

ESC Working Groups – Internal Governance Procedures

Approved by ESC Board

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This document is an ESC Board approved document that will be reviewed periodically as deemed necessary by the ESC Board to ensure alignment with the ESC Statutes.

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Article 1 – Form & rationale

-Extract from ESC Statutes-

The ESC may create Working Groups for the study and advancement of particular subjects related to the heart and the vascular system. The creation or dissolution of a Working Group is decided by the Ordinary General Assembly of the ESC upon proposal of the ESC Board. **The internal organization** of Working Groups is regulated in the ESC Statutes and bylaws.

Working Group **internal governance** must comply with the ESC Statutes & rules of governance.

Article 2 – Purpose and means

The Working Groups of the ESC are expected to contribute to the purpose and means of the ESC as detailed in the ESC Statutes.

To support this mission, the ESC Board provides the ESC Working Groups with the financial and support resources deemed appropriate to the successful delivery of the activities the Working Groups engage in, in consistency with the purpose and means of the ESC as well as the ESC Strategic Plan.

-Extract from ESC Statutes-

The ESC has the following purpose:

- advance the prevention, diagnosis and management of diseases of the heart and the blood vessels;
- improve the scientific understanding of the heart and the vascular system in particular through promotion of research in this field;
- take responsibility for the promotion of the education and training of cardiologists and other professionals involved with prevention, diagnosis and management of diseases of the heart and the blood vessels, and for the development of standards for their training, continuous education and professional conduct;
- offer advice, including advocacy, to the public, European Union, health authorities and administration, and other organisations, both statutory and non-governmental, on prevention, diagnosis and management of diseases of the heart and the blood vessels, and on research programmes regarding these topics.

Accordingly, the mission of the ESC may be stated as “to reduce the burden of cardiovascular disease”. No distribution of profit to members is permitted.

The ESC shall achieve its purpose by the means that the Board deems appropriate, and in particular by:

- bringing together: i) the National Cardiac Societies that have joined the ESC, and their members, as well as Individual Members such as healthcare professionals including, but not limited to, physicians, scientists, nurses and allied health professionals in the field of diseases of the heart and the blood vessels, and ii) other members of ESC Associations, Councils and Working Groups;
- creating synergies with other organizations such as the European Union, World Health Organization, World Heart Federation, European Heart Network, patient organisations and other bodies as may be deemed appropriate that pursue objectives related to those of the ESC;
- creating or taking interest in any trading companies, non-trading companies, for-profit structures or non-for-profit organisations such as foundations or any other national equivalent;
- undertaking the scientific and material organisation of any congress, symposium or similar event, bringing together any and all professionals, including physicians, nurses, scientist, other health care-related professionals and industrialists interested in cardiovascular medicine. Further, to offer all

associated services usual at such international meetings, including but not limited to renting space, organising scientific sessions, satellite events, publishing information and similar;

- organizing the collection, analysis, processing and communication of medical or scientific information obtained from a wide range of physicians, scientists or institutions of cardiovascular medicine and science;
- collecting, editing and publishing journals, articles or information whether in printed or electronic form on any medical or scientific nature related to cardiovascular medicine and science;
- awarding scholarships, awards or grants for education, training or research in its area of interest;
- sub-letting office space or offering a business address at its registered offices for any organisation whose activities are concordant with the ESC mission and these Statutes and providing any type of ESC services to such organisations.
- acquiring, selling or leasing any real estate property that is necessary for achieving the ESC's purpose

Article 3 – Structure, roles & responsibilities

Each Working Group is governed by a nucleus, whose structure, roles & responsibilities is identical to all and detailed hereafter.

Article 3.1 Overall structure

The nucleus of an ESC Working Group is composed of up to 17 members:

- **Up to 12 voting nucleus members** elected by the Working Group members with voting rights (as defined in Article 6.2)
- **Up to 5 non-voting nucleus members** appointed by the Chairperson

Article 3.2 Roles & responsibilities

The Working Group nucleus members' roles & responsibilities are detailed hereafter. Volunteers are expected to fulfil these duties; non-compliance to these duties may lead to exclusion (see Article 3c).

