

Policy for the Development and Coordination of the *Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad*

First Adopted: October 10, 2018 **Last Revised:** January 12, 2021

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the *Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad* are developed with guidance from the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), and to establish procedures to confirm that The Forum on Education Abroad's standards development activities follow best practices as well as the guiding principles of openness, balance, and due process.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

The Policy for the Development and Coordination of the *Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad* is reviewed annually and updated when required.

These Policies govern the development of the *Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad*. These Policies meet the requirements of due process and incorporate guidance from the ANSI *Essential Requirements: Due Process Requirements for American National Standards* and ISO's *How to write standards*.

3. DEFINITION OF TERMS AND ENTITIES

3.1 CONSENSUS

All changes to the *Standards* are adopted through a process of consensus building. For the purposes of this policy, in conformity with ISO, consensus is defined as: "general agreement where there is no sustained opposition to substantial issues by any important part of the concerned interests, in a process that seeks to take into account the views of all parties concerned." This signifies the concurrence of more than a simple majority, but not necessarily unanimity. Consensus requires that all views and objections be considered, and that an effort be made toward their resolution.

3.2 RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

The following individuals or entities are responsible for Standards development.

3.2.1 THE FORUM ON EDUCATION ABROAD STAFF

Under the direction of the Standards Manager, the staff of The Forum on Education Abroad (Forum Staff) will be collectively responsible for:

- overseeing compliance with these procedures;
- in coordination with The Forum Council leadership and Standards Manager, selecting the Standards Update Committee membership;

- administration of Standards Update Committee activities, including maintaining a roster of the Committee membership; and
- publishing the *Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad*, revisions and addenda.

3.2.2 THE STANDARDS MANAGER

The Standards Manager will be responsible for:

- ensuring adherence to the procedures;
- in coordination with The Forum Council leadership and Forum staff, selecting the Consensus Body membership;
- administration of the Consensus Body activities, including maintaining a roster of the Consensus Body membership;
- participating in appeals process as defined in 4.6; and,
- performing other functions as required by these policies.

3.2.3 STANDARDS UPDATE COMMITTEE

A Standards Update Committee will be formed to revise the *Standards*. The Standards Update Committee will be responsible for providing recommendations on the proposed draft *Standards* to the Consensus Body. The Standards Update Committee membership applications will be open to directly and materially affected individuals.

3.2.3.1 MEMBERSHIP

The Forum on Education Abroad staff will engage in proactive recruitment activities to yield a slate of candidates to serve on the Standards Update Committee. Members of the Standards Update Committee will be appointed by the Forum Council Chair. Membership term will be for two years. If a member resigns, applications on file will be considered by the Forum Council Chair for filling the available position. If insufficient applications are available from which to select a new member, The Forum on Education Abroad staff will again engage in proactive recruitment activities.

3.2.4 CONSENSUS BODY

The Consensus Body will be responsible for:

- voting on approval of proposed revisions to the *Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad*;
- voting on approval of reaffirmation of the *Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad*; and,
- other matters requiring Consensus Body action as provided in these procedures.

3.2.4.1 APPLICATION

Any directly and materially affected person may apply to serve on the Consensus Body by completing the online Consensus Body application available on The Forum's website. Membership on the Consensus Body will not be conditional upon membership in The Forum on Education Abroad, nor unreasonably restricted based on technical qualifications or other such requirements.

An applicant will define their direct and material interest in the *Standards*, their qualifications and willingness to participate actively, and should indicate the Interest Category that best characterizes and reflects the principal professional activities of the applicant. If the applicant inaccurately represents their interests, the interest category may be revised.

3.2.4.2 SELECTION/RECOMMENDATION

The Consensus Body membership will reflect a balance of interests. Membership in the Consensus Body will not be dominated by any single Interest Category, individual or organization. Members from diverse Interest Categories will be sought with the objective of balance (see [3.2.4.3.1](#)).

In reviewing applications, the Standards Manager will consider the following:

- need to achieve balance and active participation by each Interest Category; and
- size of the Consensus Body.

Applicants not accepted may have their application maintained on file for later consideration when openings occur.

3.2.4.3 MEMBERSHIP

Members of the Consensus Body will be appointed by the Standards Manager.

Membership term will be for five years. When a member completes a term or resigns, applications on file in the applicable interest category will be considered by the Standards Manager for filling the available position. If insufficient applications are available from which to select a new member, the Forum staff will engage in proactive recruitment activities.

3.2.4.3.1 INTEREST CATEGORIES

Membership is defined by the interest categories below.

