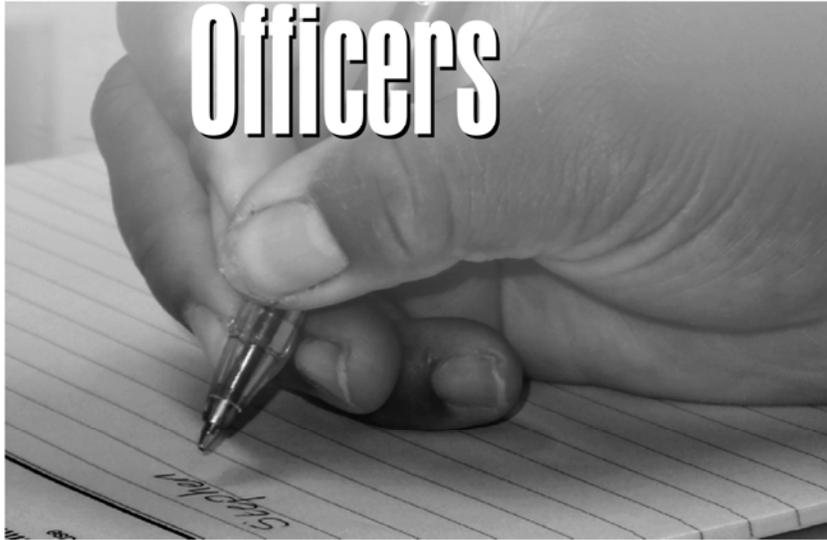


Guidelines for Administrative Officers

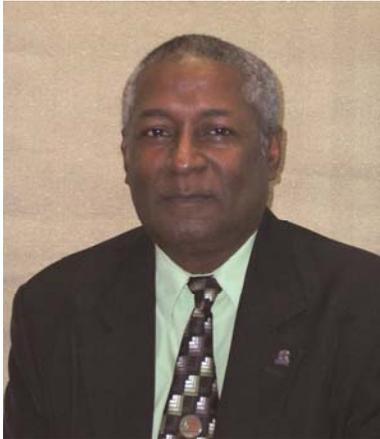


Prepared by
Office of Public Sector Reform 2012

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Michael A. Archer

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Dear Colleagues,

The **Office of Public Sector Reform (OPSR)** is committed to the continuous development of the Public Sector of Barbados and to ensuring that the pillars of effectiveness and efficiency are evident.

This manual provides a comprehensive set of guidelines which serve as reference notes for Administrative Officers. However, the contents can also serve as informative tips and reminders for other officers.

It explores the primary duties of Administrative Officers and provides easy step-by-step guidelines for achieving tasks efficiently. The areas explored are as follows:

- Orientation
- Minute Writing
- Writing Reports
- Writing Speeches
- Preparation of Cabinet Papers
- Preparation of Travel Papers

I urge you to utilise this document as an information resource/reference guide throughout your public service career.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael A. Archer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael A. Archer

Director, Office of Public Sector Reform

September 2012

2.0 ORIENTATION

On your first day of assuming your new position as Administrative Officer (AO), there are a few things which could help you.

Ideally, orientation of new staff members should include the following:

2.1 Introductions:

The first step is becoming familiar with the persons who work in your new office.

- As a new staff member, you should ensure that you meet all members of staff within your new department/section. If this is impossible, given number of staff, office layout etc. it is nonetheless very important that you meet **all** persons with whom you will be working closely on a daily basis. These persons may include the Permanent Secretary, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Senior Administrative Officer, Administrative Officers, Manager Information System, Clerical Officers, Receptionists, Typists etc.
- When introducing yourself or while being introduced, ensure that your full name is stated, as well as your position. Ensure that you gather the following information when meeting persons for the first time:
 - Full name;
 - Post;
 - Try to determine what information may be required from the staff member or the type of interaction that may occur.
- After formal introductions and at an appropriate time, request a typed list of names and extensions of persons within the department/section. If unavailable, make a special effort to visit persons you met earlier, (especially those persons you may work with closely) record their names and telephone extensions.

2.2 Office Operations:

Familiarise yourself with the operations of the office, including:

- Hours of work,
- Lunch hours,
- Telephone etiquette,
- Appropriate office attire,
- Chain of command and immediate supervisor,
- Deadlines for assignments,

- Process for applying for vacation leave, study leave,
- Process for calling in sick- to whom it should be reported, the latest time by which it should be reported,
- Operations of the registry,
- General service standards in the public sector (available from OPSR).

2.3 Office Layout:

Familiarize yourself with the layout of the office and the location of areas such as the lunch room, registry, parking, bathrooms, accounts section, meeting/conference room, resource/document centre or location of photocopiers, printers, faxes etc.

2.4 Safety/Emergency measures:

Familiarise yourself with all office safety/emergency procedures including the location of fire alarms, fire extinguishers, emergency exits, assembly points, etc..

2.5 Pertinent Documents:

Secure copies or know where to access pertinent documents such as:

- The department's operational and procedural manual
- The department's strategic plan, vision, mission, mandate
- Legislation relating to the organisation
- The department's emergency management plan
- General Orders, Public Service Act, Financial Rules

2.6 Settling in:

After settling at your desk/workstation, gather the necessary stationary, ensure that you have access to your assigned computer and the office network system (if available) and assigned an office email address.

