

Audio Engineering Society Standards Committee

Guide for Officers

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1 Scope

This guide is intended to summarise the normal duties and responsibilities of officers of Audio Engineering Standards Committee (AESCC) subcommittees (SCs) and working groups (WGs), without being unduly prescriptive.

WG chairs are both motivators and facilitators of the standards-making process. While they should be granted as much freedom as possible to achieve the goals of their group, it is essential that two-way information channels are kept open and in operation, so that the AES standards-making activity can be, and be seen to be, efficient, effective and under control.

The Guide is complementary to, and to be read in conjunction with, the following documents:

- Operating Policy of the AES Standards Committee;
- Operating Procedures of the AES Standards Committee;
- Administrative Rules of the AES Standards Committee;
- Progressing of AES standards;
- AES Style for Writers of Standards.

If a recommendation in this guide differs materially from corresponding wording in any of the above documents, the guide is not definitive.

In this guide, use of the term "formal" indicates the item is brought to the immediate attention of the secretariat either in the context of a report or by separate correspondence.

2 Duties and responsibilities of WG chairs and vice-chairs

2.1 Commitment

The posts of WG chair and vice-chair are responsible ones. Without an active and effective chair, it is most unlikely that the WG will deliver its projects on time, or at all. The post should not be accepted unless sufficient resources in time, document review and handling, and communications facilities including internet access are available and are likely to continue to be so.

2.2 Duties

In principle, the duties of the chair are:

- to preside over WG meetings and report to the parent SC in writing promptly and fully;
- to implement decisions of and request actions from the parent SC;
- to progress work via the WG reflector between meetings by encouraging project leaders and members to deliver results from tasks undertaken, and to collate work and results;
- to progress resolution of any difficulties that arise in the work, enlisting the aid of the parent SC, the standards secretariat, or both;
- to keep the chair of the parent SC aware of progress via its reflector, and to pass material to the standards secretariat.

2.3 Delegation of duties

The chair may explicitly delegate particular responsibilities to other officers, including vice-chairs, secretaries, and task-group leaders as appropriate. The delegation shall be reported to the SC via its reflector.

3. Basic housekeeping

3.1 Scope of the Working Group

Each WG has a formal scope, which is approved by the parent SC and the AESSC and is posted on the AESSC Web site. The WG chair should be aware of the scope, be prepared to ask the parent SC for an amendment if that is seen to be necessary, but otherwise ensure that the WG activity does not expand outside of its scope.

3.2 Membership

The memberships of AESSC WGs (not SCs) are open to all directly and materially affected individuals. AES membership is not required. The chair shall assure the circulation of the attendance sheet and explain that membership is automatically attained by attendance. Membership is also attained on-line or by application to the WG reflector. This application is sent to all WG officers who should determine if the applicant will hold all unpublished proceedings and committee documents in confidence so that undeveloped and unapproved documents do not inadvertently mislead persons outside the committee.

This restriction precludes membership of individuals attending for the purpose of reporting to the press. Members are expected also to abide by the AESSC Rules on all committee matters. Because AES is a professional society having individual membership, membership is not open to companies or organizations, although individuals may informally represent the positions of their organizations.

In the absence of any control, the membership procedure would create a continually expanding membership, whereas many people have only a passing or temporary interest in the work. Consequently, the secretariat continually monitors the membership list, and periodically enquires from people who have not been active whether they wish to continue as members or not. No response may be interpreted as no further interest and chair of the WG will be asked if the member should be dropped.

Information on how to join a WG is available at in the "Joining a working group" link on the AESSC Web page. The chair shall direct individuals who are not yet members and wish to join a WG to this Web address. There is no need to contact the secretariat or any other AESSC officer in order to join a WG. To update their contact information, each WG member can use the on-line update form.

3.3 Projects

The standards secretariat maintains a list of authorized projects on the Web site. The projects of each WG are on the Web site as [AESSC project status](#).

3.3.1 Current projects

The chair shall monitor progress on each project for which the WG is responsible, and facilitate and encourage steady progress. Include maintenance, and liaison.

3.3.2 Project liaisons to other Working Groups

The chair shall assure adequate cross membership in related task groups of other working groups.

3.3.3 Handling of development projects

3.3.3.1 Proposed task-group drafts (PTD)

Task-group drafts are the responsibility of the task-group meeting convenor until the draft is reported to the WG. It then becomes part of the WG discussion.

3.3.3.2 Proposed working-group drafts (PWD)

The chair shall itemize all consensus agreed changes on WG drafts and prepare the changes, or formally designate a member (such as the task-group convenor) to do so.

3.3.3.3 Proposed calls for comment (PCFC)

The chair shall itemize all consensus agreed changes on proposed calls for comment and forward the summary to the secretariat, or formally designate a member to do so.

