



Chapter Policy and Operations Manual

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ONCOLOGY NURSING SOCIETY

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For chapter management questions, contact chapters@ons.org. This manual is reviewed and updated as needed to maintain current chapter needs. Revisions will be posted on the Chapter Officers Virtual Community site (<http://chapter.vc.ons.org>) as they are available.

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INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on your board role with your local Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) chapter! This leadership position is critical to your chapter's success. This manual can assist you by providing direction and guidance related to the business of managing your chapter.

Each board member is expected to review the current manual when taking office and periodically throughout the year. This manual includes job descriptions, responsibilities, and recommendations for implementing required board positions. It also provides the basic framework for a chapter and its board members to conduct business and details the criteria to maintain status as a chartered chapter. Operations Guidelines, which begin below, describe the rules and regulations that are necessary for compliance with legal and organizational requirements.

Remember that you aren't alone in your role. Apart from your fellow board members, ONS is available to assist. Contact the ONS Chapter Relations staff at chapters@ons.org for any clarification or additional information.

OPERATIONS GUIDELINES

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS AND PROCESS FOR CHARTER RENEWAL

Each chapter's charter is renewed annually by the ONS Board of Directors. To be eligible for charter renewal, the chapter must meet the following minimum performance criteria:

- Effective January 1, 2018, new ONS chapters must have a minimum of 100 members. Existing chapters below that threshold remain chapters in good standing so long as they continue to meet all other annual rechartering requirements.
- Submit a chapter annual report by January 31st each year.
- Submit a treasurer's report by January 31st each year.
- Pay the previous year's charter renewal fee.
- Send at least one chapter board member to the annual ONS Chapter Leadership Workshop.
- Hold an election by mail or email ballot, ensuring that each member has one vote. Effective January 1, 2019, all elections and chapter board terms will be scheduled on a calendar year basis so that all newly elected leaders can take office and be onboarded at the same time.
- Chapter boards shall have at least five elected members, consisting of a president, treasurer, and three additional roles based on chapter needs.
 - Additional roles beyond the required five may be elected or appointed at the chapter's discretion.
 - Board members cannot serve more than six consecutive years on the board.
 - The president and treasurer terms are limited to two years each. The president and treasurer could serve the remainder of their six-year term in other board positions.
 - Board members serving in roles other than president or treasurer may serve all six consecutive years in the same

role if re-elected or re-appointed by membership during each voting period.

- Provide a minimum of six member engagement opportunities each year (the previous requirement was at least four educational meetings each year). Member engagement opportunities can be educational programs, journal clubs, conferences, and even social events.
- Hold a minimum of four meetings of the chapter board of directors each year.
- Maintain communication between the chapter and membership via meeting announcements or newsletters.

Once received, chapter annual reports and year-end treasurer's reports are reviewed for completion and compliance with the minimum requirements for charter renewal. Upon satisfactory review, the ONS chief experience officer will recommend charter renewal to the ONS Board of Directors. The final decision regarding renewal is the responsibility of the ONS Board of Directors. The ONS manager of chapter relations, on behalf of the ONS Board of Directors, will notify the chapter president of the charter renewal or revocation in writing.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

All members of the chapter's board of directors, whether elected or appointed, have the following responsibilities:

- Know the mission and vision of ONS National.
- Understand the relationship between ONS National and the chapter.
- Develop a strategic plan for the chapter that is consistent with the mission and strategic plan of ONS National, the needs of the general membership of the chapter, and the financial resources available to the chapter.
- Contribute to the development of the chapter goals and objectives.

- Implement policies and procedures established by the chapter board of directors.
- Direct the implementation and evaluation of the strategic plan to ensure that chapter goals are achieved, policies and procedures of the chapter and ONS National are followed, and the needs of the chapter membership are met.
- Develop, approve, and monitor an annual chapter budget.
- Contribute to the development and completion of the chapter annual report and year-end treasurer's report.
- Contribute to the development of the chapter's board of directors and general membership meeting and event agendas.
- Attend all meetings and events of the chapter board of directors and the general chapter membership.
- Participate and contribute to a successful transition meeting between the outgoing and the incoming members of the chapter's board of directors and standing committee chairs (if applicable).
- Develop a plan to create leadership opportunities for the chapter membership.
- Recognize the professional achievements of chapter members.
- Establish effective lines of communication among chapter members, the chapter board of directors, and the chapter relations staff at ONS National.

