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# Introduction

1. This document defines the decision-making practices of the Health Level Seven (HL7) Technical Steering Committee (SGB). The SGB will adhere to a set of decision-making practices that ensure consensus, openness, and balance of interest.
2. Balance of interest is related to ballot procedures; refer to the Governance and Operations Manual, or GOM (Section 14.03.03) for additional information on ballots and balance of interest.
3. The practices as outlined in this document are designed to enable timely decision-making balanced with an earnest attempt to ensure that input from all affected parties is considered. The decision-making practices are intended to govern the standard operating procedures of the HL7 SGBs and Committees and not intended to conflict with rules governing ballot procedure as defined by ANSI and the HL7 Governance and Operations Manual (GOM).
4. In the event of joint meetings, the DMP of the host SGB/Work Group shall be the governing document.

# Open Meetings

* 1. SGB meetings and conference calls are open to all interested parties to ensure that SGB decisions are open and transparent to the membership.

## Participation:

1. All SGB Members will be given an opportunity to speak; however, the chair may limit discussion on topics deemed to be non-constructive.
2. At the SGB Chair’s discretion, other HL7 members may be invited to attend as guests to provide specific input regarding a particular agenda topic, and guests may participate fully in the discussion on that topic. Guests are otherwise regarded as observers for the remainder of the meeting.
3. Depending on the purpose or mode of the meeting certain participants are expected to attend.
4. Other HL7 members may be asked to attend to provide specific input regarding a particular issue.

## Working Group Meetings

1. Meetings during Working Group Meetings (WGM) may be attended by any WGM registered attendee who wishes to participate.
2. Attendees should introduce themselves and identify the nature of their affiliation with HL7.
3. SGB meetings convened during the Working Group Meetings (WGM) shall be open to observers unless called into closed session by the Chair. Observers shall be restricted to seating on the periphery as directed by HL7 staff. Observers shall not cause distractions or otherwise interrupt the conduct of the SGB Meeting.
4. Observers at a WGM may seek the attention of the Chair if they wish to comment on an agenda topic and shall not otherwise participate in SGB deliberations unless specifically requested to comment by a member of the SGB.

## Scheduled Conference Calls

1. Current individual members or voting representatives of current organizational or Affiliate members may individually petition to become observers during SGB teleconferences. Such petitions shall be granted solely at the discretion of the Chair. Teleconference observers shall clearly announce their presence during the roll call. Teleconference observers shall be held to the same rules of courtesy and participation as expected at Working Group Meetings.
2. Persons not subscribed to the SGB list may still attend, however, all meeting announcements, minutes, and other notices will be sent to the list and posted to the SGB’s web page or wiki [found at http://www.hl7.org/permalink/?SGBWiki] (see Section 3). Therefore anyone expecting to participate is encouraged to review these web/wiki pages so that the SGB can communicate with them.

# Meeting Notifications

1. All activities shall be conducted in a public light with efforts made to ensure ample notification of those interested. The SGB shall utilize the following key mechanisms to notify interested parties of its activities
2. SGB’s listserv
3. SGB's web page under http://www.hl7.org/Special/Committees/sgb/index.cfm
4. SGB's wiki page under http://wiki.hl7.org/index.php?title=Standards\_Governance\_Board.
5. Satisfaction of minimal notification requirements dictates that relevant announcements and supporting materials are posted to ***both*** the listserv and the web or wiki page.
6. The listserv (and/or wiki) will be used predominantly for discussion threads, notifications, and draft documents; whereas the web page will be used predominantly for final documents and document resources (decision documents, minutes, papers, etc.)
7. Any use of the terms **post**, **posted**, or **posting** refers to notification, subject to these constraints.

## Unscheduled Meetings

1. SGB members requiring face-to-face meetings between scheduled Working Group meetings or calls have two options:
2. An 'Out of Cycle Meeting' can be convened as defined in HL7 Governance and Operations Manual (GOM §11.04), which requires 30 days notice.
3. The issues may be discussed in an informal group, bringing forward recommendations to the list or as a discussion topic for the next regularly scheduled SGB meeting or conference call. Recommendations brought forward by the informal group are not binding decisions until acted upon by the SGB in regular session conforming to the notification requirements defined in Section 3.