3.3.4 New projects

3.3.4.1 Nascent projects

WGs are free to discuss any technical topic informally, subject to the discretion of the chair and the chair of the parent committee, and are obliged to discuss all requests to the WG for projects.

When appropriate, the chair shall request a new project from the secretariat; the first stage in project initiation.

3.3.4.2 Formalization of project scopes

When a discussion of a nascent project appears to be leading to a publishable standard, information document, or technical report, a project request must be submitted within a reasonable time. The request should be accompanied by a proposed scope that clearly outlines the content of the eventual output document. The project is then presented for the approval of the parent SC and the AESSC Steering Committee who will complete the project initiation. Such approval is administrative, being concerned with the relevance of the project to the WG scope and the avoidance of duplicate work.

4.0 Reports

4.1 Meeting reports

The procedures of the AESSC call for the use of *Robert's Rules of Order* in the conduct of meetings where not otherwise specified in the procedures. Roberts Rules call for a specific form for the minutes. We do not follow those rules in either what some call minutes or what we prefer to call reports. For this reason, we avoid the term "minutes".

The chair shall prepare a report for every meeting or formally designate a member to do so.

The reports shall be sent to the relevant e-mail reflector in text form (see *AESSC Communications*).

These reports will be published on the Web site and in JAES after any editing necessary for consistent standard style.

The reports are intended for any member, or potential member, of the group who did not attend the meeting to inform them of what was discussed during the meeting, the conclusions which were reached, and the proposals that were made. Note that it is not appropriate to announce 'decisions'. In our process, any conclusion will need to satisfy general consensus before it can appear in a published Standards document. See 5.3.

4.1.1 Style

The style and format of the report (except task-group reports) shall be the same as the previous report on the AESSC Web site.

Precautions against common mistakes include:

- spelling out ALL abbreviations on first mention;
- stating full names of bodies (organizations) on first mention;
- hyphenating compound adjectives;
- using the first initial with names of persons on first mention, then surname only thereafter.

4.1.2 Review

The chair shall check the report after it is edited and placed on the Web.

4.2 Types of reports

4.2.1 Task-group reports to the WG

Task-group reports need to contain details of documents and discussion on content. Unresolved disagreement must be reported. These reports shall be sent to the WG reflector. They may also be presented at meetings.

4.2.2 WG meeting reports

4.2.2.1 The chair shall prepare a report to the SC meeting at a convention summarising only action items and dates for them, not discussion. This report should be simply a list of items, sufficiently described for administrative action by the subcommittee. An outline template may be provided by the secretariat to simplify this report. Substantive information should be included only if the subcommittee needs to resolve, by reassigning work, a dispute that is delaying work.

4.2.2.2 The chair shall prepare a formal report of the WG meeting containing details of relevant discussion and place it on the WG e-mail reflector. This report shall be in narrative style and should describe issues of dispute and the resolution of those issues (see 4.1 above). For its presentation form it shall use the template of the agenda.

The report shall not contain detailed proposed subclauses of drafts. These shall be posted on the WG (or TG) document site and may be referenced in the report.

4.2.2 SC reports

The chair of the SC shall prepare a report to the AESSC plenary session at a convention containing all action items agreed to by the SC. The chair may later prepare a supplementary report contain details of discussion and place it on the SC reflector.

5. Meetings

5.1 Frequency and venue

While meetings are costly, and often not very efficient in terms of tangible work done, it is necessary for each WG to hold a formal meeting at least once a year in conjunction with an AES convention. Additional meetings in other venues are encouraged as long as they are conducted in accordance with AESSC rules particularly with regard to notification and openness. If a meeting is arranged other than in conjunction with an AES convention, the cost and time required for attendance by members should be carefully considered. Any costs to the AESSC shall be approved in advance by the secretariat.

All activities of working groups and subcommittees between meetings shall take place via their respective reflectors to assure openness. The officers shall redirect correspondence to the appropriate reflector when improperly sent privately. The reflector discussions can be regarded a virtual meetings and follow the spirit of these guidelines for meetings.

5.2 Conduct

Meetings should not be excessively formal, but the chair must retain control of the discussions. It should be borne in mind that committee procedures differ in different countries: any form of procedure is acceptable that does not result in an abuse. An abuse is much more important, and normally much more clearly recognised, than a breach of formal meeting order.

The chair and officers should conduct proceedings so that confidentiality is maintained in an atmosphere of openness. Members should be made to understand that discussion of the meeting activities among members and associates is encouraged, but statements may be given to the press only through the secretariat, except for matters that have been made public on the Web site and in the JAES. (However, all statements to the press by officers must be reviewed beforehand by the secretariat for legal and procedural questions.)

5.2.1 Convention meetings

Meetings that take place in conjunction with AES conventions are recorded. This helps to keep an accurate record of the meetings and enables transcriptions to be made efficiently. The recording equipment is generally not operated by meeting attendees including the chair, but the chair should make sure that the equipment is recording before the meeting begins. The chair may start the recording if needed when the meeting begins and stop the recording when the meeting ends. When the recording starts the chair should announce the WG designation and name, the date, and the AES convention number to identify the recording.

