

Standing Rules of the American Physical Therapy Association



Adopted 1987; amended 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2002, 2005, 2011, 2013, 2020, 2021, and 2025.

1. Formation and Recognition of a Chapter

- A. To be recognized as a new chapter the interested group shall submit documentation to the Board of Directors that includes:
 - (1) A petition signed by at least three-fourths of the physical therapist and physical therapist assistant members who are in good standing and live and/or work within the area of the proposed chapter
 - (2) Proposed articles of incorporation
 - (3) Proposed bylaws
 - (4) The territorial [region] jurisdiction proposed for the chapter, which must coincide with or be confined within the legally constituted boundaries of a state, territory, or commonwealth of the United States or the District of Columbia
 - (5) The proposed name of the chapter, which shall include the geographical region as defined in these standing rules
 - (6) Evidence the proposed chapter can be sustainable and can meet its obligations to the association and its potential members, such as a detailed first-year budget
- B. For the merger of chapters, the petition submitted to the Board shall be signed by at least three-fourths of the members of the Board of each existing chapter.
- C. For establishment of a chapter within the territorial jurisdiction of an existing chapter, a compelling reason for the formation of a new chapter shall be included in the documentation.
- D. Once the Board determines that the documents meet the requirements in the American Physical Therapy Association® ("association" or "APTA®") bylaws and this standing rule, the Board shall submit the request to the next available meeting of the House of Delegates for approval. Approval requires a majority vote in the affirmative.

2. Formation and Recognition of a Section/Academy

- A. To be recognized as a new section/academy, the interested group shall submit documentation to the Board that includes a petition received before Jan. 1 of the year in which it is to be considered. The petition shall include:
 - (1) A detailed statement of purpose and rationale showing that the proposed section/academy is unique, pertains to physical therapy, and cannot have its members' interests served through an existing section/academy.
 - (2) Evidence that the proposed section/academy has been a Member Engagement Group or otherwise incorporated or organized for at least two years.
 - (3) Legible signatures, chapter assignments, membership numbers, and addresses of at least 200 members in good standing, representing a majority of chapters, each of whom states intent to join the proposed section/academy
 - (4) The proposed name of the section/academy, which shall include reference to its purpose and rationale
 - (5) Proposed articles of incorporation

- (6) Proposed bylaws
- (7) Evidence that the proposed section/academy can be sustainable and can meet its obligations to the association and its potential members, such as a detailed first-year budget, and a preliminary program for the APTA Combined Sections Meeting
- B. Upon receipt of such petition, the Board shall notify the existing section and academy presidents and component executives via electronic mail. This notification shall begin a 90-day comment period for the existing sections and academies. Comments shall indicate, but may not be limited to, an existing section's or academy's ability to serve the membership of the proposed section/academy. An existing academy may comment in the affirmative or in the negative, may elect to abstain from commenting by indicating such in writing, or may choose not to comment. An existing section's or academy's abstention from comment or choice not to comment shall not be construed as either affirmative or negative by the Board.
- C. Once the Board determines that the documents meet the requirements in the association bylaws and this standing rule, the Board shall submit the request to the next available meeting of the House for approval. Approval requires a majority vote in the affirmative.
- D. Merging of sections/academies:
 - (1) Sections/academies may petition to merge when the following is provided:
 - a. Evidence of approval by a two-thirds vote of the sections'/academies' members in good standing voting in a referendum on the question to merge
 - b. A petition signed by at least three-fourths of the members of the governing bodies of the merging sections/academies
 - c. A support statement accompanying the petition
 - (2) These materials must be received by the Board for review before Jan. 1 of the year in which the merger is considered. The petition, with the Board recommendations, shall be presented to the House for approval. Approval requires a majority vote in the affirmative.

