Note:

* These Decision-making Practices are primarily written from the point of view of a Work Group with an open membership. However, there are specific sections where alternate language has been added that have been identified as appropriate for a committee with a set membership (e.g. a committee, council or steering division). Adoption of this template should include the removal of the inappropriate alternate language.
* In several instances the Process Improvement WG recommends precise tailoring to your Work Group, and may suggest alternatives. These are denoted in brackets [ ].

Instructions:

* Find/replace <WorkGroupName> with the appropriate Work Group or Committee name
* Find/replace <WorkGroupAcronym> with the appropriate acronym for the Work Group or Committee.
* Update as appropriate, e.g. …reporting to the <SteeringDivisionName>.
* All Work Groups and Committees/Councils are expected to adapt these generic Decision-making Practices for their Work Group by the close of the January 2011 Working Group Meeting. If a Work Group or Committee is unable to meet this deadline, they may complete their own Decision-making Practices document at a later date, but the Generic Decision-making Practices document shall apply in the interim.

Contents

[1 Introduction 2](#_Toc264022948)

[2 Open Meetings 2](#_Toc264022949)

[2.1 Working Group Meetings 2](#_Toc264022950)

[2.2 Scheduled Conference Calls 2](#_Toc264022951)

[3 Meeting Notifications 3](#_Toc264022952)

[3.1 Unscheduled Meetings 3](#_Toc264022953)

[3.2 Meeting Agenda Notification Timing 3](#_Toc264022954)

[3.2.1 WGM Agendas 4](#_Toc264022955)

[3.2.2 Scheduled Conference Call Agendas 4](#_Toc264022956)

[4 Decision Publication 4](#_Toc264022957)

[4.1 Meeting Minutes 4](#_Toc264022958)

[4.2 Electronically Recording Meetings 5](#_Toc264022959)

[5 Quorum Requirements 5](#_Toc264022960)

[5.1 Quorum Requirements – Closed Membership Committees 5](#_Toc264022961)

[5.2 Preponderance of Interest 6](#_Toc264022962)

[5.3 Presiding Chair Vote 6](#_Toc264022963)

[6 Decision Threshold Requirements 6](#_Toc264022964)

[6.1 Revisiting Decisions 7](#_Toc264022965)

[7 Electronic Voting 7](#_Toc264022966)

[8 Proxy Participation 8](#_Toc264022967)

[8.1 Proxy Not Allowed 8](#_Toc264022968)

[8.1.1 Statement of Position 8](#_Toc264022969)

[8.2 Proxy Allowed – within a closed membership committee 8](#_Toc264022970)

[8.2.1 Time-limited Proxy 9](#_Toc264022971)

[8.2.2 Issue-limited Proxy 9](#_Toc264022972)

[8.2.3 Proxy constraints 9](#_Toc264022973)

[8.2.4 Proxy Notification 9](#_Toc264022974)

[9 Roberts Rules of Order 10](#_Toc264022975)

# Introduction

Each Work Group must submit their Decision-making Practices document to the Process Improvement co-chairs (see list at <http://www.hl7.org/Special/committees/pi/leadership.cfm>) and the HL7 webmaster ([webmaster@HL7.org](mailto:webmaster@HL7.org)) upon completion. Additionally, the Decision-making Practices document should be posted to your HL7 web page under the “Documents and Presentations” section.

This document defines the decision-making practices (DMP) of the Health Level Seven (HL7) <WorkGroupName> (<WorkGroupAcronym>). <WorkGroupAcronym> will adhere to a set of decision-making practices that ensure consensus, openness, and balance of interest.

Balance of interest is related to Normative ballot procedures; refer to HL7 Essential Requirements: Due process requirements for HL7 American National Standards (HL7 ER) for additional information on Normative ballots and balance of interest. §01.03 presents the ANSI position; while §02.03.03 presents the HL7 process for seeking balance in normative ballot consensus groups.

The practices as outlined in this document are designed to enable timely decision-making balanced with an earnest attempt to ensure that input from all affected parties is considered. The decision-making practices are intended to govern the standard operating procedures of the HL7 Work Groups and Committees and not intended to conflict with rules governing ballot procedure as defined by ANSI, the HL7 Governance and Operations Manual (GOM), and the HL7 ER.

In the event of joint meetings, the DMP of the host WG or Committee shall be the governing document.

# Open Meetings

1. WG and Committee meetings and conference calls are open to all interested parties unless specifically restricted to the Committee members by their Mission and Charter statement.

