

SECTION 10
MEETINGS

NUMBER 10.1 MEETINGS COMMITTEE

EFFECTIVE: April 2009; Amended November 2014; 2018 Summer Board Meeting; 2019 Spring Board Meeting; 2019 Fall Board Meeting

POLICY

The Meetings Committee is established for the purpose of overseeing policy and for proposing to the Board strategic directions for INFORMS meetings in order to accomplish the overall mission of INFORMS. In doing so, they work closely with the Director of meetings and INFORMS Staff to ensure policies and directions are feasible and follow best practices.

The Director of Meetings reports to the Executive Director of INFORMS and, together with the Meetings Department and other INFORMS staff, oversees the scheduling, contracting and administration of the meetings in order to accomplish the overall mission of INFORMS.

The Vice President of Meetings is elected for a two-year term by the membership of INFORMS, normally an INFORMS general election, according to the bylaws of the organization. Candidates for the position should have demonstrated experience in meetings leadership along with active participation in the functions of the Institute. The VP may run unopposed for a second two-year term.

PROCEDURES

Committee Members

The Meetings Committee can include up to eight members, plus the Chair, who is normally the VP Meetings. The Chair is a voting member of the Committee. Members serve two- year terms staggered so that four members are appointed by the VP Meetings each year, in accordance with Policies and Procedures Section 2.1. The Meetings Committee is encouraged to make recommendations to the VP Meetings regarding the appointment of new members.

The INFORMS Director of Meetings serves as an ex officio member without a vote. The VP Meetings is the Board Liaison for the Meetings Committee. All terms begin on January 1.

RELATED DOCUMENTS:

INFORMS Policies and Procedures Manual, Section 4.3 Nominations and Elections for the Board

NUMBER 10.1 MEETINGS COMMITTEE

EFFECTIVE: April 2009; Amended November 2014; 2018 Summer Board Meeting; 2019 Spring Board Meeting; 2019 Fall Board Meeting

Functions

The Committee's primary function is to develop policies that support the strategic plan for INFORMS meetings. In addition, the Committee, in conjunction with INFORMS staff, reviews meeting statistics, meeting evaluations, meeting finances and recommends to the Board policies that in the view of the Committee will improve efficiency, technical content, member experience and value, general operations of meetings, and financial performance. This includes informing the Board of trends in attendance, cost of producing meetings, and challenges facing INFORMS meetings, INFORMS staff develops and maintains meeting manuals for INFORMS and subdivision meeting with oversight of the Meetings Committee. In addition, the Committee develops and supervises meeting policies.

Budgeting

The Director of Meetings Department will prepare draft budgets for review by the Meetings Committee and consent of the VP Meetings, taking into account program objectives and priorities set by the Meetings Committee and financial constraints. The Meetings Department then submits its recommended budgets, including the Meetings Committee budget and budgets for the coming year's meetings, to the Director of Finance for INFORMS for review and ultimately submission to the Finance Committee. Any modifications made to the budget shall be reported back with explanation to the VP Meetings prior to presentation to the INFORMS Board for approval. See INFORMS Policies and Procedure Manual Section 15.2, Subdivisions, Procedures sections, for procedures related to expenditure approval of subdivision and special interest meetings. Increases in meeting registration rates are submitted by the VP Meetings to the Board for approval.

Appointment of Meeting Chairs

The Meetings Committee recommends future Chairs of INFORMS Meetings to the Board for review and approval. For the Analytics Conference, the Practice Strategy Committee selects the Chair and recommends the Organizing Committee.

NUMBER 10.1 MEETINGS COMMITTEE

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Meetings Locations

The Meetings Committee selects sites for INFORMS Meetings based on consideration of member convenience, cost and experience, geographic diversity and site feasibility as determined by the Meetings staff who compiles, reviews and analyzes data for future meeting sites.

Relation to Meetings Chairs

Meetings Chairs will report on the status of their meetings at least once each year for review at the Meetings Committee meeting held during the Annual Meeting. The report should be written and describe progress relative to the planning and scheduling of their meeting and identify current or potential problem areas. The report is normally delivered in person to the Meetings Committee. Summaries of these reports will be included in the Meetings Committee reports to the Board.

