WHAT IS EXPECTED OF ACOG COMMITTEE MEMBERS

When an individual accepts a committee appointment, that individual should become familiar with the following expectations:

1. Committee members are asked to sign the ACOG Volunteer Agreement, and are expected to disclose potential conflicts of interest, to abide by various ACOG policies, and to perform their committee responsibilities so as to promote the best interests of ACOG.
2. Committee members should be familiar with the charge and existing work products of the committee.
3. Committee members are expected to have expertise, current clinical experience or represent the perspective of a special group (e.g., women's health specialist, young physician) and must be willing to actively contribute to the discussions and work of the committee.
4. Before meetings, committee members are expected to review and be familiar with the agenda and all accompanying materials that will be sent by mail or electronically.
5. Committee members are expected to consistently attend regularly scheduled meetings for the entire duration of the meeting. Exceptions may occur based on personal emergencies, weather, airline issues, and other extenuating circumstances. A committee member who misses two consecutive meetings may be replaced at the next meeting for committee appointments.
6. Committee members are expected to make relevant and focused comments during discussions that will facilitate the efficiency of the committee. Committee members should avoid repeating themselves or points made by others except to express agreement or refine the argument.
7. Committee members are expected to maintain confidentiality of the agenda, agenda materials, discussions, work product and work plans of the committee.
8. Committee members are expected to demonstrate flexibility in consensus building discussions and take into account the viewpoint of different types of providers (e.g., specialists and subspecialists; academicians and private practitioners), regional differences in access (e.g., rural and urban), scientific evidence, cost-effectiveness, and other relevant factors.
9. Committee members are expected to volunteer for their fair share of “homework” assignments between meetings and to meet deadlines. This will require careful review of documents and provision of comments based on this review, to be submitted on time to collate for review by the entire committee during committee meetings or teleconferences, and following up on any requests made during and between meetings.
10. Depending on the assigned committee, committee members are expected to volunteer to serve as authors or reviewers in the development of new documents and documents undergoing revision. In addition, committee authors assist staff in addressing and resolving comments from organizational document review and during the document production process, and can opt to serve as a committee spokesperson for the media and others about committee publications, as facilitated by ACOG Communications staff. These activities unquestionably require an investment of time beyond that required for meeting attendance or teleconference participation. Please see the section entitled “What Can Committee Members Anticipate?”
11. Many committees require writing. All written works created on behalf of ACOG must be original and supported by authoritative references whenever possible. Writing skills should be such that a member can produce a coherent draft that may require some re-working, addition of evidence to support a position, and editing. Committee members should be flexible in accepting revisions of draft documents that they produce.

12. All ACOG committees have timetables for their products, whether they are publications or regulatory deadlines or future conferences. It is expected that all committee members will be prompt in their work and will produce their committee work in a timely fashion.

13. Committee members volunteer their time and effort to provide an invaluable service to the College.

WHAT CAN COMMITTEE MEMBERS ANTICIPATE?

As detailed in the “What is Expected of ACOG Committee Members” section, membership on a committee and participation in committee activities and responsibilities is tremendously rewarding but is not “easy.” Unquestionably, participation in meetings and teleconferences requires a commitment of time and attention, and the work necessary between meetings or teleconferences also requires a commitment of time and effort. It is not possible to provide a significant level of detail as to what the exact time commitment may be, due to the variations in individual committee activities as well as the amount of time involved in, for example, document review and writing. However, some general considerations can be offered.

Meetings: Many committees meet twice per year, with meetings either one or two days depending on the committee.

Teleconferences: Most committees convene at least one teleconference between in-person meetings (many convene more than that).

Email Reviews: Most committees will also review and vote on final or near-final document drafts via email throughout the year.

“Separate” Calls or E-Mail Exchanges: It is not uncommon that a specific issue may require attention by some or all committee members to help address a question or resolve an issue. For example, questions from members, media, or government personnel may require conversations involving some, or all, committee members to help address the issue that cannot wait for a scheduled meeting or teleconference.

“Homework”: It is again challenging to estimate the amount of time required between meetings or teleconferences as this will be highly variable depending on the committee and the actual activity or document being reviewed. However, document authors and primary/secondary reviewers of documents likely invest in the order of 30 hours or more per document in performing these activities. This is in addition to the reviews of other committee documents and the participation in meetings and teleconferences.

ACOG acknowledges the tremendous commitment of its committee, expert work group, and task force members, in developing the numerous activities and products that ACOG provides for its members and for the continued improvement of women’s health. This summary will hopefully provide additional information as members contemplate committee involvement in ACOG.