



POD Network Committee and SIG Chairs' Handbook

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POD Network Committee and SIG Chairs' Handbook

The POD Network Committee and SIG Chairs handbook was created in Spring 2016 by an ad hoc committee of former and current POD standing committee Chairs in an effort to help standardize and support the important work of the POD Network and Committee and SIG Chairs. Because the POD Network employs distributed leadership as the basis for governance structures and operations, including volunteer Chairs, [standing committees](#) and [SIGs](#) carry out much of the operational and community-building work of the organization. The committee and SIG Chairs are crucial to the well-being of the POD Network organization and membership.

Serving as a committee or SIG Chair also means working in accordance with the [guiding values, vision, and mission](#) of the organization. It is a commitment vital to the health and growth of the organization, and the POD Network is grateful for those who serve as Chairs. This handbook provides an overview of general responsibilities, ethical considerations, and expectations of Chairs, as well as resources for reports and other communication tools available to Chairs.

Generally, this Handbook does not apply to Affinity Groups, initiated in 2019, since they are not charged with “doing the work” of the POD Network. Rather, these groups provide a safe place where members who share similar identities can gather to discuss topics and issues of concern to their specific identities within the POD organization and their professional institutions and organizations. They exist primarily to serve the needs of their members and not the larger POD membership. However, convenors of the Affinity Groups are expected to follow the Communications and Decision Making Guidelines as presented in Section II.

I. General Overview

As per the [Governance Manual](#), Article B, Committee and SIG Chairs are responsible for overseeing and organizing the work of the committee/SIG, including but not limited to the following:

A. Communications

- Comply with the Core-Approved [Communication and Decision Making Guidelines](#).
- Communicate tasks, timelines, and processes to committee/SIG members.
- Maintain the committee/SIG web presence.
- Update the POD Network calendar with annual events and general committee/SIG deadlines, relevant to the POD membership. Keeping the calendar up to date for the committee/SIG.

- Communicate on behalf of the committee/SIG to the Core Committee via the designated Core Representative who represents the committee/SIG at the Core meeting.

B. [Governance Manual \(GM\)](#)

Read the committee/SIG charge as provided in the [Governance Manual](#) and the committee/SIG web page. Reflect on whether it matches current practice. If it doesn't, please review the [Governance Manual Style Guide](#) for guidance on revision via the committee/SIG's semi-annual report to Core. Also reach out to the Chair of the Governance Committee (Past President) for assistance with suggestions, examples from other committees/SIGs, etc. All changes to the GM are voted on and approved by Core. Submit desired changes via the committee/SIG bi-annual reports to Core.

C. [Presidential Liaison](#)

Each committee and SIG is assigned a Presidential Liaison, as shown at on the Committee and SIG webpages, to assure that the committee/SIG work is aligned with POD's mission and strategic plan. While the Core representative speaks for the committee at the Core meetings, the Presidential Liaison serves as a sounding board for committee/SIG Chairs on issues that span across committees/SIGs, have implications for governance, budget, or the organization as a whole, or the public face of the organization. Although the Presidential Liaison does not typically attend committee meetings, Chairs can invite the Liaison to attend at appropriate times for particular agenda items with broader implications.

D. [Reports](#)

Each spring and each fall, committee/SIG Chairs submit a written report to the Core Committee that documents committee/SIG work and the use of its budget.

E. [Collaboration](#)

There will be times when it is appropriate and in the spirit of the POD organization as a whole for Chairs to collaborate with the Executive Director, POD staff, or other committee/SIG Chairs. Reach out to the Core representative and/or Presidential Liaison for guidance, as needed.

II. [Communication and Decision Making Guidelines](#)

POD's volunteer-driven leadership structure is undoubtedly a strength of POD's organization; it also poses some challenges. Frequent turn-over in leadership,

widely distributed responsibilities, and members' shifting capacities to volunteer their labor all can make it difficult for POD to sustain initiatives, respond nimbly to opportunities and challenges, and pursue a common organizational mission and vision (particularly around our commitments to equity, inclusion, and accessibility).

POD's goal is to create a transparent communication and decision-making system where people understand their role and responsibilities *and* feel their expertise, labor, and contributions are valued. Moreover, we strive to enact a process where decisions are made in collaboration and consultation with key segments of the organization through regular communications between the committees, affinity groups, and SIGs (C/A/S) and the POD leadership bodies to empower decision making and accountability, ensuring that the work of C/A/S strengthens the POD community, while mitigating organizational vulnerability.