3. Formation and Recognition of an Institutional Group

- A. To be recognized as a new institutional group, the interested group shall submit documentation to the Board that includes a petition received before Jan. 1 of the year in which it is to be considered. The petition shall include:
 - (1) A detailed statement of purpose and rationale showing that the proposed institutional group:
 - a. Meets all institutional group criteria in the association bylaws
 - b. Represents a group of institutions that share a common practice setting or area of interest in physical therapist practice, education, or research
 - c. Furthers the interests of the association and the physical therapy profession
 - d. Is uniquely different from any other institutional group recognized by the association
 - (2) The proposed name of the institutional group, which shall include reference to its purpose and rationale
 - (3) Proposed articles of incorporation
 - (4) Proposed bylaws
 - (5) Evidence that the proposed institutional group can be sustainable and can meet its obligations to the association and its potential members, such as a detailed first-year budget
- B. Upon receipt of such petition, the Board shall notify the existing institutional group presidents and component executives via electronic mail. This notification shall begin a 90-day comment period for the existing institutional groups. Comments shall indicate, but may not be limited to, an existing

institutional group's ability to serve the membership of the institutional group. An existing institutional group may comment in the affirmative or in the negative, may elect to abstain from commenting by indicating such in writing, or may choose not to comment. An existing institutional group's abstention from comment or choice not to comment shall not be construed as either affirmative or negative by the Board.

- C. Once the Board determines that the documents meet the requirements in the association bylaws and this standing rule, the Board shall submit the request to the next available meeting of the House for approval.
- D. Approval by the House requires a majority vote in the affirmative.

4. Determination of the Size of the House

The size of the House is:

- A. The number of chapter voting delegates.
 - (1) Add the number of physical therapist and the number of physical therapist assistant members of the association who are assigned to chapters at the end of the month of the year preceding the House in which they will serve.
 - (2) Divide the total found in Step 1 by 400. The resulting number shall be the apportionment number.
 - (3) Divide the total number of physical therapist and physical therapist assistant members for each chapter by the apportionment number.
 - (4) Chapters shall be allowed one delegate for each whole number and one additional delegate for any remainder equaling or exceeding 50% of the apportionment number.
 - (5) Any chapter that would be entitled to fewer than two delegates according to the above shall be allowed two delegates.
- B. The number of section/academy voting delegates, which is twice the number of sections/academies
- C. The number of PTA Engagement Group delegates, which is two
- D. The number of nonvoting delegates as listed in the bylaws

5. Elections: Teller's Report

- A. The teller's report to the House shall include for each position to be filled:
 - (1) The number eligible to vote
 - (2) The number of votes cast
 - (3) The number of votes necessary for election (for officers)
 - (4) The number of votes cast for each eligible candidate
 - (5) The number of illegal (or ineligible) votes, as necessary

6. Vacancies: Officers and Directors

- A. If a vacancy occurs within the first year of a four-year term, or the Board member-elect cannot assume office, the vacancy may be filled by the Board until the next meeting of the House. The Nominating Committee shall select a candidate(s) for election at the next annual meeting of the House; the elected person shall serve for the remaining three years of the term.
- B. If a vacancy occurs after the first year of a four-year term, the vacancy shall be filled by appointment by the Board.
- C. If a vacancy occurs to the public member position, the vacancy shall be filled by appointment by the Board.

- D. Notwithstanding Standing Rule 6(B), if a vacancy occurs on the Board as a result of an election, a second election shall be required. The Nominating Committee shall prepare the slate for the second election, and additional individual petitions shall be in order.

All candidates who were slated for any position on the Board and were not elected in the first election will be slated in the second election unless they have indicated otherwise.

Candidates who were not elected for the Nominating Committee shall not be automatically slated but may be nominated by individual petition.

7. Reference Committee

- A. All main motions and resolutions, except for procedural motions presented for action by the House, shall be referred to the Reference Committee unless this rule is suspended in any particular case by a majority vote of the House.
- B. The committee will review main motions that are submitted by the established deadline.
- C. The committee will determine if the main motion criteria have been met.
- D. The committee shall provide advice and counsel regarding form, wording, and method of presentation of matters to be presented to the House.