Selection of Meeting Chairs and Program Committees

If a local chapter exists near the site of a future Annual Meeting or other INFORMS meetings, the Meetings Committee is strongly encouraged to consult with the local chapter officers prior to selecting the General Chair of the meeting and similarly to encourage the General Chair to consult with the local chapter officers prior to forming the organizing committee.

Relation to the Board

The Meetings Committee will report to the Board through semi-annual written reports prepared before the annual national meeting and the spring Board meeting. The reports will describe planning for and status of future meetings, recommendations concerning meeting times and location, and progress on specific subjects requested by the Board.

NUMBER 10.1 MEETINGS COMMITTEE

EFFECTIVE: April 2009; Amended November 2014; 2018 Summer Board Meeting; 2019 Spring Board Meeting; 2019 Fall Board Meeting

Meetings

The Meetings Committee should meet at least three times each year At least two of these meetings shall be face-to-face, one at the Annual Conference and the other at the site of the next Annual Conference. At a minimum the conference Organizing Committee meets with the Meetings Committee at the Annual Conference the year prior to their conference and at their site at least six months prior to the Annual Conference. The General Chair and Organizing Committee provide a status update on meeting preparations. A quorum shall consist of the Chair and two additional voting members of the Meetings Committee.

RELATED DOCUMENTS:

INFORMS Policies and Procedure Manual, Section 2, General Procedures INFORMS Policies and Procedure Manual, Section 10.2 Meetings Planning
INFORMS Policies and Procedure Manual, Section 10.1.1, Joint Organization and Co-Sponsorship of External Conferences
INFORMS Policies and Procedure Manual Section 15.2, Subdivisions, Procedures, Subdivision Meetings

NUMBER 10.2 MEETINGS PLANNING

EFFECTIVE: November 2014
(Editorial Changes November 2016)
2019 Spring Board Meeting

POLICY

INFORMS currently conducts three Institute-level conferences per year. These are the Annual Meeting, the Conference on Business Analytics and Operations Research (referred to as the Analytics Conference), the International Conference, and Healthcare Conference. The International Conference is not held in years when the International Federation of Operational Research Societies (IFORS) holds a meeting. During those years a topical conference, e.g., OR in Healthcare, is scheduled instead. Topical conferences may also be scheduled in other years to accomplish the mission of INFORMS.

The Annual Meeting focus is on research and scholarship. Many opportunities to speak are offered. The International Meeting is similar to the Annual meeting in format. Each International Meeting may have some unique characteristics due to location and local OR society. The Analytics Conference focus is on application of techniques and is heavily focused on practice. The Analytics Conference format offers fewer, longer talks. It may be said that attendees of the Annual Meeting come to speak while attendees of the Analytics Conference come to listen. The topical conferences may follow either model, or a different approach, depending on the needs and interests of the majority of anticipated attendees.

RELATED DOCUMENTS:

INFORMS Policies and Procedure Manual, Section 10.2.5, Refunds of Registration
INFORMS Policies and Procedure Manual Section 15.2, Subdivisions, Procedures, Subdivision Meetings

NUMBER 10.2.1 JOINT ORGANIZATION AND CO-SPONSORSHIP OF EXTERNAL CONFERENCES

EFFECTIVE: April 2009; Amended November 2014; 2019 Spring Board Meeting

POLICY

Jointly Organized Conferences

Agreements by which INFORMS organizes a conference in conjunction with an external organization must adhere to certain practices to ensure that INFORMS's logo, finances and reputation are adequately safeguarded.

Conference agreements between INFORMS and external organizations must explicitly specify the method(s) of:

- Distributing the financial liability and potential gains of the conference;
- Sharing management responsibilities for the conference, including site selection, content development, executing contracts, marketing, meeting logistics, collecting revenue, paying invoices, etc.;
- Ensuring that all revenue, expenses, surplus and liabilities are properly reported and all required Form 990's are completed and filed;
- Distributing licensing and created intellectual property;
- Use of the INFORMS logo and branding must be explicitly addressed.