Read and familiarise yourself with any relevant working files/documents. Set a reasonable timeframe by which you should have covered the salient points in each file. Do not try to digest or memorise everything. Seek a basic understanding. As time goes on, the finer details will become clearer.

3.0 WRITING MINUTES

This section deals with minute writing in two areas:

- i. Minute writing on office files
- ii. Minute writing for meetings



3.1 Minute Writing on Office Files

As an officer in the Public Service, you are required to write minutes (notes) on files to other officers, whether of a senior or junior grade. These minutes may be on a variety of areas ranging from administrative to technical matters.

In all cases, the general purpose is to provide salient information (background and other relevant information) and to make recommendations, where needed to facilitate decision and action on a matter to bring it to a meaningful conclusion.

The steps taken in writing minutes on files are usually as follows:

- **Reference Numbers:** The minute must be given a chronological number for reference. Only use a **red** pencil for permanent files and a normal (**black-grey**) pencil for temporary files.
- **Addressing:** The file minute must be addressed to an officer by title/post. In large Ministries/Departments, where there may be more than one officer holding similar positions, differentiation may be made through identifying the officer's area of responsibility, for example, Admin. Off. II (Sports) or A.O. II (Sports). A minute may also be addressed to an officer by title, followed by his/her name in brackets, for example A.O.II (Smith).
- **Ordering:** In instances where more than one officer is required to see the minute, the more senior officer should be listed first.
- **Content:** Minutes should provide basic background, relevant information and recommendations. They should provide enough information to give your reader a thorough picture of what the matter entails. This facilitates the reader's decision making and allows him/her to make a quick assessment as to the required action.

- **Succinct:** Minutes should not be lengthy or excessively wordy. Nonetheless, being succinct does not necessarily warrant the overuse of abbreviations, such as a.s.a.p (as soon as possible), f.y.i (for your information) or k.i.v (keep in view).
- **Legibility:** Minutes should be legible and easily understood by the reader. If your handwriting is illegible, minutes may be typed. Typing minutes is especially necessary if over one page in length.
- **Accompanying drafts:** Any accompanying drafts should be typed in double-lined space to allow for insertions and other amendments.
- **Ink colour:** Minutes should not be written in pencil or in red or green pen ink. They should be written in blue or black ink. Avoid crossing out and the use of erasers. Liquid paper should also be avoided and must never be used in financial matters.
- **Flagging reference material:** Documents, minutes, illustrations which are referenced, should be flagged for easy access.
- **Terminology:** Terms such as URGENT, VERY URGENT and CONFIDENTIAL should only mean what the term suggests. This allows readers to prioritise and deal with matters as they should be dealt with.
- **Deadlines:** To ensure a seamless flow of work, it may be useful to indicate deadline dates for the resolution of matters. In determining deadlines, you should give consideration to the time required for the preparation of documents, responses etc.
- **Replies by memo/letter:** Where replies are required by memorandum or letter, a draft should be submitted at cover. This saves time by not having the file returned for a memo/letter to be drafted following approval on a matter.
- **Inserting extra sheets:** As a matter of courtesy, if there is no more space on the minute sheet for writing by the next officer receiving the file, an extra sheet should be placed on the file. The next number for reference should also be written after your minute.
- **Completing minutes:** After completing your minute, the minute should be signed and dated, indicating your title/post. Note on the 'Routing of File' sheet at the front cover to whom the file should be sent next.
- **Forwarding files (internally):** The relevant file should be placed in the 'OUT' tray. If a matter is urgent, every effort should be made to ensure that the recipient

receives the file in a timely manner (*including delivering it yourself with the Registry being informed*).

- **Forwarding files (externally):** Files which are intended to leave a Ministry or Department must be entered in a book specifically provided for that purpose. ***Never take a file out of the office without informing the Registry.***
- **Updating transit slips:** All files leaving your desk should be recorded on a daily transit note
- **Care in handling files:** Files are the records of the Ministry/Department and serve as the tangible memory of the entity and as useful reference material. Therefore, they should be handled carefully. Files should never be mutilated or damaged in anyway. The wilful mutilation, alteration or destruction of property including official documents or records, either manual or electronic is defined as misconduct of a serious nature under the Public Service Act. All files should be dealt with expeditiously to maintain the integrity of the Government Service. Eating/drinking at your desk while working on files, or with files nearby should be avoided.

3.2 Minute Writing for Meetings



The purpose of minutes is to:

- Create an official record of the events which transpired during a meeting,
- Summarise discussions that occurred,
- Highlight decisions made and resolutions passed,
- Record required actions, including the person(s) responsible for executing these actions and any allotted timeframes.

Minutes capture critical discussions in a tangible form and provide the template for future or continuous discussion. They remind participants of what occurred previously and inform those who did not attend of what occurred in their absence.

They serve as reference material for not only participants, but may also be used by external parties to verify a matter or to understand the level of discussion which occurred. Minutes should therefore be accurate, factual, unbiased and must not be coloured by the writer's beliefs.

3.2.1 Before the meeting:

Taking minutes is just not writing a few notes from a meeting. This task must be approached systematically and will require planning and some thought beforehand.