## Meeting Agenda Notification Timing

1. Meeting notification and the proposed agenda are provided prior to the meeting.
2. Binding decisions can be made only at meetings with the required advance notification where quorum is met;
3. A **binding decision** refers to any decision made by the committee that establishes a practice, formal recommendation, or formal action by the committee (e.g., creating a new program, rendering guidance, etc.).
4. The Chair of the SGB or designate shall make every attempt to ensure that all parties with an interest in agenda topics are made aware of the meeting time and location subject to the documented notification requirements. As appropriate, SGB activities will be cross-posted to other HL7 lists, depending upon the topic and type of meeting as indicated in the following list. The HL7 GOM stipulates that all face-to-face meetings require at least 30 days notice.

### WGM Agendas

1. WGM WG meeting schedules are posted in the meeting brochure; specific WG agendas are posted under SGB meeting information at the HL7 wiki (wiki.hl7.org/index.php?title=WGM\_information)
2. The SGB Retreat (Saturday prior to WGM) preliminary agenda is finalized on the weekly conference call two weeks prior to the WGM and posted within 2 business days.
3. Recognizing the dynamic nature of the WGM, the agenda may require updates. Notification will be satisfied so long as at least two of the following are used:
4. E-mail notification by 6:00 pm local time the evening before the event
5. Notification on the bulletin board (near the registration desk) at least 2 quarters prior to the event
6. Announcement during the general session or lunch session prior to the event

### Scheduled Conference Call Agendas

1. Scheduled Conference Call Agendas shall be posted by close-of-business the 1 business day prior to a call.
2. Preliminary agendas for the next conference call are to be determined at the close of each teleconference.

# Decision Publication

## Meeting Minutes

1. Minutes will be produced and published for all Working Group meetings and conference calls achieving quorum.
2. The presiding co-chair of the meeting is responsible for ensuring that minutes are taken and posted.
3. Where quorum is not achieved, the production of minutes is at the discretion of the presiding co-chair.
4. Minutes shall include, at a minimum, the following information:
5. Date, time and location of the meeting/call
6. List of attendees including names and organizations
7. Identification of presiding chair (if the presiding chair changes during meeting this should also be noted.)
8. Assertion of quorum (met or not met)
9. A summary of discussion topics and the outcome of proposals or motions made (including vote tallies if votes were taken)
10. Minutes shall be published on the SGB's webpage or the wiki as well as the SGB's listserv and webpage/wiki. .
11. Minutes from a WGM shall be posted 2 weeks after the WGM; minutes from a conference call will be posted within one week of the call.

## Electronically Recording Meetings

1. The SGB may decide that they wish to electronically record a meeting or workgroup event including audio or video recordings.
2. Electronic recordings of an event will not replace the minutes or the requirements for minutes as defined in Section 4
3. Prior to starting any electronic recording, the chair will explain the method and purpose of the recording and how the recording will be used and made available.
4. Prior to starting any electronic recording, the chair will seek approval from all attendees for the recording to occur and will note the acceptance by all attendees in the meeting minutes.

# Quorum Requirements

1. A quorum for committee meetings to allow for decision making requires that a chair (or designate) and at least four SGB members must be present.
2. The Chair may be counted towards quorum as the Co-chair representing his/her constituent in the event no other Co-chairs of that constituent are present.
3. For Working Group Meetings at which an elected SGB member vote cannot be represented, the SGB preference is that an alternate representative from that constituency be named an ad-hoc member for a short duration, as nominated by the constituency for that WGM. The ad-hoc member has voting rights, and will count towards quorum, but not towards Steering Division representation, and will not represent Steering Division proxy.

## Preponderance of Influence

1. Due to the balanced makeup of the SGB, "Preponderance of Influence" is not viewed as a substantive issue for the SGB.

## Presiding Chair Vote

1.
2. In all circumstances, the SGB can have no more than one presiding chair.
	1. In the event that the Chair cannot continue during the session and an alternate co-chair is not available,another member will be selected as the acting chair for that session by vote of the attendees. .
3. Although any issue may be discussed at any time, binding actions cannot be taken without sufficient notification (see Section 3) and quorum (see Section 5). Absence of either of these conditions allows the committee to issue recommendations that must subsequently be ratified by the committee subject to satisfying constraints placed upon binding decisions.
4. No co-chair should preside over discussions or vote for which they could reasonably be perceived to have a material interest.

