

ERA-EDTA SCIENTIFIC WORKING GROUPS

I. ERA-EDTA Working Group (WG).

WG's are expected to encourage research, communication of knowledge, teaching and contribute to education.

Working groups should cover/refer to areas of large interest for nephrology. They are created for the following reasons:

1. to improve the outcomes of renal patients and/or to promote and facilitate research in specific fields;
2. to foster communication among specialists with similar interests, with various other ERA-EDTA WG's and/or Committees;
3. to collaborate in the organisation of educational activities of the ERA-EDTA;
4. to foster communication with other Scientific Societies, and with other bodies that may support research in the field.

An ERA-EDTA Working Group (WG) must follow the rules outlined in this document.

II. Creation of a WG.

The creation of a WG must be approved by the ERA-EDTA Council.

For the creation of a working group, the Council must receive a list of at least 50 ERA-EDTA supporting members (categories A and B) and the list of the Board members.

The "Candidate WG" should present its proposals to the ERA-EDTA Renal Science Chair/Chair of the Administrative Offices (the official representative of the WGs within the Council), who must then submit it to the Council for final approval.

There should be a maximum number of ERA-EDTA WGs. The ERA-EDTA Council, according to the financial status of the Society, can decide at any Council meeting – with a

majority of 2/3 of the members present – to modify this number. Normally this number should be 8: only in exceptional cases, and for specific topics that are not covered by other existing WGs, a limited number of additional workgroups may be created. If and when this happens, the Council must provide a statement regarding this exception that will be then recorded in the Minutes of the Council meeting in which this is officially approved. Council can however decide to close and/or merge WGs at any time.

Each Working Group will have their own official logo.

III. Financial support.

ERA-EDTA will provide secretarial support to all its WGs, furthermore, it will cover the expenses linked to at least one board meeting a year possibly during the annual ERA-EDTA Congress. The expenses covered will include: travel, accommodation and eventual registration for the Board Members; meeting room, AV equipment, catering (specific details regarding travel/accommodation can be found in the "[General Rules ERA-EDTA Committees](#)").

The ERA-EDTA will also provide funds for specific initiatives (for example fellowships) linked to proposals submitted by the WGs: the ERA-EDTA Council will be in charge of deciding the nature of these initiatives.

The decision regarding which WG will receive the funds will be in the hands of the Council. ERA-EDTA's SAB (Scientific Advisory Board) will assist the ERA-EDTA Council in the evaluation process of the proposals. Proposals done in collaboration with other WGs and/or ERA-EDTA bodies will receive higher scores.

It will be the Council's responsibility to decide the amount allocated each year in the Association's budget for the WG activities.

Finally, ERA-EDTA will cover the expenses linked to the CME activity of the WGs that is part of the programme of the SEID (if any such meeting is organised): also in this case the Council will decide the CME programme based on the proposals submitted by the WGs. Proposals that include the collaboration of more WGs and/or ERA-EDTA Committees will receive a higher score. A specific committee (SEID Committee) will assist the Council in the evaluation process.

Any other kind of activity must be funded through other means (= sponsors).

If and when WGs receive support for their initiatives through sponsors, the money should be transferred to ERA-EDTA. ERA-EDTA will then earmark the amount so that it can be used by the WG for its activities (provided that the Council has approved them).

Sponsorship money can be transferred to future years if not spent in the year in which it is granted.

IV. Composition and terms.

The Working Group consists of a Chair, a Vice-Chair, board members and ordinary members.

1. Chair.

The Working Group is directed by the Chair. The Chair is proposed by the WG Board and nominated by the Council. He/she serves for 3 years and represents the Working Group with the Council. The Chair can be re-elected for another 3-year mandate. After the end of the tenure of office, the past Chair remains a member of the Working Group Board for maximum one other 3 year mandate, after this he/she can become an ordinary member of the Working Group.

During elections/voting held within the Board, in case of an equal number of votes, the Chair has the casting vote.

2. Vice-chair.

The Chair will propose the name of the Vice-Chair, who should be a Board member, and is elected by the Board. The Vice-Chair will assist the Chair in his/her duties and will also act as the Chair if the Chair cannot be present. Similar to the Chair, the term of the Vice-Chair is 3 years and he/she can be re-elected for another 3-year mandate. After the end of the tenure of office, the past Vice-Chair remains a Board member for maximum another 3 year mandate, after this he/she can become an ordinary member of the Working Group.

