
For official charges of committees and subcommittees, see the MLA Administrative Structure, updated quarterly, available at http://musiclibraryassoc.org/uploadedFiles/About_MLA/Administration/FY11Q4%20MLA%20ADMIN%20STR%2026%20April%202011.pdf.

The purpose of this handbook is to set common expectations for the work of MLA committees. It covers membership policies, working procedures, organizational responsibilities, and timelines common to most MLA committees. Not every point will apply in every case, but where they do, these are the standards for MLA committee work.

Chairs may customize this template for their own committee, consulting their particular charge and criteria, and modifying the template as needed.

I. Committee/Subcommittee membership, appointment, and voting:

A. Committee and subcommittee chairs are appointed by the MLA President in consultation with MLA Board of Directors (“the Board”). All committee and subcommittee chairs must be members in good standing. The three members of the Best of Chapters Committee should represent different Chapters, and should include as much geographic diversity as possible.
B. Other committee and subcommittee members are appointed by the MLA President in consultation with the parent committee chair and the Board. All members of committees and subcommittees must be MLA members in good standing throughout their tenure and have an active interest in the work of the particular committee. These groups support the needs of MLA membership in their areas of responsibility, actively communicating topics of current national interest, identifying and framing issues, conducting discussions, preparing proposals and discussion papers, and answering questions.

C. The Board creates subcommittees as the need arises. Subcommittee members must belong to MLA and have an active interest in the work of the particular subcommittee. The MLA President appoints subcommittee chairs and members upon recommendation from the parent committee chair.

D. All members in the individual or student classifications are voting members of their respective committees/subcommittees. Ex officio members are voting members unless precluded by the committee's formal charge.

II. Responsibilities

A. Committee Chairs

“The chair of each committee is responsible for assuring that the charge given to the committee by the President and the committee's obligations as described in Section V. A-G are carried out; and that committee members are kept fully advised of and involved in all committee activities.” (MLA Administrative Handbook, Section V. C).

Committee Chairs shall:

• Follow the MLA Administrative Handbook, Sections V. H, as appropriate.

• Prepare the committee roster.
• Develop calendar of activities.
• Track and distribute documents.
• Make work assignments.
• Anticipate travel and other budget needs.
• Submit receipts/Requests for Payment (RFPs) for expenses, as needed to the MLA Administrative Officer.
• Submit budget requests to MLA Financial Officer, as needed.
• Plan and submit program proposal(s) to Program Committee for MLA annual meeting, including requesting honoraria/expenses for program presenters.
• Have responsibility for content of publications (if any).
• Make recommendations to the President for appointments.
• Process resignations by preparing letters.
• Write “thank you” notes to retiring Committee members and annual meeting program presenters (in some cases the President may issue these).
• Maintain and update committee handbook as needed.
• Prepare reports of activities to be submitted to the Board as requested for the Board’s three meetings each year with a deadline based upon the Board’s meeting calendar.
• Prepare and submit annual report as with goals for coming year to Planning and Reports Officer (refer to Appendix 2).
• Communicate to the MLA membership issues of broad concern.
• Lead discussions, both in person and virtual.
• Develop process for responding to requests for feedback from
organizations and individuals in a timely fashion.

• Prepare summaries of comments or written reports.

• Field and delegate questions from MLA membership.

• Introduce the Best of Chapter presenters at the MLA Annual Conference

• Contact MLA webmaster with name and presentation given at national meeting (updated on the Annual Meetings page, link for Best of Chapters competition)

• Communicate via chapter chair listserv mlacc-l@list.indiana.edu to solicit nominations

• Announce winner(s) via MLA-L; contact all participants individually to congratulate and thank for participating in the competition

• Confirm winner’s attendance at upcoming national meeting; have presenter fill out session proposal form, note committee’s approval and submit to program chair

B. Committee and Subcommittee Members shall:

• Participate in group discussions, both in person and virtual, drawing on personal experience, skills and knowledge.

• Complete assignments in a timely fashion.

• Provide feedback on documentation and proposals.

• The first-year member is responsible for preparing a summary of the Best of Chapter presentation(s) at the MLA Annual Conference and submitting that report to the Editor of the MLA Newsletter. If the first-year member cannot attend the conference, the second-year member will prepare the report. If neither the first- nor second-year members can attend, the committee chair will prepare the report.
III. Qualifications for Appointment

A. Chair:

• Member-in-good-standing of MLA.

• Ability to participate in the work of the committee and attend the MLA annual meeting unless extenuating circumstances occur.

• Strong professional interest in committee topic.

• Strong leadership, diplomatic, organizational, and writing skills.

