



Committee Handbook 2023

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Section I: Committee Guidelines

Through SOAP committees and working groups, members to engage with each other to deliver programs and service for the benefit of SOAP members and the profession, in alignment with the society's mission, vision and core values.

To ensure the best possible experience for all members, SOAP has established some basic guidelines for participation and expected behavior. By volunteering, you agree that you have read and will follow these guidelines and additional requirements described in the Committee Handbook.

Expectations

Committee and working group leaders and members are expected to embrace SOAP's mission, vision, values and strategic pillars, and understand how the committee/working group purpose aligns with these important guidance elements.

Further, they are expected to understand and be committed the charter of their committee or the committee with which their working group aligns. This helps ensure activities align with the approved scope and intent of the committee/working group.

Responsibilities

Committee and working group members responsibilities include the following:

- Prepare for and participate in meetings and orientation sessions
- Devote the time and effort required to accomplish the defined goals and objectives
- Contribute to the development of deliverables and fulfillment of the action plan
- Adhere to policies and processes
- Be responsive and respectful in interactions with other members and management staff
- Seek outcomes that advance the organization, rather than individual objectives
- Disclose any real or potential conflicts of interest

Meeting and Communication Etiquette

Committees and working groups may meet electronically or in person and may communicate via email, through an online community, by phone, or through other electronic means. You must reserve comments, discussions and shared content to that best suited to the committee or working group purpose. Further, you must communicate in a respectful, business-like manner both during meetings and in the SOAP Community.

To preserve a committee and working group environment that encourages both civil and fruitful dialogue, SOAP reserves the right to suspend or terminate committee or working group participation for anyone who violates these guidelines or fails to act in alignment with SOAP's core values. Please contact the management staff if you have questions or wish to report potentially inappropriate behavior.

Section II: SOAP Community Guidelines

The SOAP Community is an online, members-only forum for collaboration and member dialogue. Through the group forums, SOAP invites members to share expertise, ask questions, and seek guidance from others. You can also find materials and rosters for committees, working groups and SIGs that you are part of.

To ensure the best possible experience for all members, SOAP has established some basic guidelines for participation in and use of the SOAP Community. By joining and using this community, you agree that you have read and will follow these rules and guidelines. You also agree to reserve discussions and content to those appropriate to the community.

Please take a moment to acquaint yourself with these important guidelines:

1. Respect the purpose of the SOAP Community. Use the community to share expertise, experiences, challenges, questions and constructive feedback. Do not use the community for personal gain or to market products or services. If you have found a process, product or service helpful, please share your experience with the group in a respectful way. Focus your content and questions to align with SOAP's mission.
2. Use caution when discussing sensitive or potentially controversial issues. Information posted as part of a group discussions is available for the entire group to see, and comments may be subject to libel, slander, and antitrust laws. Respect patient privacy and follow appropriate standards for the protection of patient rights.
3. Defamatory, abusive, profane, threatening, offensive, or illegal materials are strictly prohibited. Do not post anything that you would not want the world to see or that you would not want anyone to know came from you.
4. Respect intellectual property. Only share content that you have personally created or have permission to use and have properly attributed to the content creator. If you are not sure of intellectual property ownership, do not share the materials.
5. When posting items in the collaborative environment, please indicate if the item is not available for reuse. When others share content, it is advisable to contact them if you would like to reuse it.

SOAP reserves the right to modify or remove content and suspend or terminate participation in this community for anyone who violate these rules. Please contact the SOAP staff if you have questions or wish to report potentially inappropriate use.

Section III. Expectations and Responsibilities

Expectations and Responsibilities of Committee and Working Group Members (Subcommittees & Taskforces)

- Embrace the strategic plan and understand how the committee or working group's efforts align with strategic pillars and goals
- Be committed to all aspects of the committee charter
- Prepare for and participate in meetings and orientation sessions
- Devote the time and effort required to accomplish the defined goals and objectives
- Contribute to the development of deliverables and fulfillment of the action plan
- Adhere to policies and processes
- Be responsive and respectful in interactions with other members and management staff
- Seek outcomes that advance the organization, rather than individual objectives
- Disclose any real or potential conflicts of interest

Committee and Working Group (Subcommittees & Taskforces) Chairs

In addition to the expectations and responsibilities summarized above, chairs have the following additional responsibilities:

- Set objectives and define initiatives/deliverables and timelines
- Select a vice chair, if appropriate
- Determine the committee/working group roster and help orient members
- Determine meeting schedules and develop agendas and materials
- Lead meetings in a manner that ensures participation and effectiveness
- Ensure meeting notes accurately reflect outcomes and decisions
- Evaluate progress and report to the Board as requested
- Represent the committee or working group as requested by the Board

Committee and Working Group (Subcommittees & Taskforces) Vice Chairs

In addition to the expectations and responsibilities summarized above, vice chairs have the following additional responsibilities:

- Support the chair in setting objectives and facilitating the committee or working group's initiatives
- Lead or participate in assigned projects
- When requested, lead meetings in a manner that ensures participation and effectiveness
- Represent the committee or working group as requested by the chair

Section IV: Committee Processes

The following is excerpted from the SOAP Policies and Procedures Manual (as updated November 2021).

