

Scientific Working Group for Forensic Document Examination (SWGDOC) Bylaws

ARTICLE I: OFFICIAL NAME

The name of the organization shall be the Scientific Working Group for Forensic Document Examination, and shall herein be referred to as SWGDOC.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 Purpose To provide a mechanism for the development and dissemination of resources and consensus-based standards as well as appropriate recommendations and relevant informational material for use by this discipline.

2.2 Objectives SWGDOC shall at a minimum:

- Define the scope and practice areas of the discipline
- Recommend standard practices, protocols, reporting, and terminology
- Recommend education, training, continuing education, and professional development requirements.
- Promulgate and disseminate research and development priorities to the community
- Collect and distribute information on the scientific foundation of the discipline
- Seek international recognition and harmonization of comparable work products

ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP

3.1 Eligibility for Membership Members shall have subject matter expertise relevant to the discipline of forensic document examination.

3.1.1 No person shall be denied membership for reason of race, sex, creed, or religion.

3.2 Membership

3.2.1 Only Members shall have voting privileges. Members shall be elected by a majority vote and are expected to attend all of the meetings.

3.2.1.1 The term of a Member shall be approximately 3 years, beginning upon notification of the Member's election. There shall be no limit on the number of terms that an individual may serve as a Member.

3.2.2 Members may be re-elected subject to Article 3.4.

3.2.3 Membership resides with the individual and not the individual's agency or affiliation.

3.3 Composition SWGDOC shall consist of no more than 40 Members.

- 3.3.1** The Executive Committee shall consist of the Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary (see Article IV).
- 3.3.2** Membership shall consist of individuals involved in the discipline of forensic document examination, and may also include non-forensic science practitioners such as academics, researchers, statisticians, and legal representatives. Legal representation, to the extent possible, should be balanced between prosecutors, defense counsel, civil counsel, and judges.
- 3.3.3** The membership of SWGDOC shall, to the extent possible, provide representation from a balance of federal government, non-federal government, and private forensic laboratories, with consideration to geographic diversity.

3.4 Member Elections Member elections shall be managed by a Membership Committee (see section 7.3).

- 3.4.1** The Membership Committee shall review the roster of Members at least annually to prepare for anticipated membership changes and evaluate the composition of SWGDOC. As vacancies occur, the Executive Committee shall be notified and determine the need to elect Members.
- 3.4.2** Individuals interested in membership shall submit their names and pertinent background information to the Membership Committee. Pertinent information shall include qualifications, professional membership(s), and a written letter of recommendation from the individual's employer. The Membership Committee shall assess individual applicants and make recommendations to the Chair.
- 3.4.3** Election of an individual to membership requires a majority vote of the Members casting votes.
 - 3.4.3.1** Each Member has one vote for each vacant position.
- 3.4.4** If a vote to fill a vacant position fails to produce a sufficient number of votes for approval, the Chair may take another vote with the result that either: 1) the candidate with the fewest votes is removed from the ballot, or 2) the election may be terminated and the recruitment process reopened.
- 3.4.5** Votes shall be counted by the Membership Committee and preserved until the next meeting.
- 3.4.6** A Member who wishes to serve a subsequent term shall apply prior to end of their current term and in accordance with paragraph 3.4.2.

- 3.4.7** Terms officially begin upon notification of election results. Elections may occur electronically or at the end of a scheduled meeting.

ARTICLE IV: EXECUTIVE BOARD

4.1 Executive Board The Executive Board shall consist of the Chair, the Vice-Chair, and the Secretary and be elected by a majority vote. These positions may only be held by Members. A Member may only hold/fill one office at a time.

- 4.1.1** The terms of these positions shall be 3 years. A Member may be re-elected to an office, but may serve no more than 2 terms per office for a total of 6 years.
- 4.1.2** An Executive Board member shall concurrently maintain Member status (in accordance with section 3.4) while on the Board in order to complete an executive term.

4.2 Chair The Chair shall manage the activities of SWGDOC, preside over meetings and, to the extent consistent with official duties, promote the objectives of SWGDOC. In addition, the Chair shall establish committees as deemed necessary.

- 4.2.1** If at any time during a Chair's tenure, that person is temporarily unable to serve, the Vice-Chair shall serve in the Chair's place. In the event of the Chair's resignation or inability to serve for a period in excess of six months, a successor will be elected to serve in accordance with section 4.1.
- 4.2.2** The Chair or designee may invite guests to participate in meetings. Funding for invited guests shall be verified with the funding organization. Invited guests shall not be considered Members.

4.3 Vice-Chair The Vice-Chair shall assist the Chair in duties as needed, manage the committees established by the Chair, and fill in for the Chair.

- 4.3.1** If at any time during a Vice-Chair's tenure, that person is temporarily unable to serve, the Chair shall designate a Member to serve in the Vice-Chair's place. In the event of the Vice-Chair's resignation or inability to serve for a period in excess of six months, a successor will be elected following section 4.1.

4.4 Secretary The Secretary shall perform such duties as assigned by the Chair and shall perform all administrative duties incident to the office including, but not necessarily limited to the following: preparing summary minutes of meetings, maintaining records of meetings and bylaws, and keeping records.