• Willingness to subscribe to and read electronic mailing lists that support committee topics.

• Previous or current experience on the committee, desirable but not required.

B. Committee and Subcommittee Members:

• Member in good standing of MLA national (includes student members at the discretion of the President but not on Awards or Nominating Committees).

• Ability to attend the MLA annual meeting when feasible and actively participate in the meetings and work of the committee or subcommittee.

• Specific professional interest in subcommittee business and a particular skill, area of expertise, or perspective to contribute to committee and subcommittee deliberations.

IV. Appointment Procedures

A. Typically, the chair submits known openings to the President in October-early November; the Planning and Reports Officer puts out a unified call on MLA-L for new members on all MLA committees in November, well in advance of the annual meeting.

B. Interested MLA members may apply in writing to the committee
chair and must include specific information about their particular interest in serving on the group and what they could contribute. At the end of the annual meeting, the Chair and the subcommittee chairs review the list of interested members and decide together the names to forward for the most effective appointments, taking into careful account the need for balance within each group. The Chairs then recommend the names of potential appointees to the MLA President. In exceptional cases, the application process and appointment process may take place electronically, following the general outlines above.

C. The number of members in the Committee shall be 3. In a member’s 3rd year of service, he or she will serve as Chair.

D. It is not necessary to require potential members to apply and/or interview for membership, but many committees find this to be a successful approach to recruiting when they have more interested potential members than they have spaces. After deciding which new members they would like to invite to join, committee chairs make recommendations to MLA’s President; the President makes the final decision and appointment. Appointments are not final, nor should they be announced, until individuals receive appointment letters. Because of this, chairs should not promise appointments to people. Individuals usually do not serve on two subcommittees within the same committee at the same time and serving on more than one committee simultaneously is not recommended. It is the Chair’s responsibility to check the membership directory to verify that a candidate is a member in good standing and, preferably, not already serving on other committees.
V. Length of Appointments

A. Term of membership is 3 years. In the 3rd year, the member will serve as Chair.

B. Per the MLA Administrative Handbook (V. A. 3.), “In consultation with the President, committee chairs may request the resignation of members who are not contributing to the fulfillment of the committee's charge.”

VI. Resignations

A. To resign from a committee, the member writes a letter to the MLA President but submits it to the Chair.

1. The chair forwards a copy of the written resignation to the MLA President.

2. The chair prepares a written letter of acknowledgment to the individual (with a copy to the MLA President) for his/her contributions and service to MLA.

VII. Meetings

A. Generally one business meeting is held at every MLA annual meeting. The Chair convenes and conducts the meeting(s).

1. A majority of voting members constitutes a quorum.

2. Business meeting agendas may include: correction and approval of the previous year's minutes; reports from the subcommittees, and planning for the coming year.

   a. Anyone wishing to place an item on the agenda should submit a request to the Chair before the meeting.

   b. The Chair will distribute a preliminary agenda to members at or in advance of the meeting.
c. Guests may attend business meetings and may speak upon recognition from the Chair.

3. The MLA Program Committee determines which proposed program sessions will occur at each MLA Annual Meeting. The Program Chair issues a call for proposals annually, in the spring following the annual meeting, and shortly after that, a call for scheduling business meetings. Business meetings should be strictly that and not program sessions.

4. The chair submits requests for meeting time and space to the Program Committee through the meeting scheduling process.

VIII. Absences

A. Chair

1. The Chair may designate another voting member to act as temporary Chair.

2. If the Chair is unexpectedly absent, the voting members shall designate one of their members to serve as temporary Chair.

B. Members Members should inform their committee or subcommittee chair if they will be unable to attend the annual business meeting, but they need not send a proxy.

IX. Budget

Committee chairs submit a budget proposal (as needed) to the Finance Committee of the Board each spring; budget proposals are typically due at least four weeks before the start of the spring Board meeting. Estimates should be realistic, and goals should be clear.

X. Documentation

A. Internal working papers of subcommittees are handled individually within each unit.
B. External reporting to the Association and Board - see Appendix 2
C. Document distribution is the responsibility of the Chair.
D. Website (if any)
E. Minutes/record keeping requirements, see Admin Handbook V.D.6: “Each committee keeps a record of its meetings in the nature of minutes for the use of the committee and the Board.” [soon Chairs will have access to posting on MLA site]
F. Archives The Chair sends committee files that are no longer required for current business to the MLA Archives. The Chair will archive correspondence of a substantive nature, while using discretion in determining exactly what is substantive. The Chair should send paper copies of the following documents, collected in labeled folders, using the document transmittal form found on the MLA website, at http://www.musiclibraryassoc.org/member.aspx?id=66.