Committee Charters

Committees operate under a charter, which documents the charge (purpose) of the group and other critical elements, such as leadership, composition, responsibilities, and authority.

Charters are drafted by the committee chairs with the support of the management staff, with input from the Governance Committee, and presented to the Board of Directors for approval. Once approved, charters remain valid until the end of the program year (June), except in cases where a specific termination date is indicated in the charter, or the Board of Directors deems necessary to amend or dissolve the charter by vote of the Board.

A committee chair may request a reevaluation of a charter at any time (for instance, to add or eliminate a responsibility). In this case, the Board may choose to terminate/modify the charter or take no action.

Action Plans

At the beginning of the program year, each committee will begin formulating an action plan that describes the intended activities of the committee and its working groups, including deliverables, budget needs, and timeline. The plan is due to the Board by August so that budget requests can be considered for the upcoming year.

The action plan should align with the committee charter and overall strategic plan. It is a supplement to the charter and should not include responsibilities outside the scope defined by the committee charter. At the end of each program year, the action plan can be used to evaluate the performance of the committee.

Working Groups (Subcommittees and Task Forces)

In creating the action plan, a committee may determine a need for subcommittees or task forces as working groups to carry out planned actions. Ideally, the need for a working group emerges during the development of the committee's action plan and is populated with volunteers gained either during the call for committee interest or through a separate call to the membership.

Subcommittee and task force chairs report their activities at each meeting of the aligned committee, with less formal reports as needed in the interim between meetings. Frequent communication with the committee chair is vital to the success of working groups.

Working groups support a specific initiative that aligns with an existing committee. They may be convened for a limited duration to complete a specific project, then disbanded. A rule of thumb:

Subcommittees – duration about one year; may be renewed annually

Task forces – short duration; fold upon completion of task

Deliverables

Through the working groups, committees are expected to produce one or more deliverables, which may range from tangible work products (such as publications, events or programs) to advice and guidance. Deliverables and work products developed by working groups must be approved by the committee (and in some cases, the Board) before release.

Committee chairs must stay in the loop and have oversight of the pace and quality of work products and activities emerging from the committee's aligned working groups. The Board and management staff maintain awareness of what subcommittees and task forces are working on through the committee action plan and regular reports to the Board. Open communication between and among the Board, management staff, and committees about the activities of working groups is critical.

New Project Charters/New Committees

When the Board determines that an issue or need has emerged that requires action, a project charter may be developed to outline the scope, projected costs, and benefits. The project charter may assign the project to an existing committee or recommend the formation of a new committee. Once approved, the project charter becomes the basis of the committee action plan.

Annual Committee Review

Each December, the management staff will create a worksheet of the current committees for the consideration of the Governance Committee. Looking ahead to the coming program year, they may recommend modifications to a charter, etc. They may also request the creation of new committees based on strategic initiatives or business needs. Recommendations are presented to the Board for action.

Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs

Each committee will be led by a chair, appointed through the processes laid out for Board nomination and election. Committee chair roles are for three years. These leadership roles should be carefully considered and based on expertise that enables the individual to make a significant contribution and ability to commit sufficient time and effort. The committee chair is accountable to and should maintain frequent communication with other members of the Board and within the committee itself. The chair has responsibility to share information with working groups and to collect information from working groups to share with the Board.

Except for the Executive Committee and Finance Committee, it is the privilege of the committee chair (coordinating with the Vice President) to select a vice chair to assist and act in the chair's absence. The vice chair does not automatically ascend to chair during the next term.

Likewise, working groups should be led by a chair, selected by the committee chair. Depending on the working group's initiatives, size, and duration it may be helpful to select a vice chair (not required).

Staff Support

Each committee will have a management staff member assigned as lead support. The management staff will assist in setting up calls, sending Zoom details and calendar requests, prepping the agenda and taking notes, and help the committee develop and monitor the committee action plan.

The management staff does not provide direct support at the working group level under the current workplan. Resource requests (time, budget, etc.) must come through the committee chair. If a subcommittee chair/member approaches the management staff with a request, the staff will compare it against the action plan and forward the request to the committee chair before any work begins.

Committee Composition

Committees are small, strategic bodies of seven or fewer eligible, Active members. Working groups consist of the appropriate number of individuals necessary to fulfill the group's purpose and are open to all membership types.

As much as possible, committees and working groups should represent the diversity of the membership (e.g., practice type, geographic representation, gender, ethnicity, age). Apart from the Executive Committee, less than half (or no more than two) of the committee members should be Board members.

