

SOP : BHS committees
(version 1, Nov 16, 2011)

1. Purpose

This document describes the definition, aims, composition and function of the BHS committees. It also describes the responsibilities of the members and the chair of the committees, as well as the relationship between the committees and the BHS.

2. Definition

A BHS committee includes a number of clinical and/or laboratory hematologists and/or scientists related to the field of Hematology with special interest and/or competence in a defined topic.

A "committee" can also be defined as a "working party or a "study group" but "BHS" must always be included in the name (e.g. "BHS committee on myeloma" or "BHS myeloma working party" or "BHS myeloma study group"). The term "committee" is most preferable.

The number of topics related to a particular committee is not limited and not fixed. Names of committees active in 2011 are listed in "addendum 1".

The initiation of a new committee with a different topic must be formally approved by the BHS board.

3. Aims

Committees must aim to contribute to the advancement of the knowledge in the topic they are related to.

Among the recommended methods to fulfill this objective are:

- Centralize information from congresses and symposia
- Offer a platform for discussion with external experts, representatives from pharmaceutical companies
- Organize medical need or similar programs to provide early patient access to new drugs
- Deliver common standpoints regarding questions emerging from the field
- Provide management recommendations or guidelines
- Facilitate clinical research by common contributions to phase II and phase III clinical trials
- Facilitate and/or coordinate academic clinical or translational studies
- Contribute to the generation of registration data
- Make available relevant information through posting on the BHS website or publication

4. Membership

- Committee members must be BHS members in good order of dues payment.
- Committee members must have a record of competence in or commitment to the topic of the committee.
- The number of members in each committee can vary between 5 and 20. Exceptions must be justified and approved by the BHS board.
- Applications for membership can be done by mail to the chair. It is recommended that committee members are affiliated to a maximum of different centers to increase the committee's representative function.
- Membership in a particular committee is not limited in time and committee members may participate in several committees with no limitation.
- Committee members are expected to significantly contribute to the activity of the committee.
- Committee members must be compliant with confidentiality agreements made within the committee.
- Individuals with a clear affiliation with a pharmaceutical or other company with commercial activities are excluded from membership

A membership list from each committee will be made available on the BHS website.

Specialists in the field can be invited by the chair to participate in the committee's meetings as an invitee. Invitees must be compliant with confidentiality agreements within the committee.

5. The chair of the committee

- The chair of the committee must be recognized as an expert in the field related to the committee.
- The chair of the committee is elected by the members of the committee at the start of a new term which is fixed for a period of 3 years. The chair is limited to a maximum of 2 consecutive terms of 3 years. Exceptions to this rule must be approved by the BHS board. The method of election can be determined by the committees themselves.
- The chair is expected to maintain adequate activity and output of the committee. He/she must aim to have maximal active participation of the members. Delegation of tasks and/or responsibilities to individual members of the group is a recommended modus operandi.
- The chair is committed to make an annual report on the activity of the committee (see below).

6. Activities

6.1. Regular meetings

- The basic activity of the committees is to have meetings at least 2 times a year.
- The agenda of the meeting is forwarded on beforehand by the chair, with the opportunity for members to suggest additional items.

- The meetings are held in a central location approved by the BHS (Hof Ter Musschen) preferably between 19:30 and 22:00. The reservation must be made through the BHS administrative office. Chairs are responsible for communicating the approximate number of participants at least a few days in advance. The costs for meeting room and sandwiches/drinks will be covered by the BHS.
- Commercial sponsoring is not accepted unless dully justified and after approval by the BHS board.
- The chair leads the meetings and ensures time scheduling.
- The chair provides a meeting report after each meeting within reasonable time. The report is distributed by mail to all members of the committee and is sent to the BHS administrative office for archiving. It is shortly discussed at the beginning of the next meeting when it must be approved by committee members present at the meeting.

