CultureAlly

OACETT

(ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF CERTIFIED ENGINEERING TECHNICIANS AND TECHNOLOGISTS)

2025 MEMBER RESOURCE GROUP (MRG) TOOLKIT

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MEMBER RESOURCE GROUP (MRG) TOOLKIT

Introduction

Member Resource Groups (MRGs) at OACETT play a vital role in fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization where members feel heard, and develop a sense of belonging. MRGs provide a platform for members to connect, share experiences, and drive initiatives that enhance OACETT's culture and impact within the profession and surrounding communities. This guide is designed to help MRG Liaisons and members understand their roles, structure their activities, and create meaningful engagement across the organization.

1. MRG Structure and Roles

MRG Oversight & Support

- **Member-Led, Association-Supported:** MRGs at OACETT are fully member-driven and self-reliant while aligning with the association's broader Belonging and Inclusion (B&I) strategy.
- **Belonging and Inclusion Committee Support:** The Belonging and Inclusion Committee serves as a strategic sponsor to MRGs, providing resources and support.

Roles

- **MRG Liaison:** Organizes and oversees meetings, activities and the development of an annual activity plan and budget, ensuring inclusive discussions align with our MRG principles and BI objectives. The Liaison may recruit other members to share leadership tasks as desired/required.
- **MRG Members:** General members who participate in discussions and activities, contribute to initiatives, and help create inclusive spaces within the association.

2. Simplifying an MRG

Launching an MRG

1. **Arrange a preliminary consultation with Belonging and Inclusion Committee Chair.**
2. **Recruit members to form an MRG.** The BI Committee can offer support to recruit members if the Liaison needs additional support.
3. **Establish the initial Liaison:** Consider if leadership should be rotated to assist in building facilitation skills across the group, sharing the administrative workload, etc.
4. **Create an MRG Name:** Collaborate to establish a meaningful and inclusive name that reflects the MRG's purpose and identity.
5. **Submit your MRG proposal** to the BI Committee to ensure that you can access their support. (a template is provided).

6. **Draft an MRG Terms of Reference:** Establish a document that defines MRG's mission, vision, structure, and objectives. Your Terms of Reference can evolve over time as the group changes and grows. (a template is provided).
7. **Consider planning an MRG Kickoff Event:** A launch event to introduce the MRG, share its mission, and encourage participation. This could be as simple as an email communication to all OACETT members. This should be approved by the BI Committee prior to launch.

Membership & Engagement

- MRGs are open to all OACETT members.
- Encourage both active members (who participate in initiatives) and allies who support the MRG's mission.
- Recruitment should be ongoing, leveraging MRG champions and internal communication channels.
- Ensure a smooth and welcoming onboarding experience by providing clear materials and opportunities for early connection, helping members feel engaged from the start.
- The OACETT Linx app will be the primary communication and collaboration medium and staff support will be provided to set up a group.

3. MRG Planning & Key Activities

Annual Planning

MRG Liaisons should develop a 12-month activity plan, identifying key initiatives, engagement strategies, and milestones. A 12-Month Activity Planning Template is included in this MRG toolkit.

MRG Initiatives & Activities

MRG programming could include a mix of:

- **Educational/Personal Development Opportunities:** Panels, guest speakers, mentoring programs, skills workshops and discussions on topics relevant to the MRG community.
- **Community & Social Events:** Networking opportunities, informal gatherings, and culture-building activities.
- **Awareness Campaigns:** Recognizing key cultural moments and BI-focused events.
- **Online Discussion Threads:** Through the OACETT Linx App
- **Sharing Resources**

A BI Calendar Guide is available to help plan activities around recognized dates and observances. Consider that virtual activities provide the potential for engagement with the largest number of members.

4. MRG Communication and Engagement

Clear and inclusive communication helps MRGs stay visible, accessible, and engaging for all members. To support this, MRGs should:

- **Create Awareness:** Share your MRG's mission, goals, and activities through consistent updates that generate excitement and encourage participation.
- **Use Multiple Channels:** Leverage tools such as newsletters, OACETT Linx, Teams, and Chapter meetings to reach members in different ways.
- **Incorporate Storytelling:** Highlight member experiences and initiatives through formats like spotlights, short videos, or event recaps to foster connection and build understanding.
- **Ensure Accessibility:** Make communications clear and inclusive by considering diverse needs (e.g., mobile-friendly formats, screen-reader compatibility, captions).
- **Maintain a Resource Hub:** Provide a central repository of relevant materials, tools, and examples so members can access information and inspiration easily.

