



STANDING COMMITTEE

Committee on Scholarly Publishing in South Africa (CSPiSA)

Terms of Reference (Revised 2025)

Endorsed by the ASSAf Council on 23 July 2025.



science, technology
& innovation

Department:
Science, Technology and Innovation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



ASSAf Values: The Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) is an independent, non-biased and credible source of policy advice. Its strength resides in the quality and diversity of its membership, embracing the full disciplinary spectrum, which enables ASSAf to focus on issues of a multi-disciplinary, multi-sectoral nature and to bring the strengths of a fully inclusive approach to bear on the issues of national and international concern.

ASSAf Mandate: To proactively or upon request undertake studies on matters of public interest with a view to providing evidence-based scientific advice to government and other stakeholders.

Objectives of the Committee

1. The Committee shall be constituted, operated, and maintained as per the stipulations of The Charter for ASSAf Standing Committees 2021 dealing with ASSAf Standing Committees.
2. The Committee shall focus on scholarly publishing in all its forms, as well as related matters that concern access to copyrighted materials, quality assurance of scholarly output, questionable publishing practices, peer review, open science and open access publishing models, and standards in and from South Africa. The Committee should take a broad view of its role in commenting on the rapidly developing landscape of scholarly publishing and should provide advice on the way in which government, universities, and institutions should address the challenges of evolving publishing cost models.
3. The Committee shall take as its points of departure the ASSAf Consensus Reports in this domain, viz. "*Research Publishing in South Africa*", "*Scholarly Books: Their Production, Use and Evaluation in South Africa*" and *Second Report on Scholarly Publishing in and from South Africa 2018*". It shall, however, consider these Reports as time-bound and contextual, and constantly take stock of new developments in the focus and related fields.
4. The Committee shall advise the ASSAf Council, pro-actively and responsively, on strategic approaches to developing the Academy's role in significantly enhancing the national (and continental, through inter-academy partnerships) capacity for high-level scholarship, training and research development as well as internationally recognised contributions, while guiding and overseeing the implementation of the kinds of functions described in the recommendations made in the above-mentioned ASSAf Reports.
5. The Committee shall advise the Director of the Academy's Scholarly Publishing Programme and oversee the functioning of the Academy's Scholarly Publishing Unit.
6. The Committee shall specifically exercise oversight of the National Scholarly Editors' Forum and the National Scholarly Book Publishers' Forum, in terms of ensuring that these bodies can function efficiently and effectively, that meetings take place

7. regularly, and that value is added to the publishing community and the scientific community as a whole.
8. The Committee shall oversee the discipline-grouped peer review of South African scholarly journals by peer review panels and independent peer reviewers and recommend publication of the resulting consolidated Consensus Reports to the ASSAf Council.
9. The Committee shall act as the Steering Committee for the SciELO South Africa collection as a high-quality, free-online (open access) publishing platform, unless it delegates this function to another body, but without shedding its overall accountability for the service.
10. The Committee shall also oversee the Academy's free-online scientific writing course system but may establish an ad hoc steering committee for this purpose reporting directly to it.
11. The Committee shall liaise with the Editorial Board of the South African Journal of Science in order to maximise the role of this journal in its own promotion of excellence and high impact on the part of all South African scholarly journals.

Meetings

12. The Committee shall meet bi-annually, electronically or face to face. Additional meetings may be convened for a specific purpose if necessary.
13. Meetings of the Committee shall ordinarily be called by the Chairperson, Director and/or Executive Officer, but may also be called at the request of more than half the membership.
14. The agenda shall close for submission of all proposals ten days prior to a meeting and the agenda and supporting documents shall be distributed electronically at least 3 days prior to the meeting.
15. Proposed Items for the agenda shall be submitted in electronic format to the Committee Chair, with motivation in writing in each case.
16. Decisions shall be taken by consensus. Should it be necessary to vote, decisions shall be taken on the majority with the Chair having the casting vote should the vote be equal.
17. Apologies for absence shall be submitted in writing to the Project Officer with copy to the Chair.
18. The quorum for a meeting of the Committee shall be half of the Committee membership plus one; if there is no quorum at the beginning of a meeting, the members attending it may resolve to proceed with the agenda and circulate their

deliberations and recommendations to the full membership for ratification.

19. In the event of a conflict of interest on a specific item, the nature of the conflict shall be declared, and the member shall recuse himself/herself from the agenda item concerned if in the view of the Committee this is desirable. If the recusal involves the Chairperson, the Deputy Chairperson shall assume the chair.
20. Executive decisions taken by the Chair between meetings shall be circulated in the form of a Chair Circular for notification and ratification within ten days of the action.
21. All meetings shall be recorded. The minutes of the meetings of the Committee shall be circulated to all members as soon after the conclusion of a meeting as is possible for noting and actioning as agreed and specified.
22. An annual report shall be submitted to Council.
23. The annual reports of each Standing Committee shall be circulated to other Standing Committees. Reports should be in a standardised and summarised format and shall be included in the Annual Report of the Academy.

Membership and Terms of Office

24. Standing Committees shall normally comprise between 5 and 10 persons who shall be free of real, potential or apparent conflict of interest as far as possible; any such conflict must be declared and discussed in terms of its possible impact on the Committee's functioning.
25. The terms of office of individual members on Standing Committees shall be 3 years, renewable for further 3-year terms at Council's discretion, without limit. At the end of their 3-year terms of office, members shall stand down or indicate that they wish to make themselves available for re-election to the Committee.
26. The Committee may operate autonomously within their terms of reference, having due regard for the overall control of Academy affairs by Council, but their Chairpersons shall timeously consult the President and/or the Executive Officer of any contemplated action or actual situation that may affect the reputation, statutory responsibilities or other legal interests of the Academy.
27. Committee members shall not be remunerated for their service but shall be reimbursed according to the Academy's approval procedures for all expenditures incurred in relation to the Committee's work.
28. A Standing Committee may be disbanded upon the recommendation of the Committee or of Council after due consideration of the Committee's contribution to ASSAf activities.