You may or may not be the person directly responsible for organizing the meeting. Whichever situation presents itself, there are a few things which will make your job easier:

- Identify the participants and create a participants list
- Ensure that the selected venue is available and large enough for the number of participants
- If snacks or lunch will be served arrangements must be made early to allow for timely delivery
- Ensure that participants are contacted and informed about the meeting details including time, place, purpose of the meeting and any parking arrangements.
 - Parties should be notified in writing on official correspondence and reminders should be given at least 1-2 days before the meeting via email or telephone call.

- It may also be useful to ask participants to arrive 5-7 minutes before the scheduled start of the meeting to ensure that the meeting commences on time.
- If a previous meeting was held, forward copies of the minutes from that meeting.
- Ensure an agenda is prepared beforehand and circulate to parties, possibly 2-3 days before the day of the meeting. This allows participants to clearly understand the areas to be discussed and it gives them time to generate ideas and the points they wish to raise during the meeting. If it is not possible to circulate the agenda prior to the day of the meeting, ensure that attendees are provided with a copy as soon as they arrive.
- As the person taking the minutes, you should prepare a typed attendance sheet on which to gather attendees' information. The column headings should include:
 - Name of attendee
 - Agency represented
 - Post
 - Agency's Mailing Address
 - Telephone number
 - Email address
- Make copies of minutes from previous meetings available for distribution to attendees. This prevents having to leave to have copies made for attendees who may have forgotten their copies
- Consult with the chairperson regarding copies of any other documents/reference materials which he/she may wish to circulate and ensure that an adequate number of copies are prepared beforehand for distribution.

3.2.2 On the day of the meeting:

3.2.2.1 Prior to the official start of the meeting:

- Place all required documents (minutes from previous meeting, other documents/reference materials, copies of agenda) in the meeting room,
- When most of the attendees arrive, circulate the attendance sheet and ensure that each person who is present records the required information.

- ❖ After the sheet is passed around, make sure it is returned to you so that you can double check for any missing information. It also ensures that you can pass on the sheet to any attendee who arrives after the meeting commences.

3.2.2.2 *During the meeting:*

During the meeting, as the minute taker, you must be attentive, observant and vigilant. While you may not be an expert on the subject matter or topic discussed, you should be familiar enough to understand the content at a general level and be competent enough to record and articulate relevant discussions in a meaningful way.

- ❖ If permitted, you can use a tape recorder, but do not rely solely on it, still take your own notes.
- ❖ Record too much, rather than too little. Any unnecessary information can be later filtered and omitted from official minutes.
- ❖ Record everything as it happens, even if the order is not the same as that seen in the meeting's agenda.
- ❖ Record the time the meeting commences. If the Chairperson has not arrived by the scheduled meeting commencement time, this should be captured in the minutes, as well as the person who chairs the meeting until the Chairperson arrives.
- ❖ Record late arrivals and early departures. This is important as numbers present determine the quorum and whether discussions or decisions need to be tabled for another time. They also give you an indication of who may have heard what and what discussions persons were present for.
- ❖ When taking minutes it is not necessary to attribute ownership of statements to a specific person, unless it is absolutely required in cases where there was no unanimous agreement among parties or in cases where an authority needs to be quoted.
 - Generic statements such as "It was noted that..." "During discussion, the following points were made..." "The point was made that..."etc. should be used.
 - Names should be however included in instances where:

- A person is specifically requested or required to take an action.
 - There are formal propositions. In this instance, the names of the proposers and the seconder should be recorded.
- ❖ Record any corrections or matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.
- ❖ As the Chairperson moves through the agenda items, ensure that no item is missed. If he/she inadvertently skips an item, quickly draw it to his/her attention.
- ❖ If anybody protests or disagrees in a discussion and asks for the protests to become part of the minutes, record what is said and read it aloud to ensure that it is agreed on by all present that those were the words of the speaker.
- ❖ Ensure that any action(s) to be taken before the next meeting are recorded. Record the name(s) of the persons responsible for the respective action(s), to whom they report and the timeframe allotted for completion (if so advised).
- ❖ Record the time of the meeting's closure. If there is an adjournment, for example due to an unforeseen situation or an emergency which brings the meeting to an end before the agenda is completed, this should be recorded in the minutes.
- ❖ When this meeting resumes, it should be noted as Part II and should be highlighted as a continuation. However, the names of attendees, date, time, venue of the meeting should still be recorded.

3.2.3 After the meeting:

- ❖ As soon as possible after the meeting, you should prepare a first draft of the minutes. If possible this should be done the same day or the next working day to ensure that you can accurately recall the details of the meeting, in the event that some of your own notes were incomplete.
- ❖ As a rule of thumb, minutes should be prepared (typed, formatted) before any other meeting, as there may be some confusion and transference of happenings at one meeting to another.
- ❖ When preparing minutes, use the format used for previous minutes or if this is the first meeting on a given area, use the layout which is preferred by the agency.

