

Replies to comments received to ePIC Membership Policy v0.9

General responses to comments:

- Dear all - we have read and discussed your comment and concerns about the 0.2 FTE requirement. We ultimately felt that a simple effort-based criterion was more fair and easier for our committee to manage than a task based one. That said, we understand that minimum requirements are difficult for teaching faculty. Our proposed solution is:
 - Reduce the average FTE requirement to 0.15 FTE per author for the present policy
 - Explicitly say that exceptions are allowed, upon request to the eMC and after review by the eMC and ePIC management.
- Another important change throughout the policy is the replacement of “member in good standing” with “author” (sometimes rendered as “authorship status”), and “institution in good standing” with “signing institution” (sometimes rendered as “signing status”). We welcome input on improving these formulations!

Rosi Reed [LEHIGH]

Thank you for your hard work writing this document, and I'm sorry it took me so long to respond.

I have a bit of a concern over having an average of 0.2 FTEs in order for an institution to have good standing. For instance, I am contracted to 40% research/40% teaching/20% service at Lehigh, thus I technically only have 0.4 FTEs to give to research. (Of course, I work more than 40 hours a week as do all faculty, but I think we can't count it like that.) Given that ePIC won't have data for ~10 years, there will be no faculty who are exclusively ePIC. So this means at best we're right at the 0.2 FTE limit. Graduate students who are on TAs, which a large fraction of younger graduate students are, are contracted to have 50% of their time teaching, which means that they only have 0.5 FTEs to give to research. Again, since they need data to graduate, that means that at best they are at 0.25 FTEs for ePIC. I basically think this is a requirement that a group only be on 2 experiments. Now, you can perhaps argue that this should be how people do things, but I really worry what this will mean for finishing the RHIC science mission and analyzing all of the RHIC data, some of which will be important for EIC with STAR's forward upgrade. But, once RHIC stops running, folks will need to join an active experiment for the health of their group and their early career folks. So this specific number will push people off of RHIC experiments if they want to belong to ePIC.

Secondly, I very much dislike the idea of using undergraduates to do work without being in good standing to help with the address. That incentivizes professors to not put undergraduates on the list as authors, even as they do work. (I would also argue that claiming 0.2 FTE from an undergraduate is really very different than 0.2 FTE of a senior graduate student or post-doc.)

Personally, I don't think anyone gains by this. **I would prefer that folks simply list the activities that they are involved in.** If they can't list something specific that can be confirmed, they're not in good standing. I don't really see the need to demand more.

Cheers,
Rosi

→ Dear Rosi - thanks so much for the thoughtful comments. Most of your comments are addressed in the “general reply” above, where we lower the requirement for everyone, and allow exceptions for cases in which satisfying the requirement is simply impossible for a group. We also discussed a “task based” version, but felt we didn’t have the resources in the eMC itself to manage that cleanly.

Rachel Montgomery [GLASGOW]

Hello,

Thank you for preparing this membership policy. We appreciate the effort which goes into putting this together.

I’m writing on behalf of the University of Glasgow group, as it’s CC member.

I’ve polled/discussed within the group. Overall the group is happy with the document and think it looks very good. The comments/queries I’ve collected so far are below.

- The main comment is concerns that 0.2FTE per person average is too high.
- We appreciate that this number makes sense at the moment when there is the TDR to write.
- It would be good if research group leaders can be named as members to keep involved in their group’s activities, would this add to the 0.2FTE number?
- 0.2FTE could become a difficult number to maintain after the TDR eg for academic heavy groups.
- Would maintaining 0.2FTE become difficult during the years after the TDR when the work is mostly detector development focussed? Or is 0.2 for any EIC related activity?
- Correspondingly, could the Activity Areas be further defined (eg if someone does simulations on a physics channel they just happen to be interested in does that count as approved physics towards the FTE?).

→ We have tried to expand the explanation of “activity areas” - simulations do count if they are performed in the context of a physics group (as was the original intention).

→ Any detector development that helps ePIC should be reasonable to include in the list of contributions

→ Group management can be effort that directly helps ePIC, e.g. active supervision of students and postdocs -- and can be included at a level that seems reasonable.

Thank you again and all the best,
Rachel

Kevin Adkins [MOREHEAD STATE UNIVERSITY]

Hello,

I have reviewed the proposed membership policy. I think overall this is okay, and what I expected when I opened it.

