

Be Active in APA Governance

Get Your Voice Heard

PLAY A PART

GET ELECTED



This material is intended to help members understand and access the governance structure of APA.

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APA policies are set by the Council of Representatives. The Council is composed of representatives elected from divisions and state/provincial/territorial psychological associations from a formula established by the APA Bylaws. The number of representatives from each group may change slightly each year, based on the number of votes allocated to the division or state/provincial/territorial psychological association by the entire APA membership on the apportionment ballot. Council is the only body in the Association that can make policy. Boards and committees can propose policy, but Council must approve the proposals. Council meets in February and at the annual convention each year.

The Board of Directors is the Executive Committee of Council. It has 13 members, 8 of whom are nominated and elected by Council: the Recording Secretary, the Treasurer, and 6 at-large members. Other members of the Board include the President, President-Elect, and Past President, who are elected by the entire APA voting membership, and a nonvoting representative of the American Psychological Association of Graduate Students. The CEO of APA serves ex officio and without vote. The Board holds four business meetings a year in February, June, December, and at the APA convention to conduct Association business between Council meetings and to set the agenda for Council. The Board also meets in the spring and fall for in-depth discussions of important issues.

Boards and Committees

Three Basic Types

APA has three basic types of boards and committees: 1. standing, 2. continuing, and 3. ad hoc. All boards and some committees are referred to as standing boards and committees, which means they are established in the APA Bylaws and cannot be modified or sunset without a vote of the membership.

Most committees are continuing committees, established by Council and reporting to Council, usually through an oversight board or through the Board of Directors. Continuing committees may be modified or sunset by a vote of Council. Council elects members of all standing and some continuing committees. In rare instances, groups such as the Election Committee or Agenda Planning Group are composed of individuals serving in other designated capacities. Continuing committees that report to Council through an oversight board are usually appointed by the board, subject to the approval of the Board of Directors.

The third category of APA groups includes task forces, working groups, and panels, all of which are ad hoc groups. The members of an ad hoc group are appointed by the group to which they report. This might be a standing or continuing board or committee, the Board of Directors, or Council. Ad hoc groups are established for a specific purpose and for a limited time. Occasionally, one of these groups becomes a continuing committee by vote of Council.

What They Do

Boards and committees are charged with policy development. Sometimes ideas from Council members in the form of Council new business items are referred to the group, and sometimes the board or committee develops its own policy recommendations. Boards and committees may also propose projects and programs consistent with established APA policies or specific to their respective mission statements.

Some groups, such as the Ethics Committee, Committee on Accreditation, and the Continuing Professional Education Committee, have very specific tasks to accomplish. The Association looks to board and committee members to represent an area of expertise or to represent specific constituencies, such as people of color, practitioners, academicians, researchers, etc.

If You're New to the System

It is often easier for someone who is not a veteran of board and committee service to be appointed than to be elected. (The tables show which groups are appointed and which elected.) Developing a relationship with your elected representatives can be a great help if you want to participate in the governance process.

Association policy adopted by Council states that no member of one standing or continuing group may serve simultaneously on any other standing or continuing group, except in certain unusual circumstances. This prevents a small group of people from

monopolizing governance positions. One person may, however, serve on a continuing group and also be appointed to a task force or other ad hoc group. Members serving on Council can, and often do, serve on boards and committees simultaneously.

Play a Part

To Become a Part of APA Governance

- Get involved with your division or state/provincial/territorial psychological association. Become known as someone who knows the issues facing psychology, who has knowledge about a particular field, and who can be trusted to get a job done well.
- Whether working at the division level or state/provincial/territorial psychological association level, establish credibility and reliability; usually individuals are selected for APA governance involvement only after they have proven themselves in other roles within APA.
- Ask your division to appoint you as a liaison to a board or committee; you may have a better chance of being nominated when the members get to know you. Even without a liaison appointment, comment to the relevant boards and committees and/or the Board of Directors on issues of special concern to you.
- Identify your Council representative and establish a relationship. Let him/her know how you feel about issues and talk about your desire to get involved in governance. Council elects members of all standing boards and committees and some continuing committees.
- Know what the hot issues are in your interest area. Chances are there will be a task force or working group set up to deal with the issue, and you may want to participate on the group.
- If you feel comfortable supporting a particular nominee for the Board of Directors, Council, or APA President, volunteer to help her/him.
- Talk with Central Office staff. Ask them who the key people are working in a certain area. Don't be shy about asking for information—staff are there to help you. If you have difficulty getting information you need, call Dr. Michael Honaker, the Deputy CEO and Chief Operating Officer (202-336-6071; mhonaker@apa.org). He can either find out for you or tell you whom to contact.
- Each year the *APA Monitor on Psychology* and *American Psychologist* publish lists of members of all boards, committees, task forces, and Council. Talk with those people. Find out about their experiences in governance, ask them how they were first elected or appointed, ask for advice about how you might be elected or appointed.
- *Making APA Work for You* is another resource. If you don't have a copy, contact Paul Donnelly, Director of Board and Committee Operations (202-336-6018; pdonnelly@apa.org), and he will be happy to provide one.