Composition of the Chapter Board of Directors

Membership of the chapter board of directors is based on the qualifications found in the ONS bylaws and determined by the chapter's standing rules. However, only those elected by the chapter membership may be voting members of the board of directors.

Chapter boards shall have at least five elected members, consisting of a president, treasurer, and three additional roles based on the chapter's needs. Any additional roles beyond those five may be elected or appointed at the discretion of the chapter. Board members cannot serve more than six consecutive years on the board. The president and treasurer terms are limited to two years each. The president and treasurer could serve the remainder of their six-year term in other board positions. Board members serving in roles other than president or treasurer may serve all six consecutive years in the same role if re-elected or re-appointed by the membership during each voting period.

Meeting Guidelines

- Meetings of the chapter board of directors should be held at least quarterly, and meeting dates should be determined for the year at the beginning of the term of office for the board of directors.
- Emergency meetings are scheduled as deemed necessary by the president or a majority vote of the board of directors.
- The president should notify the members of the board of directors of the date, time, and location of meetings at least two weeks in advance.

- An agenda, minutes, and committee reports should be shared with members of the board of directors at least two weeks prior to each meeting date.
- The president presides at all meetings of the board of directors.
 - In the absence of the president, the president-elect or vice president will preside.
 - In the absence of the president-elect or vice president, the treasurer will preside.
- Meetings should be conducted according to *Robert's Rules of Order* (current edition).
- A quorum of elected members of the board of directors, as defined in the chapter's standing rules, must be present to conduct business.

Voting Guidelines

Each elected officer of the chapter's board of directors present at a meeting is entitled to one vote. All motions must be passed by a majority vote of the members present at the meeting.

ELECTED BOARD POSITIONS

The chapter officers are the president and treasurer, plus at least three other positions, as determined by the chapter and described in the chapter's standing rules.

The chapter officers are elected by a mail or email ballot, ensuring that each voting-eligible member has one vote. The officers are responsible for ensuring that the chapter complies with all rules and regulations of ONS, this manual, and any applicable state and local laws or regulations.

President (required)

The president serves as the leader of the chapter's board of directors and has the following responsibilities:

- Appoint committee chairs if they are not elected by the membership; the board must approve the appointments.
- Lead the development of the chapter goals, strategic plan, objectives, and budget with the board of directors and committee chairs of the standing committees (if applicable).
- Monitor the implementation of chapter goals, strategic plan, objectives, and budget.
- Advise the general membership and chapter board of directors of progress toward the chapter goals, strategic plan and objectives, healthcare issues and trends, and information from ONS National.
- Schedule, formulate the agenda, and preside at a minimum of four meetings of the board of directors each year.
- Serve as an ex-officio member of all chapter standing committees (if applicable).
- Coordinate the completion, review, and submission of the chapter annual report and treasurer's report by January 31st each year, according to procedures established by ONS National.

- Review and sign the completed chapter annual report and treasurer's report.
- Mentor and prepare the president-elect or vice president (if applicable).
- Schedule and participate in a transition meeting between the outgoing and incoming members of the chapter board of directors and standing committee chairs (if applicable).
- Ensure that chapter records are maintained according to the record retention policies and procedures established by ONS National.
- Serve as a liaison between the general chapter membership, the chapter board of directors, and ONS National.
- Represent the chapter at meetings of ONS National.
- Perform other responsibilities designated by the chapter board of directors or ONS National.

Treasurer (required)

The treasurer has the following responsibilities.

