POLICY ON SECTIONS

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1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this Policy is to define the requirements for the establishment and operation of Sections within the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine (ACEM; ‘the College’).

Sections come under the jurisdiction of the governing body to which they are accountable. Liaison between Sections and any other College entity is, ordinarily, conducted via the relevant College Executive Director(s).

2. TERMINOLOGY

**College member**
means a person admitted as a member of the College pursuant to the provisions of the ACEM Constitution and associated regulations, and, for the purposes of this policy, also includes trainees.

**External member**
means a person (not being an ACEM member or trainee) whose membership of a Section would, in the opinion of the governing body, enhance or promote the work of a particular Section – for example, a representative from another organisation, a consumer representative, a person with a special expertise in a particular area.

**Governing body**
means the ACEM Board, the Council of Advocacy, Practice and Partnerships (CAPP), or the Council of Education (COE), which has overall responsibility for and authority over the Section in question.

**Special area of practice**
means a particular identifiable area of practice within the body of knowledge that is emergency medicine and formally designated as such by the applicable Council and/or the ACEM Board.

**Trainee**
means trainees enrolled in and undertaking the FACEM Training Program and, for the purposes of this policy, also includes Emergency Medicine Certificate and Emergency Medicine Diploma trainees, and Specialist International Medical Graduates (SIMGs) undertaking College requirements for the purpose of attaining eligibility for election to Fellowship of the College.

3. SECTION MEMBERSHIP

3.1 Composition

A Section shall include a minimum of 30 FACEM members, with no maximum limit on the total number of College members.

At its discretion, the governing body may grant approval for the Section to include external members.

**Applications for membership**
Applications for membership of a Section shall be submitted in writing in the format approved by the ACEM Board from time to time, and must be accompanied by all additional information as requested.

3.2 Section Executive

Each Section shall have an Executive consisting of a minimum of four (4) and a maximum of six (6) FACEM members. The Executive shall be responsible for conducting the activities of the Section.

The Section Executive shall have a Chair and a Deputy Chair, who shall be the Section’s office bearers.

A maximum of one each of external and/or supernumerary non-voting members may be co-opted where the Section’s Terms of Reference so permit.
Appointments to Executive

The members of the Section Executive shall be appointed by the governing body, on the nomination of the College members of the Section, for a period of two (2) years. Nomination to the governing body shall follow the outcome of an election by a process outlined in Regulations approved by the ACEM Board for the purpose.

The Chair and Deputy Chair shall be appointed by the governing body following the appointment of the Section Executive. Appointment will be by a simple majority vote of the governing body following a call for nominations from the membership of the Executive.

The term of office and maximum tenure of the Section Executive shall be in accordance with the provisions of Section 3.5 of the College Policy on College Entities (COR334).

Casual Vacancies

A casual vacancy arising in the Section Executive shall be filled in accordance with the provisions of the College Policy on College Entities (COR334).

3.3 Revocation of Appointments

The appointment of any member to the Section Executive and/or any office bearer position may be revoked at any time by resolution of a majority of members present at any meeting of the governing body of which notice had been circulated to all members of the governing body and the Section Executive member at least fourteen (14) days prior to the meeting.

4. FORMATION OF SECTIONS

(a) A proposal, made on behalf of at least 30 Fellows of the College, may be made to the governing body for the formation of a Section. Any such request must be submitted in writing to the Chair of the applicable governing body and include:

   (i) a written statement of up to 500 words that outlines the nature of the special area of practice the Section intends to pursue, the rationale for the proposal, and how the intended activities of the Section align with the ACEM Objects as described in the Constitution, and the objectives of the current ACEM Strategic and Business Plans; and

   (ii) written evidence of sufficient Expressions of Interest for membership of the proposed Section (i.e. the names and signatures of those Fellows on whose behalf the proposal is made.

(b) Where the governing body to which the proposal is made endorses the formation of the Section, a recommendation will be made to the ACEM Board that the formation be approved.

(c) Where formation of a Section is approved, the governing body shall notify the College membership and request Expressions of Interest from FACEMs for membership of the Section. Those Fellows on whose behalf the proposal referred to in (a) was made will be invited to confirm that they wish to be identified as members of the Section. Once the minimum threshold of members as outlined in this policy has been achieved, nominations from those admitted as members of the Section shall be called for positions on the Section Executive.

Pursuant to Section 3.2 of this policy, the governing body shall then organise for the appointment of the first Executive of the Section, which shall hold office until the date at which the entities of the governing body are next scheduled to be confirmed following a ‘spill’ process.