To that end, the Core Committee has developed and approved [guidelines for Communication and Decision Making](#) in an effort to minimize the challenges of our leadership structure. This document outlines processes that provide a healthy balance between providing freedom and space to innovate while ensuring that POD is functioning as a sustainable, cohesive whole in accordance with its mission and values. Ultimately, the Core Committee seeks to cultivate a culture of mutual trust among all stakeholders in the organization: one that recognizes that all of us — POD's administrative leadership as well as its C/A/S — are acting with the organization's best interests in mind.

III. Purposes of Committees and SIGs

Committees and SIGs each have distinct purposes and serve different needs within POD. For example,

- Committees are tasked by Core to do specific projects on behalf of the organization, which are outlined in the Governance Manual and on POD's website.
- Special Interest Groups (SIGs) provide support, resources, programs, and events that align with the interest of the members.

IV. Chair Succession and Committee/SIG Structure

As a committee/SIG Chair, one responsibility is to create opportunities for professional development and mentoring future chairpersons. Typically, committee/SIG Chairs and/or Co-Chairs are elected by the committee/SIG, and incoming Chairs (and/or Co-Chairs) rotate into office after the fall conference.

The committee/SIG chairs will notify the [POD Office](#) of changes in leadership, at the completion of a transition.

The leadership structure of committees/SIGs varies according to the scope of the committee or SIG:

- In committees/SIGs with a focused charge, individual chairs generally serve up to three years, spending one year in each of the following roles: incoming, current, and past Chair
- Some of Co-Chairs might serve two to three years

Unexpected Situations: If the Chair cannot complete the term, they should collaborate with the Co-Chair (if any), experienced committee members, and/or the Presidential Liaison as early as possible, to discern the best action. This is crucial both to the Chair's well-being and that of the POD Network.

V. Reporting to Core and Budget Requests

A. Reports for Core

- a. The committee/SIG Chair(s), on behalf of and in consultation with the committee/SIG members, must submit a report for the Core Committee generally 4-6 weeks before each Core meeting:
 - Fall Core Meeting: November or December
 - Spring Core: May or June.The exact dates vary each year. POD's Executive Director will provide instructions regarding the timeline to the Chairs via email, typically 4-6 weeks prior to the due date.
- b. Chairs are encouraged to share draft reports with the committee/SIG members and with the Core representative for review, comments, questions, etc. before submitting the final version. This collaboration with the Core representative will enhance the discussion at the Core meeting by providing necessary context, addressing questions that Core members may have, and ensuring Core has accurate and sufficient information to cast votes on any requests the committee/SIG may have.

c. Budget Requests

- Budget requests are *only considered at the spring Core meeting (May or June)*. The request should reflect future plans/actions for the entire upcoming fiscal year (July 1 – June 30) and any on-going expenses.
- Committees/SIGs have access to \$100 each fiscal year and must formalize the request for the funds, stating the purpose, in their reports to Core in the spring. Additional funding may be requested via the committee/SIG's report to Core.
- Requests may include funding for projects, events, grants, etc. that allow the committee/SIG to meet its mission and goals.
- The Core Committee has approved funding for *needs-based support* for travel to the annual conference, including conference fee at the early-bird rate, in accordance with the [Financial Support Guidelines](#); i.e., one member of committee/SIG leadership team. Do not include this expense in the committee/SIG's budget request. Instead, contact the [POD Office](#) confidentially.
- Chairs may not request funds for stipends or honorariums unless for a one-time special project. Per the [Communication and Decision Making Guidelines](#), Chairs should discuss with the Core representative and/or Presidential liaisons for advice before inclusion in the report.
- Funding requests outside of this timeframe must be approved by both the Finance and Executive committees. In this case, please contact the Core representative, Presidential Liaison, or the POD office to submit an off-cycle budget request.
- The Core Committee uses a [rubric](#) to assess requests for approval. Chairs are encouraged to keep these standards in mind as they develop their budget requests.
- Travel Fellowship: Committees and SIGS that award (or wish to award) funding for POD Network members to attend the POD Conference should:
 - Refer to these opportunities as "travel fellowships" (rather than travel awards or grants).
 - Create and implement an acceptance/rejection template letter to the Committee/SIG Chairs Google Team Drive so that others can use it as a resource.
 - Assess the outcomes of the fellowship for including in the subsequent year's spring budget request for renewal of funding. A sample assessment survey, used by GPPD SIG, is [here](#).

B. Use of Reports

The Core Committee reads and reviews the committee/SIG reports before each Core meeting and discusses any proposals, GM changes, or requests. Keep in mind:

- Core members read many committee/SIG reports and materials in preparation for their meeting. Aim to create a summary of the group's highlights, work, and requests.
- Committee/SIG Core representatives may be asked to speak on behalf of the committee/SIG if Core members have questions or concerns. Therefore, Chairs should help them be prepared by discussing the report with them in advance of the meeting.
- For the spring Core meeting, Core members vote on all budget items from all committees/SIGs.

