



## Policies and Procedures Topical Action Group (TAGs) Revised April 2015

A unique aspect of AACTE is that in addition to standing, board and special committees, the Association provides individuals from member institutions with opportunities to participate in Topical Action Groups (TAGs). TAGs are unique in that they are initiated, organized, and managed by participants, yet are approved, overseen and funded by the AACTE and a designated TAG staff administrator. Generally, they focus on topics which a segment of the membership deems to be important to the state of educator preparation.

### **History and Description of TAGs**

Initially established at the October 1988 meeting of the Board of Directors, Special Study Groups (SSGs) were formed to investigate areas of professional education that are of interest to faculty of member institutions. In 2013, the name was changed to “Topical Action Groups” to more accurately describe the action-oriented nature of these unique constituent groups. Historically, these groups have explored the areas of multicultural education, gender issues, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), elementary education, admissions and retention, arts and sciences, international education, paraeducation, race and racism in education, service-learning, women in the deanship, deans of color, and social and cultural foundations.

TAG activities will be overseen and managed by an entity comprised of the AACTE President and a staff person designated as the TAG staff administrator. The charge of this oversight entity includes:

- providing a forum in which individuals from member institutions exchange information on issues related to professional education;
- promoting collaboration among member institution personnel;
- monitoring the progress of established TAGs and making suggestions for improvement;
- promoting the TAG program and assisting with the establishment of additional TAGs.

### **Definition of TAGs**

AACTE defines Topical Action Groups (TAGs) as peer-generated groups of people with similar interests that provide a continuous and structured forum for discussion and action among persons from member institutions around particular professional education topics. AACTE encourages the establishment of TAGs that are congruent with the AACTE mission, goals, bylaws and policies.

## **Guidelines and Criteria for Topical Action Groups**

The following are guidelines for the establishment of AACTE Topical Action Groups (TAGs), which the Association may amend at any time.

### **Establishing a TAG**

Establishment of a TAG requires completion and submission of the TAG application to the staff administrator for approval by the AACTE President. The application requires the following:

- a TAG name
- a statement of purpose
- initial projects and goals
- the names, institutions and email addresses of the officers, and
- the names, institutions and email addresses of at least 10 additional members affiliated with AACTE member institutions

In order to establish a TAG, a Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer must be assigned when the application is submitted, and the appointed individuals must sign a letter of commitment to establish their officership. The letters will be sent automatically via email to the appointed individuals for electronic signature once the TAG application has been submitted. When the completed application has been received and all letters of commitment have been signed, the application will be considered complete and will be submitted by the staff administrator to the AACTE President for approval. The staff administrator will inform the TAG Chair when the AACTE President has approved the application. The TAG's online community space within the AACTE website will be established shortly thereafter.

The statement of purpose submitted as part of the TAG application should be succinct, and indicate a contribution to the practice of educator preparation and professional education. Statements of purpose should take into consideration existing TAGs and Standing Committees.

The TAG staff administrator and AACTE President will monitor the progress of TAGs.

### **Individual Membership in a TAG (faculty)**

Only individuals employed at institutions that are active members of AACTE (current year dues have been paid) and have the approval of their institution's Chief Representative (CR) are eligible for TAG membership. The Chief Representative of each institution has the option of disapproving any individual's participation in a TAG if they feel that this affiliation is inappropriate or incongruous with their professional responsibilities at their institution. Once a TAG is established, an individual may join a TAG at any time, but the individual's TAG membership will end conterminously when the AACTE membership of the individual's institution expires. Based on previous experience with Special Study Groups, it was found to be most beneficial when members limited their participation to two groups, thus ensuring the quality of the experience. Therefore, individuals are asked to limit TAG membership to two groups, and serve as an officer in only one TAG at a time. Should TAG annual meetings be scheduled simultaneously, the individual must choose which meeting to attend, with attendance priority being given to the TAG in which the individual serves as an officer, if applicable.

To join an established TAG, an individual must submit a request to join via the AACTE website, including acceptance of the TAG terms and conditions. The request will be forwarded to the staff administrator who will ensure that the individual's institution is an active member of AACTE and notify the individual's institutional CR of their desire to join before admitting the individual to the TAG. Once accepted to a TAG, individuals have access to all online documents and resources for each TAG in which they hold membership via their AACTE username and password.

All TAG members in good standing shall be entitled to vote for TAG officers and any other matter where a vote is taken or required.