All conference agreements must be signed by the Executive Director of INFORMS after seeking legal counsel if he/she deems necessary, reported to the Executive Committee, and stored in a central depository in the INFORMS business office.

Regional Analytics Conferences

INFORMS organizes conferences in conjunction with its regional Chapters, and with the support of appropriate subdivisions. The focus of these conferences is to reach a local audience of professionals. These are INFORMS meetings. The partnering chapter and supporting subdivision will receive financial remuneration regardless of the final profit or loss of the meeting. INFORMS will retain all profits and/or losses over and above the chapter's/subdivision's remuneration.

The content will be developed by the Regional chapter with someone from the partnering subdivision(s) participating on the program planning committee. INFORMS staff will handle all logistics related to the conference. These meetings will be planned in such a way as to limit complimentary registrations to no more than 10% of the actual registration numbers. In the initial year of a meeting, the 10% will be based upon actual registration numbers at like meetings, with the final decision being made by the Director of Meetings.

Co-Sponsorship of External Conferences

INFORMS may be asked to co-sponsor an external conference, without taking a major role in the organization of the conference. Typically the organizing entity requests that the INFORMS name appear as a co-sponsor and that the meeting be publicized among INFORMS membership.

- Requests to co-sponsor external meetings will be directed to the VP Meetings. The Meetings Committee will discuss each case and will communicate its decision to the requesting party. The Meetings Committee will report to the Board all its decisions at the earliest Board meeting.
- Requests for co-sponsorship will not be considered any earlier than 18 months before the dates of the meeting requesting co-sponsorship. This reduces the possibility of date conflicts with INFORMS subdivision meetings which might not schedule their meetings earlier than 18 months before.
- The basic criteria for co-sponsorship to guide the Meetings Committee's decisions are: the meeting does not directly conflict with an INFORMS meeting (Annual, International, Analytics, or Topical Meetings), and (2) an INFORMS member be significantly involved in the planning and execution of the meeting, and (3) the meeting content and quality are such that they support INFORMS Mission and reputation and would appeal to multiple members. A direct conflict happens when an external meeting is within a two-week window of an INFORMS meeting (i.e., any portion of the external meeting occurs in the interval between two weeks prior to the start of the INFORMS meeting, and two weeks after the end of the INFORMS meeting). Co- sponsors should check the meetings calendar online for conflicting dates before confirming the dates of their meeting. Once the dates are confirmed, the co-sponsors should contact meetings department staff with the dates and title of the meeting and staff will enter information into the calendar.
- If the co-sponsorship involves an INFORMS subdivision, the Meetings Committee will have the Subdivisions Council review the proposal. The VP Sections/Societies will work with the VP Meetings to finalize the decision.
- INFORMS prefers to have little or no financial risk. If the sponsorship involves financial exposure, the Meetings Committee will forward its recommendations to the Executive Committee for final decision.
- Communities of INFORMS may co-sponsor meetings without INFORMS approval when:
    - There is no conflict with the INFORMS meetings calendar, as defined above.
    - Marketing of the conference will make it clear that co-sponsorship is provided by the community, not the Institute.
    - INFORMS, not the community, must approve the co-sponsorship if:
        - The community logo includes the INFORMS logo and the community logo will be used in any fashion.
        - If the marketing of the conference includes "INFORMS," or the full Institute name in the community name.
        - If any potential financial obligation will be incurred.
        - When INFORMS communities wish to co-sponsor meetings the 18-month threshold mentioned above does not apply.

- Co-sponsored meetings chairs, or their representative, should provide a report after the event. The report should include an overall assessment of the meeting, the planned and actual number of attendees, a brief description of the agenda such as the number of tracks, and a link to conference websites. Should there be a concern regarding finances with respect to INFORMS that should be reported as well. It is requested the report be made within 30 days of the conclusion of the meeting.

