
Section 9.0 - GEOGRAPHIC ORGANIZATIONAL UNITS

3. The Region Student Activities Committee Chair, the Regional Director, and the Society President shall consider the Student Branch Chapter established following approval of the petition.

C. Student Branch Chapter Membership

The Student Branch Chapter membership shall elect a Student Branch Chapter Chair and any other officers deemed necessary for its successful operation in accordance with the Branch Constitution.

D. Student Branch Chapter Management

The responsibility for Student Branch Chapter management rests with the Executive Committee of the Branch. The Student Branch Chapter Chair shall serve as an ex-officio member of the Branch Executive Committee in coordinating and planning activities and programs.

1. All Student Branch members shall be advised of all meetings held under the auspices of the Branch including those organized by a Student Branch Chapter.

E. Student Branch Chapter Requirements for Membership, Meetings and Activity

A Student Branch Chapter is required to maintain a membership of not fewer than ten (10) Student members, and to hold not less than two technical meetings per year, and maintain a level of activity acceptable to the Society President, the Regional Director, and the Region Student Activities Committee Chair.

F. Student Branch Chapter Dissolution

The MGA Board may, after consultation with the Regional Director and the IEEE Society President, dissolve an IEEE Student Branch Chapter or withdraw its sponsorship and support of a Joint Student Branch Chapter for any reason deemed sufficient. The MGA Board, with the concurrence of the Advisor, the Society President, the Regional Director, and the Region Student Activities Committee Chair, a Student Branch Chapter may be dissolved. All Student Branch Chapter dissolutions will be reported to and ratified by the MGA Board.

9.9 AFFINITY GROUPS

A. Definition

Affinity Group is defined in IEEE Bylaw I-402.9; an affinity group shall be a non-technical subunit of a Region, one or more Sections or a Geographic Council. An affinity group shall be comprised by a minimum of six (6) IEEE members, who are members of the geographic unit(s) involved, and established by petition to the parent organizational unit(s) or standing committee concerned to fulfill the mission of IEEE. "Parent organizational unit" as used in this manual refers to an organizational unit or standing committee.

The following groups have been acknowledged by the MGA Board as parent organizational units as defined above and described in their charters: Consultants Network, Graduates of the Last Decade Committee, IEEE Life Members Committee and Women in Engineering Committee. No parent organizational unit shall be formed when the topic matter is within the domain of a technical group, as determined by the Societies' field of interest.

1. An Affinity Group functions in a manner similar to that of a committee of the Section/Council.
2. Any group wishing to be recognized as a parent organizational unit that may establish Affinity Groups as defined in I-402.9 shall do so by petition to the MGA Board. This petition is to supply the organizational unit's charter, which shall address at least the following: role and responsibilities, organization structure, the manner in which the organizational unit is governed in the IEEE organization, and its funding method. It is expected that the need and sustainability of Affinity Groups related to this organizational unit shall have been substantiated by prior Section/Council-level committee and/or pilot experiences. A report of these experiences should accompany the petition.

Section 9.0 - GEOGRAPHIC ORGANIZATIONAL UNITS

B. Affinity Group Formation

1. A petition to establish an Affinity Group shall contain the following:
 - a. Name of the Section or Sections of Council.
 - b. Name of the parent organizational unit.
 - c. Name of the organizer (who becomes interim Chair pending election of a regular Chair at a later organization meeting).
 - d. Signatures of at least six (6) IEEE members, who are members of the Section(s) or Council involved, and who indicate they will join the Affinity Group, if established.
2. The petition for an Affinity Group shall be submitted to the Section/Council Executive Committee for written approval and forwarded with this written approval to the IEEE Managing Director, Regional Activities.
3. The IEEE Managing Director, Regional Activities shall forward a copy of the petition to the IEEE parent organizational unit for approval.
4. The Affinity Group shall be considered established after the IEEE Managing Director, Regional Activities has ascertained that the Regional Director and IEEE parent organizational unit have no objection to its formation. A list of formations shall be transmitted to the MGA Board.
5. The IEEE Managing Director, Member and Geographic Activities shall so notify the MGA Board, the IEEE parent organizational unit, and the Section Chair on behalf of the IEEE Executive Director.
6. An Affinity Group or Joint Affinity Group may be established by the procedures defined herein to cover the territory of two or more contiguous Sections, or a Council, provided the necessary approval is obtained by all concerned. The petition shall identify the Section assuming responsibility for the Affinity Group management. That Section shall receive the Affinity Group member and Affiliate allowances and rebates for the Affinity Group meetings.

C. Affinity Group Management

1. Responsibility for Affinity Group management shall rest with the Section/Council, which shall have control of all financial and other assets of the Affinity Group in carrying out its activities.
2. Reasonable efforts should be made to notify all members of Affinity Group meetings. Methods of communication could be hard copy distributions, email distributions in keeping with IEEE email policies, and Affinity Group web site updates. Not less than once a year a hard copy mailing should be sent to the active Affinity Group membership including at least the following information: how to subscribe to the Affinity Group email list, the URL for the Affinity Group's web page, and how members may update their contact information in the IEEE master database.