# Decision Threshold Requirements

1. The SGB will strive for consensus in decision-making; however, decisions of the SGB are affirmed by simple majority.
2. While decisions are affirmed by simple majority, the SGB shall endeavor to make its decisions via a consensus process.
3. Where a consensus decision is not reached the SGB shall agree on a course of action to be followed in order that sufficient information to achieve consensus may be gathered.
4. To be called a consensus decision, it must receive two-thirds (66%) majority support. A variety of informal techniques may be used to determine if consensus may be reached including, but not limited to, straw poll, Robert’s Rules of Order, seeking response to a hypothetical opposing view, and polling each participant to voice their position on the issue.
5. When formal votes are taken, refer to the GOM (http://www.hl7.org/permalink/?GOM) for the number of votes to be processed. Member abstentions shall count towards quorum. For non-binding decisions only, all meeting participants may have the opportunity to vote at the discretion of the chair.

## Revisiting Decisions

1. It is recognized that revisiting previously made decisions inhibits progress and should be discouraged. That said, circumstances might exist that warrant re-opening discussion on a previously resolved issue.
2. To dissuade this practice, such re-opening requires a formal motion, second, and two-thirds (66%) majority affirmative vote subject to the quorum rules in this document.
3. In order for the decision to revisit a previous decision to be considered binding, advance notification as specified in Meeting Notifications (section 3) is required.

# Electronic Voting

1. Some decisions voting outside of the working group meetings may be conducted electronically.
2. SGB electronic votes will be announced on the SGB list server.
3. Those items following a prior defined approval process coming to SGB consideration may go directly to e-vote at the discretion of the SGB Chair.
4. If the motion was NOT made, seconded and discussed during a quorum meeting then, the workgroup will circulate the motion and request a second via the list service. Once seconded there will be a period of not less than 2 days of discussion prior to the opening of the e-vote.
5. The SGB electronic votes will be held open for a minimum period of 3 days but may be longer. The voting period will be defined in the announcement of opening the e-vote.
6. Quorum shall be at a minimum the same as for a SGB meeting or call as defined in Section 5.
7. If quorum has not been achieved at the end of the announced voting period, the vote will be closed as unsuccessful due to lack of quorum.
8. Electronic votes are decided by simple majority of the affirmatives and negatives.

# Proxy Participation

## Proxy Not Allowed

1. The SGB recognizes that competing interests sometimes prohibit a member’s ability to participate in person at all meetings. However, in the interest of encouraging the dynamic exchange of ideas, the SGB does not endorse/allow participation by proxy.
2. If a constituency feels strongly enough about a particular topic to want to vote, that group shall send adequate representation. Where possible, the co-chairs should accommodate schedules to ensure such representation can be present in the appropriate venue.

### Statement of Position

1. Those wishing to establish a position in writing may do so subject to the notification requirements outlined in Section 3
2. Statements of Position received prior to or during the meeting will be shared by the co-chair as part of the discussion on the related topic.
3. The presiding co-chair has the responsibility to voice and represent theses positions during relevant discussion, through they are not under obligation to support or defend them.
4. These statements do not carry the weight of a vote and are included as informational item only for consideration by the committee.
5. All Statements of Position received in electronic form will be included as attachments to the minutes.

# Roberts Rules of Order

1. The SGB shall rely upon Roberts Rules of Order in the event that formal guidance of parliamentary procedure is needed or requested.
2. In the interest of ensuring the effective and active engagement of all participants, the SGB shall follow its documented decision-making practices, referring to Roberts Rules of Order in the event of a question or concern. Since Robert’s Rules of Order provides formalism for addressing almost all matters of process, this provides a “backup mechanism” of formality in the event that it is required.
3. It is the responsibility of the presiding co-chair to guide the SGB to an efficient and effective outcome. The SGB shall follow, in this order of precedence, these Decision-making Practices (which cannot conflict with the HL7 Bylaws or Governance and Operations Manual), the HL7 Governance and Operations Manual, the HL7 Bylaws, and Roberts Rules of Order. The established decision-making practices can refine certain policies and procedures so long as they remain in accordance with the HL7 Governance and Operations Manual and Bylaws.
4. In the event that an issue arises where formality is required and no other guidance exists, Robert’s Rules of Order shall take precedence. This provides a “common denominator” to keep in-check the power of the presiding co-chair and to confirm the rights of all participants and members.

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