ASA Support of Section-Hosted Conferences

March 21, 2024 (updated June 2024)

Preamble

Over the last few years, several sections of the American Statistical Association (ASA) have hosted professional conferences. Section-hosted conferences can be a terrific service for members, providing the opportunity to share research results, generate innovative ideas, and build networks. They can be especially valuable for students. At the same time, there are financial and other risks associated with conferences. These risks accrue to the ASA, because sections are under the auspices of ASA. Thus, some ASA oversight is necessary. At present, sections may create these conferences with no required procedures or supervision. The ASA Board of Directors has developed the following policy to encourage the formation of section-hosted conferences while protecting the interests of the section and the association. (Note: This policy does not apply to the Biopharmaceutical Section Regulatory-Industry Workshop, which operates under an existing agreement.)

Policy

This policy lays out the following:

1. Levels of support the ASA has available for sections;
2. Responsibilities of the sections in the creation or implementation of section-hosted conferences; and
3. Responsibilities of the ASA toward the creation or implementation of section-hosted conferences. Note that "conferences" also refers to workshops, symposia, and similar terms.

Sections may take on various roles in conferences such as host (organizer), sponsor, or supporter. Specifically, a *section-hosted* conference is a conference in which the section organizes and drives the scientific content of the program, and the ASA is the fiscal agent. The section determines the goals, aims, and scope of the conference and creates the program committee. (Note: Multiple sections may jointly host conferences, with the same policy applying.)

All section-hosted conferences will operate under individual agreements approved by the ASA Board of Directors. They will be supported by ASA at one of the two levels given in the table below, selected by the section. New conferences come under this policy immediately. Existing conferences will come under the policy by October 31, 2025.

Through the section conference proposal form, sections should submit to the ASA Office proposals for new conferences far enough in advance to allow the Board of Directors, in consultation with the Council of Sections Governing Board (COSGB), to review and approve the proposed conference and for adequate conference planning and implementation to take place.

The Board will evaluate section-hosted conference proposals based on the following criteria:

Alignment with ASA's Mission: The conference goals should align with ASA's mission, which includes advancing statistics and data science, supporting excellence in statistical practice, and promoting the use of statistics for the public good.

Compatibility with existing meetings: The conference should fit well within the ASA's portfolio of meetings, with content not overlapping significantly with currently established meetings. The conference should distinguish itself from other conferences in the domain. Sections should schedule conferences to avoid conflicting with other ASA and section conferences to the extent possible, especially those with significant audience overlap.

Relevance to Section membership: The conference should be clearly relevant to the section or sections proposing the conference.

Quality and Reputation: Currently established conferences should have a record of maintaining high-quality content and a positive reputation within the statistical and data science community. Newly proposed conferences should demonstrate in their proposal a commitment to high quality that enhances the reputation of the ASA and the section(s) involved.

Educational and Professional Development Value: The conference should provide opportunities for educational and professional development, including workshops, tutorials, and networking opportunities. Specifically, the conference should have value to either undergraduate students, graduate students, or young professionals, not just experienced professionals.

Diversity and inclusion: The meeting should demonstrate a commitment to the ASA's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging, and Accessibility (DEIBA) values. Further information on those values can be found at https://community.amstat.org/deiba/home.

Code of Conduct: Participants must agree to abide by the ASA Code of Conduct.

Conference budget: The budget is clearly delineated and aligned with the goals of the section and consistent with the section's available resources.

Evaluation plan: Explain how success of the conference will be identified and measured. Here is a logic model for conference evaluation.

Table 1: Description of Support toward and Requirements for ASA Section Conferences

Note: In the table and elsewhere, we refer to "ASA" and to "sections." Sections are clearly part of ASA, so references to "ASA" here are to the central operations of ASA.

	Level 1: Section(s) operate largely independently	**Level 2**: Section(s) and ASA collaborate
0	*For starting a new recurring conference*: Section prepares proposal using the criteria given in this document. Section waits for approval from the ASA Board of the new conference before proceeding. *For the latest instance of an established conference*: A proposal is not needed but Section will follow the relevant steps below. *For a one-time conference*: A proposal is not needed but Section will follow the relevant steps below.	*For starting a new recurring conference*: Section prepares proposal using the criteria given in this document. Upon ASA Board approval Section and ASA collaborate per the steps below. *For continuing an established conference*: A proposal is not needed but Section follow the steps below. *For a one-time conference*: One-time conferences will typically receive Level 1 support. Contact ASA if Level 2 support is desired.
1	Section selects dates for conferences to avoid conflict with other ASA meetings. To allow some flexibility during site negotiations, multiple options should be selected and provided to ASA staff.	ASA selects dates for conferences in consultation with the section and in consideration of optimal site/hotel arrangements.
2	Section identifies two ranked choices for site/hotel and provides those choices to ASA staff, who will negotiate the contract with the site. The first choice will be selected unless the first-choice property refuses ASA contract clauses. *If the conference is a university-based meeting where the institution provides the facilities, this step is not required. In such cases an MOU between the university and the ASA will be developed to delineate fiscal and other responsibilities.*	ASA identifies the meeting site/hotel after looking at several options and negotiating with the sites.
3	ASA reviews and signs site, hotel, and sponsorship agreements. Section finds sponsors but should coordinate with ASA Development staff so that sponsors do not receive multiple simultaneous requests for funding. If Section is applying for a grant, it must first clarify with ASA who is submitting	ASA negotiates and signs site/lodging agreements, and reviews and signs sponsorship agreements. The section and ASA seek sponsorships, and the ASA assists section with preparing grant applications.

	and would be responsible for receiving, spending, and reporting on grant funds.	
4	In consultation with ASA, Section determines registration fees, provides a budget for ASA approval.	In consultation with section, ASA sets budget and determines registration fees.
5	Section coordinates program committee activities.	Section chooses program committee members; ASA provides staff to support program committee
6	Section handles abstract submissions.	Section uses ASA abstract submission system.
7	Section manages all communication regarding the program schedule and meeting locations.	Section may choose to use an app provided by ASA to communicate program schedule and meeting locations.
8	ASA sets up registration, receives funds, and makes payments	ASA sets up registration, receives funds, and makes payments
9	Section responsible for setting up and maintaining conference website	ASA sets up and maintains website for the conference
10	Section provides staffing for the meeting site (registration, etc.)	ASA provides on-site staff to support the meeting
11	ASA will collect 5% of the gross revenue to cover its costs of supporting the conference. The remaining 95% will go to the section. It is generally expected that level 1 conferences will aim to break even financially. Section keeps any net revenue and is responsible for any net loss.	ASA will collect 12% of the gross revenue to cover its costs of supporting the conference plus the cost of staff travel. The remainder will go to the section. It is generally expected that level 2 conferences will aim to achieve positive net revenue. Section keeps any net revenue and is responsible for any net loss.
12	COSGB will periodically review the health of the conference and report findings and suggested actions, if any, to the ASA Board.	COSGB will periodically review the health of the conference and report findings and suggested actions, if any, to the ASA Board.