

HFMA Meeting Etiquette Guide

This guide sets out expectations for conduct in HFMA Council Meetings and Working Group meetings, and any other Member meetings that HFMA hosts. This document is to clarify what's expected from both members and chairs, particularly around behaviour, participation and confidentiality.

This guide is informed by best practice guidance from ACAS, CIPD, and Rradar on workplace conduct and meeting management.

Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to:

- Promote professional, respectful, and effective meetings.
- Provide clear guidance for chairs on managing discussions and maintaining decorum.
- Protect the confidentiality of HFMA information and membership privileges.
- Encourage active participation from members to enhance HFMA services.

All participants are asked to:

- Treat all members with respect, listening without interruption.
- Avoid shouting, derogatory remarks, or aggressive behaviour. Such behaviour is unacceptable and will be addressed by the chair.
- Engage constructively in discussions, focusing on solutions and shared objectives.
- Raise concerns professionally, either in the meeting or through formal channels if needed.

Behaviour in meetings

Everyone attending an HFMA meeting is expected to behave professionally.

Do:

- Treat others with respect, even where views differ
- Listen and do not interrupt
- keeping contributions constructive and relevant

Don't:

- Shouting, aggressive behaviour or personal remarks are not acceptable.
- Commercial matters should not be discussed during meetings. These forums are not for sales activity, promotion, or commercial discussions.

Meetings should feel like a safe space for discussion. Poor behaviour can undermine that and make it harder for others to contribute.

Chair Responsibilities

The chair is responsible for making sure the meeting runs effectively and that the right tone is set.

This includes:

- setting clear expectations for behaviour at the start of the meeting
- making sure everyone has the opportunity to contribute
- keeping discussions focused and on track

The chair is also expected to step in if the behaviour is not appropriate.

This might include:

- asking someone to stop or rephrase a point
- intervening if someone is being interrupted or spoken over
- pausing or redirecting a discussion if it becomes unproductive

If behaviour crosses the line (for example, shouting or personal comments), it should be addressed at the time. Allowing it to continue without challenge can affect the whole meeting.

Confidentiality

HFMA provides members with access to privileged information as part of membership.

All members are expected to:

- Treat all HFMA materials, discussions, and information shared during meetings as confidential.
- Not share information with non-members, competitors, or external organisations or on any social media platforms without explicit HFMA approval
- Understand that sharing confidential information breaches HFMA's Terms & Conditions and may result in sanctions.
- Store and dispose of meeting materials securely.

Member Participation

Active participation is crucial to effective decision-making and service improvement. Members are encouraged to:

- Prepare in advance by reviewing agenda papers and materials.
- Share views and feedback respectfully, ensuring all voices are heard.
- Ask questions or provide insight that can help tailor HFMA services to members' needs.
- Engage with follow-up actions after meetings to support organisational goals.

Managing Conflicts and Disagreements

- Disagreements should be addressed professionally, focusing on ideas rather than individuals.
- If conflicts escalate, the chair should intervene and, if necessary, pause discussions to maintain a constructive environment.
- Members may request private follow-up discussions with the chair or Director General if issues persist.

Meeting Preparation and Etiquette

- Arrive on time and be ready to engage.
- Switch phones to silent or vibrate to minimise disruption.
- Use clear and concise communication and use microphones when and if provided
- Respect time allocated for each agenda item.

Summary

HFMA meetings are a forum for collaboration, insight, and decision-making. Respect, confidentiality, and participation are vital to achieving this.

Chairs are responsible for creating a safe and inclusive environment, while members and attendees contribute by engaging actively and professionally.

History

Date	Version	Reason
20/04/2026	1	New Guidance development

References:

1. ACAS (2021) *Disciplinary and Grievance at Work: The ACAS Guide*. <https://www.acas.org.uk/sites/default/files/2024-08/discipline-and-grievances-at-work-the-acas-guide.pdf>
2. CIPD (2022) *Effective Meetings: Planning, Conduct and Follow-up* <https://www.cipd.co.uk/>
3. Rradar (2021). *Engagement in Professional Boards: Best Practice Guidance*.
4. HFMA Membership Terms & Conditions: <https://hfma.co.uk/members-home/>
5. UK Government (2001) *Good Meeting Etiquette: ACW/CWTCO Skills Manual*. <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7b4a04e5274a34770eab15/good-meeting-etiquette.pdf>