

# Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Preparing AACC Academy White Papers

PURPOSE: The purpose of this SOP is to provide guidance for those who will lead efforts to develop white papers.

OVERVIEW: An AACC Academy white paper is a short document designed

- To present a not-too-detailed explanation of an analytical or clinical issue that relates to laboratory medicine.
- To state an AACC Academy policy, position, or philosophy about a subject
- To pose an analytical or clinical problem or question and then answer that issue with information or propose a solution.

The purpose of AACC Academy white papers is

- To inform the clinical biochemistry community
- To act as a catalyst for progressive knowledge-sharing
- To act as a guide for future decision-making
- To point out areas where data are missing
- To act as a stimulus to guideline writing

White papers are not intended to skirt the guideline process. Many issues addressed in white papers may not be large enough to grow into a formal guideline document, but they are significant enough to warrant review. White papers allow recognized experts and authorities to summarize the data that do exist and then offer their perspective on the current best course of action.

White papers will be made available for distribution on the AACC Academy web site. A limited number of paper copies will be made available at cost. Some white papers may be submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal (such as *Clinical Chemistry*).

Procedures

## 1. Selection of topics for white papers

Oversight of white papers is under the direction of the AACC Academy Council. On an annual basis, the Council will review potential topics and prospective authors for white paper preparation. Any member of the Academy may submit recommendations or proposals for topics to the Council. Proposals should contain the following components:

- Title
- Author list, contact information, short bio
- History, motivation, and significance of the topic
- Outline of the proposed white paper
- Key references
- Tentative timetable

All proposals will be evaluated by the Council, or designee, based on the following criteria:

- 1) relevance and importance of the proposed topic as a white paper;

- 2) track record of the proposed author (knowledge about the subject and prior record, if any, in writing this style of paper).

The review process may include constructive comments for improving the proposal and a recommendation to invite, resubmit or reject. Based on the review results, a decision is made by the Council and communicated back to the proposers/authors.

## 2. **Review process for accepted white papers**

In the case of a positive decision on the proposal, the white paper will be invited, which will undergo a separate peer review process handled by the Council, or designee. Positive review of the proposed white paper and invitation for submitting the full manuscript should not be interpreted as acceptance of the full white paper manuscript. The acceptance/rejection decision will be made based on criteria defined by the Council.

## 3. **Writing a white paper**

Some useful, high-level guidelines for writing a good white paper are:

- It provides new insights into the subject that is of interest to many areas of clinical biochemistry and laboratory medicine. It should not be a mere review and summary of a collection of previously published articles. Ideally, it should offer a fresh look at the subject.
- It explains complex concepts and subjects in a way that is easily accessible to the non-expert audience. Clever use of illustrations/multimedia will positively contribute to this desirable attribute.
- It offers the value of bringing the reader quickly to a new area and of highlighting the importance of an emerging topic.

## 4. **Paper format and length**

The general guideline for the length and preparation of the paper is as follows: Up to 20 double-spaced pages, 11 point font size, including figures, tables and references; the total number of figures up to 7, and the total number of references up to 25.

## 5. **Suggested timeline for preparation of white paper**

6 months before publication: identify topics/authors and issue call for proposals

5 months before: review & approve proposals

4 months before: issue invitation to write the white paper

2 months before: submit draft of white paper for peer review

1 month before: revise draft of white paper using comments from reviewers

## 6. **Online submission**

The white paper submission will be conducted electronically. At least two reviewers will be chosen to reach a consistent decision. The AACC general policy about conflict of interest in selecting reviewers will be followed.