- Develop an annual budget, based on a review of the previous year's budget and current goals and objectives as approved by the board of directors. (Refer to *The Chapter Treasurer's Handbook*.)
- Supervise the financial transactions of the chapter.
- Maintain all chapter financial records associated with the office of treasurer in compliance with the policies and procedures established by the chapter board of directors and ONS National.
- Maintain systematic and accurate records of all chapter revenues and expenditures.
- Prepare the treasurer's report for the chapter president to sign and submit to ONS National by January 31 each year.
- Prepare the treasurer's report for presentation at each meeting of the chapter board of directors and the general chapter membership business meeting.
- Perform other responsibilities designated by the chapter board of directors or ONS National.

President-Elect or Vice President (optional)

The president-elect or vice president has the following responsibilities.

- Actively observe and learn the role of the president.
- Assume the role of president in the following situations:
 - Absence of the president
 - Inability of the president to act
 - Resignation of the president
 - Expiration of the president's term
- Attend meetings of the chapter standing committees as delegated by the president (if applicable).
- Consult with the president throughout the term of office to provide for continuity and smooth transition of chapter leadership.
- Perform other responsibilities designated by the chapter board of directors or ONS National.

Secretary (optional)

The secretary has the following responsibilities.

- Provide for continuity of chapter proceedings through recordkeeping of all official chapter activities.
- Maintain official chapter records associated with the office of secretary according to procedures and record retention policies established by ONS National. Records include but are not limited to the following (refer to the Archival Guidelines on the ONS Chapter Officers Virtual Community at <http://chapter.vc.ons.org/resources> for more information):
 - Chapter charter
 - Chapter standing rules
 - Financial reports
 - Annual reports
 - Minutes of all meetings of the board of directors, standing committees (if applicable), and general membership
- Implement an effective communication plan among the chapter membership, chapter board of directors, chapter standing committees (if applicable), and ONS National.
- Comply with the policies and procedures established by the chapter board of directors and ONS National in reflecting the views of the chapter general membership and board of directors in all communications, written and verbal.
- Notify all chapter members about the board of directors' meeting dates, times, and locations.
- Notify the general chapter membership of all meetings and events dates, times, and locations.
- Record minutes for all meetings of the chapter board of directors and general membership.
- Distribute minutes of the board of directors, standing committees, and general membership meetings as requested.
- Perform other responsibilities designated by the chapter board of directors or ONS National.

Director-at-Large (optional)

Directors-at-large represent the general chapter membership on the board of directors. They perform responsibilities designated by the chapter board of directors.

STANDING COMMITTEES (optional)

Standing committees may include membership, nominating, and program committees, plus other committees deemed necessary by the chapter board of directors. Committee chairs may be elected as voting members or appointed as nonvoting members of the board of directors as determined by the chapter board of directors. If a chapter chooses not to elect or appoint a specific committee chair, the duties should be assumed by another chapter board member or the board as a whole.

Membership Committee (optional)

This committee promotes membership development in ONS National and the chapter. Members participate in strategies to recruit and retain membership in ONS.

Composition

- The chair of the membership committee is elected or appointed by the president and chapter board of directors as described in the chapter's standing rules.
- The members of the membership committee are appointed by the chair in consultation with the president and chapter board of directors.
- The president is an ex-officio member of the membership and all committees.
- The number of members on the membership committee is determined by the goals and objectives of the chapter, committee, and size of the chapter.
- The term of the appointment as a committee chair or member is determined by the chapter board of directors.
- Appointments to the membership committee are renewable annually.

Responsibilities of the membership committee chair

- Select members of the membership committee in consultation with the president and chapter board of directors.
- Establish meeting dates, times, and locations for the membership committee.
- Prepare agendas for all membership committee meetings.
- Preside at all meetings of the membership committee.
- Submit a report on the current membership status and activities of the membership committee at all meetings of the chapter board of directors and general chapter membership.
- Ensure that the membership committee records are maintained according to procedures established by ONS National.

Nominating Committee (optional)

This committee conducts an annual chapter election by mail or email ballot ensuring that each voting-eligible member has one vote. It also encourages chapter members to vote in chapter and ONS National elections.

Composition of the nominating committee

- The chair of the nominating committee is elected or appointed by the president and chapter board of directors as described in the chapter standing rules.
- The members of the nominating committee are appointed by the chair in consultation with the president and chapter board of directors.
- The number of members on the nominating committee is determined by the goals and objectives of the chapter, committee, and size of the chapter.
- The term of the appointment as a committee chair or member is determined by the chapter board of directors.
- Nominating committee appointments are renewable annually.