### **Individual membership in a TAG (doctoral students)**

AACTE recognizes that those seeking doctoral degrees in education at Member institutions constitute the pipeline of future professional leaders. AACTE is eager to engage these individuals early in their careers to provide them with valuable professional experiences, the support necessary to enrich their doctoral work, and the opportunity to establish valuable connections with others in the field. In addition, many of these individuals will one day serve in the capacity of lead administrator for an educational program and will therefore be the decision maker regarding their institution's AACTE membership status. Providing these individuals with an opportunity to experience the value of AACTE member programs early in their careers will likely be a key determinant in maintaining their continued commitment and support of the Association and its mission later in their professional lives.

The Topical Action Group (TAG) program can provide doctoral students with the opportunity to network with professionals at various stages in their careers from across the country around a common topic of interest while gaining valuable insights and support.

Doctoral students are encouraged to join AACTE TAG groups via under the following guidelines:

1. Doctoral students who wish to join a TAG should do so by submitting a request via the TAG portion of the AACTE website.
2. At the time the TAG membership request is submitted, the student will be asked to identify their doctoral program advisor. The advisor will be notified of the student's desire to join the TAG via email, and will need to approve the student's affiliation with the TAG before the student's TAG membership becomes active.
3. Once approved for TAG membership, the student's membership will remain active unless it is revoked by the current doctoral program advisor, or the doctoral student discontinues participation with the TAG.
4. Doctoral students approved for membership in a TAG will have the same privileges and responsibilities granted to faculty and staff members of the TAG, with the exception that doctoral students are not able to serve as officers in a TAG.

### **Duties and Responsibilities of the Officers**

Newly established TAGs must provide the names of those individuals that will serve as the initial Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary at the time of application. These officers will be asked to sign letters of

commitment that outline the responsibilities of their officer role (see “Establishing a TAG” section above).

Once appointed, officers will serve in these positions until the TAG’s next annual business meeting, to be held in conjunction with the AACTE annual meeting. At that time, officers will be elected and will serve a term of one year that begins at the TAG business meeting. After the one year term of chair has ended, this individual will serve as past chair for an additional year. All officers will be registered with the Association via the staff administrator.

**Chair.** The Chair shall be responsible for the general administration of the TAG, for ensuring that the TAG policies and procedures are followed, and will act as liaison between the TAG and AACTE. The Chair shall preside at all meetings at the TAG Annual Business Meeting. The Chair shall act as parliamentarian or shall appoint a TAG member to serve in that role for each meeting. The Chair of the TAG shall appoint persons to assist officers, to chair committees or to carry out other work of the TAG. The Chair is responsible for ensuring that the TAG’s fiscal year budget/request for funds is submitted to the staff administrator by the December 1 deadline and for ensuring that the process determining the budget is collaborative and involves the input of all TAG members (see the *TAG Funds* section below). The Chair is further responsible for ensuring that the required annual report is submitted to the TAG staff administrator detailing membership, finances, and activities. The report is due by December 1 for the current calendar year activities to date. The Chair is responsible for ensuring that all TAG materials and communications are hosted exclusively on the AACTE online community forum dedicated to the TAG. The chair is also responsible for ensuring that the TAG Partnership Disclosure Form and/or the TAG Presentation Disclosure Form is submitted as necessary, per the guidelines in this document.

**Secretary.** The Secretary shall be responsible for distributing agendas for any TAG meetings, keeping detailed minutes of any TAG meetings, and submitting copies of minutes from these meetings to the AACTE staff administrator. The Secretary shall assist the Chair as requested in developing the annual fiscal year budget/request for funds.

**Treasurer.** The Treasurer shall be responsible for managing and reporting on the financial accounts of the TAG and the safe keeping of all financial documents of the TAG. The Treasurer shall assist the Chair as requested in developing the annual fiscal year budget/request for funds.

**Past Chair.** Once the Chair’s term has ended, this individual shall serve the TAG as Past Chair for one year. The Past Chair shall perform such duties as designated by the Chair and will ensure continuity in the administration of the TAG from year to year. The Past Chair shall assist the Chair as requested in developing the annual fiscal year budget/request for funds.

**Consecutive Terms.** Individuals shall be eligible to be nominated and to succeed themselves, if elected, to the same office for consecutive terms, not to exceed three years.