The purpose of these WG and Committee meetings and calls is to transact business including the resolution of design and implementation issues related to the WG’s area of responsibility or Committee area of interest and to make decisions relevant to the WG or Committee’s business.

Unless stipulated as above, meetings of the WG or Committee are open to everyone to ensure that viewpoints of all affected parties have an opportunity to be shared and considered. Everyone will be given an opportunity to speak; however, the chair may limit discussion on topics deemed to be non-constructive.

Depending on the purpose or mode of the meeting certain participants are expected to attend.

Other HL7 members may be asked to attend to provide specific input regarding a particular issue.

Guests (non HL7 members) are welcome to participate in the WG or may be invited to a Committee and are recognized as guests of HL7.

In keeping with the ANSI policy on openness, Guests may participate on all matters related to the development of HL7 specifications; although they will typically only address specific questions in the course of a Committee meeting.

## Working Group Meetings (WGM)

1. Meetings during WGMs may be attended by any registered WGM attendee who wishes to participate.

Participants should introduce themselves and identify the nature of their affiliation with HL7.

## Scheduled Conference Calls

1. Scheduled or periodic conference call meetings may be attended by persons registered on the WG or Committee list server. Certain Committees have closed list servers.

Persons not subscribed to the WG or Committee list may still attend, however, all meeting announcements, minutes, and other notices will be sent to the list and posted to the WG or Committee’s web page or wiki (see Section 3). Therefore anyone expecting to participate is encouraged to join the list so that the WG or Committee can communicate with them, given that the list server is public.

# Meeting Notifications

1. All activities shall be conducted in a public light with efforts made to ensure ample notification of those interested. The WG or Committee shall utilize the following key mechanisms to notify interested parties of its activities
2. WG or Committee’s listserv

WG or Committee web pages under <http://www.hl7.org/permalink/?WorkGroups>

WG or Committee wiki pages under <http://www.hl7.org/permalink/?HL7Wiki>.

Satisfaction of minimal notification requirements dictates that relevant announcements and supporting materials are posted to ***both*** the listserv and the web or wiki page.

The listserv (and/or wiki) will be used predominantly for discussion threads, notifications, and draft documents; whereas the web page will be used predominantly for final documents and document resources (decision documents, minutes, papers, etc.)

Any use of the terms **post**, **posted**, or **posting** refers to notification, subject to the above constraints.

NOTE: For consistency across WGs and Committees, Process Improvement recommends that minutes, agendas, and action items use the HL7 Work Group Meeting Minutes templates at <http://www.hl7.org/permalink/?MinutesTemplate>, or <http://www.hl7.org/permalink/?WikiMinutesTemplate>,. Approved minutes shall be posted under the “Minutes” section of the WG or Committee’s web page.

The suggested naming convention is:

* CCYY-MM-DD\_<Work Group Acronym>\_WGM\_Agenda
* CCYY-MM-DD\_<Work Group Acronym>\_WGM\_Minutes
* CCYY-MM-DD\_<Work Group Acronym>\_Call\_Agenda
* CCYY-MM-DD\_<Work Group Acronym>\_Call\_Minutes

Any other file posted by the WG or Committee should conform to this basic naming format.

## Unscheduled Meetings

1. WGs or Committess requiring face-to-face meetings between scheduled WG M sessions or conference calls have two options:
2. An 'Out of Cycle Meeting' can be convened as defined in GOM §11.04, which requires 30 days notice.

The issues may be discussed in an informal group, bringing forward recommendations to the list or as a discussion topic for the next regularly scheduled WGM session or conference call. Recommendations brought forward by the informal group are not binding decisions until acted upon by the WG or Committee in regular session conforming to the notification requirements defined in Section 3.

## Meeting Agenda Notification Timing

1. Meeting notification and the proposed agenda are provided prior to the meeting.

Binding decisions can be made only at meetings with the required advance notification where quorum is met:

1. A **binding decision** refers to any decision made by the WG or committee that establishes a practice, formal recommendation, or formal action by the WG or committee (e.g., creating a new program, rendering guidance, etc.).

The co-chairs of the WG or Committee shall make every attempt to ensure that all parties with an interest in agenda topics are made aware of the meeting time and location subject to the documented notification requirements and the stated openness of the Committee. As appropriate, WG or Committee activities will be cross-posted to other HL7 lists, depending upon the topic and type of meeting as indicated in the following list. The GOM stipulates that all face-to-face meetings require at least 30 days notice.