Together, these practices ensure members not only know about the MRG but also feel welcomed, informed, and motivated to get involved

5. MRG Success & Sustainability

Building Momentum & Sustaining Engagement

- **Create Visibility:** Use multiple communication channels (newsletters, Teams, Chapter meetings, OACETT Linx etc.) to promote MRG activities.
- **Foster Inclusion:** Ensure all members as well as OACETT staff, have access to MRG programming.
- **Measure Impact:** Track engagement, attendance, and member feedback to assess the MRG's effectiveness.
- **Leadership Development:** Encourage MRG members to take on leadership opportunities within the group.

Cross-MRG Collaboration

MRG Liaisons are encouraged to collaborate with other MRGs on intersectional topics and joint initiatives to create a more unified and impactful member experience. Cross-MRG collaboration fosters knowledge-sharing, amplifies initiatives, and strengthens overall engagement across OACETT.

A key mechanism for fostering collaboration is the annual, virtual MRG Leadership Summit, which serves as an opportunity where MRG Liaisons can align on planned activities, share best practices, and ensure consistency in execution. This Summit provides:

- A structured opportunity for MRG Liaisons to meet, discuss challenges, and explore opportunities for joint initiatives.
- Alignment with the Belonging and Inclusion Committee, ensuring that MRGs have strategic support and resources to drive meaningful impact.
- Stronger cross-MRG partnerships, allowing different MRGs to collaborate on events, training, and awareness campaigns that intersect multiple communities and organizations within the profession.
- A platform for knowledge-sharing, ensuring that successful initiatives and engagement strategies are shared and replicated across MRGs.

MRG Liaisons should work together to:

- Identify common goals and intersectional themes that impact multiple MRGs.
- Plan joint events and initiatives to maximize reach and resources.
- Share insights, challenges, and best practices to strengthen each MRG's impact.

By leveraging the MRG Leadership Summit as a collaboration opportunity, MRGs can increase visibility, amplify their initiatives, and create a stronger, more cohesive BI strategy within OACETT.

Additionally, MRG Liaisons should schedule ad-hoc meetings as needed to address urgent matters, coordinate large-scale initiatives, or respond to emerging BI topics.

6. Next Steps & Resources

Key Action Items for MRG Liaisons[1]

- Review the MRG Terms of Reference Template and working guide and draft your MRG's Terms of Reference.
- Begin using the 12-Month Activity Plan Template to map out goals.
- Plan and schedule your MRG Kickoff Event.
- Leverage the BI Calendar Guide to plan awareness and engagement activities.
- Create a communications plan to share MRG updates and resources across OACETT channels.

[1] *All templates and resources can be found in the MRG Toolkit

MEETING BEST PRACTICES

Pre-Meeting Preparation:

- Send out an agenda at least 48 hours in advance
- Ensure all materials, updates, and discussion topics are ready
- Assign facilitators or discussion leads as needed

During the Meeting:

- Start and end on time to respect participants' schedules
- Encourage inclusive participation by ensuring all voices are heard
- Maintain a safe and respectful space for open dialogue

Post-Meeting Follow-Up:

- Share meeting notes or key takeaways with attendees
- Track and follow up on action items with responsible individuals
- Gather feedback on meeting effectiveness and areas for improvement

MRG PROPOSAL FORM

Thank you for your interest in creating a Member Resource Group (MRG)! This is a great opportunity to help us foster an inclusive, vibrant culture. As an MRG, members will collaborate on activities and events, contributing a few hours each month to help build a positive, connected inclusive OACETT. Please complete this short application to help us understand your proposed MRG's purpose.

This will be reviewed by the Belonging and Inclusion Committee. You may be contacted to provide additional information.

1. Your Name:
[Text Field]

2. MRG Name
[Text Field]

3. MRG Focus Area
[Text Field]

4. What knowledge, perspectives, or experiences will you (and any fellow organizations) contribute to the creation of the MRG?
[Text Field: Please describe the unique contributions you bring that will support the group's establishment and success.]

5. What outcomes and benefits do you hope the MRG will create?
[Text Field: Briefly describe the group's purpose, intended audience, and the positive impact you aim to achieve.]

7. What engagement strategies would this MRG facilitate?
[Text Field: Share the types of activities you plan to use to engage members (e.g., events, mentorship, networking).]

8. Please confirm you are willing to serve as the inaugural Liaison for the MRG?
Information on this role is available in the MRG Toolkit, Section 1: MRG Structure and Roles.
[Yes/No Buttons]

9. Have other OACETT members expressed an interest in joining an MRG with this purpose? If so, please identify them below.
[Text Field]

OACETT MRG TERMS OF REFERENCE TEMPLATE

I. MRG NAME

- Official Name of the MRG: *[Insert Name]*
- If applicable, include an abbreviation or tagline to be used in communications.

