

Procedures for the Development and Approval of RESNA Position Papers

Approved by RESNA BOD 7/12/2018.

Effective Date: 10/1/2018

Revision of approved procedures: May 2, 2013.

I. Definition of a RESNA Position Paper

A *RESNA Position Paper* presents the official statement stance of the Association on a substantive issue or subject related to best-practice trends in assistive technology (AT). They are developed in response to a particular issue, concern, or need of the Association and may be written for internal or external use. These papers are science-driven and reflect evidence-based practice in assistive technology. A Position Paper includes a review of the current research and professional literature that has been used to inform the position taken by the Association.

II. Contents of a RESNA Position Paper

The key content elements include the following:

- A comprehensive literature review and summary of current scientific evidence.
- Documented best practice on a specific AT topic.
- Focused summaries of the evidence and best practices that can assist in defining processes or preparing justification for devices or services.
- Comprehensive reviews of the benefits and application of these technologies, practices, and services.

For authors, a more detailed list of suggested content sections can be found below in Section VII.

III. Uses of a RESNA Position Paper

A RESNA Position Paper has a number of useful applications, including:

- A guide to practitioners in the development and provision of interventions.
- A teaching tool in colleges and universities to guide education in AT-related knowledge and skills.
- A clinical teaching tool for educating clients or other team members.
- A source of support material when justifying devices to advocate for or obtain funding.
- Evidence in organized education efforts for policy changes or role definition.
- A contribution to the development of a professional standard of practice.

IV. Process of developing a RESNA Position Paper

1. The idea for a Position Paper generally arises from an issue related to areas of AT practice, reimbursement for devices or services, assistive technology development, or special applications of mainstream technologies. While topics typically are generated from within RESNA, a topic proposal may also come from outside of RESNA, with sponsorship by a RESNA member. Anyone can initiate a Position Paper by bringing the topic to the attention of the relevant RESNA Special Interest Group (SIG) or Professional Specialty Group (PSG).
2. The Chair of the appropriate Special Interest Group (SIG) or Professional Specialty Group (PSG) coordinates the development of a Position Paper.
3. The SIG or PSG Chair appoints or accepts the offer of a volunteer Group Leader (GL). The GL must be a member of the appropriate SIG/PSG.
4. The primary responsibilities of the GL are to:
 - a. lead and manage the development of (or review and updating of) a Position Paper, following the steps outlined below;
 - b. submit a 1 - 2 paragraph proposal to the SIG/PSG Committee Chair and the RESNA Board of Directors that outlines the rationale for the Position Paper, the plan for creating the document (e.g., who will participate, the expected tasks, the resources needed, etc.), and the anticipated impact of the Position Paper on practice or professional skills;
 - c. track the progress of the Position Paper through this process, including a record of the steps taken to solicit review of the paper, the comments received, and changes made to the paper in response to comments; and
 - d. report quarterly to the RESNA BOD on the status of the Position Paper.
5. The GL assembles a Working Group (WG) of three or more individuals to create the Position Paper. This group may consist of clinicians, practitioners, AT professionals, researchers, manufacturers, policy makers, third-party payers, and end-users who have experience and expertise in the topic.
6. When a draft position paper is ready for circulation, all pages must be marked as “Draft,” including the front cover. Care should be taken to ensure access to the content for all WG members.
7. One or more members of the WG are encouraged to present the draft Position Paper at the next RESNA conference. This serves as a way of sharing the knowledge within the paper as well as a means of gathering feedback to improve the paper.

8. The GL submits the draft Position Paper to a SIG (or PSG)-led review. The SIG (or PSG) Chair coordinates this review, by inviting and securing at least 2 SIG members with expertise in the topic to review the draft paper. All interested SIG members are also invited to review the paper at this time; The SIG Chair will provide general instructions and a timeline to the reviewers; all reviews returned within the timeline established by the SIG Chair (typically 4 weeks from the invitation) will be considered.
9. Following revisions made after Steps 7 and 8 above, the GL submits the draft Position Paper to RESNA office staff and the draft Position Paper will be made available on the RESNA website for a 60-day comment period. All RESNA members are notified electronically of the beginning and end dates of the comment period. RESNA members are provided with a means to submit or direct comments or questions regarding the Draft to the WG. The WG will only consider comments from respondents who provide name, affiliation, and email.
10. The WG records all comments received during the review activities (the conference presentation, if this occurred, the SIG-led review, and the period of open comment), along with WG actions taken to address comments. Storing this information enhances the transparency and rigor of the review process.
11. Following these opportunities for member input, the WG updates the draft based on this feedback.
12. At this point, the GL submits the updated Position Paper to the originating SIG or PSG Chair accompanied by a timeline of the steps completed so far, feedback acquired, and responses to key points, including a summary of substantial disagreements about the content of the paper.
13. The SIG or PSG Chair reviews the documentation for completeness and content, and, if acceptable, submits the Position Paper to the RESNA Board of Directors (BOD).
14. The BOD reviews the Position Paper within 60 days and either votes to approve or provides comments or requests for changes to the WG.
15. The WG revises the Position Paper based on BOD comments and re-submits it to the RESNA BOD for approval. Steps 14 and 15 are then repeated as often as needed until the BOD approves the Position Paper.
16. Following final BOD approval, the RESNA office posts the Position Paper on the RESNA website and announces the Position Paper to all members as soon as practical and possible.
17. Following final BOD approval, the GL submits a portfolio of documents to the RESNA office for archiving, including: the final Position Paper itself; the roster of the Working Group and responsible SIG/PSG Chair; timeline of the paper development process; and the record of review activities, comments, and responses that occurred throughout the process.