➤ Voting nucleus members

Chairperson position

The Chairperson is responsible for:

- complying with the ESC statutes
- the decision-making of the Working Group
- regular reporting to the Working Group nucleus
- regular reporting to the ESC Vice President for Working Groups or another suitable nominee representing the ESC Management Group
- representation of the Working Group and of the ESC at official functions of the European Society of Cardiology and outside events
- ensuring compliance with ESC processes in all of the activities of the Working Group
- appointment of non-voting members and their tasks & responsibilities (at the start of the mandate)
- approval of new Working Group member applications
- drafting of the agenda and review of the minutes of nucleus meetings

Chairperson-Elect position

The Chairperson-Elect is responsible for assisting the Chairperson in his/her tasks and must assume the responsibilities of the Chairperson in case of absence of the latter.

Past-Chairperson position

The Past-Chairperson is responsible for assisting the Chairperson in his/her tasks and maintaining continuity with the Working Group activities at the end of his/her mandate as Chairperson.

Ordinary voting nucleus positions

Ordinary nucleus members must engage actively in the activities of the Working Group and attend the appropriate meetings for the duration of their mandates.

Amongst the voting members, the positions of Secretary, Treasurer, and Communication Coordinator must be assigned by the Chairperson. These three positions may be cumulative with one another or with the position of Chairperson-Elect or Past Chairperson. Candidates to these positions should make themselves known at the start of a mandate.

Secretary

The Secretary is responsible for the planning of nucleus and scientific meetings, consolidation of the meeting minutes according to the [Working Group Operational Guidelines](#).

Treasurer

The Treasurer is responsible for the building of the budget requests and the coordination of the Quarterly Reviews according to the [Working Group Operational Guidelines](#).

Communication Coordinator

The Communication Coordinator is responsible for the collection of the content for the website & communications of the Working Group according to the [Working Group Operational Guidelines](#).

➤ **Non-voting nucleus Members**

Non-voting members are responsible for performing tasks or activities assigned to them by the Chairperson and for reporting back to the Chairperson and nucleus about these tasks. They may also act as a liaison officer with other scientific organisations, groups, societies (inside or outside the ESC).

Non-voting nucleus members are not elected: they are appointed by the Working Group Chairperson at the start of her/his mandate, for a mandate of two years renewable once. The Chairperson is responsible for informing the nucleus (either during an official meeting of the nucleus or in writing) on the appointment of non-voting members, as well as their respective assignments.

Non-voting members cannot vote on any issues brought to the attention of the nucleus.

When appointed by the Chairperson, non-voting members must apply for membership of the Working Group (if not already a member).

Article 4 – Nominating Committee (NC)

Article 4.1 Composition of the NC

The Nominating Committee is composed of three members: the Chairperson-Elect and Past-Chairperson of the Working Group nucleus, and a third voting member of the nucleus assigned by the ESC Vice President for Working Groups.

The Nominating Committee is chaired by the Past-Chairperson and reports to the ESC Vice President for Working Groups or another suitable nominee representing the ESC Management Group

Article 4.2 Role of the NC

The role of the Nominating Committee is to identify and propose candidates for the leadership of the Working Group, to oversee the good running of the election process and to address any issues brought to their attention during the elections of Chairperson-Elect and ordinary nucleus members according to the procedures detailed in Articles 5 and 6.

The Nominating Committee must ensure full transparency of decision-making in these processes. In no case can the Nominating Committee influence or change the results of the voting.

In all election processes, the Nominating Committee must strive to encourage and implement gender and geographical diversity in the nucleus:

- There must not be more than one nucleus member from the same institution
- There should not be more than two nucleus members from the same country of work

Article 5 – Elections

Elections are organised every two years by electronic voting which is put in place with the support of the ESC staff

- The Chairperson-Elect is elected by the voting nucleus members after a nomination process
- The ordinary nucleus members are subsequently elected by the Working Group members with voting rights (as defined in Article 6.2)

The elections are supervised by the Nominating Committee, who must ensure that the procedures detailed in this document are respected.

Article 5.1 – Election turnover rules

In all Working Group elections, the following rules must be respected:

1. Limitations of cumulative positions within the ESC

-Extract from ESC Statutes-

In order to ensure a renewal within the ESC and a good internal functioning, an officer may not hold more than three leadership positions¹ at the same time. Being a Member sitting on the nucleus of a Working Group is counted as one leadership position. A candidate who already holds three offices may therefore not stand for election or be proposed as a candidate, except if one of its term of office expires before the new functions start.

