

Policy Concerning Sections

Updated: January 2024

I. Sections. The Sections and Subspecialties Subcommittee will consist of at least eight members who are current or past section chairs, or represent a subspecialty society, appointed by the President of the American Academy of Neurology, or as appropriate, its education affiliate the American Academy of Neurology Institute (“Academy”). The Sections and Subspecialties Subcommittee will oversee sections and report to the Member Engagement Committee (MEC). The Chair of the Sections and Subspecialties Subcommittee will sit on the MEC.

II. Establishing a Section. Sections and Synapse Member Communities exist as the forum for Section members to engage in conversation and exchange of ideas and information. A proposed new Section will be required to start as Synapse Member Community and remain so for at least one year before being eligible to be considered for Section status.

After this period, the Board of Directors may approve transitioning the community to a Section of the Academy to provide a forum for discussion in selected areas of clinical neurology, the basic neurological sciences, and other neurology-related matters. All requests to transition from a Synapse Member Community to a Section will be submitted to the Board of Directors. Individuals proposing to transition to Section status will prepare and submit to the Chair of the Sections and Subspecialties Subcommittee a completed application including the following:

- A. Statement of justification including proposed Section objectives (purpose statement).
- B. Synapse engagement data from at least one year to indicate member interest.
- C. Disclosure of the relationship, if any, between Section activities and any professional or commercial organization other than the Academy.

Inactive Sections: Sections identified as inactive based on an audit of Section activities by the Section & Subspecialties Subcommittee may be recommended for transitioning to a Synapse Member Community in conjunction with an election year. All recommendations to transition a Section to a Synapse Member Community will be submitted to the Board of Directors.

III. Section Guidelines. All Sections will comply with the following:

- A. *Purpose.* A Section’s objectives and programs will enhance the scientific, educational and/or practice goals of the Academy.
- B. *Membership.*
 - 1) Sections will be composed of at least 100 individuals who are current AAN members.
 - 2) Membership in any Section is open to any member of the Academy.
 - 3) Section members may join their section online communities.
- C. *Chair and Vice Chair.*
 - 1) Each Section will have one Chair and one Vice Chair.
 - 2) When seeking election and during their term of service, Section Chairs and Vice Chairs, and nominees for these positions, are required to: a) complete and maintain up-to-date Relationship Disclosure Forms (which will be governed by the *Relationships & Conflicts of Interest Policy*); b) not be employed (i.e., requires filing of an IRS Form W-2) by industry during their term of service; and

- c) not have been reprimanded, censored, or otherwise disciplined by, or been subject to termination, suspension, restriction, or non-renewal with, any licensing or certifying board, a peer review organization, third party payer, clinic, hospital, health-related agency, or the AAN, and not have such a review or investigation pending, with respect to their professional license, clinical privileges, employment, misdemeanor, misdemeanor (other than a minor traffic violation), or other similar offense.
- 3) The Chair will be elected for one two-year term, and may be re-elected for an additional two-year term, but at no time may they serve more than two terms consecutively in the same role (i.e., after two consecutive terms the Chair may not be re-elected as Chair for at least two years)¹.
- 4) The Vice Chair will be elected for one two-year term, and may be re-elected for an additional two-year term, but at no time may they serve more than two terms consecutively in the same role (i.e., after two consecutive terms the Vice Chair may not be re-elected as Vice Chair for at least two years).²
- 5) Elections will follow the Section Election Procedure, attached as Appendix A.
- 6) The Vice Chair will not succeed automatically to the Chair position at the end of the Chair's term.
- 7) The Chair and Vice Chair will be elected by the Section's members who have voting rights. The affirmative vote of a majority of the responding Section members with voting rights is required to elect the Chair and Vice Chair.
- 8) The Chair is subject to removal at any time by the Chair of the Sections and Subspecialties Subcommittee, the Academy President, or the affirmative written (either via email or online) ballot of two-thirds of all the Section members with voting rights.
- 9) If the Chair has been removed, the Vice Chair will serve for the remainder of the unexpired term and will be eligible for election as Chair at the next election. Completion of the unexpired term will not be counted in calculating consecutive terms.
- 10) The Vice Chair is subject to removal at any time by the Chair of the Sections and Subspecialties Subcommittee, the Academy President, or the affirmative written (either via email or online) ballot of two-thirds of all the Section members with voting rights. If the Vice Chair has been removed, the Section may elect a new Vice Chair who will serve for the remainder of the unexpired term and will be eligible for re-election thereafter. Completion of the unexpired term will not be counted in calculating consecutive terms.
- 11) The Chair will preside at meetings of the Section. The Chair will be invited to attend an annual Section Leadership Summit and will report at the summit on the progress and operation of the Section as so requested. If the Chair is unable to attend, the Vice Chair or another member of the Section appointed by the Chair will attend the meeting.
- 12) The Vice Chair will be responsible for such functions and projects as may be assigned by the Chair or by the Section.

D. *Working Groups.*

- 1) Proposals for new working groups must be submitted to the Chair and Vice Chair for approval.
- 2) Working groups must align with section purpose and have a clear objective.

- 3) Membership in the working group is at the discretion of the Chair/Vice Chair in collaboration with AAN staff.
- 4) Working groups should have no more than eight members.
- 5) The working group term and membership in a working group ends at end of Chair term.