18. The WG and SIG/PSG are encouraged to pursue additional dissemination steps, such as presentation at future RESNA conferences, webinars, and social media announcements.

V. Option for publication in *Assistive Technology* journal

Following final BOD approval, a Position Paper is published in RESNA's Assistive Technology journal. Position Papers do not go through the regular review process of journal submissions, since they have their own review process as described above. This fact is noted in the published manuscript, and they are published in a separate section of the journal. To initiate the publication process, the GL submits the approved Position Paper directly to the Editor-in-Chief of the journal.

VI. Suggested format for Position Paper

Outline of the Paper

The following key content areas should be included:

- 1) Title: The title should include "RESNA Position Paper on topic, (date)"
- 2) About This Paper: This is a callout that includes a description of the development and approval process for Position Papers. See next section below for the text and formatting of the About This Paper section.
- 3) Introduction (or Purpose)
 - a) Statement of the Problem
 - b) Statement of Position
 - i) The Position
 - ii) Populations & Subpopulations Affected (who benefits under what circumstances and who would not)
 - iii) Contraindications (if the position is an intervention)
 - c) Relevance of Position
 - i) RESNA and Constituencies (include implications on RESNA related activities such as practice, professional education, policy and research. How should this document be used?)
 - ii) Significance to Society
- 4) Rationale for the Position: This section must demonstrate that all of the evidence has been considered.
 - a) *Review of the Literature*. Summarize the relevant literature, emphasizing peer-reviewed sources published in the past five years. The literature review should be comprehensive and include both literature that supports and literature that refutes the position held by the WG.
 - b) *Evidence from sources other than research literature*. Recognizing that research may not always be available on some innovations or issues related to assistive technologies, this section should summarize other types of evidence, including credible clinical data and/or case examples, as well as expert opinion from cited sources. This section should include evidence that both supports and refutes the position held by the WG.

- c) *Synthesis of the Current Evidence.* How the evidence, considered as a whole, leads to the overall position taken in the paper.
- 5) **Limitations:** Issues that affect the level of confidence in the position, such as weaknesses in the research evidence. Include a discussion of why the position still appears to be valid, despite the limitations.
- 6) **Relation of this Position Paper to other Position Papers:** Note if this paper serves as a stand-alone position or if it relates to an existing position paper or RESNA official document.
- 7) **References:** Include all references used in the position paper document including references to other RESNA documents and citations for personal communications.
- 8) **Appendices:** Should include the following supporting materials:
 - a) Summary of the Position Paper Development (Process and Chronology Used to Develop and Review the Position Paper)
 - b) Detail of the Development and Review Process (including Expertise Contributing to the Position Paper)
 - c) Additional supporting materials as determined by the WG.

All draft papers should be in an electronic manuscript format. The draft should be a clean, complete, double-spaced manuscript, submitted as an electronic file.

Content of the ‘About This Paper’ Section

Include the text below for the About This Paper section. This may be single-spaced and should be set off from the rest of the paper with a border as shown.

About This Paper

This is an official RESNA Position Paper on Clinical and Professional Practice. As such, it has been prepared in accordance with the specific guidelines and approval process defined by the RESNA Board of Directors for Position Papers. See <http://www.resna.org/knowledge-center/position-papers-white-papers-and-provision-guides> for a complete description of this procedure. Key aspects of this procedure include:

1. Establishment of a Working Group of three or more experts to author the paper, using evidence from the published literature, documented best practices, and other input from experts in the field as the basis for the content.
2. Review of the draft by at least two subject matter experts from the relevant RESNA SIG or PSG, as well as all interested SIG or PSG members, and subsequent revisions.
3. Circulation of the revised draft to RESNA members and others for a 60-day public comment period, and subsequent revisions.
4. Review of the revised draft by the RESNA Board of Directors, and subsequent revisions.
5. Final approval of the paper by the RESNA Board of Directors.



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Version Control

To ensure no changes are lost as the manuscript is reviewed and adjusted, version control by filename is imperative. The GL is responsible for labelling revisions to the draft position paper using dates, draft numbers, or version numbers to keep track of the revisions.

Formatting Instructions

Use 12-point double-spaced type in a serif font such as Times New Roman throughout the manuscript.

Do not justify the text down the right margin; do not manually hyphenate or break words at ends of lines.

Indent the first line of all paragraphs with the “indent first line” feature of word processing program or use a standard TAB. Do not insert an extra paragraph return between paragraphs.

Allow margins of 1 inch.

VII. Expiration of RESNA Position Papers

RESNA Position Papers are valid for five years from BOD approval date.

The SIG Committees Chair and the PSG Committees Chair are responsible for tracking the expiration dates of current Position Papers and alerting the appropriate SIG or PSG Chair when a Position Paper is due to expire in the coming year. That SIG or PSG Chair is then responsible for assigning a review GL for each paper needing re-evaluation during their term of office. The RESNA office will be informed of the GL and the initiation of the review process.

The process for updating the Position Paper parallels the steps for developing a new Position Paper and can begin on the fourth anniversary of the existing paper.

After five years, if not updated or re-submitted for BOD review, the original Position Paper is moved to a section of archived Position Papers on the RESNA web site.