- ❖ At the top of the page indicate the purpose of the meeting, the meeting venue, date and time of the meeting.
- ❖ This is followed by the names of attendees and their positions, (with the name of the Chairperson listed first). This is followed by the names of persons who offered apologies for their absence and names of persons invited, but who did not attend. **Check that all names are spelt correctly.**
- ❖ The Body: Record the time the meeting commenced and a synopsis of opening statements of the Chairperson.
- ❖ Number discussion points. Ensure that points are succinct and not verbose or lengthy, but still comprehensive enough to give an accurate representation of what occurred.
- ❖ Record the time the meeting was completed.
- ❖ As an addendum, create an “Actions Required” Table, which outlines actions required, the person(s) responsible for their execution, to whom these persons report and the time by which they should be completed.
- ❖ Have the draft presented to the Chairperson for his/her approval and/or amendments where necessary.
- ❖ Make any changes (if needed) and return to Chairperson.
- ❖ When minutes are agreed on, prepare a final copy, paying special attention to numbering and paragraphing for separate points.
- ❖ With the Chairperson or appropriate authority’s consent (such as the Permanent Secretary) forward the minutes to each attendee, using an appropriate medium. Additionally, a copy of the meeting’s agenda may be included as an attachment. In cases where the minutes are emailed, they should be sent in portable document format (pdf).

4.0 WRITING REPORTS

When writing reports, there are a few steps which can assist in this process.

- **Understanding Purpose:** Ensure that you understand:
 - The purpose of the report and the reason behind writing it (clarify the purpose if necessary)
 - The intended audience/readers of the report (this helps to determine type of language appropriate)
- **Preliminary reading and research:** Before drafting the report, you should familiarise yourself as much as possible with the subject area. You may require research to assist you in gathering ideas about the areas which the report should cover and to give an idea about the type of information which is available and how your report could be organised.

When gathering information, appropriate, reliable and reputable sources should be used. Possible useful sources may include, but are not limited to:

- Files in the Ministry/Department for background information (minutes on the file, correspondence, comments, past projects, projected plans)
 - Journals and Magazines (local, regional, international)
 - Newspapers (editorials, features etc.)
 - Books
 - Manuals
 - Electronic and digital media
 - Interviews/discussions with persons knowledgeable in area
- **Brainstorming:** While doing this reading and research, you need to write down ideas and points that come to you as you think over the report and the area of focus. At this stage, ordering your points or ideas is not critical, simply record them.

You however need to begin focussing your thoughts on what is critical and what is not. Recall that you may have encountered a wealth of information. However, only some of it can be incorporated into your final report. Therefore, you must be able to extract the salient points after examining this information.

- **Drafting:** This is where you begin to order your points and determine how the report should flow. You can draft a report outline, where you write down a few bulleted points which reflect the order of the report. This is essentially a skeletal outline of the report's contents. After this, you create a first draft of the report. The report may be organised as follows:

A report can consist of three main sections: the opening, the body and the conclusion.

The Opening/Introduction: This section sets the platform for the report. It creates in the reader's mind what to anticipate in the main portions of the report. It consists of a few short paragraphs made up of clear statements. This section identifies the aim or purpose of the report and the main points which will be expanded in the subsequent sections.

The Body: This section is the main part of the report and elaborates on the points made in the introduction. Each point should be dealt with thoroughly and arguments communicated clearly and objectively to support the points made. Ensure that points made are justified and supported by facts, namely supporting documents, figures etc.

Points should be arranged in a logical order, with the main point addressed first, followed by the next most powerful point and so on. Try as much as possible to ensure that there is a natural transition from one point to the next, to show their relationship. Do not just jump from point to point.

The Conclusion/Closing: This section summarizes what was examined in the body and provides conclusive statements based on the arguments presented in the body of the report. No new information should be introduced in this section. Simply wrap up the report with your strongest arguments.

Review and Edit: After your first draft, where possible, it is advisable to leave it for at least one day and then review it. This gives you time to clear your mind. The writer of a report tends to see what he/she 'wants to see' or what they intend to write, but not what is actually there because of their familiarity with the report.

When re-reading the report, try to read it as someone who is unfamiliar with the subject area or who is reading it for the first time. Look for ambiguous, unclear, repetitive and argumentative statements. Remember that the report is supposed to be unbiased and objective and supported by evidence. Also pay attention to grammatical and spelling errors, as well as sentence structure.

Peer Review: Where possible, allow one of your peers to read your report and provide feedback on it. Do not fear criticism and do not take it personally. Remember that you want to submit the best report possible and persons unfamiliar with a report tend to see things differently and can detect errors not noticed by the writer.

Examine comments and feedback from the peer review carefully and objectively and make changes which are justifiable.

Final Report: Prepare final report and forward to relevant persons.

5.0 WRITING SPEECHES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

It is usually part of an Administrative Officer's duty to draft speeches for various functions/occasions to be delivered by Ministers, Permanent Secretaries or Heads of Department. The main consideration in writing a speech is to always know and understand your audience. A good speech is never written from the speaker's point of view.

The key to good speech writing is similar to that of good report writing- you must prepare a well-structured and appropriate skeletal framework. However, before you can construct such a framework, you must be absolutely clear about the following:

Purpose:

What is the speech about? What is the main topic?
When writing, the main points should be ranked in order of importance and supported by research.

Length:

What is the required or anticipated length of the speech?
Must it be 3 minutes, 5 minutes or 20 minutes?

Speaker's Objective:

What is the speaker's overall objective? Usually for politicians this is to define and sell ideas to the audience on Government's policies, programmes and/or plans for a particular sector.

Speaker's Style:

Elements of the speaker's style and speaking preferences could be useful in constructing a speech. You should consider this as this increases the likelihood that you write a speech which they feel comfortable delivering.