2. Limitation of representation within ESC Working Groups: nucleus members cannot be elected to more than one ESC Working Group nucleus
3. Limitation of representation within ESC Constituent Bodies: for the duration of their mandates, nucleus members cannot simultaneously hold another position as an elected nucleus / Board Member in another ESC Association or Council, unless if co-opted in a non-voting position
4. Limitations of years of service within a nucleus: Working Group nucleus members (whether voting or non-voting) may remain on one same nucleus a maximum of 12 years (consecutive or not).

Candidates to the positions of Chairperson-Elect or ordinary nucleus members must respect the eligibility criteria defined above, as well as in the respective sections 5.2a and 5.3a. If the candidate does not comply with the eligibility criteria, the Nominating Committee should not include their candidacy on the slate for voting.

If the candidate's situation towards above rules changes after voting has taken place, the candidate must inform the Nominating Committee which will decide on further actions, including the possible annulment of the election.

¹ Definition proposed, to be approved by the ESC Board: *as defined, for instance, by a Chairmanship of an ESC Committee, any Board/Nucleus positions within the ESC; Editor in Chief of an ESC journal etc*

Article 5.2 Chairperson-Elect elections

The Chairperson-Elect is elected for a period of 2 years after which they automatically become Chairperson for 2 years and then Past-Chairperson for 2 years.

Article 5.2a Chairperson-Elect eligibility criteria

The position of Chairperson-Elect is open to the current and immediate-past voting nucleus members only.

Candidates to the position of Chairperson-Elect must comply with all of the rules detailed in section 5.1. In addition, the following eligibility criteria apply:

1. Candidates must have spent no more than 6 years on the nucleus they are applying to (consecutive or not, whether with voting position or non-voting position)
2. Nucleus members cannot be elected twice for a chairperson position in the same Working Group
3. Candidates are expected to apply for ESC Professional Membership or FESC

Article 5.2b Chairperson-Elect election process

The Chairperson-Elect is elected by the voting nucleus members, in the year of the end of a mandate.

The election of the Chairperson-Elect is supervised by the Nominating Committee, whose role is to:

- Receive & consider the applications of all candidates who put themselves forward
- Verify that the candidates comply with the eligibility criteria
- Make a pre-selection of a minimum of 2 and maximum of 3 candidates that are presented for ballot on a slate
- Inform the candidates of their selection or not. The NC does not have to justify the choice.

Once the pre-selection of candidates is final, ESC staff will set-up the online voting system and process.

The election is valid only if at least 2/3rds of the eligible nucleus voting members have voted.

The candidate with most votes will be elected. Null and blank votes are recorded in the number of votes cast. In the event of a tied vote, a second round of voting will take place with the two highest ranking candidates. In the event of a second tied vote, the ESC Vice President for Working Groups or another suitable nominee representing the ESC Management Group shall have a deciding vote.

Article 5.3 – Ordinary nucleus member elections

Ordinary nucleus members are elected for a period of two years, renewable once, if the elected term will not make them surpass the 12-year limit.

Article 5.3a Ordinary nucleus member eligibility criteria

The positions of ordinary nucleus members are open to Working Group members with voting rights (as defined in article 6.2).

Candidates to the position of ordinary nucleus member must comply with all of the rules detailed in section 5.1. In addition, the following eligibility criteria apply:

1. Candidates who have already spent more than 8 years (consecutive or not, whether in a voting position or non-voting position) on the nucleus they are applying to are not eligible
2. Candidates must demonstrate that they are professionally active
3. Candidates are strongly recommended to apply for ESC Professional Membership or FESC

Article 5.3c Ordinary nucleus member election process

Working Group nucleus members are elected by members of that same Working Group with voting rights (as defined in Article 6.2).