However, in my opinion, this policy punishes small institutions, like mine, who do not have a slew of graduate students at their disposal. Morehead State University (and maybe there are more like it, I cannot be sure) was a charter member of the collaboration. I am the only member at MSU, and thus the only person who contributes to the ePIC effort. I have presented several updates to the Jets/HF group and I am contributing a plot to the TDR. I don’t think that is something to be overlooked. But,

reading the membership policy, I probably have not contributed enough (again, by myself) to maintain good standing. My teaching commitment (12 credits per semester) don't allow me to attend every meeting and participate as much as I wish, but I am continuing to make solid contributions.

Thus, I urge the membership committee to think about **equity for smaller institutions**. We have expertise to offer, we simply don't have a large workforce to go with it, and this statement doesn't seem to be inclusive for these groups.

Thank you,
Kevin Adkins

→ Dear Kevin - thanks so much for the input. Yours resonated with several others and led to some changes in the requirements. Please see the general reply above.

Silvia Dalla Torre [INFN Trieste and University of Trieste]

Dear Colleagues,

please find some feedback here below. Best greetings, Silvia

FEEDBACK

line 43:

Missing among the approved activities: **servicing in ePIC management or scientific roles**

lines 82-89:

The present text seems to indicate a **very heavy process** (one have the impression that there will be a set of reviews ...), while I understand that this is not your intent; I suppose that the various institutional statements of service are simply signed off by the relevant DSLs and WG conveners, maybe uploading the statements in a common working area where DSLs and WG conveners can simply read and tick the statements. I suggest that the text is modified so to **envisage a light and smooth process**.

→ We understand the message about this being a heavy process and we have tried to improve the language to emphasize this is simply about tracking 1) who is in a group, 2) where they contribute. Most group leaders will be tracking this anyway and we will defer evaluation of the work to the activity coordinators or their delegates.

Anselm Vossen [Duke University]

Dear Committee,

Thanks for distributing this draft.

My main comment, that I already voiced in a IB meeting a while back, is with respect of the 0.2 FTE in service work required per member in good standing.

I am a member of a collaboration that uses a similar standard and have been a member of many that have not.

I think this is a terrible idea.

It discourages participation and punishes institutions for involving their graduate students and postdocs in diverse projects. I also think it disproportionately falls on universities as opposed to national labs, since university faculty usually have many other commitments. It is no coincidence that in my experience smaller institutions fail to climb this threshold.

It also leads to an audit culture that I dislike very much since one has to verify that the claimed service work indeed amounts to 0.2 FTE.

I think it is a good idea to ask for service work, I feel that a fixed FTE amount is completely unnecessary. In practice it doesn't matter if people are on papers that they did not contribute much to other than data taking shifts. It is clear to everyone in the field that papers on which you are not a PA do not really count. Also, technical contributions are encouraged by separate technical papers and a institution already has to justify their involvement in front of the funding agencies.

At the very minimum, **I would scale the FTE requirement with the fractional FTE committed to epic in that year.** That way a student or PD can concentrate on some other urgent project for a stretch of time and then come back.

I can only speak for my group, but we are involved in several experiments and R&D projects. The policy as you formulate here would be completely unworkable for us, in particular in the time where there is no data taking and no major support by funding agencies. Till there is epic data and funding agency support, there is no other way for us then to engage our group on other experiments as well.

Your proposed policy would force us to withdraw most of our group from epic.

I do not see how that helps anyone since my students still do valuable work and I would argue do not unduly profit.

Best regards,

Anselm

→ Please see the general reply above

Adam Gibson-Even [Valparaiso University]

Hi Peter, Pietro, members of the Membership Committee-

See below my signature for some detailed comments, sent March 11, to Pietro and Peter about the membership policy as presented at the March 1 Collaboration Council meeting.

I've read through the official draft (sent for comment about a week after my email), v0.9, and discussed it with my colleagues at Valpo.

My chief concern, echoed by my colleagues, remains:

-)Have you considered different types of institutions represented on ePIC, including undergraduate universities (PUI, maybe also ERI)?

-)Is a one-size-fits all requirement like "0.2 FTE * number of members" (line 69) the best system to use, considering the diversity of types of institutions?

For an institution where many/most members are full-time researchers a 0.2 FTE requirement may seem quite modest.

For an institution where most members may be faculty with significant teaching loads 0.2 FTE may be significantly more intimidating.

I'm particularly concerned since the number (0.2) seems likely to grow in the future.

See below my signature (my March 11 email) for more detail, and even some brainstorming of suggestions for alternate phrasing.

