

## IUGA Publication Development Policy

### *Introduction*

IUGA develops a variety of society (endorsed) documents including clinical consensus statements (including the IUC), opinion papers, best practice statements, terminology reports and position statements that are published in the IUJ and/or on the IUGA website. For any document to be considered an official IUGA publication (IUGA branded/endorsed paper), it is essential that the IUGA Publication Development Process has been carefully followed, which is further described in this policy. The IUGA Board decided that any paper that is not developed according to the IUGA Publication Development Process will not be published as an official IUGA document nor being endorsed/branded as such unless the IUGA Board has specifically approved an endorsement (e.g. in case of requests by other organizations to endorse their publication). This policy describes how IUGA publications should be proposed and how they may be approved, how the writers are being selected, and how the development process is being monitored and executed, and finally the way the manuscript is being reviewed, finalized and published.

### *Oversight committee*

The IUGA Board is ultimately responsible for overseeing that all clinical guidance documents are being developed following standardized processes. The main objective is to ensure that IUGA develops transparent, well-balanced, high quality scientific society publications only that are supported by a majority of the members (consensus). The IUGA Board may involve or set up a (new/dedicated) standing or ad-hoc committee to commission the task of evaluating the proposals submitted (see below) as well as with the task of monitoring that the document development process is executed correctly. For further reference, this committee is called the "Oversight Committee" and can be an existing or newly formed committee. However, the proposal, the final writing group composition and the final publication will always require Board approval.

### *Proposals for IUGA (Endorsed) Documents*

Any IUGA group of IUGA members may submit a proposal to the IUGA Board (through the office) to develop an IUGA document for a certain topic or interest area. The IUGA has a standard proposal form (Appendix A) that should be filled out and completed for a proposal to be considered. Projects that are given priority and are most likely to be approved are those with topics that have a reasonable evidence base and a clearly defined scope and those with topics that are aimed to improve health outcomes, reduce variations in care, and/or reduce the burden of disease. In addition, they can address controversy and/or new evidence around the topic. Topics that are covered by existing IUGA manuscripts will not be considered for development unless the Board has defined that the existing manuscript requires an immediate/urgent update.

## *Review Process*

Once a proposal has been submitted, the IUGA Board will do an initial review and decide whether to appoint an “Oversight Committee” to score the proposals and provide a recommendation to the Board for approval (or decline). The Board and the oversight committee will agree to the review/assessment criteria and predefine a minimum score required for the proposal to be further considered. Once a proposal has been reviewed, the reviews and recommendations will be considered by the Board and they will make the final decision to approve/decline. If approved, the Board will select the standing (or ad-hoc) committee that will be in charge for the development of the document and start the writing group formation.

## *Writing Group Formation*

The selected committee will identify the writing group members through a formalized process. This always involves an open call for applications for writing group members to be sent out to the entire IUGA membership and partner organizations (if any) allowing members to apply for a minimum period of 14 days from the day the call was made. The deadline for receiving applications will not be extended unless there are less candidates than open positions or by request of the Board.

After the deadline, applications will be reviewed by the respective committee, who will make the initial selection and are also responsible for making recommendations for the writing group chair and vice chair (if necessary), understanding that the chair should have leadership ability, subject expertise and should not be conflicted. Except in unusual situations, the writing group should be composed of IUGA members not serving on the respective committee. A member of the respective committee (can be the chair) will serve as a consultant on each writing group but not participate in the actual writing process. The committee representative will also ensure the writing group adheres to IUGA processes and procedures and serve as a facilitator supporting the chair (if not the same person). Throughout the entire process, a dedicated IUGA staff person will also be involved and copied into all communications. The committee will select 4 to 8 writing group members depending on the needs of the particular document. All writing group members must disclose any potential conflicts of interest (COIs), including commercial and noncommercial financial relationship and intellectual conflicts.