II. MISSION ANDVISION

Mission:

A short statement that captures why the MRG exists — its core purpose and the impact it hopes to have.

Vision:

A future-focused statement that describes the kind of community the MRG is working to help create.

III. MEMBERSHIP

Eligibility:

Define who can join, ensuring the MRG remains inclusive and aligns with OACETT's MRG policy.

> *Example:*
> "Membership is open to all OACETT members and employees, regardless of role or location, who identify with or support the mission of the MRG."

Voluntary Participation:

Confirm that participation is completely voluntary.

> *Example:*
> "All participation in the MRG is voluntary. Members may contribute at any level that aligns with their availability and interests."

IV. LEADERSHIP AND ROLES

Leadership Structure & Responsibilities:

Each MRG at OACETT will have a Liaison, responsible, at minimum, for developing and ensuring the execution of an annual activity plan and budget. Each MRG can determine what additional leadership roles and responsibilities may be required to achieve its vision.

Leadership Selection & Term Limits:

Initial MRG Liaisons are appointed as part of their role in submitting the application to establish an MRG. Liaisons are asked to make a minimum two-year commitment to serving in the leadership capacity to ensure consistency and engagement. A Liaison may serve for a maximum of three two-year terms, based on interest and performance. Subsequent Liaisons will be recruited and selected in accordance with the "Subcommittee" section of OACETT's Committees of the Board Policy GP105, substituting "Liaisons" for "Chairs".

V. MEETING SCHEDULE

Each MRG will establish a meeting cadence that best supports their mission, vision and activity plan.

VI. CODE OF CONDUCT

Behavioral Expectations:

All MRG members are expected to:

- Maintain respectful communication and inclusive behaviour at all times.
- Adhere to OACETT's [BI policies, MRG Policy and Code of Ethics and Rules of Professional Conduct.
- Foster an environment where all members feel safe, valued, and empowered.

Conflict Resolution:

If conflicts arise, members should:

1. Attempt to resolve the issue through discussion with involved parties.
2. If unresolved, escalate concerns to the Belonging and Inclusion Committee
3. Further escalations may be directed to senior OACETT volunteer leadership.

VII. PLANNING AND GOAL-SETTING

[MRG Name] will create a 12-month activity plan each year, outlining key priorities, initiatives and budget requirements.

VIII. BUDGET AND RESOURCES

- [MRG Name] may receive annual funding based on available resources and the submission of a detailed 12-month activity plan including budget requirements
- MRG will submit expenses for reimbursement against an approved budget and will provide a year-end report on the use of allocated funds, as part of the Annual Report referenced below.
- [MRG Name] may request additional resources for large-scale initiatives, depending on the availability of resources.
- [MRG Name] may lead or participate in fundraising efforts to support initiatives aligned with their mission and vision, where organizational funds are not available.

IX. REPORTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Annual Report:

[MRG Name] is expected to report annually on:

- 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)

Reports will be submitted annually to the Belonging and Inclusion Committee.

X. AMENDMENTS TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

- Any proposed changes to these Terms of Reference must be reviewed and approved by the MRG members.
- Final approvals should then be sought from the Belonging and Inclusion Committee to ensure alignment.

OACETT MRG 12-MONTH ACTIVITY PLAN TEMPLATE

MRG Name: [Insert MRG Name]
Prepared By: [Insert Name(s)]
Date Prepared: [Insert Date]
Next Revision Date: [Insert Date]

1. MRG Purpose & Strategic Alignment

Mission Statement

Insert MRG mission statement from the Terms of Reference.

Vision

- Insert MRG vision statement from the Terms of Reference.

Alignment with OACETT's BI Strategy

- How does the MRG contribute to OACETT's overall BI goals?
- What role does this MRG play in fostering inclusion and engagement within the organization?

2. Membership & Recruitment Strategy

Membership Growth & Engagement

- How will the MRG attract new members?
- What strategies will be used to retain engagement and participation?

Ally Engagement Strategy

- How will the MRG encourage ally participation and foster a culture of inclusion?
- What opportunities exist for cross-functional collaboration?

3. Programming & Events

Annual Activity Plan

Identify key activities, events, initiatives, and awareness campaigns for the year.