D. Affinity Group Officers

Officers of the Affinity Group shall be at least a Chair, a Vice Chair, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. The Affinity Group may combine the offices of Secretary and Treasurer.

1. Each member of the Affinity Group Committee shall be an IEEE member of Graduate Student Member, Member, Senior Member or Fellow grade.
2. The Affinity Group Chair shall serve as Chair for all meetings of the Affinity Group and the Affinity Group Committee.
3. The Affinity Group Vice Chair shall assist the Chair in the coordination of all Affinity Group activities. At the request of the Affinity Group Chair or in the absence of the Affinity Group Chair, the Affinity Group Vice Chair shall chair meetings of the Affinity Group and the Affinity Group Committee.
4. The duties of the Affinity Group Secretary shall include correspondence, the keeping of the minutes of the Committee meetings, mailing notices, and submission of meeting reports and roster of members and officers to the Section/Council at the end of each year and such other duties as are assigned to him/her by the Chair.

Section 9.0 - GEOGRAPHIC ORGANIZATIONAL UNITS

5. The duties of the Affinity Group Treasurer shall include the development of an Affinity Group budget for approval by the Section/Council, accounting of all Affinity Group funds, keeping financial records, and submitting a financial record to the Section/Council.
6. The term of office for all officers shall normally be one year, but may continue until a successor has been duly elected and take office. The term of office will date from 1 January through 31 December. The consecutive period of service in any one office shall normally not exceed two years. Such exceptions require approval by the Region Director who will annually report such exceptions to the MGA Board.
7. The names of the newly elected/appointed officers voting and non-voting of the Affinity Group shall be reported by the Affinity Group Chair to IEEE Member and Geographic Activities Department within 20 days following election/ appointment.

E. Affinity Group Nominating Committee

1. Section/Council Bylaws shall provide for appointment by the Affinity Group Chair of a Nominating Committee of three or more Affinity Group members not then officers of the Affinity Group. The Affinity Group Chair, in accordance with this Operations Manual shall appoint its Chair.
2. The duties of the Affinity Group Nominating Committee shall include the preparation of a slate of candidates recommended for the offices of Affinity Group Chair, and such other members of the Affinity Group elected at-large, in accordance with the Section/Council Bylaws, to be submitted for approval by the Group Committee.
3. The approved slate shall include not less than two nor more than three candidates recommended for each office.
4. The Affinity Group Nominating Committee shall also be responsible for the annual solicitation within the Affinity Group of names of potential candidates to be considered for positions on Affinity Group committees according to the Section/Council Bylaws.

F. Group Election Process

1. Six months prior to the date of election, the Affinity Group Nominating Committee Chair shall issue a "Call for Nominations" for all positions elected at-large to all voting members of the Affinity Group through an appropriate medium.
2. Affinity Group members shall submit nominations within one month of the "Call for Nominations".
3. The Affinity Group Nominating Committee shall verify the candidates' eligibility and willingness to serve. The Affinity Group Nominating Committee shall also gather position statements and biographies of the potential candidates, as appropriate.
4. The Affinity Group Nominating Committee will select from all such submissions candidates for each position elected at large, and submit the slate of candidates to the Affinity Group Committee for ratification.
5. The ratified slate of candidates, at least two but not more than three, shall be communicated to the voting members of the Affinity Group not less than six weeks prior to the election date. In addition, provision shall be made in the communication for petition candidates for these offices.
6. Petition candidates shall require the signatures of a minimum of one percent of the voting members of the Affinity Group, except in no case shall more than 10 signatures are required.
7. The entire slate of candidates for office shall be communicated to the voting members of the Affinity Group not less than two weeks prior to the election date.
8. The election process shall be by secret ballot.
9. The Chair of the Affinity Group shall submit the names of up to three members of the Affinity Group to serve as a Tellers Committee, to the Affinity Group for approval. After the tally of votes, the Tellers Committee shall report the results of the election to the Affinity Group Chair. The Affinity Group Chair shall inform each candidate for office of the results of the election prior to announcing the results to the Affinity Group and the Section/Council.

Section 9.0 - GEOGRAPHIC ORGANIZATIONAL UNITS

G. Financial Management of Affinity Group Funds

Section/Councils shall be responsible for distributing funds to its Affinity Groups in accordance with a stated set of objectives and a plan of distribution, which shall be in consonance with the missions of the IEEE, MGA and the parent organizational unit.