**Mid-year vacancies.** Whenever any elected office is vacated for any reason before the term of that officer has been completed, the Chair shall, with the approval of the AACTE President, appoint a replacement until new elections are held. The new appointee can be an existing member of the TAG, or an individual who is affiliated with a member institution (current year dues are paid) and has the approval of their Chief Representative (CR) to participate in the TAG before being appointed as an officer. The Chair shall notify the AACTE staff administrator of any vacancies and replacements as soon

as possible. This replacement shall assume the full duties and responsibilities of that office immediately upon appointment. In the case of the Chair being vacant, the other offices of the TAG shall by majority vote elect an individual to complete the term of the Chair.

**Nominations and Elections.** The TAG officers are responsible for monitoring and overseeing all aspects of the nomination and election processes of the TAG. These elections will take place at the annual business meeting in conjunction with the AACTE Annual Meeting. To be eligible for an officer position, an individual must: 1) be present at the business meeting at which the elections are taking place; 2) be employed at an institution with active AACTE membership status (current year dues are paid); 3) have the approval of their Chief Representative (CR) to participate in the TAG, and 4) consent to the nomination. Individuals may self-nominate for any officer position of the TAG. Officers shall be elected by majority vote of those present at the business meeting. The TAG Chair shall be responsible for reporting the results of the election to the staff administrator.

### **Meetings**

**Annual Business Meeting.** The TAG shall hold at least one business meeting per year in conjunction with the AACTE Annual Meeting. Decisions during this meeting shall be by the majority of TAG members present and voting. The officers of the TAG will be responsible for establishing an agenda and submitting a copy of this agenda to the TAG staff administrator prior to the meeting. The TAG Secretary is responsible for providing a copy of the minutes taken at these meetings to the staff administrator.

**Other Meetings.** In addition to the TAG annual business meeting, TAG officers and other members shall meet when, where, and as needed to conduct the business of the TAG or carry out the charges of the committee within the parameters and requirements of the TAG policies and procedures. The TAG can meet via conference call, in person, or virtually to carry out its business throughout the year. The TAG officers shall set the meetings and determine the agenda. The TAG chair is responsible for notifying all members and the staff administrator of the date, time, place, and agenda or purposes of the meetings. The TAG secretary is responsible for providing a copy of the minutes taken at these meetings to the staff administrator. Decisions during these meetings shall be by the majority of TAG members present and voting.

**Rules of Order.** Robert's Rules of Order (current edition) shall govern all business meetings of the TAG.

## **TAG Funds**

Each year, AACTE will allocate grant money to each TAG that will be used to fund expenses throughout the fiscal year which shall run from January 1 to December 31. All TAGs who wish to receive AACTE funds must submit a fiscal year budget to the staff administrator by December 1 for the upcoming fiscal year. The officers of the TAG are responsible for discussing upcoming year plans with the members of the TAG and preparing and submitting a budget that aligns with these plans to AACTE by the deadline. Requests for funds as per the fiscal year budget will be reviewed by the TAG oversight entity, and funds will be granted and the TAG leaders notified January 1 of the new fiscal year.

Generally, any request for funds up to \$2,000 per year per TAG will be approved providing that the fiscal year budget request is deemed to be consistent with the AACTE mission and policies, and with the stated purpose of the TAG. Additional funding over \$2,000 will be considered depending upon the relevancy or urgency of the TAG's agenda for the Association as a whole. Any request for funds submitted mid-year will be prorated accordingly. Approved funds will be distributed on a reimbursement basis. Individuals within the TAG that require reimbursement for approved expenses should submit a TAG reimbursement form with appropriate signatures and receipts. This form should bear the signature of the TAG Chair, and should be submitted to the staff administrator for processing. Any expenses incurred that are in excess of the approved budget request will be reimbursed at the discretion of the TAG oversight entity. The oversight entity is also entitled to approve or deny the collection and disbursement of any other funds collected and managed by the TAG.

## **Coordination with AACTE Standing Committees**

As is often the case, some activities of a TAG will fall within the purview of an existing AACTE standing committee. When the TAG wishes to use AACTE's name in relation to an activity, e.g., conference or workshop, the agenda and associated written materials must be reviewed and approved by the relevant Standing Committee(s).