All writing group members should be free of COIs meaning that any potential/possible COI should be resolved prior to appointing the writing group members. The final composition of the writing group (chair and members) need to be approved by the Board. Once approved, the group may start with the document development process following the IUGA Publication Policy as described below.

## *Publication Policy*

IUGA has developed a publication policy for the development and public dissemination of publications commissioned and/or created by society members on behalf of IUGA. The principles

are general by intent and provide for some flexibility. Publications generated through an IUGA-sponsored (supported) or IUGA organized volunteer structure are to be published on the IUGA Website and/or in *the IUJ*, the official journal of IUGA. Note that publication in the IUJ requires further consultation with the EiCs and the document may only be published after peer-review and acceptance. Alternative journals or periodicals may be considered depending on the intended audience but require approval by the Board prior to submission. All Publications must be reviewed and approved in their final form by the Board of Directors prior to submission for publication. The publication of joint documents with external organizations will be agreed on before development begins and will require a Memorandum of Understanding signed by all organizations.

### *Authorship*

Defining authorship for or of any IUGA Publication will be based on the following four (4) criteria as produced by the ICMJE and as also applied by the IUJ:

- 1) Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; **AND**
- 2) Drafting/writing the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content; **AND**
- 3) Final approval of the version to be published; **AND**
- 4) Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

IUGA will require that all members of an IUGA writing group and/or related IUGA committee to complete a contributor agreement (Appendix B). It is the responsibility of IUGA staff to collate a list of contributors to a publication and document their approval to be acknowledged in the publication as authors. All writing group members will be acknowledged as authors in the manuscript for as long as they meet ALL 4 criteria listed above. If any of the authors does not meet any of the 4 criteria listed above, then they may only be recognized for their work in the actual paper (special recognition to) but may NOT be included as authors. This is also the case e.g. if the authors want to recognize the additional work done by consultants, external reviewers, translators, etc. The manuscript itself will be branded as an IUGA product with copyright residing with IUGA.

Exception: IUGA may decide to list ‘the IUGA Committee on...’ as the author and include the names of all the authors in a separate recognition section inside the manuscript. This may be the case e.g. for joint terminology or consensus publications that are a joint effort of multiple organizations, authors and committees. If such exceptions apply, then this will be made clear to the initiators, committees, and authors prior to the start of the development process and formalized in a Memorandum of Understanding.

### *Peer Review*

All IUGA documents are obliged to go through peer review by a minimum of three members of the Board and/or Oversight Committee. Additional external peer reviewers may be invited if specific topic expertise is needed. The reviewers will be provided the draft manuscript and reviews that they will need to complete within max. 15 days. IUGA staff will compile the individual reviews from each reviewer into 1 master document to be sent back to the writing group chair and members. Each comment will need to be addressed by the writing group chair (and other members as needed) and the final disposition recorded in the master document, which will need to be returned to the Board and/or oversight committee together with the edited manuscript for final review/approval. In any case, no manuscript may be submitted to the IUJ or any other journal without approval from the Board.

### *Journal Submission and Review*

All documents will be submitted to the International Urogynecological Journal (IUJ), the official journal of the IUGA. The submitted manuscript must meet the criteria and requirements for submission to the IUJ that can be found by [clicking here](#). All documents will undergo traditional journal peer review prior to publication.

### *Document Maintenance/Review*

The committee that has been appointed by the Board will establish a periodic review of its published documents for relevancy and accuracy. If an update is required, the committee will decide whether the revisions are minor and can be made “in house” or whether it warrants convening a writing group to undertake the update process. The final outcome of the review (update, retire/withdraw, reaffirm) with justification will be submitted to the Board of Directors. If the document was updated, a track changes version should be submitted for review.

Updated/revised documents will be resubmitted to the journal for publication, and the journal website published document will note the original and updated publication dates. The journal will be alerted to reaffirmed documents and the reaffirmation date will be noted on the journal website and PDF copy of the document. The journal will be notified to remove any withdrawn documents from their website.

