



Australian Living Evidence Collaboration

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Policy on Steering Committee Member Organisations for ALEC Guideline Programs

Policy Purpose

To define the eligibility criteria, governance requirements, and exclusion parameters for external organisations seeking representation on the Steering Committee of an Australian Living Evidence Collaboration (ALEC) clinical guideline program.

The ALEC Academic Director (or delegate) retains final decision-making authority regarding the invitation, admission and rescission of organisations to a Steering Committee.

Purpose of the Steering Committee

Each ALEC Guideline program is overseen by a Steering Committee, whose purpose is to:

1. strengthen the credibility of the guideline to the key groups who are involved in using or who are impacted by the guideline. They do this by endorsing the guideline and updates.
2. provide an avenue for dissemination of guideline recommendations to key groups who are involved in using or who are impacted by the guideline. They do this by disseminating the guideline through their networks and membership channels.
3. provide advice about implications for dissemination and implementation of the guideline to key groups who are involved in or impacted by the guideline. They do this by contributing at Steering Committee meetings.

Membership

The Steering Committee is composed of a representative from eligible member organisations. Delegates are nominated to the Steering Committee by their respective organisations. Each organisation undertakes their nomination process independently of the ALEC Guideline Program.

The Steering Committee is chaired by the ALEC Clinical or Academic Director, or a senior, independent chair chosen by the ALEC Clinical or Academic Director.

Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the Steering Committee are to:

- communicate with member networks regarding the Guideline.
- endorse recommendations (and Practice Points, if required) for publication on behalf of the member organisation.
- discuss strategic issues related to the work of the Guideline.

The Steering Committee is governed by a consensus based decision-making process where all recommendations must receive 100% endorsement from all member organisations before publication.

It is not the responsibility of the Steering Committee to revise the clinical content of the recommendations, as responsibility for final clinical sign-off sits with the Guidelines Leadership Group, although the Steering Committee will consider issues around the interpretation and implementation of the developed recommendations.

Potentially Eligible Member Organisations

- **Peak Professional & Clinical Bodies:** National colleges, specialist societies, or professional associations (or sub-committees of these) whose role includes the setting of clinical standards, professional education, and/or scope of clinical practice within the guideline topic area.
- **Consumer & Advocacy Organisations:** Formal, non-profit consumer advocacy or lived/living-experience bodies that represent patient populations, carers, or communities relevant to the clinical focus area, and who provide health-related services such as education, information, peer support or counselling.
- **Indigenous Health Organisations:** National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (NACCHO) and First Nations health peak bodies or organisations.
- **Equity-Focused Health Organisations:** Not-for-profit health organisations that represent priority populations (e.g., CALD, rural/remote health networks) relevant to the clinical focus area.

Mandatory Membership Criteria

- **National Reach:** The organisation must have a national mandate or demonstrate significant cross-jurisdictional influence in Australia.
- **Commitment to Consensus Decision-Making:** Steering Committee representatives must have the delegation to participate in decision-making and support the 100% consensus endorsement model required prior to publishing recommendations.
- **Standards Alignment:** Agreement to and ability to meet ALEC's Council of Member Organisations expectations, commitments and responsibilities.
- **Organisational Integrity:** Willingness to adhere to ALEC terms of reference, conflict of interest and operational procedures, and confidentiality obligations.

Ineligibility & Exclusion Criteria

- **Commercial Conflict of Interest:** Commercial, for-profit entities, including pharmaceutical manufacturers, medical device companies, and private health insurers, are strictly excluded from Steering Committee membership.
- **Industrial and Workforce Representation Bodies:** Trade unions, industrial associations, and employee representation bodies are excluded from Steering Committee membership. While ALEC deeply values workforce and occupational perspectives, industrial and employee representative bodies are invited to become Supporter Organisations (as below), and to provide input to the guidelines via open

consultation processes. Individuals that are members of such organisations are able to participate in the public expressions of interest processes for clinical panels being convened for guideline development.

- **Advocacy groups:** Organisations whose role is primarily advocacy (e.g. fundraising, policy development) without representation or health-related service provision to a community of relevance to the guideline are not eligible. These groups are welcome to become Supporter Organisations of the guideline, and to provide input through open consultation processes.
- **Unaccredited Groups:** Unregistered entities (i.e. not having an Australian Business Number), informal lobby groups, or entities without a transparent governance structure. These groups may provide input through open consultation processes.
- **Individual Representation:** Individuals cannot join the Steering Committee in a personal capacity.

Governance & Conflict Management

- **Institutional Conflict of Interest:** Organisations receiving funding from commercial interests related to the guideline topic(s) must declare all funding sources. The ALEC Conflicts of Interest Committee evaluates eligibility on a case-by-case basis. Please note: all individual representatives involved in the Guideline Program will also need to declare conflicts at an individual level also. Organisations or individuals with conflicts will be excluded from discussions on topics relevant to the conflict.
- **Delegate Continuity:** Member organisations must nominate a primary delegate (and an optional proxy) with appropriate authority to represent the organisation.
- **Member Representatives:** Member representatives are expected to contribute constructively and act in good faith to advance the ALEC Guideline Program's objectives. Dissenting views must be reasoned, evidence-based, and accompanied by practical alternatives where possible. Member representatives must agree not to unreasonably delay or block consensus. Objections or dissenting opinions must be substantive, relevant to the objectives, and aimed at improving outcomes.

Rescinding of Steering Committee Membership

An organisation's membership on the Steering Committee may be rescinded or terminated by the ALEC Academic Director. Grounds for rescission include persistent non-attendance, material failure to adhere to conflict of interest or confidentiality obligations, organisational re-structuring that invalidates eligibility criteria, or conduct that impairs the ALEC Guideline Program's consensus-driven governance.

Supporter Organisations

Supporter Organisations include organisations that either a) do not meet the requirements to be a Steering Committee member organisation (as noted above), or b) who do meet the requirements but are unable to commit to the responsibilities of a Steering Committee member organisation.

Supporter Organisation status allows groups to formally express support for the guidelines through being listed on the ALEC website and in the guidelines, but not to have a role in endorsing the recommendations on behalf of the organisation. ALEC will contact Supporter Organisations regularly throughout the guideline development process to enable Supporter Organisations to provide detailed input into guideline development. This includes through any formal prioritisation surveys and through regular periods of formal consultation on newly developed or updated guideline content. Supporter Organisations with an interest in the topics/field are encouraged to provide input, and/or to circulate information about these opportunities to their networks and encourage others to contribute.