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OACETT

(ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF CERTIFIED ENGINEERING TECHNICIANS AND TECHNOLOGISTS)

2025 MEMBER RESOURCE GROUP (MRG) POLICY

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For: OACETT
2025 MRG POLICY

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MEMBER RESOURCE GROUP (MRG) POLICY

1. Purpose

OACETT is committed to fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization where all members feel valued and supported. Member Resource Groups (MRGs) serve as voluntary, member-led communities that contribute to this mission by promoting awareness, advocacy, professional development and a sense of belonging. This policy establishes the framework for the formation, operation, and governance of MRGs within OACETT to ensure alignment with the Belonging and Inclusion Committee's (BIC) and the association's broader goals to continuously enhance belonging and inclusion for all members.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all members of OACETT. Participation in MRGs is voluntary and open to all members who support the group's purpose. In the spirit of inclusion, an MRG Terms of Reference may not make membership/participation in the MRG exclusionary in any fashion. Allies and champions are important participants as well. That said, disruptive or disrespectful participation will not be tolerated and could be subject to discipline under OACETT's Rules of Professional Conduct.

3. Formation & Approval Process

- Members interested in forming a new MRG must submit a proposal to the Belonging and Inclusion Committee for review, following an initial consultation with the BIC Chair.
- Proposals must include:
    - MRG purpose and alignment with OACETT's 2024 Belonging and Inclusion Committee Strategy Report
    - Anticipated membership and engagement strategy
    - Who will serve as Liaison
    - Preliminary 12-month activity plan
- The Belonging and Inclusion Committee will review proposals on a quarterly basis and provide approval or feedback within eight weeks of submission.
- Once approved, MRGs will be asked to develop a Terms of Reference Document, using the template provided by the Belonging and Inclusion Committee.
- Approved MRGs will be announced OACETT-wide and supported in their initial launch.

4. MRG Governance & Leadership

- Each MRG must have a Liaison, serving as primary point of contact and responsible for planning and execution.
- Leadership terms last for two years, renewable based on interest and performance for a maximum of three two-year terms. Subsequent Liaison positions are filled via an application process, with eligible candidates standing for a vote by MRG members.
- MRG Liaisons will be asked to participate in a virtual annual MRG Leadership Summit to share updates, best practices, and coordinate cross-MRG initiatives.

Leadership Transition

- To ensure continuity, outgoing Liaisons are encouraged to mentor incoming Liaisons during a 1–2 month transition period.
- A leadership transition plan should include:
  - Handover of key documents (activity plans, budget, reports).
  - Status update on ongoing initiatives.
  - Introductions to active members and relevant OACETT contacts.
- In the event of an unexpected vacancy, an interim Liaison may be appointed by the Belonging and Inclusion Committee until a new Liaison is selected.
- Former Liaisons are encouraged to remain engaged as advisors or active members.

5. Operational Guidelines

MRGs are encouraged to:

- Provide a safe and supportive space for members to connect and engage.
- Align initiatives with OACETT's business priorities and the promotion of belonging and inclusion.
- Prepare an annual activity plan for submission to the Belonging and Inclusion Committee by the end of August each year for consideration in terms of budget requirements.
- Collaborate with other MRGs and external partners to enhance impact.

MRGs must not:

- Promote partisan political affiliations or agendas.

- Speak on behalf of OACETT without prior approval from OACETT Staff or senior volunteer leadership.

6. Conflict Resolution Process

MRGs are expected to provide a respectful and inclusive space. When conflicts arise, the following process applies:

1. Informal Resolution

- Members should first attempt to resolve disagreements informally through respectful dialogue.
- The MRG Liaison may facilitate these conversations to ensure all voices are heard.

2. Internal Escalation to the MRG Liaison

- If informal resolution is unsuccessful, the matter should be brought formally to the MRG Liaison in writing.
- The Liaison will review the concern, meet with the parties involved, and propose a resolution within 14 days.
- If the Liaison is directly involved in the conflict, another member of the MRG may serve as interim facilitator.

3. Escalation to the Belonging and Inclusion Committee

If the conflict cannot be resolved internally, or if the parties do not accept the Liaison's resolution, the matter will be escalated to the BIC.

The BIC will:

- Review written documentation of the issue and prior resolution attempts.
- If appropriate, meet separately with each party to understand perspectives.
- Facilitate a mediation session, aiming for a collaborative resolution.
- The BIC will issue a written decision within 30 days of escalation. This decision will be final.

4. Outcomes & Accountability

- Possible outcomes include: facilitated dialogue, changes to group processes, reassignment of roles, or (in cases of ongoing misconduct) referral under OACETT's Rules of Professional Conduct.

- All decisions will be documented and retained in the MRG's annual report for accountability and learning purposes.

7. Inactive Groups

- MRGs are expected to maintain active membership and programming aligned with their annual activity plan.
- A group will be considered inactive if it:
    - Fails to submit required annual reports, or
    - Holds no meetings or activities for 6 consecutive months, or
    - Membership falls below a sustainable threshold (to be determined with the Belonging and Inclusion Committee).
- The BIC will notify the MRG Liaison if the group appears inactive and provide an opportunity to respond.
- The group may request additional support, such as recruitment assistance, leadership coaching, or planning resources, to re-establish activity.

Dissolution

- If the group remains inactive after a review and support period, the BIC may initiate dissolution.
- Dissolution includes:
    - Formal notice to members of the group.
    - Closure of the group's budget and activities.
    - Retention of records (activity plans, reports) for historical reference.
- Members of a dissolved group are encouraged to continue engaging in other MRGs and may submit a proposal in the future to re-form the group when sustainability is achievable.

8. Funding & Budget

- MRGs will receive an annual budget, based on their annual activity plan and allocated by the Belonging and Inclusion Committee. The budget will be managed by the Liaison within each MRG. Given the potential for limited budget resources to share among the MRGs, some activities may not be able to be funded.
- Budget utilization must be tracked and reported annually to the Belonging and Inclusion Committee.
- Budget will be allocated on an expense reimbursement basis. If the size or the cost of an activity makes expense reimbursement problematic, OACETT staff can be consulted for other options

- MRGs may request additional funding for major initiatives, subject to Belonging and Inclusion Committee approval and the availability of resources.
- MRGs may lead or participate in fundraising efforts to support initiatives aligned with their mission and vision, where organizational funds are not available.

9. Reporting & Accountability

- MRGs are required to submit annual reports to the Belonging and Inclusion Committee, summarizing:
    - Membership engagement (number of active members).
    - Activity participation & impact (attendance and feedback).
    - Key accomplishments and contributions to OACETT's BI efforts.
    - Use of allocated budget (per the note above)
- Annual reviews will assess MRG impact and sustainability, guiding future funding and leadership planning.

10. Policy Review & Amendments

- This policy will be reviewed annually by the Belonging and Inclusion Committee and updated as required.

11. Related Policies

- Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Policy
- 2024 BIC Strategy Report.
- Code of Ethics and Rules of Professional Conduct

Version Control: V1
Last Reviewed Date: [Insert Date]
Next Review Due: [Insert Date]
Reviewer: [Insert Name & Title]