### WGM Agendas

1. WGM Committee or WG session schedules are posted in the meeting brochure; specific WG or Committee agendas are posted under WGM information at the HL7 wiki (wiki.hl7.org/index.php?title=WGM\_information)

A preliminary agenda is developed by the end of the prior WGM and posted with the minutes following the WGM (posting deadlines are established by HL7 Headquarters; typically 2 weeks after the WGM).

The preliminary agenda is finalized at least two weeks prior to the WGM and posted within 2 business days or as required by HL7 Headquarters.

Recognizing the dynamic nature of the WGM, the agenda may require updates. Notification will be satisfied so long as at least two of the following are used:

1. E-mail notification by 6:00 pm local time the evening before the event

Notification on the bulletin board (near the HL7 registration desk) at least 2 quarters (there are four 90-minute quarters per WGM day) prior to the event

Announcement during the general session or lunch session prior to the event

Include other forms of notification specific to your WG or Committee if applicable

### Scheduled Conference Call Agendas

1. Scheduled Conference Call Agendas shall be posted by close-of-business of the first business day prior to a call.

Preliminary agendas for the next conference call are to be determined at the close of each teleconference.

# Decision Publication

## Meeting Minutes

1. Minutes will be produced and published for all WGM sessions and conference calls achieving quorum.

The presiding co-chair of the meeting is responsible for ensuring that minutes are taken and posted.

Where quorum is not achieved, the production of minutes is at the discretion of the presiding co-chair.

Minutes shall include, at a minimum, the following information:

1. Date, time and location of the session/call

List of attendees including names and organizations

Identification of presiding chair (if the presiding chair changes during meeting this must be noted in the minutes.)

Assertion of quorum (met or not met)

A summary of discussion topics and the outcome of proposals or motions made (including vote tallies if votes were taken)

Minutes shall be published on the the WG or Committee’s webpage or the wiki as well as the WG or Committee’s listserv.

Minutes from a WGM session shall be posted 2 weeks after the WGM; minutes from a conference call will be posted within one week following the call.

## Electronically Recording Meetings

1. The <WorkGroupAcronym> may decide that they wish to electronically record a session, conference call, or event including audio or video recordings.
2. Electronic recordings will not replace the minutes or the requirements for minutes as defined in Section 4
3. Prior to starting any electronic recording, the presiding chair will seek approval from all attendees for the recording to occur and will note the acceptance by all attendees in the meeting minutes.
4. With the approval of the WG or Committee to proceed with any electronic recording, the presiding chair will explain the method and purpose of the recording and how the recording will be used and made available.

# Quorum Requirements - General

1. A quorum for WG or Committee meetings require that a co-chair and at least two other HL7 <WorkGroupAcronym> members be present, where no single organization or party represents more than a simple majority of the voting WG or Committee members present.

[NOTE: The minimum number of attendees required for a quorum varies based on WG or Committee size, but it SHALL be no less than two in addition to the presiding chair.

A motion may be made, by any member, to defer major decisions even if quorum is met, particularly if key stakeholders are not present.

## Quorum Requirements – Closed Membership Committees

Insert section here to for quorum requirements for closed membership committees (e.g. Board, TSC, SD, IC)

The term "constituent" is used to indicate the number of votes in the committee.

1. A quorum for committee meetings to allow for decision making requires that a presiding chair (or designate) and at least half of the voting members must be present.
2. A quorum for committee meetings to allow for direction setting requires that a presiding chair (or designate) and at least one third of the voting members must be present.

In both circumstances, the presiding chair may be counted as the co-chair representing his/her constituents in the event no other co-chairs of that constituent are present.

## Preponderance of Interest

[NOTE: The following section is suggested. Work Groups that routinely face controversial decisions that are influenced by organizational participation should consider rigid enforcement. Those that do not should consider “only-as-needed” enforcement.]

1. To ensure balanced decision-making, no single organizational interest may wield a “Preponderance of Influence” within a WG.

Preponderance of Influence is defined as having one organization representing more than 50 percent of the voting WG members in session. Note: Committee members are normally chosen for specific expertise; therefore, preponderance of influence is rarely an issue.

This rule may be either stringently or loosely enforced, at the discretion of the presiding chair, given that the chair is not a member of the organization in question. However, if a WG member believes that decisions are being significantly influenced, he may invoke the “Preponderance of Influence Clause” requiring the presiding chair to bring the voting membership into compliance with this 50% rule. This invocation is non-debatable.