The election of ordinary nucleus members is supervised by the Nominating Committee, whose role is to:

- Validate the election process and structure:
 - o Number of positions open (according to the terms of current nucleus members)
 - o Profile of each open application (not mandatory): if the Working Group nucleus wishes to attract candidates with a specific profile, the NC must define the specifics of each open position accordingly and submit the selection criteria of each position for the approval of the nucleus. Such selection criteria must be quantifiable. Consequently, the elections will be set-up in different pools. Candidates must be informed on the specific selection criteria for each position and the number of positions open in each pool; and must position themselves in no more than one pool
- Resolve potential conflicts on the positioning of candidates into the different pools available, with consultation of the ESC Vice President for Working Groups (if applicable)
- Review the list of candidates and validate the candidacies that are included in the slate for voting, in accordance with the eligibility criteria and selection criteria (if applicable)
- Inform the candidates of their (non)pre-selection without a justification being required
- Communicate the results of the voting to the nucleus

The election is valid only if the quorum is reached: 20% of the Working Group members must have participated in the election. Null and blank votes are included in the number of votes cast.

In each respective pool, candidates with the highest number of votes are automatically elected.

In the event of a tied vote, a second round of voting will take place amongst the candidates who have not automatically been elected. In case of a second tied vote, the chairperson will have the casting vote.

Article 5.4 Exclusion criteria & process

Nucleus members may be excluded from their positions if they fail to comply with the following:

- Failure to submit their annual Declaration of Interest (in this case, exclusion is mandatory)
- Failure to attend three consecutive official meetings of the Working Group
- Failure to participate actively in the tasks he/she has been assigned

Prior to any exclusion, the Chairperson must give written notice to the person concerned and give them the opportunity to defend their position.

Working Group Chairpersons may request the exclusion of one of the nucleus members, by sending a request in writing to the entire nucleus.

If the request concerns the Chairperson, the same procedure applies, and it should be mandated by the Chairperson-Elect.

The request must be supported by:

- evidence of failing to comply with the above conditions
- evidence of previous warning
- the majority of the other voting nucleus members
- the ESC Vice President for Working Groups or another suitable nominee representing the ESC Management Group

If the request is confirmed, written notice is given to the person concerned and the exclusion from the nucleus is immediate.

Article 5.5 – Replacement of nucleus members

In the event of the death, resignation or exclusion, of any member of the nucleus, he or she will be replaced as follows:

- I. If it concerns the Chairperson, such will be succeeded for the balance of the appropriate two-year mandate by the Chairperson-Elect on an acting basis. The Chairperson-Elect will therefore cumulate the responsibilities of the Chairperson-Elect and Chairperson for the balance of the mandate.
- II. If it concerns the Chairperson-Elect, new elections will be organised in a timely manner, following the procedures laid down in this document. In the meantime, until the new vote has taken place, the task related to the position of Chairperson-Elect within the nucleus may be delegated to one of the other nucleus members.
- III. If it concerns the Past Chairperson, the nucleus may, in its own discretion, appoint any previous nucleus member for the balance of the two-year mandate. This previous nucleus member will have no voting rights.
- IV. If it concerns the Secretary/ Treasurer/ Content coordinator: the Chairperson, in consultation with the nucleus, may appoint one of the other voting nucleus members to assume such responsibilities for the balance of the two-year mandate.
- V. If it concerns any other ordinary nucleus members: the nucleus will refer the matter to the next election; the position will not be replaced in the meantime.

Article 6 – Working Group Membership

Article 6.1 - Working Group ordinary members

All ESC Working Groups are open to individual membership. Individual membership of an ESC Working Group is open to all healthcare professionals as defined by the ESC Statutes.

Potential members can apply to become a member via the online application available on the Working Group website. Specific eligibility criteria per Working Group are publicly available on the same website. Membership is effective once the application is formally approved by the Working Group Chairperson.

Article 6.2 – Working Group Ordinary members with voting rights

Working Group members with voting rights are members of that same Working Group approved at the launch of the call for candidates, whose country of work is in an [ESC Member Country](#).

Article 7 – Working Group Operating Business

The ESC Working Group operations are handled by the ESC Working Group Team located at the European Heart House. Each Working Group is assigned a dedicated Working Group coordinator who is responsible for the coordination of the operations of the Working Group.

In order to ensure a smooth running of the activities, Working Group Chairpersons are responsible to comply with the [Working Group Operational Guidelines](#) and keep a regular contact with their Working Group coordinator.