Activity	Description	Target Date	Lead	Budget
Activity 1	[Describe the activity]	[Q1/Q2/Q3/Q4]	[Lead Name]	
Activity 2	[Describe the activity]	[Q1/Q2/Q3/Q4]	[Lead Name]	
Activity 3	[Describe the activity]	[Q1/Q2/Q3/Q4]	[Lead Name]	
TOTAL				

Key Considerations for Activity Planning

- What resources are needed to successfully execute these activities?
- How will activities be communicated and promoted?
- How will feedback be gathered on the success/impact of the activity?

4. Communication Strategy

- How will MRG updates, activities, and opportunities be shared with members?
- What internal communication channels will be leveraged? (e.g., OACETT Linx, email, Chapters, social media)

5. Cross-MRG Collaboration

Opportunities for Cross-MRG Collaboration

- What initiatives or events can be co-hosted with other MRGs?
- How will this MRG support intersectional BI efforts?

6. Continuous Improvement Feedback & Evaluation Process

- How will feedback from MRG members be collected and incorporated into planning?
- What processes will be used to evaluate and refine MRG initiatives?

MRG ACTIVITY AND INITIATIVES EXAMPLES

Professional Development & Career Growth

1. Mentorship & Sponsorship Programs: Pair MRG members with senior leaders for career guidance and support.
2. Leadership Development Workshops: Host sessions focused on skills such as public speaking, negotiation, and career advancement.
3. MRG Member Spotlight Series: Feature stories of MRG members and their professional journeys in internal newsletters.
4. Resume & Interview Coaching Sessions: Provide members with tips on resume writing, LinkedIn optimization, and interview techniques.
5. Navigating Career Growth as a Minority: Storytelling on overcoming barriers to advancement for marginalized groups.

Community Engagement & Social Impact

6. Volunteer & Give-Back Days: Partner with local nonprofits and organize volunteer opportunities that align with MRG missions.
7. Supplier Diversity Fair: Highlight and partner with businesses owned by diverse entrepreneurs and community leaders.
8. MRG-Led Community Outreach: Organize health and wellness workshops, donation drives, or skill-building programs in local communities.
9. Industry Mentorship & Career Days: Host informational sessions with professionals from underrepresented groups to guide aspiring members.
10. MRG-Backed Policy Recommendations: Work with the Belonging and Inclusion Committee to advocate for member policies that support organizational equity and inclusion.

Awareness, Education & Training

11. Lunch & Learn Sessions: Host discussions on BI-related topics, from cultural celebrations to allyship strategies.
12. Speaker Series: Invite experts to discuss topics like unconscious bias, accessibility, and intersectionality.
13. Book & Film Club Discussions: Choose books or films related to social justice, equity, or cultural heritage and facilitate discussions.
14. Employee Storytelling Event: Create a safe space for members to share personal experiences and perspectives.
15. Cultural Competency Training: Provide learning sessions on understanding and respecting different cultures across the organization.

16. Disability Inclusion Awareness Workshops: Educate members on how to create a more accessible and inclusive environment.
17. Microaggressions & Bias Awareness: Offer resources or training on recognizing and addressing unconscious biases and microaggressions.
18. MRG-Led Roundtable Discussions: Host open conversations on issues affecting different communities within OACETT.
19. How to Be an Effective BI Ally: Equip members with practical tools and resources to support marginalized colleagues.
20. Faith & Religious Inclusion Dialogues: Explore different faith traditions and how to foster religious inclusivity within OACETT.

Health, Wellness & Well-Being

21. Mental Health Check-Ins & Wellness Days: Organize sessions with therapists, meditation guides, or fitness professionals.
22. Neurodiversity & Association Inclusion: Host workshops on supporting neurodivergent members in professional settings.
23. MRG Well-Being Challenge: Encourage members to participate in a wellness challenge promoting self-care.
24. Cultural Food & Nutrition Events: Explore traditional foods from different cultures and how they contribute to well-being.
25. Work-Life Balance Panels: Discussions on managing family, stress, and mental health as a diverse professional.

Employee Engagement & Networking

26. MRG Socials & Team-Building Activities: Informal meetups to strengthen relationships among MRG members.
27. Speed Networking Sessions: Fast-paced virtual or in-person meet-and-greet opportunities to build community.
28. MRG Peer Circles & Support Groups: Create affinity-based discussion groups for members with shared experiences.
29. MRG Knowledge Sharing Series: Provide opportunities for MRG members to share skills, experiences, and industry insights with colleagues.
30. Heritage & Cultural Celebration Events: Organize events for Black History Month, Pride Month, Indigenous Heritage Month, etc., with guest speakers, music, and storytelling.