6.2. Participation in the BHS committees' meeting

The BHS will organize a "committees' meeting" on a regular basis to which all committees will be invited to participate.

6.3. Annual report

The chair will prepare an annual report which has to be approved by the members of the committee and sent to the BHS board in due time.

The annual report should include information on the chair (+ last election) and members (and their function if applicable), dates of meetings, overview of the activities with short comments, list of published items, policy plan for the next year, approximate scheduling of forthcoming meetings. A template is provided as addendum 2.

6.4. Publication policy

Publication policy must be established for each relevant item and clearly noted in the meeting report and/or clinical protocols as appropriate.

7. Relationships with BHS board

Committees can have an expert function for all BHS members. Questions related to the topic of the committee can be addressed to the chair for discussion with the members followed by feedback.

The BHS board must be kept informed of the activities of the committees through the annual report. The board may ask chairs to present their report at the General Annual Meeting.

New committees can be initiated by all BHS members or the BHS board. Any application for a new committee should be clearly motivated and formally (topic, name, members, objectives) approved by the BHS board. Only approved committees will be officially recognized and supported by the BHS.

Conflicts arising within the committees must be managed by the chair. If needed, members can request an intervention at the level of the BHS board.

The BHS board can stop the activities of a committee after request by the chair or at least 2/3 of the members or in case of clear evidence of insufficient activity. Similarly, the BHS board can dismiss the chair if necessary for the correct continuation of the committee's activity.

8. Relationships with commercial companies

Committee chairs and members must commit to maintain full independence from commercial partners. To ensure this :

- Individuals with a clear affiliation with a pharmaceutical or other company with commercial activities are excluded from membership.
- The chair of the Committee may however invite such individuals to participate in part of a Committee meeting if this is needed to discuss a given topic.
- Committee members must maintain confidentiality on Committee's deliberations.
- When defining guidelines or similar clinical recommendations to BHS members in any form (letter, publication, website posting...), strict rules should be implemented :
 - No pharmaceutical company present at any meeting.
 - No material (literature, manuscript writing, ...) provided by pharmaceutical companies.
 - No communication of guidelines draft to companies before final manuscript acceptance
 - If a Medical writer is necessary, a contract ensuring independence should be provided and signed by committee chair and BHS president.
 - Potential conflicts of interest are disclosed on any publication by all participant authors.
- If additional financial support from a commercial partner is needed for a particular activity, the chair shall make sure that this is provided in full transparency :
 - The chair presents the project to the BHS board and the reasons for the need for financial support (together with a proposed letter to potential sponsors).
 - The BHS board may decide to finance the project on its own funds or agree to request commercial support.
 - The budget as well as the need for acknowledgement of commercial support is agreed on by the BHS board and the committee chair.
 - Commercial support is provided in the form of an unrestricted grant to the BHS and is transferred to the BHS bank account. The BHS board commits to reimburse expenses related to the scheduled activity as defined in the budget.

9. SOP distribution

The committees SOP will be distributed to all committee chairs after approval by the board. Chairs will communicate it to their committee members at their next committee meeting and ask all committee members present at that meeting to sign it to document knowledge of the SOP. The signed SOP will be returned to the BHS President.

ADDENDUM 1 : List of committees (as of November 16, 2011)

Approved committees are:

- Hematopoietic stem cell transplantation
- Lymphoproliferative disorders
- Red blood cell disorders
- Regulatory affairs
- Multiple myeloma
- Myelodysplasia
- Myeloproliferative neoplasms
- Nurses

This list of topics is not limitative.

ADDENDUM 2 : Template of Committee annual report

(all cells can be expanded as needed)

Committee chair

Name of committee :		
Chair :	Since :	Date of last election :

Committee members : name (E-mail)

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Activities in year 20..

Date	Activity

! Please provide minutes of all this year's committee meetings !

Publications in year 20..

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Plan (policy, activities with approximate dates...) for next year

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Comments / requests for the BHS board

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