Personal contacts are critical in getting involved in APA governance. Ask for help from individuals in leadership positions in APA governance. Ask for help from officers in your division or state/provincial/territorial psychological association.

Following is information about the nomination/election process.

The Call for Nominations for the selection of members of standing boards and committees is distributed in early December for terms that will begin 13 months later, based on information about the desired composition of the group that is provided by the boards and committees. Nominations are due in early February to the Governance Affairs Office to ensure their consideration; in the spring the boards and committees develop their slates for the ballot, which are finalized by the Board of Directors in June. The ballot is sent to current Council members the last working day in October.

The election period is 30 days.

In most cases, appointments to continuing committees are made by respective oversight groups in November based on slates developed by the continuing committees in September.

The Board of Directors reviews the appointments in December.

Terms begin January 1.

Boards and Committees • Play a Part

Nomination/Election Process

The process just to get on a ballot is more than 1 year long—it can be tedious, and, if elected, you have 3 years of hard work ahead of you. Many people find it all worthwhile, so, if you're still interested, what follows is how it all works. An excellent resource on the election process is Garnett Coad, Director of Elections. If you have questions, you may reach him at 202-336-6087 or gcoad@apa.org.

Targeted Nominations—Fall

Boards and committees annually review their composition at their fall meetings, noting who will be rotating off at the end of the year. If someone with a particular expertise is leaving the group, the board or committee might want to replace the expertise represented by that individual. Or, if a particular major project is beginning, the group may want someone who can be helpful with the project. Each group provides a “targeted nomination” statement describing the expertise or ethnic or gender balance being sought.

Call for Nominations—Winter

The Call for Nominations is published in the *APA Monitor on Psychology* and mailed in early December to all Council representatives, board and committee chairs, Council caucus/coalition chairs, presidents and secretaries of divisions, and officers of state/provincial/territorial psychological associations. This is the point at which you can see if you fit into one of these slots. Anyone can nominate herself/himself or others during this time; often multiple nominations are received for a single person to be on a particular governance group. Nominations are due to the Governance Affairs Office by **February 1**. Nominations are compiled by Election Office staff and distributed to the staff liaison for each group.

The more nominations you receive, the more weight your nomination may hold. However, identifying key players is at least as vital as soliciting multiple nominators. For instance, if someone known to the chair of the group to which you want to belong contacts the chair and offers compelling reasons why you would make a contribution to the group, the chair can become an influential advocate for your nomination. Compelling reasons might include your expertise, your ability to get things done, your ability to work as part of a team, your perspective on issues, your experience in a certain area, and your energy and enthusiasm for the position.

Slates Developed—Spring

At the Spring Consolidated Meetings—during which most, but not all, of the standing and continuing groups meet at the same facility over the same weekend—the nominations are presented to the boards and committees. Groups then put together their slates, usually composed of three nominees for each vacancy. Some rank order their choices, and some

The following tables describe the standing boards and standing and continuing committees only. Ad hoc groups are appointed by the group to which they report.

Standing Boards and Committees (Established in Bylaws)	Appointed by (Date)	Elected by (Date)	Special Considerations or Requirements
Board for the Advancement of Psychology in the Public Interest (BAPPI)		Council (November)	
Board of Convention Affairs (BCA)		Council (November)	Four-year terms instead of usual 3 years. President may appoint one member.
Board of Educational Affairs (BEA)		Council (November)	One slate proposed by boards representing Science, Practice, and Public Interest.
Board of Professional Affairs (BPA)		Council (November)	
Board of Scientific Affairs (BSA)		Council (November)	
Policy and Planning Board (P&P)		Council (November)	One of its members shall be a Council member serving in his/her first or second term on Council.
Publications and Communications Board (P&C)		Council (November)	Six-year terms instead of the usual 3; APA Treasurer and CEO are ex officio members. Members must be Fellows of the Association.
Membership Committee		Council (November)	
Finance Committee		Council (November)	Nominees must be current members of Council in the first or second year of their term or former or outgoing members of the Finance Committee. The APA Treasurer serves as chair. Members elected from diverse geographic areas.
Ethics Committee		Council (November)	Consists of APA Past President as chair and two most recent presidents not serving on the Board of Directors.
Election Committee		Council (November)	