3. Chair and vice-chair.

The Chair, together with the Vice-Chair, are responsible for the scientific, educational and financial output of the Working Group. They are also responsible for the annual reports that must include a working plan and detailed list of costs and, if applicable, budget for future initiatives of the Working Groups; they must make sure that the Working Group follows the regulations outlined in this document and supervise the election procedure of the Board members, finally, they are responsible towards the Renal Science Chair/Chair of the Administrative Offices and the Administrative Coordinator with regard to the information necessary for the Annual Report.

V. Secretarial assistance (Administrative Coordinator).

The ERA-EDTA Headquarters will provide secretarial support to each Working Group. This will include taking care of the ordinary correspondence and assisting the Chair/Vice-Chair with any other kind of correspondence; up-dating the Working Group web-page according to the Chair/Vice-Chair's instructions; assisting with the newsletters of the WG and taking care of sending them; verifying the ERA-EDTA membership (categories A and B) of all the WG Board members, when applicable; organising the Board meetings and informing the Board members accordingly. He/she will also prepare the Minutes of the Board meetings, which must be approved by the Board members and sent to both the ERA-EDTA Secretary-Treasurer and the Renal Science Chair/Chair of the Administrative Offices.

The minutes should also be posted on the ERA-EDTA web-site, in a restricted and dedicated area for the WG, so that all the WG Board members can view them.

He/She must support the Chair and Vice-Chair with regard to assistance in preparing the eventual budgets and the costs for the annual reports; informing both about the regulations and assisting with the election procedure of the Board members.

VI. Board.

1. Composition.

The board is composed by 7 to 10 members including the Chair and Vice-Chair.

All WG Board members, including the Chair and the Vice-Chair, must be ERA-EDTA Full members (categories A and B), exceptions are possible only for non-nephrologists; in this last case, however, the country of residence must be within Europe, Countries bordering Europe as well as the Mediterranean Sea.

Industry, or industry representatives/employees, cannot be a WG board member - please see below for more details regarding this specific matter:

- a. Medical scientists - basic science scientists - technicians - engineers - employees - leaders receiving salaries and/or payments done on a regular basis directly by industry and working directly for industry will not be involved, directly or indirectly, in any ERA EDTA WG, will not participate in WGs' meetings, production of papers and/or written recommendations;

- b. Any person receiving a salary (or part of his/her salary) or a regular payment from a company as a result of the company having purchased the property of the medical centre or University where this person works, and who is active as a professional specialist physician or who is directly involved in patients' treatments may participate in the ERA-EDTA WGs. However, they will not be involved in the WGs' activities which may be affected or influenced, directly or indirectly, by their personal professional industry dependent work.

2. Election and rotation.

From the fourth year of the existence of the WG onwards, new Board members will be elected by the current Board members. To be eligible for the Board a member must have been an ordinary member of the WG for at least 2 years (or from its creation) or have a proven track record of relevant scientific expertise that would justify his/her being part of the board; he/she must also be an active ERA-EDTA Full member (categories A and B): exceptions to this last rule can only be made for non-nephrologists. Elections will be held during a WG Board meeting, whether in person, teleconference or email.

If a Board member leaves the Board before ending his/her term, the other Board members will elect his/her replacement. The newly elected Board member will then follow the normal term rotation.

Notice of any Board vacancy must be announced to all WG members and the ERA-EDTA contacts via the Society's newsletters and social media at least two months prior to the election date. This will be done by the WG Administrative Coordinator, under the supervision of the Chair/Vice-Chair.

Candidates for Board membership must send their application to the WG Vice-Chair, as well as supporting letters from two WG members (ordinary or Board) within the given deadline. The Administrative Coordinator will be in charge of verifying the eligibility of the candidates and informing the Board members at least 2 weeks prior to the meeting in which the election will take place. A special template must be used to submit candidatures (www.era-edta.org/2019_01_03_Working_Groups_Template_Candidate_Board.docx).

3. Confirmation and notification of new Board members.

The Board of WGs must be confirmed by the Council. After the Council's confirmation, the Chair of the WG will receive an official notification from the Renal Science Chair/Chair of the Administrative Offices; the WG Chair will then inform the single Board Members of their official Council acceptance.

4. Terms.

The term of Ordinary Board Members is 3 years that can be renewed for a second 3 year term.

No member can remain on the Board for more than 9 consecutive years.

When a Board member ends his/her term, a minimum break of at least 3 years is required before he/she can be re-elected as a Board member.

5. Transitional norm regarding the terms of the board.

Only for the first elections, in order to make sure that not all the WG Board members leave at the same time, 1/3 of the originally elected Board members must leave after the completion of their 3rd year within the Board; another 1/3 after their 4th year and, the remaining 1/3 after their 5th year of service on the Board (this rule does not apply to the Chair or the Vice-Chair). After this period the normal rotation of the board members will be applied. Each time Board members leave the Board, newly elected members can replace them.