1. Funds within the Affinity Groups, from whatever source derived, are the property of the IEEE, and shall not be used for purposes other than the normal operations of the Affinity Group as defined in the IEEE Bylaws or published interpretation of policy, without prior authorization of the MGA Board, unless otherwise provided.
2. Funds derived from member dues shall not be used for scholarships, fellowships and other education awards. The awards activities shall be supported by funds from activities all or in part specifically directed to such usage. Contributions may be accepted for such use and donations should be encouraged by the use of tax-exempt mechanisms.
3. All funds derived from whatever permitted source designated for these purposes shall be deposited in properly authorized separate accounts, foundations, or other approved depositories under agreement, direction, or control of the organizational unit, with adequate provisions for ensuring the proper use of the funds or proceeds there from. A properly executed agreement will include provisions for disposition of residual funds should any approved program be discontinued.
4. Affinity Groups shall have the right to obligate their funds for all purposes necessary to promote their objectives, except that no Affinity Group or any officer or representative thereof shall have any authority to contract debts for, pledge the credit of, or in any way bind the IEEE for those activities specifically prohibited in the governing documents of the IEEE or published interpretation of policy.
5. The Affinity Groups may serve nonmembers or groups wishing to receive meeting announcements and other Affinity Group publications.
6. Affinity Groups may accept local voluntary financial contributions.
7. All unit funds management must adhere to a fiscal year 1 January - 31 December.
8. Affinity Groups may establish appropriate bank accounts for accounting of funds.
 - a. Accounts established in the name of IEEE must be reserved for the purpose for which they are established, without co-mingling of funds.
 - b. They establish a reserve fund at least equal to one half of the total budgeted yearly expenditures.
 - c. All accounts shall have signature cards with at least two volunteer signatures, one volunteer as the primary signatory and one additional volunteer as an alternate. In addition, all IEEE Geographic Units accounts must have the IEEE Staff Director, Financial Services as a signatory thereon (Policy 11.3.A.3) Exemptions must be requested as part of the Geographic Unit Annual Financial Report, and approved by the Region Director
 - d. All affinity groups are encouraged to utilize the IEEE Concentration Banking Program as a depository for all IEEE funds, if possible.

H. Joint Affinity Group

A Joint Group comprising the members of more than one parent organizational unit may be established by the procedures defined herein, provided, however, that the petition to establish a Joint Group shall contain at least six (6) signatures and that each parent organizational unit involved shall be represented by at least three signatures.

I. Change of Joint Affinity Group Status

The status of an Affinity Group may be changed from single to joint, or vice versa or from one joint combination to another, without submission of a petition. The change in status will become effective following approval of the request for change by the Regional Director(s), affinity group chair, Section/Council Executive Committee, and other organizational units involved.

Section 9.0 - GEOGRAPHIC ORGANIZATIONAL UNITS

J. Affinity Group Requirements for Membership and Meeting Activity

1. An Affinity Group shall be required to maintain a membership of not fewer than six (6) members, and to hold not less than two group-interest meetings per year, or to maintain a level of activity acceptable to the Section/Council Chair and Region Director.
2. Meeting Activity
 - a. An Affinity Group or Joint Affinity Group shall schedule a group interest meeting only if it has received the prior approval of the Executive Committee of the Section/Council within whose boundaries the meeting is to be held.
 - b. All Section/Council members shall be advised of all meetings held in the Section/Council, including those organized by Affinity Groups. In addition, a special notice may be sent to the members of the Affinity Group that organizes a meeting.
 - c. An Affinity Group shall submit annual a meeting report, a roster of officers, and a roster of members, to the Section/Council Secretary.
 - d. The Section shall receive credit for Affinity Group activity.

K. Affinity Group Probation

Failure of an Affinity Group to meet the minimum required activities as described in 9.9.F for a period of one year shall result in the Affinity Group automatically being placed on probation, effective 1 January of the following year. An Affinity Group probation period shall last three consecutive years. The Affinity Group will not be eligible for Rebates until it comes into compliance with the minimum requirements.

1. Annual notice of delinquency will be given to all concerned.
2. A report of delinquent Affinity Groups will be presented to the MGA Board.

L. Affinity Group Dissolution

With the concurrence of the Section/Council Executive Committee, the Regional Director, and the parent organizational unit(ies), an Affinity Group or Joint Affinity Group may be dissolved.

1. If the probation of an Affinity Group (see 9.9.G) continues for a third year, and in the absence of plans to reactivate the Affinity Group acceptable to the Regional Director and the MGA Board, the Affinity Group shall be automatically dissolved.

9.10 **STUDENT BRANCH AFFINITY GROUPS**

An Affinity Group, as a unit of an IEEE Student Branch, is permitted. The administration of such Affinity Groups shall follow the process for Student Branch Chapters, Section 9.8. Signatures of at least six (6) IEEE Student members are required to establish a Student Branch Affinity Group. The Regional Director, the Affinity Group Chair, the Regional Student Activities Chair and the Regional Student Representative shall be informed of the Student Branch Chapter approval. Each Student Branch Affinity Group shall have an advisor who shall be:

- a) A faculty member of IEEE grade higher than the student, not necessarily an Affinity Group member but with a strong commitment for its goals,
or;
- b) An Affinity Group member of the Section.