

#4 Define Council Roles & Responsibilities

What are council roles and responsibilities?

For any council to function well, its members need to know what is expected of them. This helps avoid problems such as no one doing key tasks, one person trying to do too much, or conflict over who does what. While there is no recipe of required roles for a council, certain roles have proved to be critical for effective council operation. These include the following:

<i>Roles</i>	<i>Functions</i>
Facilitator - presides over the meeting and is primarily responsible for keeping the meeting focused and moving.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep the discussion focused on the agenda.• Assist the council in evaluating its progress.• Summarize key points.• Provide feedback to the council.• Assist the council in following its decision making procedures.
Chair - may or may not be filled by the same person as the facilitator.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pre-meeting preparation including agendas and supporting materials.• Provide direction.• Represent the council and be the point or contact person for the council.• Coordinate with facilitator (if the roles are not combined).• Assess progress.• Keep a master copy of council records.
Recorder/Scribe - records the council's ideas, decisions, and assignments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Listen carefully and capture accurately for council members what has been said, agreed to, or decided.• Maintain the council's memory in official minutes.
Council Members - need to understand up front what is expected of them, during and between meetings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Report to stakeholders groups.• Attend and participate in meetings.• Offer experience, knowledge, and ideas.• Secondary facilitation to keep meetings on track.

Note: Other roles may include a timekeeper or process observer.

Why are they important?

For team members to work together productively without duplication of effort, confusion, and unclear expectations, they need to understand the variety of roles, both formal and informal, for a successful team.

When do you need them?

Establishing team roles is one of the first things a council should do. Periodic re-evaluation is useful for a council when new members join, at the beginning of the school year, at mid-year or end-of-year for a self-assessment, or when group process appears to be breaking down.

How do you develop them?

Ask council members to identify the critical functions to be covered. Examine the roles described above. Determine together which roles the members believe are most appropriate to facilitate the functioning of the council.

Our Roles and Responsibilities