U.S. Education Institutions	Education Institutions outside of the U.S.	Education Abroad Providers
Professional Associations, Service Providers, Charitable Organizations,	General Interest	Governing Bodies of The Forum on Education Abroad (Council, Board)

3.2.4.3.2 MEMBERSHIP REVIEW

3.2.4.3.2.1. Voting records will be reviewed on a continual basis by the Standards Manager. A Consensus Body member will be removed for the following if they:

- completed a five-year term,
- voted on less than three of the last four ballots,
- abstained on three of the last four ballots,
- failed to vote on two consecutive ballots,
- has a conflict of interest (see [3.2.4.3.2.4](#)), or

- has a change in employment that affects the member’s interest category or organizational balance within the membership of the Working Group.

Interest category changes will be documented by The Forum after written request from the member.

3.2.4.3.2.2. At the end of a membership term, the member may reapply for membership for one additional term. If not selected, they will be removed from the Consensus Body roster.

3.2.4.3.2.3. A Consensus Body member may resign at any time.

3.2.4.3.2.4. Any conflict of interest by any member of the Consensus Body must be brought to the attention of the Standards Manager, who will discuss and attempt to resolve the issue with the Consensus Body member. If the issue cannot be resolved the Standards Manager may remove the member from the Consensus Body roster.

3.2.4.3.3 MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

The Forum will maintain a current Consensus Body membership roster containing pertinent member contact information, affiliations, and Interest Categories. The membership roster will be available to Consensus Body members. A list of Consensus Body member names and affiliations are available on The Forum’s website.

4. STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT PROCEDURES

4.1. NOTIFICATION OF STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT

4.1.1 PROJECT INITIATION

At the initiation of a project to develop, revise, or reaffirm the *Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad*, notification of Standards development will be announced in suitable media to demonstrate an opportunity for participation by all directly and materially affected persons.

The decision to undertake a project to develop, revise, or reaffirm the Standards can only be made by the Forum Staff, but directly and materially affected persons may make suggestions for Standards development, revision, or reaffirmation by submitting their idea(s) in writing via email or the webform available on The Forum’s website.

4.1.2 DISCONTINUANCE OF A STANDARDS PROJECT OR PROPOSAL

The Forum may decide to abandon the processing of proposed new or revised *Standards* or portion thereof, after initiation of the project, at its own discretion and without a vote of the Consensus Body.

4.1.3 WITHDRAWAL OF A CLAUSE

The Forum may decide to withdraw a clause or sub-clause at its own discretion and without a vote of the Consensus Body.

4.2 OPERATIONS

The Standards Update Committee drafts updated text based on feedback and requests from materially affected individuals. All directly and materially affected persons are invited to suggest updates to the Standards upon notification of Standards Development.

4.3 DISPOSITION OF VIEWS AND OBJECTIONS - PUBLIC COMMENT

Once the Standards Update Committee has drafted updates to the Standards, their draft is made available for public comment.

4.3.1. The Standards Manager will forward the comments to the Standards Update Committee.

4.3.2. Prompt consideration will be given to the expressed views and objections of all directly and materially affected individuals. An effort to resolve all expressed objections will be made, and each objector will be advised in writing of the disposition of the objection and the reasons thereof.

4.3.3. Only comments related to the proposal and comments received during the public review and comment period will be considered. The submitter will be notified that unrelated comments and comments received after closing of the public review and comment period will be treated as a new proposal.

4.3.4. Each unresolved objection and attempt at resolution, and any substantive change made in the proposed *Standards* will be reported to the Consensus Body to afford all members of the Consensus Body an opportunity to respond, reaffirm, or change their vote.

4.3.5. Each objector will be informed in writing that an appeals process exists within these procedures; see **4.6**.

4.3.6. Once the Standards Update Committee has addressed all comments, the draft is considered complete. The complete draft is sent to the Consensus Body, along with a record of all comments received, and the actions taken or not taken by the Standards Update Committee to address each comment, and the reasons for their decisions.

4.4 BALLOTS

4.4.1 GENERAL

All Consensus Body decisions will be conducted via electronic ballot.

All Consensus Body members on the roster at the time a ballot opens are eligible to vote on that ballot.

4.4.2 BALLOT PERIOD

Consensus Body members will have a minimum of fourteen calendar days from the ballot opening and closing date. Members should be given 30 calendar days to review proposed standards, amendments, or changes prior to the closing date.

4.4.3 BALLOT OPTIONS

Each Consensus Body member will vote one of the following positions:

- Affirmative, with optional comment;
- Negative, with *required* comments giving the reasons for a negative vote, and specific wording changes to the document or other actions that would resolve the objection; or,
- Abstain, with *required* comment for why the member cannot vote either affirmatively or negatively.

