

THE ADVOCATES' SOCIETY PRACTICE GROUPS

TERMS OF REFERENCE

A. Mandate

1. Each Practice Group shall pursue the following objectives:
 - a. Enhancing the benefits associated with membership in The Advocates' Society ("TAS");
 - b. Fostering collegiality among advocates within a practice area;
 - c. Supporting continuing education by TAS within a practice area;
 - d. Supporting advocacy initiatives by TAS with respect to a practice area; and
 - e. Providing a forum for TAS members across all years of practice and across Canada.

B. Governance

1. Each Practice Group shall be under the direction of a Leadership Committee comprised of a Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary.
2. Each Practice Group Leadership Committee shall be assisted in carrying out its responsibilities by three Members-at-Large.
3. Each Practice Group Leadership Committee shall report to the Practice Groups Standing Committee in accordance with such schedule as may be determined by the Practice Groups Standing Committee.
4. In exceptional circumstances, the Practice Groups Standing Committee may consider proposed deviations from these Terms of Reference, recognizing that certain Practice Groups may face unique challenges with regard to membership and programming.

C. Terms of Leadership Committee and Members-at-Large

1. Each position on a Leadership Committee shall be for a period of approximately 12 months, beginning at the Annual General Meeting of one year and ending at the Annual General Meeting of the following year. The term of any position may be extended for up to an additional 12 months in exceptional circumstances with the approval of the TAS Board of Directors, on the recommendation of the Practice Groups Standing Committee.

2. Following expiry of the term of the Vice-Chair, she/he shall assume the position of the Chair for the following year.
3. Following expiry of the term of the Secretary, she/he shall assume the position of Vice-Chair for the following year.
4. The three Members-at-Large will each serve on the Practice Group for a period of approximately 12 months, beginning at the Annual General Meeting of one year and ending at the Annual General Meeting of the following year. The term of any Member-at-Large may be extended for an additional 12 months in exceptional circumstances with the approval of the TAS Board of Directors on the recommendation of the Practice Groups Standing Committee.

D. Appointments Process

1. The Members of the Leadership Committee and the three Members-at-Large shall be appointed having regard to TAS's objective of promoting diversity, encouraging regional representation, expanding and serving TAS's membership across Canada and providing opportunities for TAS members of varying years of practice.
2. For the 2018-2019 term (*i.e.*, the period of approximately 12 months, beginning at the 2018 Annual General Meeting and ending at the 2019 Annual General Meeting), each Practice Group's Leadership Committee and its three Members-at-Large shall be appointed by the TAS Board, on the recommendation of the Practice Groups Standing Committee.
3. Beginning in the 2019-2020 term (*i.e.*, the period of approximately 12 months, beginning at the 2019 Annual General Meeting and ending at the 2020 Annual General Meeting), the incoming Chair and Vice-Chair, in consultation with the outgoing Chair, shall select the Secretary for the subsequent term from among applications solicited from members of the Practice Group. For clarity, Members-at-Large are eligible to apply and to be selected to be Secretary.
4. Beginning in the 2019-2020 term, the incoming Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary, in consultation with the outgoing Members-at-Large, shall select the Members-at-Large for the subsequent term from among applications solicited from members of the Practice Group.
5. Beginning in the 2019-2020 term, appointments to the Practice Groups' Leadership Committees and Member-at-Large positions shall be subject to ratification by the TAS Board of Directors, on the recommendation of the Practice Groups Standing Committee.
6. Barring exceptional circumstances, one Member-at-Large will be a young advocate (that is, a TAS member who has been called to the bar for 10 years or less) and one Member-at-Large will be a 10+ member (that is, a TAS member who has been called to the bar for 10 to 18

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years). The third Member-at-Large may be a young advocate, a 10+ member or a TAS member who does not fit into either of those categories.

7. Barring exceptional circumstances, no two members of the Leadership Committee or Members-at-Large shall be from the same law firm or organization.
8. If the Chair resigns before the end of her/his term, the Vice-Chair shall move into the position of Chair, the Secretary shall move into the position of Vice-Chair, and a new Secretary shall be appointed. If the Vice-Chair resigns before the end of her/his term, the Secretary shall move into the position of Vice-Chair, and a new Secretary shall be appointed. If the Secretary resigns before the end of her/his term, a new Secretary shall be appointed. The appointments shall be made by the remaining members of the Leadership Committee.
9. If a Member-at-Large resigns before the end of her/his term, the Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Members-at-Large shall appoint a replacement Member-at-Large from among the members of the Practice Group.