Audience Composition:

What type of audience will be receiving this speech? This will determine the level and use of language. The presentation must capture the audience and must be informative, interesting and appropriate for the particular audience.

After these considerations, the steps identified in **Section 4.0 Writing Reports** may be followed:

- Preliminary reading and research
- Brainstorming
- Drafting
- Review and Edit
- Peer Review
- Final Speech (double-line spaced to allow any insertions to be easily made).

5.1 Other General Considerations

- Check the availability of a public address (PA) system.
- Ensure that the PA system works well.
- Check on lighting conditions (as they will affect the speaker).
- **Do not become frustrated if changes are made after the draft is reviewed.**

6.0 PREPARING CABINET PAPERS

A Cabinet Paper may be defined as a written submission which is prepared along specific guidelines and provides for Government Ministers (who form the Cabinet of Barbados) relevant information required for them to note or make considered and informed decisions on various matters. It follows therefore that unless accurate and relevant information is provided, inappropriate decisions may be made.

On this premise, a good Cabinet Paper is one which provides basic background information, general and specific information, costing, alternative methods or approaches (for purposes of comparison) and a recommendation for the Cabinet to consider.

Cabinet Papers may be prepared for a number of reasons, including:

- For information only
- To give a position on a matter (Position paper)
- For a decision by Cabinet on an important issue, for example, legislation.

When preparing a Cabinet Paper, the background information is usually on the Ministry's files. This information may be in the form of correspondence (letters, memoranda, fax messages etc.), minutes, position papers, feasibility studies, briefs and other informative sources (for example, previous Cabinet Papers on the matter). Other Ministries/Departments may be requested to provide input or comments depending on the nature of the Cabinet Paper. For example, where matters may have financial implications, the draft Cabinet Paper should be sent to the Ministry of Finance.

6.1 The Role of Cabinet Committees

Cabinet Committees ensure that development priorities are addressed in a timely manner and decrease the pressure on the Cabinet by attending to business in smaller fora. Unlike Cabinet meetings, public officers may be invited to attend Committee meetings to provide technical input, if the Chairman of the Committee, so instructs.

The work of Cabinet Committees may also be assisted through Cabinet Working Groups (CWGs) which are established to carry out particular tasks within an allotted timeframe and report to the parent Cabinet Committee.

With the exception of papers proposing appointments of Chairmen, Board Members and management staff of statutory corporations and boards or those proposing or reporting on Ministerial travel, papers should **not** be submitted directly to the full Cabinet without having first been considered by the relevant Cabinet Committee. However, in instances where a matter is urgent or sensitive in nature, it can be submitted directly for consideration by the full Cabinet through the Cabinet Office. Currently there are four (4) Cabinet Committees: **Governance, Social Policy, Economic Policy and Infrastructure.**

6.2 Format for Presenting Cabinet and Committee Papers

After researching and collecting the relevant information, the format for presenting Cabinet Papers is as follows:

- **Title:** Express the title of the paper in as few words as possible. Use key words to identify the subject of the paper. Underline the brief outline of subject.
- **Proposal:** The matter which the Cabinet or Cabinet Committee is being asked to consider or decide on should be stated at the beginning of the paper. For example, “The matter for consideration of the Cabinet is...” OR “The ... is submitted for the information of the Cabinet” OR “ The matter under consideration of the Cabinet Committee on Governance is ...”
- **Background information:** Background information should cover areas such as a brief explanation of the reasons for the paper (for example, government policy), how the project was formulated, reference to previous Cabinet or Committee decisions (it may not be necessary to restate in full all the previous decisions. However, always quote the most relevant cabinet decision).
- **Body of the Paper:** This section should examine the benefits of the project/programme or attendance to Barbados, the Ministry or Department. Supporting details such as human resource requirements, travelling expenses, airfare, materials and equipment, allowances, salaries, overall costs, donor agencies involved etc. should be provided.

Various alternative/approaches/methods, along with their advantages and disadvantages should be included. For example, purchase of equipment etc.

- From time to time, it is important to seek the comments from other Ministries under whose purview certain matters rest. In these cases, the comments obtained should be placed in the penultimate paragraph prior to the final paragraph which includes the recommendations.

- **Recommendations:** The final paragraphs include recommendations on the best course of action. Recommendations must provide a clear guide to the Cabinet or Cabinet Committee. No new material or points should be introduced in this section.

Each recommendation must have been earlier supported by a statement or statements in the body of the paper. If there are several recommendations, it may be helpful to use sub-headings in line with the ones used in the main body of the paper. Wherever applicable, the legal basis for any recommendation must be clearly stated.

- **The Invitation:** There must also be an invitation to Cabinet or Cabinet Committee to agree to the recommendation(s) or to note information. This entails summarising the details on the matter(s) which Cabinet is being invited to approve or note.

The invitation must be the **final paragraph** of the Cabinet or Cabinet Committee Paper and should stand on its own. The invitation should not contain any recommendation that is not argued or presented in the paper and should be written in such a way that there is no need for interpretation.

- **General:** The file reference and date are placed at the bottom left of the final page of the Cabinet or Cabinet Committee Paper and underlined along with the date of submission.

The Cabinet or Cabinet Committee Papers must be numbered.

