

## Policy for the Development and Approval of Official AAAAI Work Group Reports and Systematic Reviews

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The Practice, Diagnosis and Therapeutics (PDT) Committee facilitates the development of projects by AAAAI members to be submitted for publication in JACI or JACI: *In Practice* carrying the imprimatur of the AAAAI. Referred to as the “PDT process”, this charge to the PDT committee is intended to ensure these projects contribute to the literature of the specialty, are of consistent high quality, and reflect the standards of the AAAAI.

### Project types

There are two categories of projects eligible for development under this particular PDT Process. Official AAAAI Position Statements follow a separate policy viewable here (*link once policy is approved*)

A Work Group Report is a narrative review that provides further comment or clarification on appropriate methods of treatment or care. They are generally created by committees or work groups, and the end goal is to aid practitioners in clinical decision making. They are well referenced and contain an appropriate bibliography. They are not guidelines, but do aid in making decisions for patient care. They do not constitute an official opinion or statement of the AAAAI but serve to bring attention to key clinical or even controversial issues.

A Systematic Review examines an aspect or aspects of clinical practice, research or public policy pertaining to allergic/immunologic disease in a systematic, reproducible fashion. Most such reviews will address therapies, but proposals focusing on other areas – including diagnosis, prevention, or prognosis – are also encouraged. It is expected that authors will define a question, perform a literature search with specified inclusion and exclusion criteria, abstract and critically appraise data according to methodologic quality and assessment of validity, and transparently describe the overall results of the review and how to apply these results to patient care. These reviews do not constitute official statements or policy of the AAAAI, but do carry the potential for meaningful impact.

### Surveys

The PDT Committee leadership reviews and approves proposals for surveys of and from AAAAI members because these are often linked to the development of Work Group Reports. Members should start by completing the [survey request form](#) and be aware of the AAAAI [survey data ownership policy](#). Surveys approved through the PDT Process must be administered through the AAAAI to maintain compliance with the terms of the data ownership policy. Any group that would only conduct its survey through an external data collection system would be considered an external collaboration, and thus have to be approved by AAAAI leadership as opposed to through PDT.

### Document proposal

The PDT Committee and Process provide oversight for projects that are developed within the AAAAI, such as by a Writing Group of a committee or assembly. Any AAAAI member may propose to develop a document through the PDT process with the consent and support of the leadership of their relevant constituent group. Writing groups must include AAAAI members. Non-members may participate with the approval of the PDT leadership, but must follow all

policies and procedures that apply to the AAAAI members involved, including participation in the conflict of interest review process.

Any project proposal that involves outside organizations or agencies is not covered under the PDT process and must instead be approved by AAAAI leadership. For more information on external projects, see [AAAAI Policy Regarding the Development of Joint Activities with Other Organizations or Entities](#).

#### Proposal submission

The writing group must submit to [pdreviews@aaaai.org](mailto:pdreviews@aaaai.org) a [proposal intent form](#) including the lead author(s) name and e-mail address, proposed title, approval by relevant constituent group; and also answers to each of the following:

1. A brief outline and topic summary of the proposed Work Group Report/ Systematic Review.
2. A review of evidence/literature currently available on the topic, including a reference list of relevant previously published statements on the topic (practice parameters, other specialty society position statements, etc.). Note: The Board has asked the PDT Committee to critically assess the age of the evidence/literature that will be used to support a document in its review process. Documents based on old or outdated literature are not likely to be approved.
3. A list of all writing group members and a conflict of interest disclosure statement for each author must be submitted using the [Online Disclosure Management System](#).
4. Why is a new paper on this topic necessary and why do the authors believe this should be a statement of the type selected?

Most Writing Groups are formed within an AAAAI committee or other constituency. If a Writing Group proposes a project that draws individuals from more than one constituency and/or is beyond the scope of any one committee, the Writing Group is to get the consent of the most relevant committee's leadership. If no existing constituency can be identified as related to the proposed topic, the Chair of the Practice and Policy Division may be asked to sign off as the most closely related constituency leader. If the leadership of the related constituent group does not approve of the proposed project, their decision may be appealed to the PDT Chair. The decision of the PDT Chair on the intent form will be final.