4.4.4 BALLOT APPROVAL - EVIDENCE OF CONSENSUS

Ballots will be received from a majority of the Consensus Body (counting abstentions) and at least two-thirds of those voting must submit an affirmative ballot (not counting abstentions) prior to a proposed *Standards*, amendment, or reaffirmation being adopted.

4.5 DISPOSITION OF VIEWS AND OBJECTIONS – CONSENSUS BODY

4.5.1. The Standards Manager will forward the ballot tally and comments to the Standards Update Committee.

4.5.2. Prompt consideration will be given to the expressed views and objections of all directly and materially affected individuals. An effort to resolve all expressed objections must be made, and each objector will be advised in writing of the disposition of the objection and the reasons thereof.

4.5.3. Only comments related to the proposal will be considered. The submitter will be notified that unrelated comments and comment received after closing of the public review and comment period will be treated as a new proposal.

4.5.4. Each unresolved objection and attempt at resolution, and any substantive change made in the proposed *Standards* will be reported to the Consensus Body to afford all members of the Consensus Body an opportunity to respond, reaffirm, or change their vote. If requirements of **4.4.4** are attained at the completion of the review, all objections will be considered adjudicated.

4.5.4.2. Each time changes are made a new ballot period (**4.4.2**) opens to allow the Consensus Body to consider changes and change their vote if they choose. This process repeats as many times as necessary until consensus is reached as described in **4.4.4**.

4.5.5. Each objector will be informed in writing that an appeals process exists within these procedures.

4.6 APPEALS

4.6.1. Persons who have directly and materially affected interests and who have been or will be adversely affected by any procedural action or inaction by The Forum regarding the development of proposed *Standards* or the revision, amendment, reaffirmation, or withdrawal has a right to appeal. If the appeal is related to an action or inaction of the Standards Manager, the role of the Standards Manager in the following appeals process will be filled by another member of Forum management.

4.6.2. The appellant must file a written complaint with The Forum within thirty calendar days after the date of notification of action or at any time with respect to inaction. The complaint will state the nature of the objection(s) including any adverse effects, the clause(s) of these procedures or the sections or clauses of the *Standards* that are at issue, action(s) or inaction(s) that are at issue, and the specific remedial action(s) that would satisfy the appellant's concerns. Previous efforts to resolve the objection(s) and the outcome of each will be noted.

4.6.3. Within thirty days after receipt of the complaint, the Standards Manager will respond in writing to the appellant, specifically addressing each allegation of fact in the complaint to the extent of the respondent's knowledge.

4.6.4. If the appellant is unsatisfied with the response, he or she may request a hearing to address the issues. The Standards Manager will schedule a hearing with an appeals panel on a date agreeable to all participants, giving the appellant at least ten working days' notice in advance of the meeting.

4.6.5. The appeals panel will consist of five individuals nominated by the Standards Manager and who have not been directly involved in the matter in dispute and will not be materially or directly affected by any decision made or to be made in the dispute. At least three members of the panel will be acceptable to the appellant. If The Forum and the appellant cannot agree on the composition of the appeals panel within 14 calendar days, the panel will be appointed by Standards Manager's Supervisor. Appeals panel members will select a Chair and Secretariat from their membership.

4.6.6. The appellant has the burden of demonstrating improper actions or inactions, adverse effects, and the efficacy of the requested remedial action. The respondent has the burden of demonstrating that participants in the standards activity took all actions in compliance with these procedures and/or that the requested remedial action would be ineffective or detrimental. Each party may adduce other pertinent arguments, and members of the appeals panel may address questions to individuals. Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure (latest edition) will apply to questions of parliamentary procedure for the hearing not covered herein.

4.6.7 The appeals panel will render its decision in writing within thirty days, stating findings of fact and conclusions, with reasons thereof, based on a preponderance of the evidence. Consideration may be given to the following positions in formulating the decision:

4.6.7.1. finding for the appellant, remanding the action to the Standards Manager with a specific statement of the issues and facts regarding which fair and equitable action was not taken;

4.6.7.2. finding for the respondent, with a specific statement of the facts that demonstrate fair and equitable treatment of the appellant and the appellant's objections; or

4.6.7.3. finding that new evidence has been introduced and remanding the entire action to the Standards Manager for appropriate reconsideration.

5. EVIDENCE OF COMPLIANCE – RECORD KEEPING

Records related to the development of the *Standards* will be retained for one complete *Standards'* cycle, i.e., until the *Standards* are revised, reaffirmed, or withdrawn. Records concerning withdrawals of a clause or sub-clause will be retained for at least five years from the date of withdrawal.