## Presiding Chair Vote

1. The presiding chair may cast a vote in only two circumstances:
2. The presiding chair may cast a tie-breaking vote.

The presiding chair may vote when that vote corrects potential preponderance of influence concerns within the WG.

* 1. For example: 5 members are present, one of whom is the presiding co-chair. Two others are with the same organization; the co-chair’s vote removes the majority vote of the over-represented organization and thus brings the committee into balance.

In all circumstances, the WG or Committee can have only one presiding chair, with any other co-chairs participating as regular members when not presiding.

* 1. Note that the presiding chair can change within the course of a given session so long as a public statement recognizing the change is made and recorded in the minutess.

Although any issue may be discussed at any time, binding actions cannot be taken without sufficient notification (see Section 3) and quorum (see Section 5). Absence of either of these conditions allows the WG or Committee to issue recommendations that must subsequently be ratified by the WG or Committee subject to satisfying constraints placed upon binding decisions.

No co-chair should preside over discussions or vote for which they could reasonably be perceived to have a vested interest.

# Decision Threshold Requirements

1. The <WorkGroupAcronym> will strive for consensus in decision-making; however, decisions of the WG or Committee are affirmed by simple majority.

WGs may choose to make the thresholds on this more rstrictive, so long as those practices are agreed upon, voted by the WG, and documented in their practices. For instance, a WG may choose to require a two-thirds vote to revisit a previously discussed issue.

While decisions are affirmed by simple majority, the Work Group shall endeavor to make its decisions via a consensus process.

Where a consensus decision is not reached the Work Group shall agree on a course of action to be followed in order that sufficient information to achieve consensus may be gathered.

To be called a consensus decision, it must receive two-thirds (66%) majority support. A variety of informal techniques may be used to determine if consensus may be reached including, but not limited to, a straw poll, Robert’s Rules of Order, seeking response to a hypothetical opposing view, and polling each participant to voice their position on the issue.

When a formal vote is taken, the presiding chair will explain the eligibility for voting.

Any participant concerned that a given organization has undue representation or influence within a session of the WG may invoke the “Preponderance of Influence” clause (see Section 5.2). This invocation is non-debatable.

## Revisiting Decisions

1. It is recognized that revisiting previously made decisions inhibits progress and should be discouraged. That said, circumstances might exist that warrant re-opening discussion on a previously resolved issue.

To dissuade this practice, such re-opening requires a formal motion, second, and two-thirds (66%) majority affirmative vote subject to the quorum rules in this document.

In order for the decision to revisit a previous decision to be considered binding, advance notification as specified in Meeting Notifications (section 3) is required.

The Meeting Notifications (section 3) can be waived to expedite ballot reconciliation items if the WG determines that the new discussion represents the same range of views as addressed in the original decision.

# Electronic Voting

1. Some decisions considered outside of the WGM may be resolved electronically.

<Work Group Acronym> electronic votes will be announced on the <Work Group Name> list server.

If the motion was NOT made, seconded and discussed during a quorum meeting then, the workgroup will circulate the motion and request a second via the list service. Once seconded there will be a period of not less than 3 days of discussion via the list server prior to the opening of the e-vote.

The <Work Group Acronym> electronic votes will be held open for a minimum period of 1 week but may be longer. The voting period will be defined in the announcement of opening the e-vote.

Quorum for electronic voting will be set at 90% of the number of attendees at the last WGM session or conference call at which quorum was achieved. Quorum shall be at a minimum the same as for a <Work Group Name> session or conference call as defined in Section 5.

If quorum has not been achieved at the end of the announced voting period, the vote will be closed as unsuccessful due to lack of quorum.

Electronic votes are decided by simple majority of the affirmatives and negatives.

# Proxy Participation

## Proxy Not Allowed

1. The WG recognizes that competing interests sometimes prohibit a member’s ability to participate in person at all meetings. However, in the interest of encouraging the dynamic exchange of ideas, the WG does not endorse/allow participation by proxy.

If an organization feels strongly enough about a particular topic to want to participate in the vote, that organization shall send adequate representation. Where possible, the co-chairs should accommodate schedules to ensure such representation can be present in the appropriate venue.

### Statement of Position

1. Those wishing to establish a position in writing may do so subject to the notification requirements outlined in Section 3
2. Statements of Position received prior to or during the meeting will be shared by the presiding chair as part of the discussion on the related topic.
3. The presiding chair has the responsibility present theses positions during relevant discussion, through they are not under any obligation to support or defend them.
4. These statements do not carry the weight of a vote and are included as informational only for consideration by the WG.
5. All Statements of Position received in electronic form will be included as attachments to the minutes.