The decision on who should leave the board should preferably be done by the Board members who wish to leave, however, in case of problems, the Board will vote on who will have to leave the Board upon a proposal with a list of names prepared by the Chair and Vice-Chair.

VII. Various.

1. All WG Board members must fill in the DoI online and keep it regularly up-dated. This is especially important for those WGs in which industry is already very heavily present and/or for which it has a high interest. It is essential that ERA-EDTA's WGs are absolutely independent from industry and, therefore, the Council can, at any time, decide to substitute or change Board members or modify/cancel any other report/activity of the WG if this is in the best interest of the Society;
2. If a person is already a Board member of a current WG, he/she cannot send his/her candidature to become a Board member in another WG, unless his/her term is ending in the prior WG. This rule however is not valid for the creation of the Board of new WGs;

3. A Board member who does not actively participate in the WG activities can be asked to resign from the Board: a vote of the WG Board must however be done for this to become effective;
4. Keeping in mind the requirements mentioned above, if possible, a balanced geographical representation of the Board members should also be taken into consideration when the members are appointed;
5. Only the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the WGs will receive a diploma (signed by the ERA-EDTA President and ERA-EDTA Secretary-Treasurer) upon ending their term. The diploma will be prepared by the Administrative Coordinator and will be given to the person ending his/her term by the Chair or the Chair-Elect at the first possible face-to-face Board meeting. If this is not possible, the diplomas can also be sent by post;
6. If deemed essential for the WG it is possible to have "external consultants" to the Board. A secret vote must be cast by the Board members before this exception can be considered valid. External consultants have no vote within the Board. "External consultants" however cannot be industry representatives or employees;
7. All Working Groups are strongly encouraged to include women and young members in their respective Boards;

VIII. The function of the WG Board members and Board meeting.

The duties of the Board members include:

1. Appointing the Chair;
2. Advancing proposals for the scientific and educational activities of the WG.

1. Board Meetings.

- a. The Board will meet once a year, while most of interaction will take place by various means of telecommunication. Normally at the annual ERA-EDTA Congress a Board meeting will take place. If possible, another annual WG meeting focusing on educational themes and on research proposals will be organised. In this last case

the costs will be taken from the eventual budget of the WGs, thus funds coming from sponsors;

- b. If a Board meeting is scheduled to take place during the ERA-EDTA Annual Congress, any ERA-EDTA Council member can participate in this meeting, upon request to the WG Chair, as an observer;
- c. Normally each WG that organises a board meeting during the annual ERA-EDTA Congress will receive a meeting room. The meeting rooms will be allocated on a first come, first serve basis: ERA-EDTA cannot therefore guarantee the exact date/time slot requested by the WG (specific details regarding this matter can be found in the "[General Rules ERA-EDTA Committees](#)");
- d. Board meetings (not linked to ERA-EDTA events) and teleconferences can be organised exclusively using the WG individual funds (if any) thus using support coming from third parties.

2. Reimbursement policy for Board members attending a Board meeting.

For the rules regarding the reimbursement policy for WG Board Members who participate in the face-to-face Board meeting organised at the time of the annual ERA-EDTA Congress (if any is organized) one must refer to the "[General Rules ERA-EDTA Committees](#)".

If the WG wishes to cover the costs of other guests that are not Board members, this can still be done, but, in this case, the costs will be taken from the eventual budget of the WGs, thus funds coming from sponsors.

3. External funding.

External funding raised by the WG must be used for scientific and educational activities approved by the ERA-EDTA Council.

IX. WG ordinary members.

Ordinary WG members must be persons with a proven interest in the research area covered by the WG.

Submission for WG membership should be addressed to the Chair of the WG, but will be processed by the Administrative Coordinator (under the supervision of the Chair/Vice-Chair).

After three years a WG Ordinary member will be asked to confirm if he/she still wishes to be part of the WG.

X. Reports and approval by council of WG activity.

When a new WG is formed, a mission statement and a three years project should be presented. After three years the Council should judge the fulfilment of the three year plan. Opinion from the SAB and any other body that the ERA-EDTA Council feels useful are possible and may be used for the final judgment by the Council. The report of the end of the three year WG activity should be presented to Council by the Chair of the WG.