The meetings shall be organized by projects as shown on the agenda. Liaison reports shall be presented during the relevant project discussion, unless they relate to new business.

5.2.2 Documents

Copies of documents needed for the meetings will be provided by the secretariat for convention meetings and, when requested, for other meetings. The documents shall include the report of the previous meeting and an agenda based on the project list plus additions by the chair. The chair shall pick up the copies of these documents before the meeting from the AESSC facilities room.

Note that, since early 2007, it has ceased to be our practice to make paper copies of working documents for meetings. Instead, a data projector will be provided so that the document under discussion can be displayed on the screen and modified as necessary. Also, participants would normally have a copy available on their laptop computer. If printed copies of any document are necessary, please discuss your requirements with the secretariat in plenty of time.

The attendance list for working or task groups or an attendance list for subcommittees, as appropriate, must be circulated during the meeting. At the close of the meeting, the chair shall give the list to the secretariat for updating the membership database, or if the meeting is not at a convention, send it. The secretariat will make a copy for the chair or convenor of the meeting.

The report from the previous meeting of the WG and the current agenda have to be reviewed and accepted as written or be amended accordingly.

The chair shall collect copies for the secretariat of any additional material presented or handed out during the meeting.

5.2.3 New business

The chair shall provide for discussion of new administrative business such as officer vacancies. Liaisons that do not relate to projects on the agenda should also be discussed during this agenda point.

5.2.4 New projects

The chair shall provide for discussion of new standards projects.

5.3 Voting

AES standards meetings proceed by consensus, using the ISO definition: "the absence of sustained objection." Voting in WG meetings is to be avoided; the chair is permitted to poll individual opinions, but the result should not be reported as if it were a vote.

The usual method for determining approval of an action or decision in working and task groups and in SCs is by general consent without objection (*Roberts Rules, part 4*). An officer posts the proposition on the group reflector and asks for objections by a fixed date (sufficient time for members to receive the message - usually two weeks at most). If any objection is received, the matter usually goes back to discussion until a consensus is reached. If an objection is sustained, the group can forward the action to the SC, but the existence of a sustained objection and the reasons for overriding it must be well documented and will be subject to administrative review.

6 Actions during stages of documents

The stages of document progress are shown in *Progressing of AES Standards* on the Web site.

WG officers shall assure that all documents and communications at any stage of a project are either sent to the WG and task-group reflectors as appropriate or placed on the WG document sites, properly named and marked, "Committee use only - not for publication", according to the AESSC communications document.

6.1 Project initiation

See 3.3.4.

New projects may arise internally in a WG or from external sources. If the Steering Committee feels that a project belongs in a different WG, the chair shall ask all members interested in the project to join that other group.

6.2 Task group assignment

While it is procedurally possible to handle everything in the Working Group, it is usually expedient to assign the writing work to a Task Group. Accordingly, the chair shall ask the WG to establish a task group to progress the project or shall assign the project to an existing task group.

6.3 Proposed task-group draft (PTD)

The task group convenor shall report the draft to the working group when complete with regard to content. AESSC formatting is not required but will save time later. The chair shall ask the WG if it should accept the document or send the document back to the jurisdiction of the task group.

6.4 Proposed WG draft (PWD)

The WG chair or his or her designee shall guide the document through changes and maintain the document changes on the group document site. The designee may request the assistance of the secretariat to format the document in AESSC style. When there is no sustained objection (*see 5.3*) the WG may request that the secretariat prepare a proposed call for comment (PCFC).

6.5 Proposed call for comment (PCFC)

The secretariat will post the proposed call for comment and ask for objections. If there are many, the chair may move the document back to the PWD stage. Otherwise, objections agreed to shall be listed by the chair or designee for the secretariat to incorporate. The chair will then provide the parent SC with a record of consensus (which may be by reference to the reflector site) including the dates when general consent was requested at each stage.

6.6 Call for comment (CFC)

The SC chair shall inform the secretariat if the SC is satisfied with the record of consensus, including the date of general consent of the SC. The secretariat will publish the call for comment with the consent of the AESSC Steering Committee. Any comments received will be published on the Web site and supplied to the SC.

The call for comment is handled by the SC, normally involving the WG chair as the main point of contact. Because the CFC is a public process, all comments must be equally public. Accordingly, during a WG meeting, the chair will lead discussion of the formally-submitted comments only. No new comments may be brought up by way of a WG meeting or on the WG reflector. WG members wishing to comment must use the public route at this stage.

If the WG can resolve all substantive comments, the document will be published as a final standard or information document. If it cannot, it, the SC, or the Steering Committee may request the withdrawal of the draft and its return to the WG.

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