The following section SHALL be used only for closed membership committees.

Note from the HL7 Board: HL7's consensus process works best when decisions are based on a dynamic exchange of ideas between colleagues. By removing the voter from the discussion, proxy voting weakens the consensus process. Thus the Board recommends that Work Groups not implement a proxy vote procedure.

If your committee or WG seeks to implement such a procedure, the Board advises that you clearly document the requirements that lead to that decision.

The following section is provided as candidate boilerplate for those committees choosing the support proxy participation. It is not considered to be part of the “default” practices unless specifically adopted by the committee. If this section is adopted it should REPLACE Section 7.1

## Proxy Allowed – within a closed membership committee

1. Committee members unable to participate in <WorkGroupAcronym> activities in person may do so byproxy.
2. The Committee recognizes that competing interests sometimes prohibit a member’s ability to participate in person at all <WorkGroupAcronym> meetings.
3. To address this concern, declared members may issue a formal proxy to allow their voice to be heard in their absence.
4. Proxies take the forms of Time-Limited, Issue-Limited and "Statement of Position". Note that a proxy can be both time-limited and issue-limited at the discretion of the issuing member.

### Time-limited Proxy

1. A time-limited proxy empowers another individual or organization to speak for the absent member. Time-limited proxies empower the proxy participant to represent the originating individual for the period of time designated in the proxy (for instance, the duration of a WGM).

Proxy-holders may participate and vote *on all issues* on behalf of the issuing individual subject to the constraints in the proxy.

[Process Improvement suggests that the time-limited proxy be restricted to individuals in attendance at the meeting.]

### Issue-limited Proxy

1. Contrasted with a time-limited proxy, an issue-limited proxy empowers the proxy participant to act on behalf of the issuing individual for all matters pertaining to the issue designated in the proxy itself.

Proxy holders may participate and vote in all matters *concerning the issue designated in the proxy* and subject to any constraints in the proxy. For instance, if an individual proffers a proxy on all issues related to HL7 Balloting, the acting proxy participant may engage only on those issues pertaining to balloting.

Note: A declared member may also declare their vote on a given issue by email in advance of the meeting.

### Proxy constraints

1. An individual can hold a proxy for multiple individuals.

Proxies are subject to all HL7 participation requirements (e.g., current HL7 members, etc.). In other words, if one individual would like to have two proxies represented in one meeting, they must find an individual able to attend the <WorkGroupAcronym> session for each proxy vote they wish to delegate.

Proxies are not transitive. A proxy for one individual cannot re-delegate that proxy to another. That said, members are not required to name individuals as their proxy, and may instead name ”any individual voting representative of <Organizational Member Name> (therefore empowering any voting representative of that organization to sit in their stead).

Proxies are not reciprocal. An issued proxy to a member does not in turn allow the converse. A second proxy back to the first individual would be required.

### Proxy Notification

1. Proxies must be identified to, at a minimum, the <WorkGroupAcronym> co-chairs and the HL7 Organization (represented by the TSC Chair or the HL7 Staff).
2. This notification must be provided either on paper and physically signed by the member (facsimiles are accepted), or received electronically from the registered e-mail address in the HL7 Membership Directory.

During a WGM, a proxy can be provided to either a co-chair with one witness, or to an HL7 staff member with one witness; witnesses must be from a different organization than the proxy holder.

# Roberts Rules of Order

1. The WG or Committee shall rely upon Roberts Rules of Order in the event that formal guidance of parliamentary procedure is needed or requested.

In the interest of ensuring the effective and active engagement of all participants, the WG or Committee shall follow its documented decision-making practices, referring to Roberts Rules of Order in the event of a question or concern. Since Robert’s Rules of Order provides formalism for addressing almost all matters of process, this provides a “backup mechanism” of formality in the event that it is required.

It is the responsibility of the presiding chair to guide the WG or Committee to an efficient and effective outcome. The WG or Committee shall follow, in this order of precedence, these Decision-making Practices (which cannot conflict with the HL7 Bylaws, GOM, or ER), the HL7 GOM, the HL7 ER, the HL7 Bylaws, and Roberts Rules of Order. The established decision-making practices can refine certain policies and procedures so long as they remain in accordance with the HL7 GOM, HL7 ER, and Bylaws.

In the event that an issue arises where formality is required and no other guidance exists, Robert’s Rules of Order shall take precedence. This provides a “common denominator” to keep in-check the power of the presiding chair and to confirm the rights of all participants and members.

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