



4.7 Publications Committee

Purpose: This policy provides the purpose and responsibilities of the Publications Committee

Applies to: Publications Committee, Volunteers, Members, Staff, Publications Partners

PURPOSE / SCOPE

The Publications Committee shall provide strategic direction and ensure the quality and impact of the society's print and electronic publications, digital content, and news. The committee will engage in strategic planning and, in coordination with MRS Headquarters, and MRS's Publishing Company, lead the development of the Society's current and future publications, organize subject-matter experts to assist in bringing appropriate content to the editorial teams, recommend and work with partner entities where appropriate, and initiate publication-focused task forces and subcommittees as deemed necessary by the committee.

The Publications Committee, in collaboration with MRS Headquarters, shall recommend candidates for Editors-in-Chief (EICs) of the peer-reviewed journals to the Board of Directors, and will make a recommendation regarding contract renewal for each EIC to the Board of Directors at least three months before the contract renewal decision date (i.e. approx. 9 months before the end of the EIC contract). The Publications Committee will also provide feedback for the annual EIC contract review conducted by the MRS Executive Director.

The Publications Committee Chair shall partner with the MRS Executive Director to ensure efficient and effective relationships and cooperation between MRS volunteers, MRS staff and MRS's Publishing Company representatives to develop and monitor plans to further MRS's Strategic Aspiration and publications goals.

The Publications Committee Chair and the MRS Director of Programs shall annually update MRS Officers, and on occasion the Board of Directors, on the State of MRS publications.

STRUCTURE

The Publications Committee shall be comprised of a chair, the chair(s) of the subcommittee(s) and taskforce(s), and other standing members as appointed by the chair, both for tasking and for representation of the membership. The MRS Director of Programs is also a voting member of the Publications Committee.

The Publications Committee shall have one subcommittee the Editorial Strategic Planning Subcommittee . In addition, one member of the Publications Committee (Quality Advocate) will be tasked with ensuring that the Publications Committee adequately oversees the continuous quality improvement processes implemented by the Editorial Teams, MRS Headquarters Staff, and MRS's Publishing Company.

The current structure of the Publications Committee includes:

The **Editorial Strategic Planning Subcommittee (ESPS)** shall focus on strategic planning and decision-making by providing a forum to engage key editorial volunteers and staff. Members of ESPS shall include MRS Journal Editors-in-Chief, MRS Bulletin Editors, MRS Bulletin Editorial Board Chair, MRS Books Editorial Board Chair, and the MRS Director of Programs. The ESPS shall be led by the chair of the Publications Committee. Additional members may be included by mutual consent of the Publications Committee Chair and the MRS Director of Programs.

The **Publications Quality Advocate (PQA)** shall work with Publications Committee members and MRS Headquarters to ensure that publications quality assessments are performed in a timely manner and reported appropriately. The Publications Committee establishes the quality standards and metrics that the society will use, while the Editorial Teams and the professionals at MRS Headquarters track and report those metrics. All members of the Publications Committee have a role in developing strategies to reach those goals. These strategies, performance assessments, and competitive analyses shall be reported in development plans and dashboards. The Publications Committee reviews performance against those metrics annually and will periodically convene a task force to ensure that the goals and metrics meet or exceed best practices. The PQA shall ensure that the Publications Committee accomplishes these tasks in a timely and effective manner.

Strategic Portfolio Development Planning Group(s) shall be formed to support MRS Publications strategic planning efforts. The MRS Publications Committee Chair and the MRS Director of Programs shall jointly facilitate Strategic Portfolio Development Planning on an annual basis to support Society goals. They will jointly convene Strategic Portfolio Planning Groups as needed to develop strategic proposals in specific areas identified by the Strategic Coordination Groups, Editors, Board of Directors, or others. Strategic planning must incorporate all relevant publications stakeholders and these planning groups may include as needed Publications Committee Members, Members of the Editorial Strategic Planning Subcommittee, Editorial Board Members, Headquarters Staff, and representatives from MRS's publishing company, and others as needed.