I didn't specifically request a reply in my earlier email. I didn't receive one, nor did the draft language on the matter change. So, I'd appreciate a reply. And/or I'm happy to schedule a conversation.

And a couple of smaller comments.

Based on my experience on other large collaborations (STAR, ATLAS, CDF) the policy seems... to require a lot of paperwork and human time. I've seen such proactive requirements for institutions joining collaborations, or as part of new members becoming authors, or for shift requirements and other service work requirements. I don't recall such explicit documentation requirements for routine membership, on other collaborations where I've been a member. Perhaps your committee, and each institution, will manage to hold the requirements lightly. Perhaps the process can be carried out quickly each year. But, I'll admit, creating such extensive bureaucracy is a bit concerning. I can imagine there might be times such a review would be desirable (e.g. if there were concerns about a particular institution's activity): **I wonder if the documentation could be triggered specifically in such cases, rather than required across the board from everyone** (and then requiring review by your committee). Such a trigger might be awkward, but it's not clear to me that "more extensive bureaucracy for everyone, every year" is a better alternative. I don't insist that I'm correct on this point, but I'm sharing a reaction.

My last comment is probably quite minor. Line 165 indicates that a final year of "good standing" for departing institutions allows the institution and members to remain on "scientific and technical papers released during this period". I suppose our publication and/or authorship policies are likely to eventually spell out more clearly exactly what this means. At what point is an author list frozen, and at what point should an author be a member in good standing to be listed on a particular paper. I'm not sure if your choice of word, "released", is meant in some technical sense. If so, perhaps it should be spelled out more specifically. Or, perhaps this is better done in other documents. Then, I wonder if something a little fuzzier might be safer. "This allows the institution and its members to remain on additional scientific and technical papers." or "This should facilitate the institution and its members being listed as authors of final scientific and technical papers." (Perhaps adding, "in coordination with other Collaboration policies.") Or some such.

Good luck as you finalize the draft.

I look forward to your reply on the question of undergraduate universities and the blanket 0.2 FTE requirement.

Best wishes,

Adam

Adam Gibson-Even (he/him)

Associate Professor, Department of Physics and Astronomy

Valparaiso University

Earlier email sent by Adam Gibson-Even [Valparaiso University]

Date: Mon, Mar 11, 2024 at 1:13 PM

Subject: anecdotal thoughts on Membership slides, undergraduate universities, from March 1

To: <pietro.antonioli@bo.infn.it>, Peter Alan Steinberg <peter.steinberg@bnl.gov>

Hi Peter, Pietro (feel free to forward this to the whole membership committee if you prefer)-

Thanks for the Membership Committee report back on March 1 at the Collaboration Council meeting.

Unfortunately, I had left for class by the time your talk came up, but I appreciated your slides. It looks like you're taking a thoughtful approach to a membership policy.

I'm confident you're aware that there are a variety of types of institutions on ePIC including a variety of folks who do work on ePIC in a variety of career roles.

But, I figured that an anecdotal response from a professor at an undergraduate university in the US might be useful already as you formulate your (first?) "final" draft. I guess there are at least a few universities that match that description that are members of ePIC. (Taking a quick survey... there are more than I realized. Maybe eight, or perhaps more, undergraduate universities? At least one more with a masters program but no PhD? More than I've noticed on other large collaborations. But, of course, still a small percentage of the overall number of institutions.)

My university (Valparaiso, in northwest Indiana about an hour from Chicago) has regular faculty (with significant teaching responsibilities), staff (with research commitments, and other commitments), semi-retired faculty that are still active in research (on a part-time basis), and undergraduate students. We sometimes have a postdoc, but not lately (depends on funding). No graduate students.

Have you, the committee, already had some conversation about undergraduate universities?

I'll admit I'm a bit nervous by the idea in the slides of an institutional commitment of 0.2 FTE x number of members. I may be able to meet it, but it makes me want to think carefully about who I officially list on the member list.

For full-time researchers, a 20% requirement per person might seem relatively modest, even for someone active on multiple experiments.

At an undergraduate university, the calculus may be a bit different. Using myself as an example, I have significant teaching responsibilities (even if they're lighter than at some undergraduate universities). Depending on how you crunch the numbers, my paid research time, annually, could come out to around 0.3 FTE (certainly not more than 0.6 FTE). My Department of Energy grant calls for work on two experiments (ePIC and STAR): this won't be surprising since ePIC is years from construction, and further from taking data.