Any questions on the intent form or submission process should be submitted to Practice and Policy staff at [pdreviews@aaaai.org](mailto:pdreviews@aaaai.org).

#### Intent form review

Practice and Policy staff will review the intent form for completion and request any missing conflict of interest disclosures. The completed intent form and accompanying disclosures are sent to the PDT Chair and Vice Chair for review. The PDT Chair and Vice Chair, in consultation with the Chair of the Practice & Policy Division and the related Interest Section Chair, if necessary, reviews the request and disclosures of the writing group, and approves, responds with suggested edits, or denies the request. In addition to reviewing for [conflicts of interests](#), considerations for whether to approve an intent form may include issues such as whether the proposal will result in an appropriate and meaningful document to advance practice and/or patient care; whether the proposal might conflict with or duplicate efforts already underway by another group within or in conjunction with the AAAAI, such as a Practice Parameter; and whether the proposed writing group has the requisite expertise for the proposed work. Considerations for appropriateness may include whether the proposal fits the description for a

Work Group Report, or Systematic Review; if it appears to endorse a commercial interest, or if something else about the intent form indicates that the document is outside the scope of PDT, like the word “guideline” in the title or an indication of external partners. The decision of the PDT Chair is final.

The decision from PDT leadership on whether or not an intent form for a Work Group Report, or Systematic Review is approved will be communicated to the Writing Group by Practice and Policy division staff. A decision by PDT leadership to not approve an intent form for a Work Group Report or Systematic Review may be appealed to the Practice and Policy Division Chair, via written email request submitted to [PDTreviews@aaaai.org](mailto:PDTreviews@aaaai.org).

### **Document development and review**

Once given approval to proceed, a Writing Group is expected to submit a draft document for review (with line numbers included) within 3-12 months by sending it to Practice and Policy staff at [PDTreviews@aaaai.org](mailto:PDTreviews@aaaai.org). While a draft Position Statement should be no more than seven (7) printed journal pages (20 double spaced manuscript pages) including references, Work Group Reports and Systematic Reviews have no maximum length, but the same standard is recommended.

Upon receiving the draft document, Practice and Policy staff verify that all authors listed on the draft were included in the intent form, and pull conflict of interest disclosures for anyone who is listed on the document but who was not on the intent form, and request an updated disclosure if necessary. Upon sending the draft document to the PDT Chair and Vice Chair, Practice and Policy staff will point out if there is any change in the writing group from those listed on the intent form. If leadership of the constituency group indicated on the intent form has changed while the draft document has been in development, the Writing Group will be asked to verify consent from the new constituency group Chair.

The PDT Committee Chair and Vice Chair identify potential reviewers with relevant expertise to the topic of a draft document. Reviewers may be drawn from Interest Section leadership or elsewhere in the AAAAI. Reviewers who are not members of the AAAAI may be asked to participate if necessary to find relevant content experts who were not in the Writing Group. A Writing Group may suggest reviewers, but PDT leadership is not required to invite those suggested. So long as some reviewers have specific expertise to judge the clinical and scientific merit of the document, other reviewers may be assigned with less specific expertise to review for readability and other factors.

Practice and Policy staff contact potential reviewers identified by PDT leadership. Reviewers are provided with a timeline in which to return their comments, and asked to keep the review process confidential. There is to be no communication between the reviewers and the Writing Group about the draft during the review process. Reviewers are asked to send their comments to Practice and Policy staff in a separate document, and not via comments on a copy of the draft itself.

Practice and Policy staff will compile reviewer feedback into one comments table and send it to PDT leadership. The PDT Chair and Vice Chair will review the content of this comments table to determine whether the feedback it provides is sufficient to constitute a comprehensive and robust review of the draft document. If PDT leadership determines that further review is needed, or if the original reviewers failed to deliver comments within the allotted timeframe, then additional reviewers may be identified and invited.

