Education Policy: Volunteer Contributor Relations

Volunteers and AAOS Staff

The Academy/Association (AAOS) policy for developing publications, electronic media, and examinations is outlined below. The policy does not apply to AAOS journals, magazines, or newsletters.

Introduction

The AAOS recognizes that orthopaedic surgeon volunteers give generously of their time to develop or contribute to AAOS publications, electronic media, and examinations. AAOS Members volunteer as editors, section editors, or authors (contributors) for book publications, electronic media videos/multimedia programs, and test questions for examinations. The AAOS also realizes that entering into an agreement to produce new educational material for a book, chapter, video, or examination is a commitment by the volunteer to dedicate valuable time and effort to achieve the goal of a timely publication. In addition, the AAOS recognizes these volunteer efforts must be weighed against the business aspects of development of these products, including AAOS' contractual obligations to third party vendors relating to the publication or production of these products. This policy clarifies this volunteer commitment while also weighing the business aspects of creating a timely publication for the Academy and its members and other customers.

Publications

Editor. The Editor (Main Editor or Corresponding Editor if more than one) coordinates with other Editors and Contributors (if any) and is the main contact with AAOS staff to develop the publication. Responsibilities include keeping the project on schedule as planned and regular communication with Section Editors (if any) or Authors/Contributors (if no Section Editors are assigned or the Editor needs to communicate to all). The Editor needs to communicate well with staff and Section Editors or Authors and have a strong commitment to the quality and quantity produced and the product's development schedule, as well as good time management skills.

Section Editor. The Section Editor (Main Section Editor or Corresponding Section Editor if more than one for a particular Section) communicates with the Editor, the Section Co-Editors (if more than one) and with his/her Section's Authors (Corresponding Author/Contributor). The Section Editor drives the commitment to and expected quality of the manuscripts and is the first to give feedback to Authors at an early stage in product development. He/she is also committed to the development schedule and needs to inform Authors and the Editor if situations occur that can affect timely publication, such as overdue manuscripts, overall manuscript quality that does not meet expectations, or the length of the manuscript or the presentation does not match the predetermined outline or content template for the chapter.

Author/Contributors. The Main Author (Corresponding Author) is part of the team of Authors/Contributors (if more than one) of a given chapter and an active participant in the writing of the chapter. The Main Author and his/her co-authors are tasked with following the guidelines provided by staff (content templates) and following common practices of writing style and other guidelines of the publishing industry. See also the [AAOS Information Statement on Recognition for Authoring and Editing Digital Publications](#). The Author needs to communicate proactively with the Section Editor if any questions or concerns arise or if the work cannot be done on schedule.

Electronic Media

Contributors and authors for electronic media programs work with Academy staff to produce, record, and edit video programs and multimedia programs. There may be several contributors to an anthology of videos for a procedure or diagnosis. Each video contributor works with Academy staff to schedule production dates, optimize camera angles for production, and plans for narration, and works with staff

to complete program editing. All programs undergo a separate peer review process by one or more members who has not contributed to the project.

Examinations

Academy members appointed to evaluation committees receive item writing training at the commencement of their appointment. Using this specialized training, an item writing assignment to each committee member is made using the examination blueprint. Members participate in an item review process to ensure thorough review for content accuracy and test item writing style. Members receive regular communication from the Committee Chair and Academy staff regarding the item writing assignment and schedule.

Problem-Solving Process

Ideally, all tasks are completed as scheduled; the development process goes smoothly; the writing, initial review, and editing/revisions processes go well; and the expected publication, electronic media program, or examination meets quality and schedule expectations in advance of the defined product launch date.

However, the Academy realizes that because volunteers often have many commitments, timely completion of the assignment and review/revision may not be possible and thus the schedule of the product launch may be jeopardized. Also, the expected quality of a chapter, video, or examination items sometimes does not meet expectations or an Editor/Section Editor just cannot follow up in a timely manner with the task of reminding Authors or getting the "job done" when it comes to reviewing material at the most critical time. All volunteers who participate in AAOS educational projects are expected to maintain necessary and timely communications with AAOS staff, Editors and other volunteers and to immediately notify AAOS staff if he/she experiences difficulty in working on or completing assigned work on schedule. The failure of a volunteer to respond to communications from AAOS staff or Editors within five (5) business days or to meet project deadlines on two or more occasions will be considered a voluntary resignation.