ADDITIONAL FUNCTIONS

The Publications Committee also has responsibilities in collaborative teams that require input and/or decision making from volunteers, MRS Headquarters, and external entities MRS engages in fulfillment of its publications portfolio.

Current responsibilities of Publications Committee members outside the structure of the Publications Committee include:

Publications Strategic Coordination Groups (SCGs) shall provide forums for high-level communications to facilitate *coordination* of strategic planning for each of the publications portfolios. These portfolios currently include Journals and Books—ergo there shall be a Journals Strategic Coordination Group (JSCG) and a Books Strategic Coordination Group (BSCG). Each SCG consists of two representatives each from the Publications Committee, MRS Headquarters, and MRS's Publishing Company. The primary functions of SCGs is to help identify strategic needs for publications and to ensure that all inputs and expertise are proactively sought and communicated to the individual standing groups with responsibility for strategic planning and implementation. SCGs may propose strategy or tactics, but SCGs are *not* subcommittees of the Publications Committee and do *not* decide publications strategy. SCG meetings may be called by any SCG member at any time, but the Publications Committee Chair is responsible for ensuring that meetings occur frequently enough for effective strategic planning. Additional PCG's may be formed as needed.

Editor Panels will be convened by the MRS Director of Programs to discuss and coordinate editorial operations across MRS's publication portfolio. The **Journal Editor Panel** will include journal EICs and MRS Bulletin Editors. Additional Editor Panels may be convened as needed, either on an ad hoc or standing basis, for other publications products. The MRS Publications Committee Chair (or designee), MRS editorial board members, MRS staff, and MRS Publishing Company representatives will be invited to participate in Editor Panel meetings as appropriate.

VOLUNTEER MEMBERSHIP APPOINTMENTS

The Chair of the Publications Committee will be nominated by the Vice President and approved by the MRS Board of Directors. The Chair of the Publications Committee, in consultation with the MRS Director of Programs, shall

appoint the chairs of any Subcommittees and Task Forces, as well as the Publications Quality Advocate. Members of temporary and ad hoc activities, such as working groups or task forces, will be appointed as necessary by the Publications Committee Chair in consultation with the MRS Director of Programs and other members of the Publications Committee.

New Editor-in-Chief candidates shall be recruited by a task force co-led by the Chair of the Publications Committee (or designee) and the MRS Director of Programs. The Executive Director shall be engaged in the final round of candidate interviews. A finalist will be recommended by the task force and vetted by the Publications Committee prior to final review and appointment (or rejection) by the MRS Vice President. The MRS Executive Director shall retain the right to refuse any EIC candidate.

Candidates for the Chair of the MRS Bulletin Editorial Board will be selected by a group consisting of the Chair of the Publications Committee, the MRS Director of Programs, the MRS Bulletin Editor, and the MRS Bulletin Impact Editor, and proposed for approval by the Publications Committee.

Candidates for the Chair of the MRS Books Editorial Board will be selected the Chair of the Publications Committee and the MRS Director of Programs and proposed for approval by the Publications Committee.

All other Editorial Board and Editorial Advisory Board members shall be appointed by the Editor-in-Chief, Editor, or Editorial Board Chair of the respective publication. The Editor-in-Chief, Editor, or Editorial Board Chair may, at his or her discretion, appoint an Editorial Advisory Board Chair. The Editorial Advisory Board Chair may recommend Editorial Advisory Board members, subject to Editor-in-Chief/Editor/Editorial Board Chair approval.

All members of the committee/subcommittees shall be members of the Society, unless approved in each instance by the President, including the specific term of appointment. The committee shall strive to maintain a diverse group of members to effectively achieve its mission.