RELATED DOCUMENTS:

INFORMS Policies and Procedure Manual, Section 10.2 Meetings Planning
INFORMS Policies and Procedure Manual, Section 10.2.2 Policy on Alleviating Informs Meetings Conflicts
INFORMS Policies and Procedure Manual Section 15.2, Subdivisions, Procedures, Subdivision Meetings

NUMBER 10.2.2 POLICY ON ALLEVIATING INFORMS MEETINGS CONFLICTS

EFFECTIVE: APRIL 2007; 2014 Fall Board Meeting; 2019 Fall Board Meeting

POLICY

In addition to the Annual, International, Analytics, and Topical meetings organized by INFORMS national, INFORMS subdivisions/communities organize meetings targeted primarily to their members. In order to ensure robust participation in all INFORMS events, it is important that the timing of INFORMS meetings do not conflict with one another. This policy seeks to minimize conflict among all INFORMS meetings through informed decisions.

INFORMS subdivisions/communities may not schedule meetings in direct conflict with an INFORMS meeting (Annual, International, Analytics, or Topical Meetings). A direct conflict occurs when a subdivision/community meeting is within a two-week window of an INFORMS meeting (i.e., any portion of the subdivision/community meeting occurs in the interval between two weeks prior to the start of the INFORMS meeting, and two weeks after the end of the INFORMS meeting). Exceptions to this requirement may be granted by the Meetings Committee.

Subdivisions face competing goals and conflicts, often in their efforts to serve as interfaces between INFORMS and other societies. INFORMS will help subdivisions make good scheduling decisions by providing a central online repository for all meetings organized by INFORMS and its subdivisions. In addition, this repository will include meetings organized by sister societies of interest to INFORMS members. INFORMS and the subdivisions should all participate in this process by providing information on future conferences as soon as they are considered and prior to scheduling.

To alleviate timing conflicts among INFORMS and subdivision meetings, all INFORMS meeting organizers should follow this process:

- A meetings calendar is maintained on the INFORMS website with the broadest possible listing of conferences in fields relevant to our mission. All subdivision meeting organizers should consult the meetings calendar to determine the dates of INFORMS meetings prior to selecting dates for their meeting.

- After checking the meetings calendar for potential conflicts, the date for a proposed meeting should be communicated to the Director, Meetings, as soon as it is proposed, and if possible, at least 12months in advance of the proposed meeting. Efforts need to be made to avoid conflicts with other subdivision meetings and INFORMS meetings. No meetings should be considered within two weeks before or after an INFORMS meeting. If a subdivision is having difficulty finding a time that will not conflict with other subdivision meetings or an INFORMS meeting, it should be brought to the attention of the Meetings Department for possible resolution.

NUMBER 10.2.2 POLICY ON ALLEVIATING INFORMS MEETINGS CONFLICTS

EFFECTIVE: APRIL 2007; 2014 Fall Board Meeting; 2019 Fall Board Meeting

- For the protection of meeting organizers, all contracts and agreements must be reviewed by the INFORMS Director of Meetings and signed by the Executive Director.

- Once meeting dates have been confirmed, the meetings department will post the meeting in the online Meetings Calendar. The calendar is available to list all meetings, including those of sister societies.

RELATED DOCUMENTS:

INFORMS Policies and Procedure Manual, Section 10.2 Meetings Planning ,
NUMBER 10.2.3 SCHEDULING THE PROGRAM FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING

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EFFECTIVE: April 2009; amended November 2014; 2017 Spring Board Meeting; 2018 Summer Board Meeting

POLICY

- Each Invited and Sponsored track will be scheduled to "wrap around," i.e., one track/room will be scheduled from Sunday through Wednesday before a parallel track can be scheduled.

- Each Invited and Sponsored cluster must have an average of at least 4 papers per session (a norm of 5 papers is highly encouraged). The abstract system provides a mechanism for cluster chairs to search for appropriate Contributed papers to add to their sessions to meet the average goal. If the 4 average is not achieved, sessions with less than 4 papers will be given lower priority, combined or will have contributed papers added when scheduling the program. In addition, sponsored clusters not meeting the minimum average may be allocated a restricted number of sessions in future years depending on space availability.