As it relates to examinations in production, a test item writer may fail to complete his/her entire assignment, write items that were not assigned on the blueprint, write items that are styled incorrectly, or not write at all. In addition, a test item writer may not participate in all required steps or skip one of the steps, such as the Test Item Peer Review. The test item writer also may fail to make adequate time for the final Panel Review or fail to participate in the final Panel Review.

Problem with an Author/Contributor. The Main Editor or Section Editor, depending on the project, addresses the issue with the Author and tries to remedy the problem within two (2) weeks. For a publication, if no satisfying solution can be found or the Author is not responsive, the Section Editor reports the issue to the Editor and suggests a solution. Available options may include:

   a. Finding a new Author;
   b. Assigning a different Main Author;
   c. Dropping the Author and working with the Main Author alone or a reduced team of Contributors; or
   d. Dropping the chapter completely.

Extending the deadline or publication schedule is generally not an option. The Editor shall use good judgment in reviewing the situation and keep AAOS staff informed of the Author and chapter status. AAOS staff may also suggest names of a new Author to replace an Author if necessary. The failure of an Author to respond to communications from AAOS staff or Editors within five (5) business days or to meet project deadlines on two or more occasions will be considered a voluntary resignation. If an Author resigns from the project for any reason, the Section Editor will write a thank-you email to the Author informing him/her of the decision to replace him/her as Author. AAOS staff will invite a new Author on behalf of the Section Editor and inform all participants about the change in authorship as

soon as possible.   The entire process, from identifying the problem through resolution and notifications, should not take more than three to four (3 to 4) weeks.

With a video or multimedia project contributor/author, the project Main Editor/Committee chair works with the Contributor to remedy the problem within two (2) weeks. For some projects, patient availability may be the issue and this needs to be taken into consideration. If delays continue, the Main Editor and staff will work to identify other members who might contribute to the project. If a Contributor drops out of or resigns from a video or multimedia project, a replacement will be sought immediately. For an examination program, AAOS staff will complete the Committee Appointment Program (CAP) process in order to replace a committee member. Any delay resulting from the CAP process which may impact schedules must be taken into consideration by the Main Editor and staff as they work to remedy the problem.

Problem with a Section Editor. The Editor shall inform AAOS staff about any problems involving a Section Editor and should suggest a solution. Options available may include:

   a. Finding a new Section Editor;
   b. Assigning the role of Main Section Editor to a different person;
   c. Reducing the team of Section Editors; or
   d. Having the Editor assume the duties of the Section Editor.

Dropping an entire Section is generally not a viable option for reasons of marketability and salability.

Failure of a Section Editor to respond to communications from AAOS staff or Editors within five (5) business days or to meet project deadlines on two or more occasions will be considered a voluntary resignation. If a Section Editor resigns for any reason, the Editor will write a thank-you email to the Section Editor informing him/her of the decision to replace him/her as Section Editor. AAOS staff will invite a new Section Editor on behalf of the Editor and inform all participants about the change in Section Editorship as soon as possible. The entire process should not take more than three to four (3 to 4) weeks, recognizing the importance of a Section and that the product launch plan may be delayed.

Problem with the Editor. AAOS staff will consult with the Chair of the Publications Committee if there is a problem with the Editor. Ideally, the Chair will reach out to the Editor to find a solution, which may be simply assigning a different Main Editor for that role (if there is more than one Editor). The failure of an Editor to respond to communications from AAOS staff or Editors within five (5) business days or to meet project deadlines on two or more occasions will be considered a voluntary resignation. If an Editor resigns from the project for any reason, the Chair will write a thank-you email to the Editor informing him/her of the decision to replace him/her as Editor. AAOS staff will invite a new Editor on behalf of the Chair and inform all participants about the change in Editorship as soon as possible. The entire process should not take more than three to four (3 to 4) weeks.

Problem with Test Item Writers. AAOS staff will consult with the Chair of the Self-Assessment Committee and request that he/she reach out to the volunteer and remedy the situation. The failure of a volunteer to respond to communications from AAOS staff or Committee Chair within five (5) business days or to meet project deadlines on two or more occasions will be considered a voluntary resignation. If the writer does not complete his/her entire assignment and/or does not participate in all required steps, he/she does not receive the up to 10 *AMA PRA CME Credits*. In addition, test item writers who do not contribute to the item writing process are not invited back for a second term.

This policy is effective upon adoption: December 6, 2014