The WG should present an annual report (to the Fall Council via the Renal Science Chair/Chair of the Administrative Offices). The WG's progress should normally be revised every three years by the ERA EDTA Council. In any case the Council can decide, after the presentation of each annual report, to close a WG: for this to happen a simple majority vote is required. The template to be used for this annual report can be found here: www.era-edta.org/2019_01_03_WGs_Annual_Report_Template.docx .

Participation by WG representatives in the ERA-EDTA Council will follow the following indication:

1. Fall Council: Chairs of new WGs must be invited to present their first report and the Chairs of current WGs presenting their three-year report;
2. any Council: Chairs of new and old WG can be invited only if necessary.

XI. Official WG Scientific and educational output.

WGs will produce as part of their objectives documents and articles. For certain types of documents, the ones that wish to give an "official view" on behalf of the WG, that is indeed also representing the Society, collaboration with ERBP is essential to obtain a coordinated output of scientific guidance, whilst safeguarding the individual freedom of opinion of each of the WG, and, at the same time, avoiding that potentially conflicting messages are produced.

Below are some examples of WGs documents and how these should be addressed:

1. A true "guidance" document/systematic review

This type of document provides guidance on the management of a certain condition. The guidance is provided in separate statements.

This type of documents should only be produced according to the highest standards of evidence based medicine and guideline production, as described in the following methods paper (Nagler et al, NDT 2013. [European Renal Best Practice \(ERBP\) Guideline development methodology: towards the best possible guidelines.](#))

In practice this implies a close collaboration with and support from the MST (Methods Support Team), and publications of this type should always be reviewed and endorsed by ERBP. The final document should include, in the list of authors, the name(s) of the MST member(s) involved.

2. A narrative review document

This type of document contains opinions based on literature data, but without a true systematic literature search being done. For this type of documents, it should be avoided that they create an impression of providing guidance, e.g. by providing separate statements. They should be clearly marked as narrative reviews.

Preferentially, these documents should be reviewed by the MST of ERBP to ensure methodological quality, but this is not a prerequisite as long as the previous points are taken into account.

3. A document presenting own original research done by the working group

This type of document describes original scientific content as produced by the collaborative effort of the working group. Although these documents clearly mention the working group and are thus linked to the society, they merely describe facts and observations from scientific research, and thus do not represent an "official viewpoint" of the society. The MST of ERBP can provide methodological advice when requested (for clinical/epidemiological studies), but this is not necessary nor mandatory.

4. Documents produced by members of the working group, on topics relating to the working group, but as "private" persons (so not referring to the working group)

This type of documents do not represent an official viewpoint of the ERA-EDTA, and there is thus no role for ERBP. This type of documents are *srictu sensu* no "working group" documents.

Any publication or report of the WG should, preferably, be submitted to one of the ERA-EDTA official journals; furthermore all publications, or scientific/educational events organised by the WG must clearly mention the fact that the WG is indeed a WG of ERA-EDTA. The sentence approved by Council related to this matter is: "This article (to be adapted accordingly) was written by (to be adapted accordingly) on behalf of (insert name of the WG) which is an official body of the ERA-EDTA (European Renal Association – European Dialysis and Transplant Association)."

All WGs can present their work at other national/international meetings, they must however clearly always highlight that they are an ERA-EDTA WG for visibility reasons. If however they wish to be part of an official ERA-EDTA session, held at an event that is NOT organised by ERA-EDTA, then they must send their request directly to the ERA-EDTA Council via the President.

In the event that WGs organise additional educational activities, the costs will be taken from the eventual budget of the WGs, thus funds coming from sponsors.

Educational meetings shall be preferably organised in collaboration with other ERA-EDTA committees/bodies.

At least 25% of the speakers should be women; it is highly advisable to include young speakers in the programme, furthermore, regarding nephrological topics, it is recommended to invite speakers who are ERA-EDTA members (cat A. and B.).

The Council will be in charge of evaluating the quality of the CME activity based on the following items:

- a. Scientific programme;
- b. Faculty;
- c. Number of participants, age range and country of practice;
- d. Type (basic, clinical and basic/clinical);
- e. Topic (more general/more specialised);
- f. Relevance of the topic;
- g. Educational value.

In order to further assist the Council in this evaluation, the replies of the post-Course survey that the participants will be requested to fill in will be available. The post-course survey will include questions related to the following aspects of the meeting:

- a. Scientific Programme;
- b. Speakers;
- c. Educational value;
- d. Clinical value;
- e. Teaching tools and methods used during the event;
- f. Organisation.

Last approval by the ERA-EDTA Council done by email vote on February 13, 2019 (recorded in the minutes of the Council meeting held in London (U.K.), February 21-23, 2019).