An extended inaugural term may be granted by the governing body if the proximity of the ‘spill’ would make it impractical to implement. Thereafter, appointment to the Section Executive shall be made in accordance with clause 3.2 of this Policy and the Policy on College Entities.
5. **ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY**

5.1 **Role**

The primary role of a Section is to promote and advance the objects of the College as they relate to the area of practice, and in the context of the College’s strategic and business plans. In particular, this may include matters such as:

(a) to promote communication between practitioners with an interest in the special area of practice

(b) to promote education and scientific activities and meetings focussing on the special area of practice

(c) to facilitate and encourage research in the area of special area of practice

(d) to progress issues or recommendations for or on behalf of the consideration of the applicable governing body.

5.2 **Responsibility**

Each Section shall:

(a) advise the governing body promptly of any matter arising in the special area of practice likely to affect the interests of the College or its members, and

(b) make suggestions to the governing body for appropriate action in relation to such matters.

6. **AUTHORITY**

A Section may only act in accordance with its Terms of Reference and having regard to the provisions of this and all applicable College policies. Pursuant to Section 5.2(b), a Section does not have any authority to make decisions that are binding on the College or any of its entities, including in regard to the commitment of resources to activities of the Section.

6.1 **Limitations on Authority**

Unless otherwise provided for in its Terms of Reference, a Section expressly does not have authority:

(a) to initiate any action or communication of any opinion on any matters to any person or authority or organisation, except in situations where communication with medical or other bodies is undertaken as an endorsed representative of the College as part of the relationship between the College and that body, or in accordance with any other College policies

(b) to decide any issue or matter, but only to make recommendations (apart from where expressly specified in the Terms of Reference as agreed by the governing body)

(c) to waive, vary or otherwise depart from:
   - its Terms of Reference
   - the terms or requirements of any approved College policy, regulation, guideline or similar applicable document, and
   - the requirements of the Constitution and any relevant legislation.

(d) to bind or enter into any contract or other liability on behalf of the College.
7. **STANDARDS OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS**

Section members are to act in accordance with the standards of conduct and ethics appropriate to the aims and purposes of the College and the Section at all times.

In particular, members are to comply with the provisions of the following:

- *Code of Conduct (COR235)*
- *Member-Staff Relations Policy (COR304)*

8. **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

(a) The Terms of Reference of a Section shall be determined by its governing body, and may include any requirement, limitation or other condition as the governing body deems appropriate.

(b) In respect of each Section, the Terms of Reference shall include the following:

- the membership criteria
- specified membership of the Section
- the roles and responsibilities of the Section, and
- the group’s terms of operation.

8.1 **Lines of Reporting**

(a) Each Section shall report on its activities to the governing body following the meetings of its members and/or its Executive, or as required by the governing body. At the discretion of the applicable governing body, a Section may be required to report on its activities to a parent entity and through it to the governing body.

(b) Any Section whose role involves providing recommendations on the disbursement of College funds, whether by way of bursary, scholarship, monetary assistance or otherwise, shall:

- provide these recommendations to the Board via the ACEM Foundation, and
- report on these and its other activities to the governing body.

9. **CONDUCT OF EXECUTIVE MEETINGS**

9.1 **Meetings of Executive**

Meetings of the Section Executive shall be held at least twice a year, but shall meet more frequently where necessary. One (1) of these meetings shall held face-to-face, and the remainder by teleconference.

9.2 **Quorum**

(a) The required quorum for the transaction of business at an Executive meeting is:

- where the Executive consists of either four or five members – three (3) members; or
- where the Executive consists of six members – four (4) members.

9.3 **Record Keeping**

Each Section Executive shall keep adequate and proper records and minutes of its meetings, which shall include details of the nature and extent of any conflict of interest and those present at the meeting.
A copy of such minutes shall be forwarded to the relevant College Executive Director immediately following the relevant meeting for making available to the next scheduled meeting of the governing body of the Section.

Support in regard to administrative functions, such as arranging meetings, the keeping of minutes of meetings of the Executive, and facilitation of the business of the Section will be coordinated by College staff as assigned by the Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the chair of the governing body and the Executive Director of the relevant College department.

9.4 Reporting Obligations

For the reporting obligations of Sections, see clause 8.1, *Lines of Reporting*.

10. EXPENSES

Expenses incurred by members in relation to attending any meeting of the general membership of the Section are the responsibility of the member. College funding of the attendance of members at sanctioned face-to-face Executive meetings will be in line with the relevant College policy(ies).

11. DISSOLUTION OF SECTIONS

The governing body may put a resolution to the ACEM Board to dissolve a Section by resolution of a majority of members of the governing body present and voting if, in the opinion of the governing body, the Section:

(a) has been guilty of conduct detrimental to the interests of the College

(b) is unable to elect an Executive, or

(c) membership drops below the minimum threshold level of 30 FACEM members.

The Board may accept or reject the resolution.

12. DOCUMENT REVIEW

Timeframe for review: every two (2) years, or earlier if required.

12.1 Responsibilities

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12.2 Revision History

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