The first draft of the Cabinet or Cabinet Committee Paper should contain accurate, relevant information before it is forwarded for approval. The accuracy of the information sources and calculations for costs should be checked by a senior officer to alleviate the eventuality of incorrect decisions being made by the Cabinet or the Cabinet Committee.

All appendices referenced in the Cabinet Paper, are attached and numbered sequentially at the back of the paper for ease of reference.

6.3 Procedure for Submitting Cabinet and Cabinet Committee Papers

Cabinet and Cabinet Committee Papers must be prepared in draft, double-line spaced for review by officers such as Administrative Officer I, Senior Administrative Officer, Heads of Department, Deputy Permanent Secretary and Permanent Secretary. The Permanent Secretary must approve the Cabinet or Cabinet Committee Paper before it is submitted to the Minister for approval.

In the case of Cabinet Papers twenty-five (25) copies should be faired, copied and submitted to the Cabinet Secretary and one (1) should be placed in the Ministry's file. For Cabinet Committee Papers:

- ▶ Governance/Infrastructure - Fifteen (15) copies and one (1) additional copy for the file
- ▶ Economic Policy - Thirteen (13) copies and one (1) additional copy for the file
- ▶ Social Policy - Twelve (12) copies and one (1) additional copy for the file

The dates for the submission papers:

- ▶ Cabinet Papers – **Monday** morning
- ▶ Governance and Social Policy - **Wednesday** morning
- ▶ Infrastructure and Economic Policy – **Tuesday** morning

Copies of the paper are submitted with the relevant main file (not a temporary file) to the Cabinet Secretary with an accompanying log book. The log book is signed by an officer in the Cabinet Office to record receipt of the copies and the file. It is important to note that papers with accompanying appendices must be punched in the upper left corner.

When the Cabinet has made a decision on the matter, the file is returned to the Ministry with the relevant note made by the Cabinet Secretary. The official note (yellow paper) will be returned at a later date with the informed decision. The yellow paper must be filed in the registry of the Ministry/Department for future reference of the Cabinet's decision.

In the case of decisions emanating from the various Cabinet Committees, the confirmed Committee recommendations will be communicated to the Ministry/Department on a "green" extract. Once a decision has been taken by the Cabinet on recommendations presented by the Cabinet Committee, the Cabinet Office will issue a memorandum with the Cabinet decision to the respective Ministry.

7.0 PREPARATION OF TRAVEL PAPERS

Permanent Secretaries, Chairmen, Chief Executive Officers of Statutory Boards who are travelling overseas on Government business should travel business class. In cases where there is no business class, then travel should be economy class. All other officers travel economy class. There is no authority for an officer to be upgraded to business class because of the length of the travel.

Ministers can choose travel agencies for their travel, but travel for public officers should be based on a list of travel agencies available from the Cabinet Office.

No late papers for travel by officials will be accepted by Cabinet, unless they are accompanying the Minister. Submissions will also not be considered by round robin.

The Minister must approve the travel paper before it is submitted to the Cabinet Office. Papers must be submitted on files which include the background to the meeting/conference two weeks prior to the proposed date of travel. The following points are to be noted:

1. The travel paper must be received by the Cabinet Office no later than 12 noon on the **Thursday** prior to the Tuesday on which the paper will be considered. All travel papers for consideration should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the proposed date of travel.
2. Papers are to be submitted to the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Travel (**nine copies**).
3. Papers for attachments:
 - a. Invitation to meeting/conference
 - b. Agenda for meeting/conference
 - c. Briefs
4. For all delegation members who are not attached to the Ministry submitting the Travel Paper, the comment “no objection” from the relevant Ministry must be included.
5. The tentative itinerary issued by the travel agency must be appended to the Travel Paper seeking permission for officers to travel.
6. Briefs which Ministers or senior civil servants propose to take to meetings where major policy decisions are to be made must be appended to the paper seeking approval for travel.
7. The decision of the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Travel will be dispatched to Ministries on blue paper which will distinguish these decisions from the yellow Cabinet extract.

7.1 Ministerial Travel

Written approval must be sought from the Prime Minister for Ministerial travel on official business. The Minister should submit a written request to the Prime Minister providing background information on the conference/meeting and its potential benefits to Barbados. The Cabinet Paper should include confirmation that approval was granted by the Prime Minister.

7.2 Format for Papers to the Sub-Committee on Travel

Papers for consideration of the Sub-Committee must be presented in the same format as if they are submitted to the Cabinet.

Permission for public officers to travel on training should be sought from the Public Service Commission through the Training Administration Division.

Examples of papers to the Cabinet, Cabinet Committee on Governance and the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Travel are at Appendix I

8.0 WRITING MEMORANDA

Memoranda are correspondence between one Government agency and another. Memoranda generally consist of a heading, an opening paragraph/section, the body and a closing paragraph/section.

8.1 Heading

The heading section identifies:

- The recipients of the memo
- The sender of the memo
- The date on which the memo was sent
- Reference no.
- The subject/purpose of the memo

Ensure that you have the correct title(s) of recipient(s). The subject line should be specific enough to convey the primary purpose of the memorandum. For example, “Meeting on Substance Abuse on Friday June 4, 2012” as opposed to “Meeting”.