## **TAG Communication and Materials**

TAGs are AACTE-sponsored groups that remain active and ongoing regardless of the group's changing individual membership. Therefore, any electronic materials – including papers, videos, webinars, newsletters, surveys or documents produced by a TAG - are required to be maintained exclusively within the forum space dedicated to the particular TAG on the AACTE Online Community. This policy will ensure the continuity and transparency of materials within a TAG as the membership of each group changes over time; protection of AACTE members' proprietary rights to materials produced by TAGs; and that access to TAG materials is password protected and granted only to individuals who are official members of a TAG and therefore affiliated with an AACTE member institution. Any TAG that wishes AACTE to consider an exception to this policy must request and receive written permission from the AACTE TAG staff administrator to maintain TAG documents or materials elsewhere.

## **TAG Partnerships**

At times, it will be appropriate and advantageous for a TAG to partner with a non-AACTE organization or entity to complete important work. However, it is important for the Association to ensure that the lines of demarcation between the TAG and the partnering organizations are clear, appropriate, and do not infringe on AACTE's mission and goals. All TAGs who wish to partner with another organization, either

formally or informally, must submit the TAG Partnership Disclosure Form to the AACTE TAG Staff Administrator and receive written approval for the proposed partnership from the AACTE CEO before any collaborative work or discussions can take place.

### **TAG Publications**

Any print or online publication, video, or webinar that will bear the Association's name must be submitted for review by the Association's Research and Dissemination Committee and be approved by the Board of Directors. In addition, any publications or other materials issued by an AACTE Topical Action Group (TAG) must indicate in writing that it is not an official publication of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. This includes monographs or papers. Periodicals, such as newsletters, need only be submitted once, but may be subject to additional review given significant changes in format or content. Further, any printed or on-line matter to bear the Association's name, logo, or acronym must be submitted in advance to the Board via the staff administrator for review and approval.

Any publications from a TAG must also bear the following inscription:

The contents of this material were developed by an AACTE Topical Action Group. However, the contents do not necessarily represent the policy and/or view of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education and you should not assume endorsement by the Association.

Any conference materials, marketing information, grant proposals, webinars, videos or other public representations by a TAG must be approved in advance by the AACTE Board of Directors and carry in a prominent position the inscription above. Similar precautions should be observed with regard to potentially misleading use of section, chapter, or page headers used in TAG publications, printed matter, or on-line materials.

### **TAG Presentations**

Because TAG membership is a benefit of AACTE membership it is important for AACTE to monitor the access that others have to TAG materials and intellectual capital. Therefore, a TAG must submit the TAG Presentation Disclosure Form and receive written permission from the AACTE staff administrator before making any presentation to an audience that includes individuals who are not members of the TAG, and therefore may not be affiliated with an AACTE member institution.

### **TAG Representation at the Association's Annual Meeting**

Each TAG will be expected to conduct an annual business meeting in conjunction with the AACTE Annual Meeting. AACTE will provide meeting space for the annual business meeting at a time that occurs just before, during, or just after the Annual Meeting depending on space availability and the preferred meeting day and time of the TAG committee members.

### **Termination of TAGs**

**Voluntary dissolution.** Should it be decided that the TAG is no longer meeting the needs and serving the purposes for which it was founded, the TAG shall be voluntarily discontinued by a majority vote of the members present at a TAG Business Meeting followed by a two-thirds vote of those voting in person at

the annual business or other meeting, or via electronic ballot. A message of the results of this election shall be sent in writing by the TAG chair to the TAG membership and the AACTE staff administrator within one week of the counting of the votes.

**Other circumstances for dissolution.** The TAG may automatically be dissolved for any of the following reasons:

1. Should its members approve the merging of the TAG with one or more other TAGs;
2. Failure to submit annual reports by the due date that show meaningful and measurable progress on the TAG's stated annual goals and initiatives;
3. Failure to maintain the minimum membership requirements (at least thirteen (13) members, including the three officers);
4. Failure to have TAG publications or activities approved through the relevant channels;
5. Failure to maintain TAG documents, materials, and communication exclusively on the AACTE online community, or receive authorization from the AACTE staff administrator to host materials and communications on a non-AACTE-sponsored site;
6. Failure to submit a TAG Partnership Disclosure form and receive proper authorization before any TAG partnerships with non-AACTE organizations or groups are undertaken;
7. Failure to submit a TAG Presentation Disclosure form prior to making any presentation to an audience that includes individuals who are not members of the TAG.

The AACTE President may terminate recognition of a TAG for other good and sufficient reasons, e.g., violation of AACTE's mission, bylaws, resolutions or policies, including AACTE's policies and guidelines for TAGs.