert Committee
1.1	the date of approval	Internal quality review: corrected cross-references, status wording and document control	Approved by the ASF Expert Committee

E-learning for this document

- **Governance & Management** (H-07)
- Safety Management System & Leadership (MGMT-01)

References

- Accréditation Sans Frontières (2026). ASF Expert Committee consensus on Standard 1. (E-009)

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