AUSTRALASIAN SLEEP ASSOCIATION

CLINICAL AND RESEARCH DOCUMENTS POLICY

Approved by the ASA Board on 6 February 2023

This policy sets out the process for ASA working groups, committees and sub-committees to follow when preparing clinical and research documents on behalf of the association.

The ASA produces and maintains documents that include guidelines, policies, commentaries and position statements on key matters in the practice of sleep medicine. ASA committees, sub-committees and working groups also produce research reports, manuscripts for publication in academic journals, and opinion pieces in relation to sleep health and sleep medicine.

This policy explains how all these documents are commissioned, developed, approved and endorsed by the ASA to ensure they are:

- Aligned with the ASA's strategic priorities
- Represent evidence-based scientific consensus
- Prepared in a timely manner with strong accountability to one of the main ASA standing committees (Clinical Committee, Education Committee, Research Committee or Membership Committee)
- Approved by the overseeing standing committee, and
- Endorsed by the ASA Board before submission for publication.

Commissioning

From time to time the ASA will commission the development of new clinical and research documents. In addition, members can propose clinical documents for development.

The request to develop or review a document will be considered by the most relevant ASA standing committee (Clinical Committee, Education Committee, Research Committee or Membership Committee). In many cases, the standing committee itself will determine that a document is needed and approve its development.

The overseeing standing committee should review the ASA's current strategy to ensure the task or project is a high organisational priority. Clinical documents that fit with the broader mission of the ASA and have a high likelihood of being completed in a reasonable timeframe will be presented to the Board for approval after assessment by the standing committee. The Board will consider proposals based on the greatest need, available evidence, resources and overall strategy and mission of the ASA.

Once a document has been approved for development or revision, a working group will be established by the overseeing standing committee

The type of document being developed will be determined before the document development process begins.

Types of documents

This policy applies to documents prepared by ASA volunteer committees, sub-committees or working groups.

- *Clinical guidelines* support best-practice decision-making in healthcare and are based on the best available evidence derived from a systematic evidence-based review of available data.
- *Position statements* summarise the available evidence on a clinical or scientific topic and include recommendations for patient care where evidence may not be strong enough to support a clinical guideline.
- *Consensus statements* articulate a consensus view of experienced clinicians on a clinical or scientific topic and include recommendations for patient care in circumstances where evidence may be limited.
- *Research reports* describe in detail the findings of research conducted by an ASA committee or working group. Research reports commissioned by the ASA and conducted by external organisations would follow the approval and oversight processes outlined in this policy only.
- *Scientific papers reporting on ASA research* set out specific findings of research projects for publication in the scientific literature.
- *Opinion pieces on clinical or scientific topics* describe a consensus view on a topical or controversial issue with the aim of communicating a matter of importance.
- *Systematic reviews* synthesise current scientific knowledge on a specific research question in a structured way that is able to be replicated.
- *Literature reviews* describe and appraise existing literature on a given topic, identifying gaps and not describing the methodology for the literature included. These are often used as a rationale for new research or to scope the types of interventions available for a systematic review.

This policy is not applicable to government submissions, policy proposals or briefing papers, though some of the approval principles may be relevant for some submissions. Media releases and other official organisational communications are also excluded.

Working groups

ASA working groups are established by the Board or committees to undertake a specific task. Each working group has a reporting and accountability responsibility to a standing committee.

When a working group is established:

- the chair and group membership should reflect the goals of the ASA's Diversity and inclusion policy

- where relevant to the working group's task, a clinical epidemiologist should be included as a member of the working group to help guide the group's methodology, and
- the overseeing standing committee should approve the chair and group members.

There may be a general call to members for expressions of interest to join a working group.

All applicants wishing to join the working group or all individuals involved in a project are required to declare any potential conflicts of interest (COI). For further details regarding COI, see the ASA Conflict of Interest Policy.

Development

Once a working group has been formed, document production may commence. Preparation and submission of all documents should be completed within their specified timeframe. Timeframes include all phases of the project, including research, document development, and review. Working group chairs must provide a progress report to the overseeing committee every three months.

The word limit for documents produced will depend on the purpose of the document and plans for publication. It is the responsibility of the working group chairs to discuss this with the standing committee chair at the beginning of document production and articulate all aspects of the task in terms of reference for the working group. The terms of reference should include:

- Description of the project
- Roles of chairs and working group members
- The nature and structure of the document
- The journal to be submitted to or a publication plan
- Dissemination plan
- The review period
- Evaluation plan.

Approval and endorsement

Manuscripts must be approved by both the establishing standing committee and the ASA Board before they are submitted for publication.

The submission of documents to the relevant standing committee involves a thorough procedural and content review and will usually include editorial suggestions, and the document may require revision before it is finally accepted.

Once the establishing standing committee has reviewed the document, the standing committee will make a recommendation about whether the manuscript should be endorsed in its current form. The document will then be presented to the ASA Board for approval before being submitted for publication or disseminated.

Authorship and acknowledgements

Working group members are the authors of papers and reports prepared as official ASA documents. Working groups should follow the NHMRC Authorship guidelines.

The ASA must be appropriately acknowledged in the manuscript or publication. Examples of suitable acknowledgements include:

- "a position statement of the Australasian Sleep Association" in the publication title
- "as members of the Australasian Sleep Association XX Sub-Committee/Working Group, the authors acknowledge the support and endorsement of this paper by the association"
- "the authors acknowledge the support of the Australasian Sleep Association in the preparation of this paper"

Publication

During the proposal stage, the endorsing committee, proposers or working group should include a plan for publication to the ASA Board. This will determine the paper's style, format and length.

After submission, any revisions requested by the journal prior to acceptance should be made by the working group. If significant or large-scale changes are requested, the working group should seek approval of the revised manuscript from the relevant standing committee.

When a clinical document is published in a journal, the ASA is not able to pay publishing costs to make the document available as Open Access. The ASA will pay any author fees charged by the journal for publication.

The ASA has an affiliation agreement with the Sleep Research Society and Oxford University Press outlining the terms and conditions of *SLEEP* and *SLEEP Advances* being the ASA's official journals. This affiliation agreement allows for:

- ASA members to access the same author fee discounts as Sleep Research Society members, and
- The publication of one open-access article submitted by ASA per year in each of the Journals at no cost to ASA or the authors.

Working groups submitting papers for publication should liaise with the CEO and Clinical Chair in relation to whether the paper should be submitted to *SLEEP* or *SLEEP Advances* under these terms of the affiliation agreement.

Dissemination and impact

A dissemination plan must be developed alongside each document. This plan will be developed by the ASA staff in consultation with the working party.

- In order to enhance access to ASA guidelines and position papers, all clinical documents will be made available via the ASA website, either in full or as a link to the publication. Where a clinical document is published in a journal, it will not be published on the ASA website until the publication embargo has lifted.
- Where there is a high level of interest among ASA members, the working group may be invited to host an ASA webinar to present their document or findings.
- If applicable, a training course based on new clinical practice guidelines will be developed in consultation with the Education Committee. This might be undertaken by the working group where appropriate, or a new working group established to develop the training course.

Each ASA document should have a plan to evaluate its impact, documented alongside the dissemination plan.

Updates

All ASA documents will be endorsed for five years unless agreed otherwise during the review process. Before five years elapse, the ASA will ask the relevant committee and/or the original working party to review the document for currency and determine whether there is a need for updating.