



OPC 11051

Working Group Guidelines

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OPC FOUNDATION

WORKING GROUP GUIDELINES FOREWORD

This document describes the processes, procedures and rules relating to creating and managing OPC Foundation working groups (INTERNAL working groups) and working groups that are initiated together with other standards organizations (JOINT working groups).

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Revision Table

Version	Date	Description
1.00	May 17, 2020	First version
1.00.02	July 08, 2020	Several editorial changes. Clarified use of YouTube channel.
1.00.03	Oct 24, 2020	Updates for use of MOCA.
1.00.4	Apr 15, 2021	Added requirements to follow antitrust policy and for chairpersons to perform the online training.

OPC Working Group Guidelines

1. Purpose and Scope

This document describes the process for creating and managing OPC Foundation (or OPC) working groups (INTERNAL working groups) and working groups that are initiated together with other standards organizations (JOINT working groups).

Such working groups are essential for the development of industry-leading specifications, technologies, certification, and processes. The focus of these working groups is to provide the deliverables that are adopted by the OPC community into real-world products and services.

All participants in working groups must respect the agreements, policies, and procedures of the OPC Foundation. In particular, they are subject to and must conform to the OPC Foundation's Intellectual Property Rights Policy (OPC IPR) and Code of Conduct.

NEW: All participants in working groups need to follow the OPC Antitrust Policy (<https://opcfoundation.org/opcf-antitrust-policy.pdf>). An antitrust online training is available as well. This training is required for chairpersons. Contact the OPC Technical Director for instructions to do that.

All working groups must operate in an open, transparent, and vendor neutral manner.

2. Creating an OPC Working Group

Establishing a working group is a commitment and it needs time and attention.

The working group creation consists of the following steps:

1. Write a charter that includes purpose, scope, and planned activities. It shall be based on *OPC 11050 – Working Group Charter Template*. Most successful groups have a clearly defined initial scope and a rather concrete target/outcome. While the scope may change over time, it helps to have a very clear and concrete target.
2. Send the charter to the Technical Control Board (TCB) at tcb@opcfoundation.org for approval. Oftentimes, the proposer will be asked to present in a TCB meeting.
3. Once approved, a kickoff meeting needs to be scheduled and announced with a call for experts to all OPC corporate members. There shall be at least 4 weeks between announcement and kickoff day.
4. The provisional chair receives the registration requests and has to verify that the requesting person fulfills the membership criteria (see clause 3). Those qualified will be provided with meeting logistics.
5. Part of the kickoff meeting is the appointment of the chairperson and editors. With this step the creation is complete.

INTERNAL working groups

Any OPC corporate member can propose a working group. A core criterion for approval is the significance and the projected adoption of the working group deliverables; therefore, the proposer should look, in advance, for other interested OPC members to increase the chance for approval.

An INTERNAL working group shall have at least 3 active (contributing) members in addition to the chairperson. If this number is not achieved, the Technical Control Board will decide if the creation is called off.

In addition to the TCB, the Technical Advisory Council (TAC) will need to approve the new working group.

JOINT working groups

See <https://opcfoundation.org/about/working-groups/joint-working-groups/> for specific guidelines for creating a Joint Working Group. This includes the signing of the OPC Multi-Org Cooperation Agreement (MOCA).

3. Membership criteria

Working group membership (participation) is open to any employee or representative of a company that is member of OPC Foundation (or [the partnering organization\(s\) in the case of JOINT working groups](#)). OPC Logo members are not entitled to participate in working groups, except if invited as an expert guest.

Working groups are not intended to be operated as educational activities, and so those who are not sufficiently well versed in the field, or who do not have the available time (and commitment where necessary from their employer) to contribute meaningfully, should not present themselves for membership.

The number of working group participants is not limited and all interested parties are encouraged to volunteer their time. Each participant represents his or her company in the working group. This company must be a member in good standing of the OPC Foundation (or [the partnering organization\(s\) in the case of JOINT working groups](#)).

Each member company can send more than one member; however, in the case of formal voting, only one vote per company will be counted.

Working group members have no set term; however, it is strongly suggested that each member commits to remain actively engaged during the development and release of the defined deliverables.

The working group can allow expert guests to participate for specific topics.

4. Working Group Chairperson

The working group chairperson (the Chair) will be elected during the kickoff. S/he has a number of obligations and rights concerning the organization of the WG:

- take care that the composition of the WG is well balanced so that all included experts are involved in the scope of work,
- identify issues which are relevant to other WGs and have common collaboration with them,
- prioritize the tasks of the WG,
- where practical, use e-mail discussion for minor matters,
- participate in the Harmonization Working Group,
- invite expert guests on a case by case basis, so long as there are no objections from working group members. These guests shall be informed about and agree to comply with OPC's charter, OPC working group guidelines, OPC IPR Policy, and OPC Code of Conduct;
- when appropriate, initiate editing groups or subgroups in charge of certain tasks such as preparation of drafts and guides,
- Perform the OPC antitrust online training. Contact the OPC Technical Director for instructions to do that.