Call for Committee Interest

Each year a solicitation will be issued to members describing the committee opportunities available. Members may review the committee charters and complete an online form indicating their interests and agreement to abide by committee guidelines. To be eligible, volunteers must be members. Volunteers must indicate their interest in continuing to serve each year; committee assignments will not roll over automatically.

Committee Member Selection

Selection of committee members is the first phase in a two-phase process. The management staff will compile and collate volunteers and distribute to the committee chairs along with guidance for the selection criteria. Committee chairs will respond with an initial selection list of individuals, in ranked order, including alternates where appropriate. The Vice President, Governance Chair, and Diversity & Inclusivity Chair will review the initial selections with an eye for diversity and inclusivity, minimizing overlap between committees, and achieving other goals. Their recommendations will be provided to the chair for consideration. If the chair accepts the recommendations, the committee membership is confirmed. In the case of disagreement, it may be necessary to involve the Governance Committee in resolving the matter.

Development of working groups is a second phase of the process. As action plans are approved and working groups are formed, groups will be populated from the pool of volunteers from the call for committee interest.

Chairs will make every effort to place volunteers on their desired committees and working groups, but such placement is not guaranteed. Staff will assist chairs in notifying members of their placement status.

Confirmation of Acceptance

SOAP may ask members selected for committee and working groups to confirm their acceptance of the appointments, agreement to abide by guidelines, and assignment of intellectual propriety rights for work products.

Nonmember Participation

Chairs may occasionally invite a nonmember as a guest participant when the individual offers knowledge or skill that contributes to a committee or working group's work. Nonmembers may not be voting members of a committee or working group.

Orientation

The Governance Committee and management staff will prepare orientation materials and schedule an annual orientation for committee chairs and vice chairs. Web conference or conference call is an appropriate option for orientation. Ideally, this orientation will be completed in June/July or soon after the formation of the committee. Committee chairs may also arrange a mini orientation for committee and working group members.

Project Management and Reports

Transparency is vital to gauge progress on strategic priorities. To that end, committee and working group actions will be tracked, and committee chairs will update the Board via regular reports (ideally monthly) focused on accomplishments and upcoming initiatives. Updates will be shared with the membership via the website and newsletter as appropriate, as well as reports at the Annual Business Meeting.

Meetings and Communication

Committees and working groups are encouraged to use an agenda to frame the discussion and follow a consistent, recurring schedule for their virtual meetings. This will make best use of everyone's time and avoid overlapping meetings. There will be times when the recurring schedule will need to flex due to scheduling issues, holidays, etc. The SOAP Community platform will be useful for sharing materials and intra-committee/working group communication through private communities.

Quorum and Voting

If a vote must be taken, at least 25% of the members listed on the official roster must be present. A simple majority of those present is sufficient to pass a motion. Each member listed on the official roster is entitled to vote in committee and working group business, including those in ex officio roles.

Limitations, Terms, and Participation Requirements

Other than chairs, committee member terms are for two years and limited to two consecutive terms (total four years). Terms for working group members are one year, renewed annually. No member may serve more than six years on any one committee.

Leaders and members are expected to contribute and participate to maintain their seats on committees/working groups. An individual is considered participating when he/she/they attend more than 50 percent of the scheduled calls. A member who misses 50 percent or more of the scheduled calls in two calendar quarters may be removed by the committee chair or Board of Directors.

The Board may remove committee chairs who fail to follow guidelines, do not maintain their members, or otherwise act in a way that is counter to association policies.

Conflicts of Interest

Real or potential conflicts of interest must be disclosed. A committee chair or Board of Directors may remove or recuse a committee/working group member if there is a concern about a conflict of interest or a discussion of a sensitive nature.

Intellectual Property, Copyright and Authorship

Work products created by committees, working groups or individual authors acting on behalf of a SOAP committee or working group are owned by SOAP. The society asserts its intellectual property rights for current and future use and has developed a variety of policies and agreements aimed for this purpose. See references codes 1210-1213 of the Policies and Procedures Manual.

Of note is the Intellectual Property Statement and Agreement regarding committee and working group-produced materials. Members are asked to acknowledge and agree as part of accepting a committee or working group appointment.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY STATEMENT AND AGREEMENT

Society for Obstetric Anesthesia and Perinatology (SOAP)

Work products and materials created by committees, working groups, or individual authors acting on behalf of a SOAP committee or working group are the copyrighted intellectual property of the Society for Obstetric Anesthesia and Perinatology and are proprietary.

Members may not seek to copyright, publish, cause to be published, or claim ownership of these materials or documents.

Unless otherwise approved by the Board at the recommendation of the committee, authorship of work products is attributed to the committee or working group that created it, without individual authors being identified.

In consideration of participation on a committee or working group, and by signing below, members assign to SOAP all copyrights and any other intellectual property rights they may have in materials or documents created in connection with participation in committee and working group activities.