

## IOA Committee and Task Force Description

### Mission Statement

The mission of the International Ombudsman Association is to support and advance the global Organizational Ombudsman profession and ensure that practitioners work to the highest professional standards by:

- Setting standards of practice, regulatory platform and code of ethics for the Organizational Ombudsman profession;
- Assisting in the establishment of Organizational Ombudsman offices;
- Providing excellent professional development resources, research and information;
- Increasing awareness and understanding of Organizational Ombudsman value among key stakeholders and the general public;
- Creating strategic alliances or direct communications with other key organizations and professionals involved in dispute resolution, governance, ethics and risk mitigation.

### 1. Name of Committee or Task Force Research and Assessment Committee

### 2. Purpose of Committee or Task Force (scope of responsibilities):

Because the ideas of surveys and research have been ephemeral and have easily gotten lost, the topics need a stable, coherent Board-monitored charge and regularly-reported review. The IOA Strategic Plan and mission outline a goal to have an OO in every organization... but we still do not really know who and how many we are. We cannot possibly begin to achieve our strategic plan without immediately improving our knowledge of the profession.

As the premiere association for OO's, the IOA has an obligation to coordinate efforts to educate both members as well as organizations about the OO role. It is difficult to achieve our mission without data to support us. The purpose of this committee is to enhance our practice through filling the research and assessment gap. The committee will also support research to promote excellence in OO professional development, to study ombuds practices with the intent not only to understand what ombuds do, but also over time to improve practice (knowledge and skills) of experienced and new ombudspersons based on research findings.

The following goals for the group include:

- Develop and update a research and assessment agenda for IOA (on an annual basis)
- Build a scholarly basis of OO knowledge
- Promote existing research through guidance/mentorship in publishing results
- Encourage a variety of research methods and perspectives
- Develop research skills and mentorship of OO scholars and non-OO scholars interested in OO topics
- Establish a funding program for research including criteria and process for evaluation of research/assessment proposals
- Fund research and assessment projects through board-approved processes
- Promote research agenda throughout IOA (through collaboration with the Journal, PDC and Conference)
- Explore the idea of an IOA Research Symposium (separate from the annual conference)
- Conduct a biennial ombudsman compensation survey
- Establish a clearinghouse of ombudsman and ombudsman-related materials

### 3. How the Charge of the Work Group Relates to the Strategic Plan

Relates directly with Goals 1, 4 and 5 of the SP with the following purposes:

- Support excellence in Ombuds' professional development;

- Increase understanding, visibility, and development of OO roles and offices;
- Influence policy-making relevant to the OO profession.

#### **4. Chair Reporting Relationships (where group fits within the organizational structure)**

Committee chair(s) report(s) to the Board of Directors through the Board liaison.

#### **5. Chair Appointment and Term (how appointed, length of term, term limits)**

The committee recommends a committee member to serve as chair (co-chair) and the IOA Board considers his/her qualifications before appointing to serve a 3-year term, with the option to renew for one consecutive term, for a maximum of 2 full terms. If possible, terms of co-chairs will be staggered to preserve continuity

#### **6. Committee Composition (by position or other qualifications rather than name; number of members)**

One chair/co-chairs and committee members of the association (regardless of category) who are knowledgeable about the association's mission and vision, are able to devote adequate time to the responsibilities involved in meeting the committee's goals. Committee membership should represent all sectors and global regions, as well as a balance of newer and more experienced members, all of whom should be knowledgeable about IOA.

In order to effectively pursue the IOA's international objectives, including opening channels of communication with, and mutually supporting, professionals and organizations outside of the United States, and promoting the role of the Organizational Ombudsman in all regions, the committee will ensure that its criteria for membership and leadership functions promote participation and perspectives from all global regions.

#### **7. Committee Member Appointment and Term (how appointed, length of term, term limits)**

Chair(s) will collaborate with the Volunteer Management Committee to recruit potential members. The chair(s) shall appoint the committee members to a 3-year term. Committee members have the opportunity to reapply for a consecutive term, subject to approval by the Chair(s).

#### **8. Subcommittees (if any)**

Other subcommittees may be created by committee chairs to assist with the performance of committee's responsibilities. The membership of subcommittee may also include IOA members who are not current members of the committee. Subcommittees will be chaired by current committee members.