8. Deadline for Main Motions

All main motions to be considered by the House shall be submitted in writing to APTA headquarters by a date set by the Speaker of the House of Delegates, which shall be at least three months prior to the date of the House meeting. Any main motion that has not been so submitted shall require a majority vote, without debate, to be considered by the House.

9. Main Motion Criteria

- A. All main motions submitted by the established deadline shall meet the following criteria. It is the responsibility of the maker of the motion to:
 - (1) Provide a statement of the intended outcome of the motion.
 - (2) Demonstrate that the motion meets the purposes of the association.
 - (3) Demonstrate that the motion's subject is national in scope or importance.
 - (4) Provide pertinent background information, in collaboration with the Board or staff, as necessary, including (a) a description of previous House, Board, or staff activity relating to the subject and (b) an identification of the stakeholders affected by the motion.
 - (5) When possible, demonstrate that the motion concept has been disseminated to delegates of other delegations prior to the deadline for submission of main motions.
 - (6) Provide a description of the potential resources needed to adopt and implement the motion.
- B. The Reference Committee determines if criteria have been met. If it is determined that the criteria are not adequately met, the motion shall be placed at the end of the agenda of the House and shall not be considered unless a majority of the delegates vote, without debate, to consider the motion. The Reference Committee shall develop and make available to the delegates guidance designed to help delegates satisfy the foregoing criteria.

10. Bylaws and House Documents Committee

On a regular, established basis the committee will review the association bylaws, standing rules, and association documents created by the House and, as it deems appropriate, bring motions and amendments to the House for consideration. The committee will make editorial corrections as necessary to association bylaws, standing rules, and association documents created by the House, and will communicate such corrections to the House.

11. Consent Calendar

- A. The officers of the House of Delegates (House Officers) shall prepare a list of recommended motions that are routine, standard, noncontroversial, or self-explanatory, and for which general approval is anticipated, for placement on a consent calendar.
- B. The preliminary consent calendar will be distributed three weeks prior to the start of the first meeting of the House.
- C. Prior to the first meeting of the House, motions may be removed from the consent calendar by the House Officers or at the request of five chief delegates.
- D. The revised consent calendar will be prepared by the House Officers for presentation to chief delegates prior to the first meeting of the House.
- E. Following the opening of the House, motions may be removed from the consent calendar by an affirmative vote of one-third of the voting body of the House.
- F. If a motion is removed from the consent calendar, it shall be placed appropriately in the order of business previously assigned by the Speaker of the House and the chair of the Reference Committee.
- G. The consent calendar shall be presented for adoption in a single motion.

12. Definition of Association Documents Referenced in the Bylaws

- A. Policy: A course of action or principle of action. Policies of the association direct subsequent actions on similar matters of the association, its components, and its members.
- B. Position: A firmly held association stance or point of view. Positions of the association direct subsequent decisions on similar matter of the association, its components, and its members.

13. Responsibilities of the Officers of the House of Delegates

The House Officers shall be responsible for registering delegates, transferring voting rights, preparing rules of order and an agenda for the consideration of the House, recording, and reporting the proceedings, making appointments to House committees (other than the Nominating Committee), conducting elections, and performing other duties as determined by these bylaws or the standing rules.

14. Creation of Special Committees of the House of Delegates

- A. A special committee may be created through a main motion to the House, or by referring a pending motion to a special committee. In either case, items B and C below shall be included when creating a special committee.
- B. The motion must clearly delineate the purpose of the committee and the desired outcome.
- C. The motion must include a date by which the House expects to have a report or recommendation returned to it.
- D. The motion to create the committee shall list the qualifications of individuals to serve on the committee. The House Officers will appoint committee members.

- E. The Board will determine resource allocation.
- F. The House Officers will oversee activities of a special committee.

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