- Wednesday will be a full or partial day depending on the venue capacity, demand and site logistics, with all the normal activities of the meeting.

Number 10.2.4 WORKSHOPS AT THE ANNUAL MEETING

Effective: April 2009, amended November 2014
2018 Summer Board Meeting

POLICY

Basic Requirements

- A workshop cannot compete with the INFORMS Annual Meeting; it must be held before or after the Meeting.
- Workshops must be a minimum of 2 hours.
- Workshops registrants and speakers must register for the Annual Meeting.
- For registration, workshops will appear as an add-on option on the Annual Meeting registration form. Registration processing will be handled by INFORMS staff.
- The number of workshop opportunities at an Annual Meeting will be determined by the available space and time.
- Organizers must submit a proposal to the Meetings Committee through the Director of Meetings with the following: organizer background; topic and outline of workshop content; budget with attendance projections. Proposal deadline: seven months prior to the meeting. Organizers will be notified of acceptance within 15 days.
- The INFORMS Meetings Committee has authority to approve or disapprove requests and will evaluate all proposals relative to their added value to meeting attendees.

Who can organize a workshop?

- INFORMS subdivisions.
- Companies in the OR product field – publishers, software vendors, consulting services who are exhibiting at the Annual Meeting.
- Other entities in the OR field (universities, professors, nonprofit initiatives in the field such as COIN).

Financial Requirements

- The workshop must be cost neutral to INFORMS, including staff time.
- The workshop may be offered free or may charge a fee.
- Any costs must be assumed by the workshop organizer/sponsor or a fee may be charged to cover costs.
- Typical costs include: registration services through INFORMS staff, materials, AV, food & beverage (if offered).
- Workshop rooms will be provided free (as part of the INFORMS facility contract).
- Registration must be handled by INFORMS staff. INFORMS staff can also provide assistance with logistical planning, management, and marketing. Workshop organizers will be required to pay a fee to cover INFORMS services. The fee amount will be developed by the INFORMS Director of Meetings. Workshop organizers will be required to agree to the fee as part of workshop planning.

- INFORMS reserves the right to cancel the workshop if a mutually agreed upon minimum number of registrations are not received by a negotiated date.
- In the case of any net profit being realized, that profit would go to INFORMS. The exception would be when the workshop is organized by an INFORMS subdivision. In that case, any net profit would go to the subdivision, as long as all costs (including INFORMS staff labor) are covered.

NUMBER 10.2.5 REFUNDS OF REGISTRATION

EFFECTIVE: APRIL 2009, amended November 2014

POLICY

Refund requests made by the cancellation deadline for an INFORMS meetings will receive a refund of the registration fee less a processing charge. Refunds will not be allowed for cancellations made after the deadline. The deadline and processing charge will be established by the Director of Meetings.

Exceptions to this policy will be considered in the case of emergency, hospitalization or serious illness of the registrant or a close family member. In these cases, the requester will be required to submit documentation verifying the situation. With verification, these people will receive a refund of the registration fee less the processing fee. The Director of Meetings has the authority to grant exceptions to this policy.

Number 10.2.6 INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS

Effective: April 2009, amended November 2014
2018 Summer Board Meeting

An INFORMS goal is to produce international meetings on a regular basis and to not conflict with IFORS meetings.

- If there is a local OR society in the location, INFORMS will obtain the agreement and cooperation of the society before producing a meeting in that country.
    - INFORMS will develop a written agreement with the local OR society.
    - Each agreement will be written on a one-time basis, i.e., for one year or one meeting only. A basic protocol can be set that might be applied in multiple years, but each agreement will be for one meeting only.

- In all agreements, INFORMS strongly prefers to:
    - Have responsibility for budgeting/financial management and contracts.
    - Manage registration. In some countries, registration for in-country attendees may be handled by a local service to allow people to pay in that currency.
    - Manage most other aspects of the meeting, including marketing, abstract processing, logistics and exhibits management.