### *External Endorsement Requests*

If an external request for endorsement of another organization is received, then the IUGA Board will make the final decision regarding endorsement.

## APPENDIX A: Proposal to develop an IUGA Publication

Submitted by:

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Group/Committee: \_\_\_\_\_

We would like for IUGA:

- to develop a new publication
- to revise an existing publication
- to withdraw a publication in progress
- to withdraw an existing publication

Type of publication:

- systematic review
- narrative review
- position statement
- opinion paper
- public policy statement
- consensus statement
- guideline
- white paper
- original research
- rapid communication / letter (time sensitive short publication)
- textbook or chapter
- other, please specify:

Development and timing

Preferred start date: \_\_\_\_\_

Estimat. completion date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Consultative/Review Process**

Do you recommend this be a joint project with another organization?

NO

YES, with: \_\_\_\_\_

Title/topic: \_\_\_\_\_

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Please provide a brief summary of the issue and subject background: \_\_\_\_\_

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Why would this be particularly timely to develop now? \_\_\_\_\_

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Why would this be novel / how would it advance the field? \_\_\_\_\_

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Please provide a list of potential contributors and/or reviewers (topic experts) \_\_\_\_\_

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**By submitting this form, you acknowledge that you have read and agree to the procedures as described in the IUGA Publication Development Policy.**

**Please submit this form by email to the IUGA Office: [office@iuga.org](mailto:office@iuga.org)**

## Appendix B- IUGA/AUGS Document Contributor-level Agreement

Thank you for agreeing to work on the *Cosmetic Gynecology Terminology Report* (“Work”) of the International Urogynecological Association (“IUGA”) and American Urogynecologic Society (“AUGS”) and the and for your contributions to the Work.

As the purpose of any Terminology and Standardization document is to encourage its universal usage, it is imperative that IUGA, AUGS, and any employees, agents, licensees and assignees thereof will be able to fully utilize the Work. As such, please complete this form, sign, date and return to the IUGA Office at [office@iuga.org](mailto:office@iuga.org)

With regard to the Work, you agree to the following:

1. You grant and assign to IUGA and AUGS all worldwide right, title and interest in and to your contribution to the Work (collectively the “Contribution”), all rights in the Contribution provided by law, including but not limited to all revisions and/or derivatives thereto, including the copyright therein, in all languages and in all forms now known or later developed, including but not limited to electronic formats from which the Contribution can be perceived, reproduced, or otherwise communicated either directly or with aid of a machine or device for the full term of the copyright, and all renewals and extensions thereof throughout the world; all right, title and interest in and to the title of any portion of the Contribution, including without any limitation any trademarks, service marks and/or trade dress, and all goodwill associated therewith.
2. You waive any and all moral rights you have to or regarding the Contribution or the Work.
3. You warrant and represent that (a) you have full power and authority, free of any rights of any nature whatsoever by any person, to enter into this Agreement and to grant the rights which are granted to IUGA and AUGS in this Agreement; (b) no part of the Contribution infringes upon any copyright or other intellectual property right of any third party; (c) the Contribution contains nothing libellous, injurious or untrue (d) you have, as necessary, obtained appropriate permission to re-print any portion of the Work which you are not the author.
4. You acknowledge that neither IUGA nor AUGS has responsibility to provide legal counsel or other assistance with respect to any requests for information (including but not limited to any subpoenas) directed to you arising out of your contribution to the Work or publication of the Work.

Yes  No

By signing this document, you grant IUGA and AUGS the right to use your name in connection with the publication of the Work and to acknowledge you as a contributor to the Work after final review and approval.

In consideration of the rights granted to it pursuant to this Agreement, IUGA and AUGS agree to acknowledge you as a contributor, if you so designate above.

Signature:

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Name/Title

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Institution/Organization

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Signature/Date

*Approved by the IUGA Board on 2022-02-27*