Reporting to	Continuing Committee (Established in Association Rules)	Appointed by (Date)	Elected by (Date)	Special Considerations or Requirements
Council	Committee on Structure and Function (CSFC)		Council (November)	Nominees must be current members of Council in their first or second year of term. Does not meet except when called to adjudicate questions regarding members’ rights.
Board of Directors	Committee on Constitutional Issues	B/D (as needed)	Council (November)	Members must be licensed practitioners who pay the assessment. APA Treasurer is an ex officio member. CAPP may appoint two members with special expertise.
	Committee for the Advancement of Professional Practice (CAPP)		Council (November)	Nominees must be within 7 years of receipt of the doctorate at the time of their election. CEO and designee of USNC/IUPsys serve ex officio.
	Committee on Early Career Psychologists (ECP)	B/D (December)	Council (November)	Members must be graduate student affiliates; terms begin at annual convention.
	Committee on International Relations in Psychology (CIRP)		Council (November)	Nominees submitted by BSA, BAPPI (slates for one seat each), BEA (3 seats), BPA and CAPP (3 seats).
	American Psychological Association of Graduate Students (APAGS)		APAGS Membership (June)	Members are chairs of major APA boards and committees. Chair is APA President.
	Commission for the Recognition of Specialties and Proficiencies in Professional Psychology (CRSPPP)		Council (November)	Members must be officer or board member of a division. Nominations submitted by divisions only.
	Agenda Planning Group		Automatic membership as specified in Association Rules	
Board for the Advancement of Psychology in the Public Interest	Committee on Division/ APA Relations (CODAPAR)	B/D appoints (June)		
	Committee on Aging (CONA)		BAPPI (November)	
	Committee on Children, Youth, and Families (CYF)		BAPPI (November)	
	Committee on Disability Issues in Psychology (CDIP)		BAPPI (November)	
	Committee on Ethnic Minority Issues in Psychology (CEMA)		BAPPI (November)	Members must represent ethnic minority communities in psychology.
	Committee on Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Concerns (CLGBC)		BAPPI (November)	CLGBC must be composed of three men and three women.
	Committee on Women in Psychology (CWP)		BAPPI (November)	
	Committee on Psychology in the Public Interest Awards		BAPPI (November)	Composed of BAPPI chair, two past chairs, and two others reflecting the diversity of public interest constituencies.
Board of Educational Affairs	Continuing Professional Education Committee (CPEC)	BEA (November)		
	Committee on Accreditation (COA)	BEA (April)		Twenty-one members selected in accord with Policies for Accreditation Governance approved by Council. Elected by TOPSS membership All voting members must be high school teacher affiliate members of APA.
	Committee of Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools (TOPSS)			
	Psychology Teachers at Community Colleges (PT@CC)			Elected by 2-year college teachers who are APA members, associate members, or affiliates. Nominees must be 2-year college teacher affiliates or members.
	Committee on Education and Training Awards	BEA (November)		
Board of Professional Affairs	Committee on Professional Practice and Standards (COPPS)	BPA (November)		BPA appoints one of its own members to serve on COPPS.
Board of Scientific Affairs	Committee on Animal Research and Ethics (CARE)	BSA (November)		
	Committee on Psychological Tests and Assessment (CPTA)	BSA (November)		One slate of nominees from BAPPI, BEA, and BPA in rotation.
	Committee on Scientific Awards	BSA (November)		
Publications and Communication Board	Council of Editors			
Committee for the Advancement of Professional Practice	Committee on Rural Health		Council (November)	Composed of the editors of all journals published by APA. Chief Editorial Advisor is an ex officio member.

Nomination • Election Process

do not. Alternates are also named, in case a nominee is unable or unwilling to serve on a particular group.

Slates Finalized—June

The Board of Directors Subcommittee on Nominations, composed of the President, Past President, and Recording Secretary, meets in June to review the slates for balance of gender, ethnicity, constituency, and other diversity issues. The subcommittee also ensures that nominees are not placed on more than one slate on the ballot. The slates are then reviewed and approved by the entire Board. The slates may sometimes be changed if there is a particular concern that the Board of Directors thinks is not being addressed by a governance group or if a member has been nominated for more than one board or committee. However, in the majority of cases, slates submitted by boards and committees are not changed. Once the Board of Directors approves the slates, Governance Affairs staff contact each nominee to determine if he/she is willing to serve. The Recording Secretary coordinates filling any vacancies that occur at this point. Alternates named by the boards and committees generally receive first consideration when filling a vacancy on a slate.

Elections—October–November

Ballots are finalized and mailed on the last working day in October to members of the current Council. Many people who appear on the ballot contact members of Council to highlight their qualifications and willingness to serve. In other words, they lobby Council. The balloting period is 30 days. Results are announced early in December. Terms begin January 1 and normally run for 3 years, expiring December 31 of the final year.

Reality Check

The reality of this process is that there are many more people nominated each year than eventually end up as members of the governance—an average of 1,500 members are nominated for approximately 70 elective slots. Some people try for several years before they are elected, so don't be discouraged if you don't wind up on a slate or on a ballot the first time. Like many things in APA, it may take a long time to get it done, but it is worth the wait.