xxxx = previous year
yyyy = current year
zzzz = upcoming year

Reports (xxxx-yyyy)
Chair’s Report to the Board (Spring xxxx)
Chair’s Report to the Board (Fall xxxx)
Chair’s Report to the Board (yyyy Conference)
xxxx Annual Reports (Parent Committee and Subcommittees)
yyyy Conference Summary Reports (Parent Committee and Subcommittees)
Task Force Reports (xxxx-yyyy)
Budget (xxxx-yyyy)
Budget Request (xxxx)
Request for Payment Forms and Receipts (photocopies)
yyyy Conference
Meeting Room and Equipment Requests  
Agendas (Business, Open)  
Minutes (xxxx Conference)  
Roster (yyyy-zzzz)  
Calendar (yyyy-zzzz)  
Appointments (yyyy)  
Call for Subcommittee Applicants (yyyy)  
Recommendations to President (yyyy)  
Updated Portion of MLA Administrative Structure (yyyy)  
Thank You Letters to Retiring Members (yyyy)  

XI. Communication Tools [subject to change pending MLA IT Task Force work over coming 2 years]

A. MLA infrastructure  
   1. Tools: Google apps are in use on the MLA website and available for committees and chapters to use. LAC in particular should store and display conference information consistently from year to year, working w/web editor. Documents in collaborative workspaces should use relatively uniform and consistent templates.  

   2. Guides: Technical Resources guides will be made available as resources allow. See Member Resources for an example, How to Use Skype (web conferencing).  

B. Outside of MLA infrastructure  
   Groups are encouraged to use free, web-based tools for committee business, but should be sure to save/backup data where possible and strive for consistency in public-facing documents. File sharing sites such as Dropbox may be useful in providing copies of the presentations for each committee member to read. Tools include Skype, PBworks, Google Docs, listservs hosted at members’ institutions, Facebook, institutional listservs, institutional servers, Jing, Sharepoint, SurveyMonkey, and many others. These are merely examples; groups may use developing tools that suit their purposes.
C. Listserv Committee chairs are added to MLA-COMM email list: A listserv hosted at Indiana University, MLA-COMM-L@listserv.indiana.edu, exists for committee chairs and MLA Board members. This listserv is typically used for administrative matters related to the running of committees and reporting of their work, including calls for reports. The listserv moderator updates the list membership at least once per year, following annual committee appointments. Questions regarding this listserv and membership should be directed to the MLA President, MLA Administrative Officer, or the listserv owner, Dick Griscom, griscom@upenn.edu.
Appendix 1: Committee Calendar

1 July  Fiscal Year starts
1 August  Annual reports due to Planning and Reports Gatherer
Mid-August  Board reports due to President for Fall Board meeting; watch for call on MLA-L.
Nov-Dec.  Unified call for new members, put out by the MLA President (via Planning and Reports Officer).
Dec.-Jan  Board reports due to President for Winter Board meeting. Watch for call on MLA-L.

After annual meeting

Submit recommendations for new committee members to President as soon as possible, after verifying their current membership in MLA. Send “thank you for your service” letters to retiring committee members. Verify currency/accuracy of committee charge, send changes to President. Ensure that reports of business meetings and program sessions are submitted for publication in MLA Newsletter (newsletter editor solicits volunteers).

April-May

Prepare and submit program/business meeting forms to Program Chair as requested. Watch for call on MLA-L. Submit Budget Requests to Fiscal Officer as requested. Watch for call on MLA-L.

Late April-Early May

Board reports due to President for Spring Board Meeting. Watch for call on MLA-L. First call for Annual Reports, due 1 August, to Planning and Reports Gatherer. Watch for call on MLA-L.

30 June  End of Fiscal Year

MLA Calendar: http://musiclibraryassoc.org/member.aspx?id=64
Appendix 2: External Reporting

1. Annual Reports

MLA issues a formal Association-wide Annual Report each year. This glossy, edited publication appears online as a PDF and is used for promotional purposes and as the primary summary of MLA activities for that fiscal year. Past reports are available online at http://www.musiclibraryassoc.org/about.aspx?id=55. The MLA Board Planning and Reports Officer collects content for this report, issuing a call for submissions with sufficient notice so that reports can be compiled soon after the close of an MLA fiscal year on June 30. All committees, joint committees, and special officers must submit a report for this publication, according to a standard format provided as part of the call for reports. Other groups, such as the MLA Board of Directors also submit reports, and summary MLA budgetary information also appears. The MLA Newsletter Editor, with the assistance of A-R Editions, edits the submitted reports for content, length, and style, and typesets the text into the formal publication. The previous year’s Annual Report is typically issued prior to the MLA Annual Meeting. Individual sections of the Annual Report typically represent a committee or officer’s work at a fairly high level, suitable for promotional purposes and introduction to the Association for those not intimately familiar with it. Annual Reports are separate from the more periodic Board Reports, and should be prepared separately.