So, "0.2 FTE x number of members" already feels like a significant barrier to me. And the implication is that this may rise over time. (OK, eventually our commitments at STAR will decline but...).

I don't have an immediate "favorite solution" for how to accommodate different types of institutions, like my own.

A smaller number (less than 0.2) would, of course, be easier for my institution to meet.

Or, perhaps it would be reasonable to make the required commitment a fraction of available research time, instead of a fraction of the calendar year. (Or some hybrid, "0.2 FTE x number of members or a minimum of 25% of the research time of members" or whatever percentage seems appropriate.)

A more informal process could perhaps allow for some discretion. (Maybe institutions like mine are rare enough to be treated as exceptions, rather than altering the main rules.) A general guideline, but an idea that the actual rule is that contributions should be reasonably consistent with the institutional plan (that's signed off by the membership committee, or perhaps management could get involved, etc.)

I'm not inclined to make this overly formal, or time consuming, in terms of annual reporting and review. But, at the same time, I'm eager to not prohibit certain types of institutions (especially not accidentally!) by formulas that might be written in an apparently rigid way and turn out to be too simple.

Different collaborations have handled this in different ways, of course. And probably you've taken some survey. In my time at STAR, all during the data-taking phase, the requirement as I've experienced it has been based on taking shifts, is accounted against the institution, and is based on the number of authors. It's the same requirement for all types of institutions. It means that I spend a larger fraction of my research time taking shifts than does maybe a typical postdoc from a research institute. But, the accountable requirement's never been as large as 20% of an FTE. (So perhaps this is an example of "same requirement for every author, but a de facto requirement smaller than 20% of an FTE". And that <20% even in the data taking phase of an experiment.)

When I first joined the faculty at Valparaiso, I had some conversations with US ATLAS (US CMS? both? it was a dozen years ago and memory fades) about joining from an undergraduate institution. At the time they were explicitly considering a policy with undergrad institutions in mind. But, I went in another direction and I'm not sure where the dust settled with those policies.

Best wishes,

Adam

→ Please see the general reply above.

Brian Page and Thomas Ullrich [BNL]

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.

→ Changed to "typically"

- 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.

→ This is the introduction - details are below

- 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?

→ One time per individual

- Line 18: Remove 'in addition'

→ Done

- Line 42-43: who approves the officially approved activities? Not clear from text but should be defined.

→ eMC on advice from the activity coordinators. The guiding principle is that we are keeping track of people, not their work.

- Line 44 & 45: Many scratched their head about the meaning of Organigram. It is not used commonly. Why not simply organizational chart?

→ It's a common phrase worldwide but is the same as an org chart, but is more compact to write.

- 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.

→ We meant to move entirely to institution

- 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.

→ We see no path for "inflating" here - rather we see a way for people to incorporate their groups into ePIC that works the best for them

- 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.

→ Typically members in good standing will be authors, so there is no obvious change associated with this suggestion.

- Line: 82-84: Repetition. This was mentioned at least twice earlier.

→ We did not feel these mentions were redundant

- Line 135 and around: Repetition already discussed line around 59/60

→ Again, we didn't feel it was redundant, but added more details

- Section 7: Violation of code of conduct must affect membership - no words on this

Here.

→ We don't see why section 7 is pertinent here, but it is relevant for section 6. Some words added about thks, although this is truly the domain of DEI policy

- 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 University 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?**

→ **We feel that group leaders should be able to quantify the fraction of their member's time on various efforts. We don't see this as anything more than that.**

- 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?**

→ **Again, activity coordinators are in fact responsible for work getting done, and tracking the people contributing. We are just asking for them to tell us what they should already know.**

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.

→ In every large collaboration, groups are able to report rough estimates of what their members contribute to.

- 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.**

→ The idea is that the typical case is 6 months, but exceptional cases can be argued-for and accepted by management. That said, we agree it is a good idea to clarify this and have modified this in the draft.

- 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.**

→ 0.2 FTE is meant to signal a significant amount of time spent, without demanding it to be the majority of someone's time. We have since reduced this to 0.15 FTE.

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 sPHE-NIX 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"

→ We feel that this is more complex in principle to monitor "significant" contributions than it is to require that someone is spending substantial time (albeit with enough productive output to justify it)

- 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?

→ **Good point - our mechanism appears to us to be a specific case of the general situation envisioned in the charter**

• 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?**

→ **Yes, e.g. from a DEI violation, but this is beyond the eMC policy scope.**