8.2 Opening

The opening paragraph/section states the purpose of the memo. It is generally quite brief and usually no more than a few sentences. For example, if the memo is in response to a particular problem, the problem should be stated clearly. Conversely, if the purpose of the memo is to introduce a new policy or to provide a project update, this fact should be briefly stated.

Memos do not begin with a salutation.

8.3 Body

The body is essentially the discussion section of the memo. In this section, the most important and most specific information should come first. This is followed by the less important and more general information.

Memos are meant to be brief and most are not more than one page in length.

If an attachment such as a graph, chart, list or a more detailed summary of findings is included, it should be identified in this section (if appropriate) or in the closing section.

Paragraphs in the memo should be short and concise and should be numbered.

8.4 Closing

In the closing paragraph, recommendations should be indicated and/or the action you wish the reader to take. If no particular action is needed, end the memo on a positive note. This section often can be very brief, but it should not be made so brief that the reader is unclear about what he/she is supposed to do next.

No closing remark such as “Yours faithfully” is necessary. If an officer, other than the Permanent Secretary (PS) or Head of Department (HoD) is signing the memorandum, then the officer signs on their behalf. The officer’s signature therefore precedes the closing remark which is “*for Permanent Secretary/Head of Department*”.

9.0 LETTERS

While memoranda are correspondence between one Government agency and another, letters are used as a mean of communication between a Government agency and members of the public. Letters are also written to other Governments, state agencies (statutory corporations), national and international organisations.

In opening a letter, a salutation is necessary i.e. “Sir”, “Madam”, “Dear Sir”, “Dear Madam”, etc. At the end of the letter, the subscription “Yours truly”, “Yours sincerely”, “Yours faithfully”, should be placed immediately above the signature of the person sending the letter.

Additional information on letters, memoranda and other documents can be found in the **Guidelines on Styles of Address for Public Officers** a publication produced by the Office of Public Sector Reform.

Examples of a memorandum and a letter are at Appendix I

10. SENDING FAXES

When sending faxes, the following can assist:

- Complete a cover sheet or cover page.
- Address the cover sheet to the person or division with the department or Ministry to whom the fax is intended.
- Indicate the fax number of the recipient.
- Provide a subject indicating the reason for sending the fax.
- Fax cover sheets should include the name and contact information of the sender, as well as the number of pages which are included in the fax.
- You may include a brief note, followed by your signature.
- Documents should be placed in their proper sequence (the order in which you wish them to be read).
- Most faxes automatically print a confirmation sheet, which indicates whether the transmission was successful or not.
- Always print the confirmation sheet as it serves as proof that the fax was sent.
- Call the sender to confirm receipt of the fax.

11. FAXES/EMAILS

Official faxes and emails should be treated as normal mail. Therefore faxes and emails sent or received should be filed. In the case of faxes which were sent, the confirmation sheet should also be filed along with the actual fax.

12. OFFICE OF PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM

Guidance Manuals, Brochures and other publications

Over the years, a number of guidance manuals have been produced by the Office of Public Sector Reform. These are available on the Office of Public Sector Reform's website at www.reform.gov.bb under '**publications**'. Please check the site or call the Office for assistance in obtaining copies. The list of publications include:

- Improving Customer Service - Developing Customer Charters
- Guidelines for Handling Complaints
- Guidelines on Styles of Address for Public Sector Officers
- How to Make the Telephone Work for You
- Guidelines for Planning and Conducting Workshops & Seminars
- Developing A File Plan/Filing Key
- Conducting Registry Reviews
- Registry Procedures Manual
- Strategic Planning in the Barbados Public Service -Guidelines for the Development of Strategic Plans

Contact Numbers for the Office of Public Sector Reform

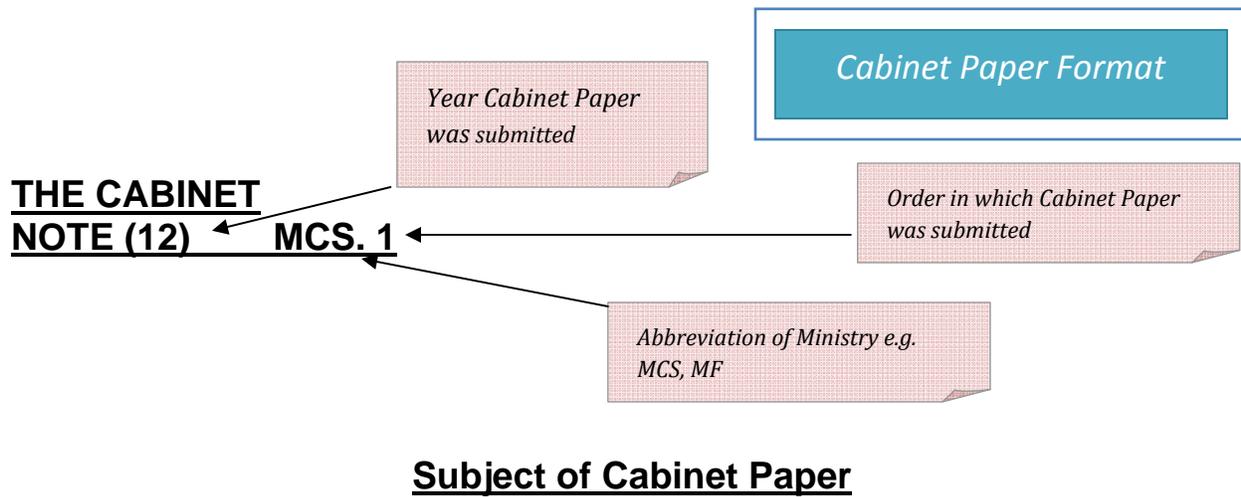
Director – 467-4427

Deputy Director – 467-4481

Communications Officer – 467-4438

Employee Assistance Programme Coordinator- 467-4431

Appendix



Proposal:

