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Roles and Responsibilities of the General Referee (GR) & Topic Advisor (TA)

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Official Methods Board**

September 2010

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AOAC Method Volunteers

- Community leaders
- Study Directors
- Methods Committee Members (voting)
- Methods Committee Advisors (non-voting)
 - General Referee, Topic Advisor, Statistical Advisor,
Safety Advisor
- Official Methods Board

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Outline

- **What is a GR, What is a TA?**
- **Where do they fit in the process?**
- **Duties & Responsibilities**
- **Selection and Appointment Criteria**
- **Appointment Process**
- **Rewards of service**



What is a General Referee?

- A technical expert and advisor on validation facilitating method protocol development, validation studies and validation manuscript development.
- A technical *validation process expert* and advisor to study directors, OMB, communities and method committees in the peer review process.



Position Description: General Referee (GR)

- The AOAC Validation Process Expert
- Must have knowledge and experience of the validation and collaborative study process, either through training or experience
- Appointed to serve as validation process advisors to the OMB, Study Directors, Method Committees, Communities, and Stakeholders



What is a Topic Advisor?

- A *subject matter expert* who advises the AOAC analytical communities, stakeholders, study directors, OMB or Method Committees on technical or scientific aspects of the matters pertaining to a method.
 - Analyte
 - Matrix
 - Technology, etc....



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Position Description: Topic Advisor (TA)

- Scientific and Technical Expert
- Has knowledge and experience of the collaborative study process, either through training or experience
- Appointed to serve as *Subject Matter Experts* to the OMB, Methods Committees, Communities and Stakeholders.

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Process

- **Community or Stakeholders submits application materials to AOAC staff**
- **AOAC Staff makes a quick check to ensure there are no major omissions with the submission**
- **OMB chair, with assistance from AOAC staff, locates technical and process experts (GRs, TAs, from the Pool of Experts) to help**

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Process (II)

- **OMB chair directs the OMB in the formation of a method centric committee (3-5 members)**
 - **OMB is to take input from community, stakeholders, etc. in the selection.**
 - **Committee will include**
 - **Chair**
 - **Statistical and Safety Advisors (non-voting)**
 - **Topic Advisor, as a technical expert (optional)**
 - **General Referee, as a process expert (optional)**
 - **2-4 additional members**



Process (III)

- **Once the method committee is formed the Study Director is notified**
- **Evaluation will follow existing AOAC guidelines**



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Duties and Responsibilities of a GR

- **Work with Study Directors providing guidance in the validation process**
- **Respond to questions from the Methods Committee, AOAC Research Institute, Community, Stakeholder group, or the OMB.**

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Eliminated from the GR's Past Responsibilities:

- **Writing the “GR Report”**
 - **Caveat: for existing committees the GRs will continue to write the reports until the existing committees are retired**
- **Identifying the “method type”**
(new, modification, matrix extension, etc., will be done by OMB)

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Roles of a Topic Advisor

- **Work with Study Directors, and GRs, giving guidance in designing and conducting collaborative studies and assisting in finding collaborators.**
- **Serve as an expert in a specific topic area**
- **Answer inquiries from the OMB, Methods Committee, Community, or Stakeholders group.**

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Roles of a Topic Advisor, Con't

- **Review and recommend changes in OMA**
- **Collect and review feedback for methods brought to First Action. Two years after the Method has been brought to First Action, prepare a report to the OMB on the recommendation of whether to proceed to Final Action or Repeal.**

TAs:

- **Are encouraged to provide topical reports to the OMB**
- **May advise more than one Committee, Community, or Stakeholder group**

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Roles Eliminated from the TA

- **Writing Topic Advisor Reports as part of the “GR Report”**



Some Considerations

- **GRs and TAs will both be able to serve on Methods Committees, if appointed by the OMB**
 - As members (voting)
 - or
 - As advisors (non-voting)

This is a major distinction between the “old” process and the new process



More Considerations

- **GRs and TAs can serve on multiple methods committees concurrently**



More Considerations

- **What about the GR reports?**
 - Will not be required
 - **The method committee Chair will be responsible for progress reports on the method (not the GR)**



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Criteria for Becoming a TA or GR

- **Member of AOAC International**
- **Have a letter of support from sponsoring organization (employer)**
- **Completed Volunteer Acceptance Form (VAF)**
- **Completed Non-Disclosure Form and/or confidentiality Agreement (certain instances)**

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Criteria for Becoming a TA or GR Con't

- **Experience or training in validation/ collaborative process, preferably as a Study Director (for GR)**
- **Demonstrated expertise in subject area, including publications and/or years of experience (for TA)**
- **Successful Completion of appropriate OMA Training courses (with refresher training at least every 3 years)**
- **Recommendation by the relevant Community (optional)**

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Process for Appointing a GR or TA

The OMB, Methods Committee, AOAC-RI, or Community /Stakeholder Group determine the need for a GR. OMB is notified of the need for a TA.

Nominations can be solicited from the associated Community, the OMB, and general membership.

Interested parties are asked to submit letters of interest addressing the criteria, resumes/CVs, and a letter of support from their sponsoring organization to AOAC staff



Appointment Process, Con't

- The chair of requesting body works with staff to complete required documentation.
- The chair of requesting body may recommend a GR/TA to the OMB chair.
- Upon approval of the OMB, the President may appoint the GR/TA candidate. If appointed, an appointment letter will be sent. Copies of the letter will be sent to the chair of the requesting body and the GR/TA's supervisor.
- The GR or TA normally serves a three-year term unless otherwise recommended by the chair of the Method Committee (or other requesting body).



OMB Approval Process

- **The Chair of OMB will forward the nominee's materials to two members of the OMB for review. They will review the documents and, on behalf of the OMB, advise the chair on an appointment decision.**



Where Can GRs and TAs Find Information?

- **The Chair of the method committee**
- **AOAC Staff**
- **Statistical and Safety Advisors**
- **Analytical communities**
- **OMB**
- **Contact research scientists**
- **Literature**



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Rewards of Being a GR or TA

- Greatly facilitating the standards development and validation process is a substantial accomplishment
- Developing a network with other scientists, industry, and government agencies
- Improved contacts with stakeholders and communities
- Access to up-to-date information on methods in your field

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Rewards of Being a GR or TA

- **Improved knowledge, skills, and abilities in method validation**

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