Practice and Policy staff will then send the comments table to the Writing Group. The Writing Group will be asked to provide a response to each item in the comment table, indicating which suggestions were incorporated and which were not (referring as appropriate to the respective line numbers in the updated draft) and the rationale for the decision. When the Writing Group completes editing the draft, they are to send the marked up copy, the comments table showing their response to each item, and a clean copy of the revised document without line numbers back to Practice and Policy staff, who will send all of these documents to PDT leadership.

The Chair and Vice Chair of PDT will review the revisions documents to be sure the Writing Group has provided a thoughtful and complete response to the reviewers' comments. Practice and Policy staff will then send the comments table showing the Writing Group's responses and the marked up draft back to reviewers. The reviewers may indicate to PDT leadership that they are satisfied that the revisions reflect careful consideration of their own suggested edits, or suggest further specific edits. This subsequent feedback by the reviewers is sent to PDT leadership, who then decide whether the review and revision process is complete. If they determine further editing is required, the review and revision process is repeated as necessary.

Once the PDT Chair and Vice Chair are satisfied that the document has undergone a sufficient and robust review, the Director of Practice and Policy will inform the Executive Director that PDT has released a document to a Writing Group for journal submission and the Writing Group may submit the report to JACI or JACI: *In Practice* (author's choice) as outlined below.

### **Approval requirements**

1. The Director of Practice and Policy will inform the Executive Director that PDT has released a document to a work group for journal submission.
2. Authors submit the PDT-approved Work Group Report to JACI or JACI: *In Practice* (authors' choice).
3. Journal peer review takes place, and reviewer comments are sent back to authors as with any other manuscript; this process may also involve revisions by the authors.
4. If the Journal accepts the Work Group Report for publication, the Journal shares the final submitted PDF that was accepted (including reviewer comments, author responses, marked, and unmarked manuscripts) with the executive office staff. The final Work Group Report manuscript is shared with the full Board of Directors and comments are requested. The Executive Committee will then hold a vote on approval of the manuscript as an official Work Group Report.
  - a. With Executive Committee or full Board of Directors approval, the Work Group Report will be published in the Journal that conducted the review as an official AAAAI Work Group Report. The authors are notified by the Journal of this decision.
  - b. If the Report is rejected by the Executive Committee, the manuscript could still be accepted by the Journal, but not as an official AAAAI Work Group Report. Alternatively, if there is a compelling scientific reason for lack of acceptance of the Report by the Executive Committee, the Journal could decline the manuscript, in which case the authors will be told they can submit the document to another journal as a work product of a group of individuals, but not as an official AAAAI Work Group Report. The authors are notified of either the Accept As Is as a non-official report or the Decline decision by the Journal.
5. If the Journal peer review process recommends Decline, this information is shared with the Executive Committee, and the Executive Committee provides additional input regarding whether a new submission should be considered, based on reviewer concerns. In this case, the Work Group Report process starts over. A Decline decision is

issued by the Journal to the authors, with or without the caveat of starting over, based on Executive Committee input.

Work Group Reports and Systematic Reviews may be approved by the Executive Committee, on behalf of the full Board of Directors.

Work Group Reports are subject to review by AAAAI legal counsel at the discretion of the AAAAI President in consultation with the Executive Director.

Work Group Reports and Systematic Reviews may be approved by a simple majority (51% or more) vote of the Executive Committee or full Board of Directors.

### **Post-approval processes**

The document title must include the name of the project: whether it is a Work Group Report or a Systematic Review; and to which AAAAI constituency group it belongs. If the document is not accepted by a journal, the Writing Group may submit it to another journal, but must not identify the paper as an AAAAI Work Group Report.

All approved documents will also be posted to [www.aaaai.org](http://www.aaaai.org) as soon as possible, and announced to membership via broadcast email or in a regularly scheduled email communication.