PERFORMANCE REVIEWS AND TERMS OF SERVICE

The Publications Committee Chair shall generally serve a three-year term, extendable to six years by mutual consent of the Board of Directors and the Executive Director (not including time previously served in different roles on the committee or any of its subcommittees). Exceptions will be granted on a case-by-case basis by the Executive Committee. The Publications Committee Chair and the MRS Director of Programs will annually discuss progress towards publication portfolio goals and priorities for the coming year with the MRS President/Presidential Line and the Executive Director.

The Subcommittee Chair(s) shall each generally serve a three-year term, extendable to six years by mutual consent of the Chair of the Publications Committee and the MRS Director of Programs (not including time previously served in different roles on the committee or any of its subcommittees). Exceptions will be granted on a case-by-case basis by the Executive Committee. The Publications Committee Chair will annually discuss progress towards publication portfolio goals and priorities for the coming year with each Subcommittee Chair.

The Chairs shall recommend potential successors one year prior to close of their term.

Other non-Editor members of the Publications Committee shall each serve a three-year term, extendable to six years with mutual consent of the Chair of the Publications Committee and the MRS Director of Programs. Terms shall be staggered so that no more than half of the members of the subcommittee are replaced in one year.

The Chair and members of the MRS Bulletin Editorial Board shall each serve a three-year term, extendable to six years with mutual consent of the Chair of the Publications Committee, the MRS Director of Programs, the MRS Bulletin Editor and the MRS Bulletin Impact Editor. The MRS Bulletin Editorial Board Chair shall collaborate with the MRS Bulletin Editor to establish and evaluate progress towards annual editorial goals and priorities.

The Chair and members of the MRS Books Editorial Board shall each serve a three-year term, extendable to six years with mutual consent of the Chair of the Publications Committee and the MRS Director of Programs.

All other Editorial Board and Editorial Advisory Board members (including Editorial Advisory Board Chairs) will serve three-year terms, renewable for one additional three-year term at the discretion of the EIC. This includes time previously served on the Editorial Board.

Editors and Editors-in-Chief shall serve for a term set by the Executive Director in consultation with the Publications Committee Chair. Performance expectations, terms, and renewal terms are outlined in their individual contracts. The Publications Committee, HQ staff and MRS's Publishing Company will provide feedback for the annual EIC contract review conducted by the MRS Executive Director.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Publications Committee shall be responsible for:

- Leading the development of the Society's current and future publications portfolio consistent with Board directives and MRS's Mission and Values
- Publications strategic planning, including proactively proposing new strategies for Board review, as described above.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of MRS's publications portfolio in fulfilling MRS's strategic plan, MRS Board directives, and publications portfolio goals.
- Initiating and/or reviewing and approving concepts and plans for new journals or other publications products for Board review and approval.
- Reporting to the Board any new products, strategic plans, or activities that might negatively affect the society. New expenditures require Board of Directors approval via the annual budgeting process.
- Overseeing¹ an effective continuous quality improvement process², including:
 - specifying metrics to be used in benchmarking MRS publications against the offerings of other materials societies and publishing groups
 - ensuring that strategies consistent with making MRS a highly-respected and sought-after publisher are developed and implemented throughout the portfolio,
 - ensuring that the specified metrics are being collected and recorded in the quality assessment dashboard along with the associated performance assessments and strategic remedies, and
 - reviewing quality assessment dashboards annually and providing feedback to all editorial teams, MRS headquarters staff and MRS's Publishing Company, and
 - periodically (at least once every 3-5 years) reviewing the entire continuous quality improvement program to ensure that it meets or exceeds best practices.
- Implementing Board charges and ensuring that all committee, subcommittee, and task force members are informed about Board charges and requests.
- Recommending new candidates for Editors-in-Chief as per the practice above.
- Providing timely performance assessments of existing EICs to the Executive Director.
- The Chair will partner with the MRS Director of Programs and the MRS Executive Director to promote and monitor effective engagement between volunteers, staff and MRS's publishing company representatives to further MRS's Strategic Aspiration and publication goals.
- The Chair shall be responsible for facilitating and directing the work of the committee, subcommittee, and task forces, and shall keep abreast of Board plans and goals, requesting guidance from the Board as necessary.
- The Chair shall submit an annual report of activities, including succession planning, to the Board.