Organization of meetings:

- add all meetings to the calendar on the collaboration site,
- create each agenda in a cooperative way with the active working group members,
- ensure that the agenda is set up and known to the working group in advance of every meeting;
- for face-to-face meetings, the objectives should be defined several weeks in advance to allow timely authorization for travel,
- take care that the materials for the meeting are provided sufficiently in advance – clearly identified and presented in a comprehensive way – for efficient discussion (having clear introduction of the issue(s), proposed solutions, etc.),
- create an attendee list for each meeting. For virtual meetings, the recorded attendee list of online meeting tools (e.g., GoTo Meeting, Teams or FreeConferenceCall) is sufficient,
- all attendees shall sign an attendee sheet and confirm their acceptance and compliance to the OPC Foundation IPR Policy,
(For JOINT Working Groups the OPC Foundation IPR Policy stated in the signed "Multi-Organization Cooperation Agreement (MOCA)" shall apply. For groups that have been initiated before MOCA was available, the most recent IPR Policy shall apply)
- ensure that minutes are taken, including recording of all decisions. The respective minutes and presentations should be made available on the collaboration site.
- ensure that all meetings are recorded (audio and presenter screen) and that the recording is accessible for the working group members (OPC suggestion: publish unlisted to an OPC YouTube channel). The recording location (e.g., URL) shall be in the meeting minutes.
[Click here](#) for instructions on how to publish recordings to a YouTube channel.

5. Amendments

Changes to the charter goals may be proposed by active group members and, if these recommendations receive the working group's general consensus, as determined by the Chair (see Section 10 below), they may be brought forward to TCB for approval.

6. Working Group Operation

The operating format of a working group includes advanced meeting communications, periodic scheduling of meetings, recording of meeting minutes, etc.

The working group meets as needed. Meetings may be electronic or in person. The frequency and form of the meetings will be established once the working group is formed.

When meetings are recorded, the attendees shall be informed at the outset.

Face-to-face meetings will be commonly organized and hosted by individual member-companies.

The set language for meetings will be English, when participation is international. Documentation (agenda, minutes, submissions, specifications) must all be in English.

Internal working papers, meeting minutes, as well as draft specifications, shall be treated as confidential and shall be marked with "OPC Foundation Confidential". After release, all documents shall be available publicly. Prior to public release, marked documents shall only be available within the working group and the control board.

7. Participants in "Good Standing"

The term "good standing" implies a serious commitment, including:

- attending most meetings of the working group,
- providing deliverables or drafts of deliverables in a timely fashion,
- complying with OPC's policies and procedures, including IPR policy and Code of Conduct
- being familiar with the relevant documents of the working group, including minutes of past meetings.

Without these qualifications, working group members can be excluded from votes (see 10). Chairs may relax these criteria. For example, the Chair may relax the attendance requirement for meetings that require international travel. The Chair is expected to apply standards for good standing consistently.

8. Sub-groups

A working group can create sub-groups under their own responsibility. The goals and purpose of sub-groups must be within those of the main working group. Sub-groups will usually be staffed with experts

from companies represented in the main working group. If additional involvement is desirable, the TCB can issue another request for participation.

Besides the "creation" of working groups, all stipulated rules apply to sub-groups.

9. Quorum

The Chair has the responsibility to determine if a quorum is present in a meeting (online or in person).

When a quorum is not met, the group may only make limited decisions but may still work on solutions that are held for confirmation or further development in a later meeting where a quorum is present.

If the charter does not define a quorum (e.g. 50 % of working group members) it is up to the Chair to decide.

10. Voting

When resolving issues and making decisions, the goal of an INTERNAL or JOINT working group should always be to achieve unanimity among its members. Where unanimity is not achieved, the working group must then reach consensus by considering the ideas and viewpoints of all active participants.

In establishing consensus, the working group must address the legitimate concerns of the minority. However, at times it may be necessary (e.g., for timely delivery of a specification) to proceed with a large majority consensus, in favor while a small minority object.

The Chair decides when consensus has been reached.

The Chair is responsible for ensuring that minority views are accommodated, where possible. The minority cannot stop a working group's work simply by saying that they do not agree with the decision. When the Chair believes that the legitimate concerns of the minority have, in fact, been addressed, as far as is possible and within reason, the Chair will determine that there is consensus, the dissenting views will be recorded and the working group will move on.

The Chair may reopen a decision when presented with new information.

The Chair should archive decisions which are to be reconsidered (and must do so if requested by a working group participant). New information includes:

- additional technical information,
- comments by email from participants who were unable to attend a scheduled meeting.

Majority Votes

At times, the working group may settle an issue by simple majority rather than by trying to establish consensus; the Chair will decide when majority voting is appropriate.

As an example, while it is appropriate to decide by simple majority whether to hold a meeting in San Francisco or Dallas, it is inappropriate to vote on substantive technical decisions regarding the working group's deliverables, for which consensus should be required.

Only one vote per company will be counted.

Chartered voting procedures

The charter may include provisions for working group voting procedures. For example, in order for a proposal to pass, it must gain a particular proportion of participant votes or a particular proportion of the total membership of the working group.

11. Working Group Infrastructure

OPC Foundation offers to provide an infrastructure for working groups to effectively collaborate. This includes:

- A dedicated SharePoint or Google Site on which working group members can collaborate or store documents.
- If a Google Site has been chosen, a Group Email List (opc-XYZ@opcfoundation.online). Only working group members will be able to receive and respond to mail. All working group members will receive emails sent to this address.
- A Working Group Calendar, either on SharePoint or as part of the Google Site.
- Web meeting facilities

This infrastructure should be requested early enough so that it is in place in time for the kickoff.

12. Templates for Specifications

The preferred file format is MS Word because of its advanced change tracking features.

OPC provides templates for specifications (Word for standards and Visio for drawings). They contain guidelines about paragraph styles and formatting of pictures and tables in order to make documents from different editors look uniform and can be validated. Working groups – both internal and joint - are obliged to follow the instructions in these templates.

A supplemental guide includes additional rules for the creation of such specifications.

- *OPC 11020 - UA Companion Specification Template*
- *OPC 11021 - UA Companion Specification Guideline*
- *UA Shapes.vss* – Visio stencils for OPC UA nodes

Available for download here: <https://opcfoundation.org/Guidelines-And-Templates/>

13. Working Group Status Updates

Every working group is required to give a quarterly status update (via email) to the Technical Control Board.