E. Responsibilities

1. Members of the Leadership Committee and the Members-at-Large shall meet by teleconference call to coordinate the activities of the Practice Group, at a minimum, once per month during the term of the Leadership Committee.
2. The Chair of each Practice Group, in consultation with the other Leadership Committee members and the Members-at-Large, shall submit for approval, to the Practice Groups Standing Committee, by April 30 of each year, an outline of the planned activities of the Practice Group for the following calendar year (January 1 to December 31). In developing this outline of planned activities, each Practice Group shall consider any activities that have been planned by TAS's Education, National Advisory Committees and Collegiality, Membership and Mentoring Committees and by the Young Advocates' Standing Committee ("YASC") and the 10+ Task Force.
3. The Chair, assisted by the Vice-Chair, shall be responsible for planning and coordinating the activities of the Practice Group and reporting to the TAS Board, via the Practice Groups Standing Committee, on the activities of the Practice Group.
4. The Secretary and Members-at-Large shall be responsible for coordinating with TAS staff with respect to communications with, and participation by, Practice Group members in the activities of the Practice Group and other TAS initiatives.
5. Each Practice Group shall hold at least two programs each year including, where appropriate, one bench and bar event or networking event. At least one of those programs shall be accessible (in person or electronically) by TAS members outside Toronto.

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6. In planning Practice Group events, the Leadership Committee shall reflect TAS's objective of promoting diversity, providing services to TAS's membership across Canada and providing opportunities for TAS members of varying years of practice.
7. The Leadership Committee and Members-at-Large shall coordinate with the TAS Board, provincial Advisory Committees, YASC and the 10+ Task Force to foster participation and engagement by Practice Group members outside of the Greater Toronto Area ("GTA") and outside of Ontario. This could include organizing programs to be held via webcast or teleseminar. Where feasible, the Leadership Committee and Members-at-Large shall consider reproducing or sponsoring additional Practice Group events outside of the GTA and outside of Ontario.
8. The Leadership Committee, with the assistance of the Members-at-Large, shall oversee the Practice Group's contributions to some or all of the following areas, as appropriate:
 - a. Written content development, including producing articles for TAS's regular publications (*Advocacy Matters* and *Keeping Tabs*);
 - b. Support for Advocacy and Practice initiatives with respect to issues that closely affect the members of the Practice Group, including collaborating with the Standing Committee on Advocacy and Practice in relation to interventions and submissions to government, regulators, and other similar entities;
 - c. Promotion of TAS programs and content produced by or relevant to the Practice Group on social media;
 - d. Support for educational programming including submission of ideas for Practice Group-specific programming through new or existing programs including collaborating with the Education Committee in relation to learning-by-doing programs;and
 - e. With the approval of the Practice Groups Standing Committee, partnership or coordination, as appropriate, with other organizations whose programs or services would be of interest to the Practice Group.
9. The Practice Group Leadership Committee and Members-at-Large may be assisted by Practice Group members in carrying out initiatives referred to in E.6 through E.9 above.

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10. Upon request by the TAS Board or the Practice Groups Standing Committee, the Practice Group Leadership Committee and Members-at-Large shall complete an evaluation and debrief document within a reasonable time for each program it organizes.

F. Requests to Create Practice Groups

1. Any member of TAS may submit a proposal to the Practice Groups Standing Committee to create a Practice Group. The proposal should be made in writing and should include an outline of the name, subject area and goals of the Practice Group as well as a description of at least two proposed Practice Group events. The proposal should be supported by the signature of at least 10 TAS members who are interested in joining the Practice Group.
2. The Practice Groups Standing Committee should review the proposal and formulate a recommendation for the Board. In reviewing the proposal, the Practice Groups Standing Committee should consider a number of factors including: whether the Practice Group will attract sufficient interest from existing TAS members and/or will serve to attract new members to TAS, whether the goals of the group could be met through an existing Practice Group, whether the new Practice Group will diminish the membership or activities of one or more existing Practice Group(s), and whether TAS has sufficient staff and other resources to support the Practice Group.
3. If there is a concern about possible overlap of mandate or membership with an existing Practice Group, the views of the Leadership Committee of the existing Practice Group should also be consulted.
4. The recommendation of the Practice Groups Standing Committee concerning the proposal should be submitted to the Board for a final decision.
5. If the Board approves the creation of the new Practice Group, TAS staff should send an email communication to all existing TAS members announcing the creation of the group and inviting applications for the group's Leadership Committee and/or roles as Members-at-Large. The Practice Groups Standing Committee will review all of the applications received and make a recommendation to the Board regarding the initial Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Members-at-Large. The Board will make a final decision regarding these appointments.
6. Once the initial Leadership Committee and Members-at-Large have completed their term of office, subsequent roles will be filled in accordance with the procedures set out in paragraphs D3 through D9 above.

G. Requests to Dissolve Practice Groups

1. The Board may dissolve any Practice Group on the recommendation of the Practice Groups Standing Committee.
2. The Practice Groups Standing Committee may recommend dissolution of a Practice Group on the recommendation of TAS staff or where the Practice Group has not demonstrated an appropriate level of activity for at least two consecutive years. The Practice Groups Standing Committee may consider a number of factors including:
 - a. the Practice Group's past activities and events,
 - b. the number of TAS members actively engaged with the Practice Group; and
 - c. the group's prospects for growth in membership and/or member engagement.
3. Before recommending the dissolution of a Practice Group, the Practice Groups Standing Committee will give the Leadership Committee of the Practice Group the opportunity to make written submissions.