The Editorial Strategic Planning Subcommittee (ESPS) shall be responsible for:

- Initiating, reviewing, proposing, and implementing editorial strategy in concert with the Publications Committee, MRS Headquarters, and MRS's Publishing Company in line with the MRS Mission and Vision and strategic priorities established by the Board of Directors.
- Coordinating the Aims and Scope of each MRS product such that the unique mission of that publication will be achieved while satisfying the overall requirements of the MRS publications portfolio.
- Actively participating in discussions about strategies to increase the quality and impact of the MRS publishing portfolio.

MRS Editors-in-Chief shall be responsible for:

- Fulfilling contractual obligations, including MRS's commitments with MRS's publishing company, as codified in journal EIC contracts.

- Providing unique leadership on the volunteer side of MRS, leading volunteer editorial and/or advisory boards as well as participation in Editorial Strategic Planning Subcommittee, Editor Panels and Strategic Portfolio Development Planning Groups.
- Maintaining both topical coordination across and functional distinctions between MRS publications.
- Being the primary public facing representative for their journals. They oversee the editorial mission and vision of their journals and have responsibility for maintaining the highest scientific and ethical standards.

The Publications Quality Advocate shall be responsible for:

- Maintaining a record of the metrics and activities associated with the publications continuous quality improvement process¹.
- Maintaining a calendar of activities related to the publications continuous quality improvement process.
- Working with Editors, MRS Headquarters, and MRS's Publishing Company to ensure that assessments are performed in a timely manner and reported appropriately in performance dashboards.
- Ensuring that the Publications Committee reviews these assessments in detail and communicates the results of that review appropriately.
- Ensuring that the Publications Committee reviews the publications continuous quality improvement process in a timely manner.

Strategic Portfolio Development Planning Groups shall

- Be formed around specific strategic initiatives.
- Collect information pertinent to the strategic initiative from all relevant publications stakeholders as well as from external sources of expertise and best practices.
- Develop strategic proposals in the defined area; preferably a range of options with analysis of advantages and disadvantages of each relative to society goals.

Each Publications Strategic Coordination Group shall be responsible for:

- Maintaining communications among the Publications Committee, MRS Headquarters, and the MRS's Publishing Company. (Assumes Journals and Books are represented by the same Publishing Company as is presently the case. If a different external entity is contracted for different parts of the portfolio, then the each SCG includes only the relevant external partner.) Note that this group has no leadership authority, which is retained by the participating constituents within their organizations.
- Meeting regularly to discuss strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats within the portfolio and communicating any perceived strategic needs or opportunities to the other SCG partners.
- Maintaining a strategic planning calendar for its portfolio, identifying issues where strategic direction is needed, and notifying those responsible for making those strategic decisions in a timely manner
- Tracking and reporting on opportunities to expand content flow both within existing titles and by additional publishing venues.

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1. Members of the Publications Committee (including the Publications Quality Advocate) do *not* assess publications quality. Those assessments are performed by the editorial teams and the publishing professionals at MRS Headquarters and the Publishing Partner. Rather the Publications Committee *uses* those assessments in strategic planning.
 2. Note that the professionals at MRS Headquarters and the Publishing Partner are not only experts in publishing performance metrics, but also have a significant stake in MRS publishing success. It is *not* expected that volunteers will attempt to independently establish performance metrics. Rather volunteers should work closely with these professionals to determine which metrics and which target values of those metrics will best achieve MRS's Publications Strategic Goals.

Deliverables: N/A; Review every three years or as needed

Who: Secretary/GovCom/Pubs Committee

When: At least 8 weeks before the Board meeting at which amendments should be considered.

To: President

Policy first adopted: Establishment of Cte – B:2010:29 – Aug 21, 2010
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Policy created by: MRS Secretary Party responsible for this policy: GovCom/Publications Committee