Research Subcommittee, Survey Subcommittee and others to be determined by the Co-Chairs as appropriate

**9. Authority (what committee/task force has authority to do)** the committee has the authority to conduct internal IOA surveys, promote/make suggestions for research projects, grant funding (based on criteria for grants approved by the Board of Directors) for research/survey projects from within their budget, authorize changes to content of relevant pages of the IOA website.

**10. Limitations on Authority (what committee/task force does not have authority to do)** does not have the authority to spend money beyond their budget without prior authority or make official statements without approval of the IOA President or Executive Director (for official communications) or the Treasurer (for resource requests). The committee will not represent IOA without the express consent of the President or Executive Director. Members of the committee (including co-chairs and liaison) will be ineligible for receiving grants from the committee to avoid a conflict of interest. The committee will make recommendations for grant recipients to the board and the board will have final approval of which proposals will receive grants.

#### **11. Association Policies Impacting Committee/Task Force Function (relevant votes the Board of Directors has taken)**

## **12. Interactions, Influences & Interdependencies with Other Committees**

The global priorities of the IOA apply to all committees, and the scope of work for each committee has an international scope. To integrate international perspectives into the goals, operations and substantive work of the committee, each committee will collaborate with the International (Outreach) Committee and the Regional Advisory Communities to develop needed processes that enable them to seek guidance, have dialog, and receive feedback and recommendations from the International (Outreach) Committee on international opportunities, and may directly engage with the Regional Advisory Communities with regard to needs and interests of the regions and the IOA and committee.

As appropriate, the committee will liaise with other IOA committees including the Journal of IOA, CO-OP, the International Outreach Committee and the Regional Advisory Communities. Coordination with the Membership Committee in relation to conduct of surveys of membership on IOA products and services conducted by Membership Committee.

**13. Job Products (what output work committee/task force delivers during a year)** Produce a regular (no less than biennial) assessment and report results of member practices to the Board of Directors and to IOA membership annually (either conducted by committee members or commissioned by approved outside experts). There should be assessments that report compensation every other year..... and assessments about practice the off year (Or both could be surveyed together, every other year). Make annual recommendations for research and assessment topics. Regular (annual or biennial) survey of issues that members are hearing about in their office using the Uniform Reporting Categories. Implementation of plans to seek funding and pursue partnerships in order to conduct research..

**14. Timelines (deadlines committee/task force is expected to meet)** No less than 1 biennial survey of IOA membership

**15. Description of Operations (how committee/task force gets its work done)** teleconference calls supported by IOA HQ (international toll free numbers required) and email communications.

## **16. Role of Board Liaison**

Operations associated with committee oversight responsibilities include the following:

- Service as liaison between oversight committees and the Board
- Overseeing the process of appointing committee chairs (in collaboration with president) and committee members as needed
- Assuming the responsibility of acting committee chair if there is a temporary vacancy
- Educating committee chairs about the roles and responsibilities of the Board oversight and the committee chair
- Active participation in scheduled committee meetings, including providing a report of relevant Board discussion/decisions relating to the work and interests of the assigned committee and assisting in clarifying common issues and interests between IOA committees
- Proposing motions for inclusion to the Board agenda associated with oversight area
- Work with committee chairs on the timely completion and submission of Board reports
- Insuring that Board decisions are communicated and followed-up upon with committee leadership.
- Monitoring and encouraging progress of committee in carrying out assignments.
- Bringing to the attention of the IOA Board and officers situations related to committee activities requiring attention.
- Mentoring the Board member who will assume oversight responsibilities when Board term ends or upon reassignment

**17. Role of IOA Staff** Help coordinate and schedule teleconference calls; provide an international toll free number for conference calls. Attendance on calls is not required. Assistance, if requested, with survey technology. Committee chairs will request additional staff resources, should they be necessary, through the board liaison.

**18. Resources required (funds, equipment, other)** toll-free international conference line for regularly scheduled committee and subcommittee calls. The committee is encouraged to reach out to external resources provided they are at no cost to IOA. Access to premium level of online survey/assessment tools for IOA (survey monkey or survey gizmo or a similar service). Annual membership for a site like this is around \$500-600 for non-profits. \$5000-\$10000 annually to distribute in the form of research grants to support field research and surveys in the ombudsman field.

**19. Report Back Process to Board** The committee will report back through the board liaison as appropriate.

**20. Questions & Open Issues**

**21. Person Completing Form** Lisa Witzler (with contributions from Mary Rowe, Shereen Bingham, Willem Kweens and Shannon Burton)

**22. Date:** April 19, 2015 by IOA Board of Directors