E. Meetings.

- 6) Each Section will have an opportunity for an annual business meeting of the Section for the purpose of conducting business that should come before the Section and sending proposals (as the Section may deem necessary) to AAN Member Engagement and potentially the Sections and Subspecialties Subcommittee.
- 7) The Chair of the Section will declare a quorum present when at least ten Section members are in attendance at the annual business meeting. The decision of a majority of the members in attendance will constitute an act of the Section.
- 8) Sections may vote by email or online on Section actions between meetings. For such votes, a decision of a majority of the responding Section members will constitute an act of the Section.

IV. Dissolving a Section. The Board of Directors may dissolve a Section at its discretion.

¹ To align the timing of all section elections, beginning in 2022, the AAN will hold elections for all sections every two years. To accommodate this change, current Chairs, as of 2022, may choose to end their current term after one year or remain in their position for two more years (i.e., a total of one 3-year term).

² To align the timing of all section elections, beginning in 2022, the AAN will hold elections for all sections every two years. To accommodate this change, current Vice Chairs, as of 2022, may choose to end their current term after one year or remain in their position for two more years (i.e., a total of one 3-year term).

Appendix A

Section Election Procedure

The following is the Election Procedure for all sections.

AAN staff will use both direct email and Synapse Online Communities posts to announce nomination period and voting information throughout the nomination and election period.

1. The call for nominations for available offices (Chair, Vice Chair, or both) will be submitted to the Section membership via communication from AAN staff (sections@aan.com) in quarter four of the year immediately prior to the election year. A "call for nominations" email will include nomination instructions, a job description, and time commitment.
2. Nominations for Chair and Vice Chair must be submitted by nomination form (link to be provided in the nomination email as well as located on section Synapse homepage) by a deadline date TBD by AAN staff.
3. Section members may nominate other section members or self-nominate. All nominees are required to be AAN members in good standing.
4. Section members may nominate more than one individual for each available office but may only self-nominate for one office position.
5. All nominees are required to submit a Relationship Disclosure Form.
6. Nominees' disclosures will be shared with the section in advance of the vote.
7. If a member is nominated for more than one available office position, AAN staff will reach out to the nominee to choose one office position.
8. All nominees for whom AAN receives completed nomination forms will be contacted by AAN staff to confirm acceptance of the nomination. All nominees must provide the required information for the ballot.
9. All candidates must submit a nominee statement. The nominee statement has two questions, determined each year by the Sections and Subspecialties Subcommittee, as well as a space to provide a brief bio. Each question should not exceed 150 words to keep the ballots brief. The information provided by the candidate will not be edited by AAN staff and will be noted as such on the nomination form.
10. All nominees who accept the nomination and fill out the forms provided by AAN staff, will be placed on the ballot.
11. If the Chair and/or Vice Chair are eligible to run again, they will be asked if they wish to have their names on the ballot and they must complete the nomination form by the deadline stated. Current section leaders will be sent two additional emails (using the email contact in the AAN member profile) informing them of nomination information for their section. One email will be sent at least one week prior to the all-section member email announcing nominations with the nomination form in the body of the email. One email will be sent one week prior to the close of nominations to provide a list of all confirmed candidates to date. Staff will request that any further nominations should be submitted by the nomination deadline.
12. The Call for Nominations period will last 2-2.5 months, with voting to take place in mid-late February through March. Deadlines may be extended by the Chair of the Section and Subspecialties Subcommittee, the then-current section Chair, or AAN staff if no

nominations are received. Nominations will not be accepted after the given deadline by AAN staff.

13. Elections will be held via email using a templated ballot/response system. Voting will take place over a 4-week period. Deadlines will be given in each email.
14. Any member of the section who is also a current AAN member is eligible to vote.
15. AAN staff will submit the ballot to each Section member who is eligible to vote via email at the Section member's email address on file with the AAN.
16. The ballot email will state that votes may be submitted via the survey response until a deadline TBD each year.
17. Each Section member who is eligible to vote may vote for one individual for each available office from the candidates listed.
18. If both office positions are on the ballot, Section members may submit a vote for both positions or for only one of the positions and abstain from voting for the other position (e.g., a Section member may vote for one individual for Chair, but not submit a vote for Vice chair).
19. Write-ins are not acceptable and will invalidate the ballot.
20. The candidate for Chair receiving the most votes from the responding Section members will be elected Chair. The candidate for Vice chair receiving the most votes from the responding Section members will be elected Vice chair.
21. Candidates who are uncontested for an available office will be deemed "elected" without conducting an email vote; however, this result is not final until the uncontested candidate is officially notified by the AAN.
22. AAN staff will send a reminder to all voting section members prior to the vote period ending.
23. AAN staff will establish a deadline for submitting a completed ballot, which will be approximately one month after voting begins. Results will then be tabulated by AAN staff.
24. If there is a tie, the Section's staff liaison will re-submit the ballot via email to all Section members who are eligible to vote and request a re-vote on the candidates who tied within a timeline designated by the staff. If after the re-vote the tie remains, the then current Chair will make the determination.
25. Results will be announced in conjunction with and just prior to the Annual Meeting
26. Newly elected Section leaders will take office after the Annual Meeting.

Policy History: Adopted by the Board of Directors by email vote in March 2010 (AAN Policy 2010-12). Amended by the American Academy of Neurology and American Academy of Neurology Institute Boards of Directors on May 6, 2010, December 1, 2011, March 5, 2013, February 6, 2014, October 5, 2015, December 8, 2020, and January 12, 2024.