Background:

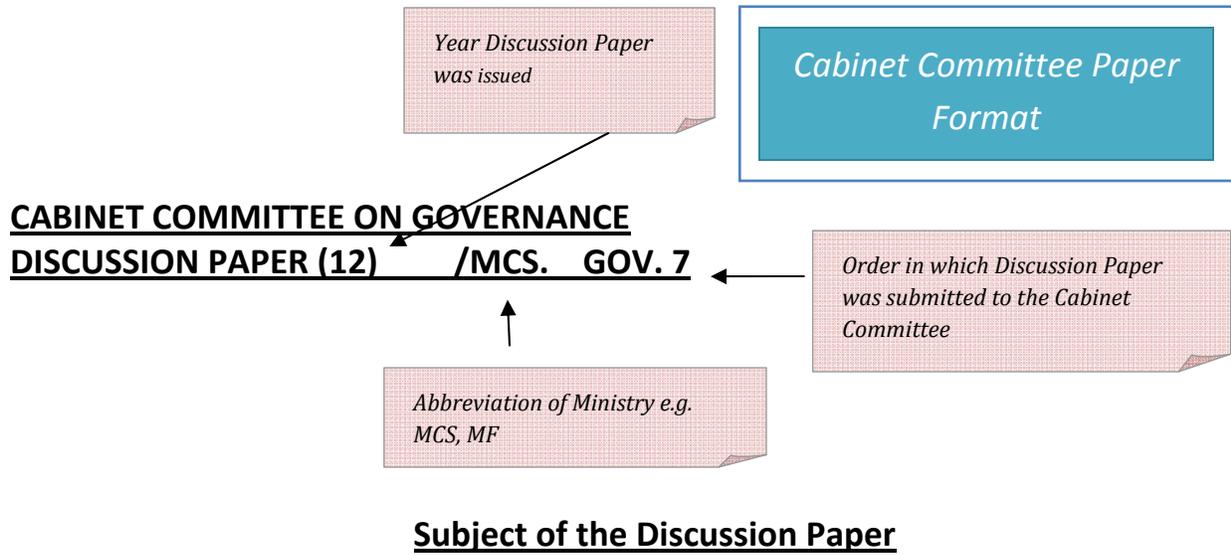
Body:

Invitation:

The Cabinet is invited to:

Ministry's Reference Number

Date



Proposal:

Background:

Body:

Invitation:

The Cabinet Committee on Governance is invited to:

Ministry's Reference Number

Date

CABINET SUB-COMMITTEE ON TRAVEL

NOTE (12) /MCS T1

*Cabinet Sub-Committee
on Travel Paper Format*

*Year Travel Paper was
submitted*

*Abbreviation of Ministry e.g.
MCS, MF*

*Order in which Travel Paper
was submitted*

Subject of the Travel Paper

Proposal:

Background:

Body:

Invitation:

The Cabinet Committee on Travel is invited to:

Ministry's Reference Number

Date



MEMORANDUM

*Sender of memorandum –
Permanent Secretary or Head of
Department*

FROM:

Recipient (s)

TO:

Date memorandum was issued

DATE:

SUBJECT:

Reference number of file

REF. NO:

*Signature of Permanent Secretary or
Head of Department or the signature
of a staff member for the Permanent
Secretary or Head of Department*

J. Smith

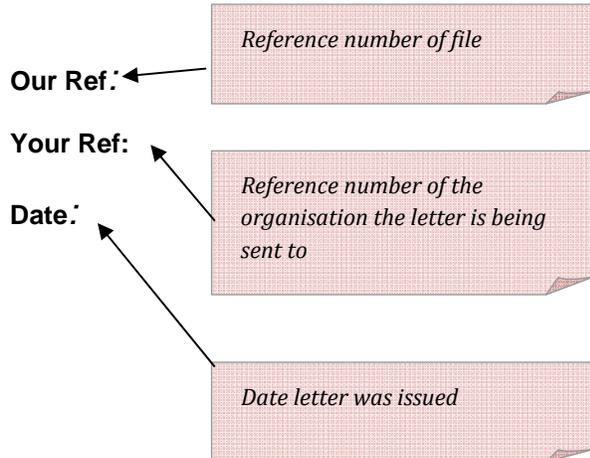
Permanent Secretary/
Head of Department



MINISTRY OF THE CIVIL SERVICE
*E. Humphrey Walcott Building
 Cnr. Culloden Road &
 Collymore Rock
 St. Michael*



Letter Format



Telephone:

Fax:

E-MAIL:

Dear Addressee,

Subject

Body of Letter

Yours faithfully,

J Smith

Signature of Permanent Secretary or Head of Department or the signature of a staff member for the Permanent Secretary or Head of Department

*Permanent Secretary/
 Head of Department*