Responsibilities of the nominating committee chair

- Select members of the nominating committee in consultation with the president and chapter board of directors.

- Establish meeting dates, times, and locations for the nominating committee.
- Prepare an agenda for nominating committee meetings.
- Preside at all meetings of the nominating committee.
- Submit a copy of all nominating committee meeting minutes to the chapter president and/or secretary.
- Submit a report on the activities of the nominating committee at all meetings of the chapter board of directors and the general chapter membership.
- Within two weeks of completing election procedures, submit an election results form to ONS National at chapters@ons.org.
- Submit a report to the chapter board of directors to be included in the chapter annual report.
- Ensure that nominating committee records are maintained according to procedures established by ONS National.

Responsibilities of the nominating committee

- Establish qualification criteria for candidates for chapter board positions in collaboration with the chapter board of directors.
- Develop a plan for conducting an annual chapter election that includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - Notification of the chapter board member positions to be filled
 - Length of term of office
 - Qualifications
 - Time commitment for each office
 - Deadlines for each phase of the election process
 - Solicitation of candidates
 - Production, distribution, and receipt of ballots
 - Counting the ballots
- Distribute candidate information packets to all members who request materials (if applicable). Materials are not limited to the following:
 - Job description and responsibilities of each board position
 - Length of term of the position
 - Qualifications
 - Time commitment for each position
 - Request for candidate biographical information
 - Request for candidate statement of purpose
- Review all materials submitted for each candidate.
- Prepare a slate of candidates to be submitted to the chapter board of directors for approval.
- Produce a ballot that includes candidate biographical information, statement of purpose, instructions for voting, and deadline for return of the ballot.
- Mail or email the ballot to all chapter members who are current ONS members to verify that each voting-eligible member has only one vote.
- Receive and verify that ballots are complete and received by the published deadline for return.
- Tally the votes for each candidate.

- Communicate the election results to the chapter board of directors, candidates, and general chapter membership.
- Implement strategies to encourage members to vote in chapter and ONS National elections.

Program Committee (optional)

This committee identifies the educational needs of the chapter membership and provides programs that meet those needs that are consistent with the mission and strategic plan of ONS.

Composition of the program committee

- The chair of the program committee is elected or appointed by the president and chapter board of directors as described in the chapter's standing rules.
- The members of the program committee are appointed by the chair in consultation with the president and chapter board of directors.
- The president is an ex-officio member of the program committee and all chapter committees.
- The number of members on the program committee is determined by the goals and objectives of the chapter, committee, and size of the chapter.
- The term of the appointment as a committee chair or member is determined by the chapter board of directors.
- Appointments to the program committee are renewable annually.

Responsibilities of the program committee chair

- Select members of the program committee in consultation with the president and chapter board of directors.
- Establish meeting dates, times, and locations for the program committee.
- Prepare an agenda for program committee meetings.
- Preside over all meetings of the program committee.
- Submit a copy of all meeting minutes of the program committee to the chapter president and/or secretary.
- Submit a report on the activities of the program committee at all meetings of the chapter board of directors and general chapter membership.
- Submit a report to the chapter board of directors to be included in the chapter annual report.
- Ensure that the program committee records are maintained according to procedures established by ONS National.

Responsibilities of the program committee

- Develop, distribute, and analyze the results of an educational needs assessment instrument to determine the educational needs and interests of chapter members.
 - Schedule at least six member engagement opportunities per year. These can be educational dinners, conferences, social events, journal clubs, etc.
- Develop an annual plan for meeting the educational needs

of the chapter membership that include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Date, time, and location for all programs
- Program topic, format, and presenters or coordinators
- Educational objectives
- Required audiovisual equipment
- Evaluation plan
- Continuing education credits (optional)
- Promotion and advertising strategies
- Annual budget for programs
- Maintain a list of members and guest attendees at each chapter meeting, event, or educational offering.

