

Comments from BNL on the ePIC Membership Policy Draft 0.9

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The comments below are displayed as provided by the individual reviewers. Only minor edits were performed for clarity. The comments and questions below are not meant as a “BNL” view but simply a compilation of the input we received.

- Line 9: Individual group standing -> Individual good standing
- Line 9: “*Individual group standing also requires that one’s institution be in good standing.*” This is contradicted in line 121 if you change institutions and have good standing. At least make a footnote here saying that there are exception and point to section 5.
- Line 11-15: It is not clear here who gathers the info and who decides. The eMC might collect but at the end it’s the CC. This paragraph could be a bit more detailed.
- Line 17: the term “*a one-time separate process*” is confusing and not clear to the reader. May be one can rephrase this. It is not a one-time process, it repeats. Why is it separate and separate from what?
- Line 18: Remove 'in addition'
- Line 42-43: who approves the officially approved activities? Not clear from text but should be defined.
- Line 44 & 45: Many scratched their head about the meaning of Organigram. It is not used commonly. Why not simply organizational chart?
- Line 52 and following. The text suddenly changes from institution to the term group. A group means different things. BNL is one institution but has many groups. Suggest sticking to the term institution in the policy.
- Line 76-80: One sees the idea behind that text, but it opens Pandora’s box. In principle a group can inflate its member list not requiring even good standing for most of their members. One wonders then what being a member of ePIC means? Suggest limiting this to well defined positions: undergraduate students, active technical staff, emeritus, etc. Turning this around once allowed will be hard to turn back.
- Related to above: This section seems to envision a category of collaborators who never have ‘good standing’ even though in the case of technical staff, they may make

significant contributions and be collaborators for many years. I know the phrase ‘good standing’ is baked into the Charter, but if we really plan on going this route, I think we should use different terms. There is no getting past the fact that lacking good standing will be seen in a punitive or probationary light. I think what is really being implied here is that there will be collaborators who don’t necessarily need to be on the author list. I would encourage the eMC to think about who is eligible to be a collaboration member (keeping in mind that this is somewhat defined in lines 108-9 of the Charter) so group numbers cannot be artificially inflated and on possibly tying group FTE requirements to the number of authors, not necessarily the number of members with good standing.

- Line: 82-84: Repetition. This was mentioned at least twice earlier.
- Line 135 and around: Repetition already discussed line around 59/60
- Section 7: Violation of code of conduct must affect membership - no words on this here.
- On the 0.2 FTE requirement: At the labs, this is a bit easier, because they naturally track their work this way (literally filling timecards to charge proper accounts). However, this might be different at universities. Having a hard number seems like a good idea so we have a metric to use, but it is not clear that this metric is always going to be straightforward. I know this 0.2 FTE requirement is also VERY moderate, so perhaps this is much ado about nothing, but I can already hear the complaints from Uni groups. In STAR, we operate by requiring each member to do some service work, and then take shifts (data, detector expert, etc.) to meet institutional quotas (handled internally by the institutions), while each institution who is a “full member” also has some thresholds for STAR membership in terms of students and postdocs committed to STAR. Should we provide some guidance in the policy which helps groups which don’t normally track FTEs like labs do to account for this?
- Along these lines, the activity coordinators (DSLs, PWG, and software conveners) are now going to have the additional responsibility of “policing” this within their working groups. So, in essence, it then becomes their job to somehow “check” the FTE being committed to that specific group’s work? This is why I think if ePIC is going to have this numeric threshold there needs to be some standardized way in which we track it – as I said, for lab people this is a bit easier because we naturally do this in timecards, while many Unis do not.
- A six-month incubation period before obtaining authorship sounds good on paper for a new institution, especially if they need time to “ramp up” their input. And I see we have a provision to shorten that waiting period, depending on circumstances. I see the same problem here as with the threshold for the 0.2 FTE requirement. The

requirement is a hard number, with a definition in terms of total contribution from a group. However, what metric is used to define “enough work” to shorten the 6 month window? Is it simply “you know it when you see it”? I think this should be spelled-out a little more definitively. For example, “An institution can obtain good-standing before the 6 month threshold by having a substantial contribution in that 6 month window (e.g. major software contribution, > 0.2 FTE contribution from the beginning, major hardware contribution, in-kind contract, etc.). I think if this is not spelled-out a bit more concretely it could easily irritate a new institution if they feel like they don’t have a “bar” to reach to get authorship earlier if they are coming in with a major contribution out the gate.

- I'm still not sure about the wording in the section "Maintenance of institutional good standing". The second sentence reads: “In the current policy, the total contributed work from an institute must equal or exceed 0.2 FTE (averaged over a year) per group member in good standing.” I have a few questions about this:

1. Is the definition of FTE uniform across all ePIC institutions? For instance, I believe the standard full-time work week in some countries is 35 hours, while it's 40 hours in the US. The disparity by country might be even greater if you base it on standard working hours per year. I think the goal is to establish that ePIC members are spending a significant fraction of their time on the effort, and it might be best to phrase it that way.

2. I suppose most of the people covered by this policy are not supported on project funds. Being so specific about the fraction of one's time required to be devoted to ePIC raises the question of who is funding that effort. A lot of people who could contribute very usefully to ePIC may be largely supported on RHIC operations funding right now, meaning that it might not be practical for them to put 20% of their full effort on ePIC. Still, they might be in a position to contribute in significant ways. The same sort of constraints might affect an early career University professor.

To address these issues, I would replace the quantitative language regarding the level of required effort with "significant". For instance, regarding membership, the sPHENIX bylaws read: “Scientists, engineers and students making a significant contribution to the sPHENIX collaboration are eligible to be members of the Collaboration. Members in good standing are those individuals who are associated with an sPHENIX institution and who have contributed significantly to the sPHENIX experiment”

- Does the eMC and the Membership Policy consider the suspension of Institutional good standing to be the same as or different from the suspension of an institution from the collaboration as described in Section 4.2 of the Charter? If they are the same, point 'D' of section 4 of the policy needs to be changed to align with the text in Section 7 of the Charter that suspension requires a supermajority vote from the CC. If they are different, and there is a mechanism to suspend institutions beyond simply

revoking their good standing, does the Membership Policy need to address the reasons for suspension and procedures to be followed?

- In a similar vein, I don't see any discussion on the criteria under which an individual could have their good standing revoked, the procedure to revoke this standing, and requirements/procedures to reinstate their standing. Is it the policy that once an individual is granted good standing, this status can only be revoked in conjunction with the loss of good standing by their group (excepting cases where they leave the collaboration or change institutions), or can a member have their good standing revoked individually?