VI. Committee/SIG Meetings

Typically, committees/SIGs conduct business through regular online meetings and may choose to host meetings or social gatherings at the in-person POD annual conference. Chairs create, set the agenda for, and run committee meetings, which vary in frequency and form.

- Large committees/SIGs with numerous ongoing projects typically meet monthly or bimonthly as a whole group, and then Co-Chairs or subcommittees meet at other times to plan meetings or develop projects.
- Other committees/SIGs may meet frequently for shorter periods of intense work (for example, when awards selections are being made) and not meet other months of the year, unless a need arises.

Meeting tips and timesavers:

- To save time in scheduling, agree with committee/SIG members to put a hold on a certain time each month and keep it available for whole committees/SIGs, subcommittees, and leadership meetings as needed.
- Create a template to use for each meeting agenda so that it's predictable and thorough. Include space for new ideas and ideas to keep on the radar. Avoid acronyms unless spelled out first. [Sample template.](#)
- Make email communication and meeting agendas brief. Provide overviews with links to more detail on the committee/SIG Google Team Drive, web pages, etc.
- Limit whole group synchronous meetings to about one hour. Use whole group meetings for debriefing, brainstorming, and discussing/voting on issues that require a "buy in" from the group (e.g., a potential new initiative or committee guidelines).
- Document the agenda, decisions, and actions (taken or to be taken) in minutes/notes of each meeting in a Google document in your committee/SIG Google Team Drive.

VII. Resources for Communication and Getting the Work Done

A. Schedule Events and Deadlines

- Committee and SIGs may use the POD Network Zoom account for virtual meetings or you may use a Zoom account of your choosing (personal, institution, organization, etc.).

B. Committee/SIG Communication and Documentation

The POD Network provides communication/documentation tools to each committee/SIG:

1. Committee/SIG unique email address

This email is available on the committee/SIG webpages and is used by non-committee/SIG members to reach the committee/SIG Chair. The email settings can be set to forward the emails directly to the Chair's email "personal" or "work" address for easy access and response (that is, eliminating the need to access the account directly). When responding to these emails, use the committee/SIG email address to avoid sharing personal emails and to retain an historical record of the emails and responses.

Never put two-step authentication factor requirements on this email and do NOT change the password.

2. Committee/SIG Google group list

This group list is for use by the members of the committee/SIG. [Add and remove email addresses](#) of the committee/SIG members to the Google group list as new members come on board and other members leave the group. Members of the group automatically have access to the group's Google Team Drive.

3. Committee/SIG Google Team Drive for documenting the group's work.

To improve operations and transparency within a committee/SIG, chairs (and sub-chairs) should use the committee/SIG Team Drive to store documents for easy access by the members of the committee/SIG Google Group List and future leaders.

4. Web conferencing for committee/SIG on-line virtual communication:

[Reserve time](#) on the POD Network Google calendar (using the committee/SIG email address) to ensure that there are no scheduling conflicts with other committees/SIGs and/or to reserve one of POD's Zoom rooms.

NOTE: Each Google Team Drive contains a “_READ ME FIRST” document with information unique to the committee/SIG – email, group list, team drive, etc.

C. Communication with POD Membership and Beyond

- The Branding and Style Guidelines assist in the creation of communication using the appropriate POD Network logo and style. The following documents can be found in this [Google folder](#)
 - Chair Guidelines for Creating Branded Material (READ ME first to Create Branded Materials)
 - The Writing Style Guide
 - Visual Style Guide
 - POD Network logos
 - Other branded templates are on the Committee/SIG Chairs Google Team Drive.
- To send an email to POD Network members; contact the [POD Office](#). Chairs can also share the committee/SIG news or calls for proposals via the [POD Network discussion group](#).
- Each Committee/SIG has its own web page(s) on the POD Network’s website. Review the information to ensure it is and remains current, including the name(s) of the chair(s) and the Core representative. To request updates, either;
 - Email the desired additions/revisions to the [POD Office](#) to update the pages, or
 - Notify the POD Office that you would like to be granted editorial access to the committee/SIG web pages

VIII. Documenting Committee/SIG work

A. Maintain Consistent, Thorough, and Organized Records

The Committee/SIG Google Team Drive is the place to store documentation so that it can be easily shared with other committee/SIG members and passed on to new leadership. Samples of documentation include, but is not limited to, the following

- POD’s mission statement and strategic plan, and the committee/SIGs alignment to these guiding documents
- Descriptions of roles and responsibilities within the committee
- Records of formal reports to Core
- Meeting notes/minutes, including decisions made
- Documentation on programs offered such as standard descriptions, email notification templates (e.g., grant award notifications)
- Any committee/SIG proposals for POD annual conference

- Assessment data and reports about the effectiveness of the committee/SIG and its programs
- Evaluation/assessment processes/rubrics
- Membership/contact lists
- An annual workflow document, providing timelines for projects, initiatives and/or deadlines

B. Privacy and Confidentiality

When documenting the work of the committee/SIG, it is critical to keep privacy and confidentiality in mind, especially around competitive processes (e.g., submissions for research grants, PDC workshops, travel and internships funding). Efforts should be made to anonymize any documentation that will be passed on from year to year. For example, remove individual names, institution names or other identifying information from applications that were not selected.