CHAPTER ELECTIONS

Elections shall be held on a calendar year basis with board terms running from January 1–December 31. Terms may be one or two years in length, depending on the chapter's standing rules. They are conducted by a mail or email ballot to all voting-eligible chapter members (refer to the ONS bylaws) who are also current ONS members. All completed ballots must be returned to the chapter nominating committee for tally.

VACANCIES

In the event of a vacancy in the office of president, the president-elect (if applicable) or a board member predesignated by the chapter board will assume the office and serve for the unexpired term of the president in addition to the term to which he or she was elected.

In the event of a vacancy in the office of president-elect, if applicable, the office will remain vacant until the next scheduled election.

In the event of a vacancy in any other elected or appointed office, that position will be filled by the chapter board of directors.

REQUIRED MEETINGS

Board of Directors

The chapter board of directors should meet at least four times each year. This minimum number of meetings must be open to all chapter members in good standing, regardless of member type, employment status, or other demographic characteristic.

A quorum of members of the board of directors as defined in the chapter's standing rules must be present to conduct business.

General Membership Meetings and Events

Chapters are required to provide a minimum of six member engagement opportunities each year, replacing the previous minimum requirement of four educational meetings each year. Member engagement opportunities can be educational programs, journal clubs, conferences, or even social events.

A quorum of the chapter board of directors and the chapter membership as defined in the chapter's standing rules must be present to conduct business.

REQUIRED REPORTING

Each year, chapters must submit the following reports by their respective deadlines to ONS National at chapters@ons.org:

- Treasurer's report due no later than January 31st each year
- Chapter annual report due no later than January 31st each year
- Election results due within two weeks of the ballots being tallied

MANDATORY POLICIES

CONTRACTS

Chapters may sign routine contracts for chapter events (e.g., hotel and restaurant events) without notifying ONS National; however, contracts must clearly specify that the contract is between the chapter (not ONS National) and the hotel or restaurant. All other contracts must be sent to ONS National for review and approval prior to entering or signing any contracts. This may include contracts for staffing support, office space, website hosting, and other similar services. Forward such contracts to the ONS manager of chapter relations at chapters@ons.org. Chapters are not authorized to enter into contracts on behalf of ONS National in any way. The full ONS chapter name must be used at all times in contracts. It is the chapter's responsibility to ensure that its contracts comply with these policies.

ALCOHOL

Chapters have a professional and legal responsibility not to serve alcohol to intoxicated people. Alcoholic beverages at any chapter event must be handled by a cash bar and only served by the venue's staff.

DISCLAIMER

Disclaimer statements must be included on all ONS chapter products. Approval for the use of the disclaimer statement must be obtained from chapters@ons.org.

ANTITRUST

The chapter president must sign an antitrust statement annually.

No one shall explicitly or implicitly communicate in the name of ONS (e.g., in speeches, articles, testimony, letters) without prior approval of the ONS board of directors or an appropriate officer.

Any communication that could raise a question of anticompetitiveness or antitrust should be reviewed by the ONS legal counsel. Contact chapters@ons.org for assistance.

FINANCE

Refer to *The Chapter Treasurer's Handbook*.

LIABILITY

Refer to Insurance and Liability section of *The Chapter Treasurer's Handbook*.

FUNDRAISING

Chapters may raise funds in the geographic area designated in their standing rules. All fundraising items must contain the national ONS logo.

To comply with federal fundraising regulations, the following statement must be displayed prominently: "CONTRIBUTIONS OR GIFTS TO THE ONCOLOGY NURSING SOCIETY ARE NOT DEDUCTIBLE AS CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS FOR FEDERAL INCOME TAX PURPOSES."

LOGO

- ONS National owns all rights to the ONS National logo. Chapters cannot alter the ONS National logo or use the ONS National logo other than as authorized by ONS National in writing.
- ONS National encourages all chapters to develop their own logos. Chapter logos must be submitted to chapters@ons.org for review and approval.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The chapter president must sign a conflict of interest statement annually. The intent of these policies is to avoid any assumption or appearance of conflict of interest or unauthorized representation of ONS.