- 4.4.1** If at any time during a Secretary's tenure, the person is temporarily unable to serve, the Chair shall designate a Member to serve in the Secretary's place. In the event of the

Secretary's resignation or inability to serve for a period in excess of six months, a successor will be elected following section 4.1.

ARTICLE V: TERMINATION OF A MEMBERSHIP

5.1 Termination of Membership – A Member may resign, or be terminated at the discretion of the Executive Board for insufficient participation.

5.1.1 Resignation – A Member may withdraw/resign at any time with written notice to the Membership Committee or the Chair.

5.1.2 Insufficient Participation – In the event of a member's absence from two consecutive physical meetings and/or a majority of telephonic/web-conferences, the Secretary will notify the Membership Committee in writing. The Membership Committee shall review the matter and may recommend the Member's removal to the Executive Board. The Member shall be notified of the review and given the opportunity to submit a written response. The Executive Board shall then decide whether to dismiss the Member.

ARTICLE VI: MEETINGS

6.1 Regular Meetings There shall be a minimum of 2 regular meetings per year. Regular meetings should be 3 to 5 days in length.

6.1.1 Guests may be invited to participate in the meeting. Invitations shall be extended by the Chair or designee.

6.2 Special Meetings Special meetings may be called by the Chair. Consideration shall be given to the funding agency for facilitation and funding approval.

6.3 Notice of Meetings To the extent possible, notice of the meetings shall be communicated to Members and invited guests at least 60 days in advance of the meeting date. Meeting dates shall be posted on the SWGDOC website.

6.4 Member Attendance Meetings shall consist of Members and invited guests. If funding is available to cover the expenses of those attending, all Members will be funded to attend each meeting.

6.5 Conduct of Meetings/Parliamentary Rules The simplest mechanism governing meetings will be used, and all Members shall follow good business practices during meetings. When deemed necessary or when a dispute arises, the most recent version of *Robert's Rules of Order* shall be followed.

ARTICLE VII: COMMITTEES

7.1 Establishment The Chair shall establish committees when deemed appropriate.

7.2 Presiding Officer The Chair shall appoint a Member to be the presiding officer of a committee.

7.2.1 The presiding officer shall manage the activities of the committee. These duties include, but are not limited to, preparing committee meeting agendas, maintaining minutes and records of committee meetings, acting as a spokesperson for the committee within SWGDOC, and forwarding draft documents and other work products to the SWGDOC membership.

7.3 Membership Committee The Membership Committee shall manage member elections. The committee shall consist of the presiding officer and 4 Members proposed by the Chair and confirmed by a majority vote.

ARTICLE VIII: PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

8.1 Adoption of Products The Members shall review and evaluate recommendations by committees regarding the adoption of standards, and other recommendations and/or findings. A vote by the Members shall be considered the final action on any committee recommendation.

8.2 Expiration of Products When a product is determined to be obsolete, an expiration date shall be established to allow those laboratories using this work product to comply with the new standard.

ARTICLE IX: VOTING

9.1. Voting Voting is conducted for the election of new members, adoption of work products, and revision of the bylaws

9.1.1. Each Member shall have one vote. Proxies shall be permitted at the discretion of the Chair.

9.1.2. Voting may take place during regular meetings or may be conducted electronically between meetings.

9.1.3. For voting between meetings, all materials to be considered on the ballot must be distributed at least one week in advance of the electronic vote.

9.1.4. Members are elected by a majority vote.

9.1.5. Work products are adopted by a two-thirds vote of the Members.

9.1.6. A revision to the bylaws is adopted by a two-thirds vote of the Members.

9.2. Quorum A majority of the SWGDOC Members, including the Chair or Vice-Chair, are required to constitute a quorum. A quorum shall be required in order to conduct official business.

- 9.2.1. Participation by a majority of the Members, including the Chair or Vice-Chair, shall constitute a quorum for voting at a regular meeting or electronically.
- 9.2.2. For the determination of a quorum at a regular meeting, it is the Chair's discretion whether telephonic/electronic participation is an acceptable form of attendance.

ARTICLE X: COMMUNICATION

10.1 Official Communications Official communications shall be made only by the Chair or designee.

ARTICLE XI: AMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS

11.1 Notification and Adoption To the extent possible, proposed amendments to the Bylaws shall be submitted to the Secretary at least 45 days prior to the next scheduled meeting.

11.1.1 Members shall be notified at least 30 days prior to the next scheduled meeting that a proposed amendment to the Bylaws will be presented.

11.1.2 Minor grammatical and formatting changes to the bylaws do not need to be approved by a vote of the Members.

11.2 Approval by Funding Organization All proposed amendments to the bylaws shall be submitted by the Secretary to the SWGDOC funding organization for review. The funding organization may approve, reject, or return proposed amendments for changes. Notification of the decision shall be forwarded to the Secretary.

11.2.1 Amendments approved without change by the funding organization will become effective immediately unless otherwise stated.

11.2.2 If the funding organization does not take any action within 2 months after receipt, the submitted amendment or amendments are automatically approved

11.3 Official Copy The Secretary shall keep the official copy of the Bylaws. Any time an amendment is made, the bylaws shall be updated and a copy shall be sent to the funding organization.