C. Archives

Maintain several years' worth of committee/SIG records. In general, it is good practice to archive at least 3 to 5 years of documentation. Consult the POD Office for guidance if needed.

IX. Fostering Volunteer Leadership and Professional Development

Recruit and welcome new committee/SIG members from across the POD membership.

A. Recruiting

- Issue an "invitation to join" to share at in-person gatherings and to make available via the web page. Include the committee/SIG's charge, general meeting timeline and expectations, Chair name and contact information (i.e., the group's email address), and the range of member responsibilities and opportunities (or current needs).
- Hold one or more open committee meetings at the POD annual conference (in-person and/or virtually) where the focus is more on communication and idea generation than decision making. Invite potential committee members to attend these open meetings to learn more about the committee/SIG charge and opportunities to serve.

B. Provide a Personal Touch

Reach out to new members on a one-on-one basis prior to the first group meeting.

- Connect them to your Google committee email list and folder.
- Introduce them to the committee/SIG work and tell them which 2-3 documents to read first. Where appropriate, give a glossary of terms and acronyms.
- Introduce them at the first meeting to help build community among the members.

C. Mentor

Serve as a mentor to members transitioning into leadership. Offer them responsibilities that are suited to their experience level and/or areas of interest. Members may want fairly structured mentoring but may not be comfortable asking for it. Reach out!

D. Honor and Recognize

- Communicate well in advance about upcoming responsibilities and deadlines.
- Check in and encourage throughout the tasks, especially complex ones.
- Write recognition letters, copying key individuals, when members move off the committee/SIG or complete major initiatives. Ask who should be copied at their institutions. Hand-written thank you notes are always welcome. After all, we are all volunteers!

X. Ethical Considerations

A. Ethical Guidelines

Chairs should model and be informed by the ethical practices outlined in the POD Network [Ethical Guidelines for Educational Developers](#).

B. Conflict of Interest

The [Governance Manual](#) explains the POD Network conflict-of-interest policy. Chairs are expected to read it, understand it, and comply with it.

In addition to the general conflict of interest policy, POD committees/SIGs should consider potential situations specific to the committee/SIG work that might pose a conflict of interest for committee members. For example, committee/SIG members may wish to submit proposals for events facilitated by the committee/SIG. A clear process will help the committee/SIG avoid direct conflict of interest within the review and selection process for a given event. A sample, created by the Professional Development Committee (PDC) to help improve transparency related to committee service and POD-sponsored initiatives, is in the Appendix.

C. Ethical Review Processes

Committees and SIGs involved in reviewing proposals for institutes, events, workshops, grants, etc. should identify processes to avoid bias in the review process; i.e. de-identify proposals through the review process and ensuing discussion. Chairs may choose not to reveal the identity of authors until decisions have been made.

APPENDIX For Ethical Considerations

Conflict of Interest Example

The Professional Development Committee (PDC) makes public and transparent the selection criteria and processes for PDC-sponsored events and institutes. It is the position of the PDC that serving on the PDC is an excellent way to learn about what is involved in hosting a successful POD institute or event. To help avoid potential conflicts of interest, we ask that committee members disclose to the Chair of the PDC any interest in hosting a future PDC-coordinated institute or event. This will allow the Chair to arrange subcommittees so that no members who are involved with the active proposals can have any role in the review/selection process or see competing proposals during that application cycle.

To further cultivate quality programs and to minimize conflicts of interest, we encourage awarded hosts of PDC-sponsored events or institutes to remain active with the program in one or more of the following ways:

- *Mentoring the next selected host*
- *Recommending changes to future calls to host*
- *Being a part of an info session for interested hosts (at conference and/or webinar)*
- *Submitting detailed historical records of the event including planning and/or learning materials*
- *Joining the PDC*
- *Other ways as identified by the host*

Ethical Review Processes

The Diversity Committee uses the following language in their calls for proposals.

New Application Guideline: Anonymous Review Process

In the spirit of objectivity and fairness, we ask that you anonymize your application; that is, make sure that neither your name nor that of your institution appear in your application. You will, of course, indicate your name in the email message when submitting the application, but the PDF file of your application materials should be anonymized.