TERRITORY DISPUTES

Chapter boards should work collaboratively to address any territory disputes that may arise. However, if the leadership groups are unable to resolve a dispute, the ONS Board of Directors will be the final arbiter in such matters, after hearing arguments from both groups.

VOLUNTARY AND INVOLUNTARY

RELINQUISHMENT OF CHARTERS

A chapter charter is a demonstration of the chapter's commitment to ONS, and vice versa. Chapters occasionally have difficulty complying with the minimum chartering requirements because of limited membership, inability to retain or recruit volunteer leaders, geographic location, etc. ONS wishes to assist chapters in retaining their charter status and will work with chapter leaders who are experiencing difficulties with meeting requirements. Contact the ONS manager of chapter relations (chapters@ons.org) who will make every attempt to provide the support necessary to maintain the charter.

FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH REQUIREMENTS

The minimum requirements for charter renewal are described on page 3. Failure to meet the minimum requirements each year may result in the ONS Board of Directors disbanding the chapter. If chartered after January 1, 2018, chapters that cannot main-

tain a minimum of 100 ONS members shall be required to adhere to the following procedure:

- The chapter leadership will collaborate with chapter relations at ONS to develop a membership recruitment and retention plan in writing within 30 days.
- The chapter membership is notified that the chapter is in jeopardy of losing its charter unless membership grows within 90 days.
- The plan must be implemented within 60 days.
- If after implementing the plan the chapter is unable to grow membership to 100, the ONS manager of chapter relations may recommend to the ONS Board of Directors that the chapter be dissolved. All chapter members would be notified in writing of the decision.
- Within 60 days after receiving the letter from the ONS Board of Directors informing the chapter that its charter will be revoked, the chapter may appeal.
- The chapter sends a letter stating its desire to appeal the decision to the ONS president and sends a copy to the ONS manager of chapter relations.
- The ONS Board of Directors reviews the appeal and advises the appealing party and the ONS manager of chapter relations of its decision.
- The ONS Board of Director's decision is final. If the ONS Board of Directors upholds the charter revocation, all remaining chapter funds and property will be donated to the Oncology Nursing Foundation (after paying or making provisions for the payment of its remaining liabilities).

Required Reporting

Failure to submit required reports by their designated deadlines will result in the following procedure:

- Immediately after the deadline, a late reminder is sent to the chapter president and chapter board of directors.
- Thirty days following the deadline, the ONS manager of chapter relations notifies the chapter membership in writing that the chapter is in jeopardy of losing its charter unless all reports are submitted immediately.
- If reports are not submitted after the notification, the ONS manager of chapter relations may recommend to the chief experience officer and the ONS Board of Directors that the chapter is disbanded. All chapter members are notified of the decision in writing.

Other Requirements

A chapter's inability to meet the minimum requirements on page 3 will be addressed on a case-by-case basis by the ONS manager of chapter relations.

APPEALING A DECISION OF THE ONS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The revocation of a chapter charter may be appealed to the ONS Board of Directors. The appeal method follows:

CHAPTERS CHOOSING TO DISBAND

A chapter may choose to disband for any number of reasons, including an inability to meet the minimum chapter chartering requirements, an inability to recruit candidates for leadership positions, or a lack of support by the membership at large. A chapter may choose to disband entirely or merge with a neighboring chapter.

If a chapter chooses to disband, any remaining funds in the chapter bank account(s) are donated to the Oncology Nursing Foundation and any property returned to ONS.

CHAPTERS DIVIDING INTO TWO OR MORE

Chapters may choose to divide into two or more chapters to better serve the membership in an area. A new chapter(s) can be separated from an existing chapter as follows:

- The new group selects its geographic area.
- The existing chapter submits a letter of agreement to the ONS manager of chapter relations (chapters@ons.org) that a new chapter would like to be formed from the requested territory within the area. Revising the chapter's standing rules will require redefinition of existing chapter's geographic area.
- Funds from the existing chapter will be proportionally divided between the new groups, based on the territory and membership of the resulting split.

Oncology Nursing Society

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For chapter management questions, contact chapters@ons.org.

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