Sample Call for Committee annual reports

Sent to Committee Chair listserv and MLA-L by Planning Officer

Dear MLA Members,

All committees, special officers, chairs of joint committees, and representatives to ALA and NISO, must submit an Annual Report to MLA. These annual reports cover the fiscal year from July 1, 20XX to June 30, 20XX. Subcommittees should submit annual reports through their parent committee chair.

Annual Reports are due [Date], to the Planning and Reports Officer, [Name] [Email]
In the past year, the MLA Board, in an effort to encourage committees to give specific direction to their work, decided to ask committees to articulate goals for each year. Since goals for committees are a new part of the process, when reporting this year you may report on any targets your committee may have had or worked towards informally. Part of your report this year should be specific goals for the upcoming 20XX/20XX fiscal year.

You can find past Annual Reports for these individuals and groups in MLA's Annual Report for examples of coverage and detail: <http://www.musiclibraryassoc.org/about.aspx?id=55>

Please use the following format for your Annual Report:

ANNUAL REPORT FORMAT

COMMITTEE NAME

Members: Mary Q. Contrary, (2010), Chair; Jack Spratt (2011); L.J. Horner (2011) Report on Activities:

List of previous goals and progress made toward each goal: List of goals for the next year: Please let me or [Name] (MLA President) know if you have any questions. Thanks, [Name] MLA Board Planning and Reports Officer [dates] 2. Reports to the Board of Directors

Board reports summarize committee activity since the previous Board meeting, including requests for Board decisions/actions, if needed. Reports for the spring Board meeting should include budget requests, if needed, for the fiscal year to come, July-June. Reports for the fall Board meeting should include committee goals for the current fiscal year, July-June. Reports are normally due 2 weeks prior to each board meeting as announced by the President (September, February, June).
Sample Call from MLA President

Dear Colleagues,

The MLA Board will be meeting in Middleton, Wisconsin June 1-3, 2011.

In order to prepare the files for the Board to review, I will need brief reports from Officers, Editors, and Committee Chairs no later than Wednesday, May 18, 2011. Of course, early submissions are always welcome. Committee chairs that have subcommittees reporting should plan to include their subcommittee reports in their comprehensive committee report.

1. Please send your report as a Word (not PDF) attachment and format it in the following way:

   I. NAME OF COMMITTEE
   II. MEMBERS
   III. BOARD ACTION REQUIRED
   IV. BRIEF SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

2. If there is not Board Action Required, please write NONE next to number III.

3. Under number IV. please be very, very brief. Use bullet points, and keep your comments to no more than one page with 12-point type (if you have a committee that has several subcommittees, you may stretch this a bit).
Appendix 3: Sample Appointment (customize)

TO: NAME  President, Music Library Association
FROM: NAME  Chair, [name of committee]
RE: Recommendation for appointment of [name of committee position]
DATE: [Month, day, year]

Dear [Name of MLA President],

The chairs of [name of committee] and its subcommittees unanimously recommend the appointment of FIRSTNAME LASTNAME as the new [name of committee position]. This is a four-year appointment that will take effect at the close of the annual meeting [name city, year]. According to the MLA membership website, he/she is a member in good standing of the Association. In preparing the letter of appointment, please include the responsibilities outlined in the MLA-L posting:

Responsibilities include:

• Take minutes at [name of committee] business meeting(s);

• Take minutes or arrange for a substitute to take minutes at any [name of committee] sponsored program meeting;

• Provide a written transcript of these meetings within one month following the Annual Meeting;

• Manage the [name of committee] web documentation, in consultation with the [name of committee] Chair (where applicable).

THE SELECTION PROCESS [SAMPLE]
[Name of committee] opted to recruit and fill this position virtually, so that the appointment could be made well in advance of the Annual Meeting, thus allowing the incumbent to work with the new appointee to make for a smooth transition. The [name of committee] chair posted a call for written applications on MLA-L on [date] with an application deadline of [Month, day, year]. We received [number of other] applications, both of whom would be qualified to hold the position.
CONTACT INFORMATION

Successful Candidate Address  Phone (work)  Fax

Email address

When I have received a copy of the appointment letter, I will forward the new information for the MLA Administrative Structure to you and the Administrative Officer.

Please contact me if you have any questions. Thank you.

NAME  Chair, [name of committee]  Contact Information