

MEMBERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE PROTOCOLS, REVISION

HISTORY

Approved by OCLC Members Council, 10 February 2009. Ratified by OCLC Board of Trustees, 20 April 2009. Replacement Article II approved by Members Council, 19 May 2009, and ratified by Board of Trustees, 8 June 2009. Revised by OCLC Board of Trustees, 14 June 2010, ratified by Global Council electronic vote, 21 June 2010. Revised by the OCLC Board of Trustees on 10 June 2013, and ratified by the Global Council 19 June 2013 by electronic vote. Revised by the OCLC Board of Trustees on 16 November 2016 and ratified by the Global Council on 16 November 2016. Revised by the OCLC Board of Trustees on 8 June 2020 and ratified by the Global Council on 18 September 2020 by electronic vote. This revision was approved by the OCLC Board of Trustees on 15 November 2021 and ratified by the Global Council on 17 December 2021 by electronic vote.

I. PREAMBLE AND DEFINITIONS

This document sets forth the following protocols for membership in and for the governance of the OCLC cooperative. It is authorized by Article IV and succeeding passages of the OCLC Code of Regulations.

The foundation of OCLC is sharing, including records, materials in many formats, people, and research. From 1977 to date, use of WorldCat for holdings and resource sharing has been the basis for OCLC membership and the prerequisite for participation in governance. Expanding membership in the cooperative has been an ongoing goal. For member institutions, the broader diversity means a greater wealth of resources available in WorldCat and a broader base to share the costs of operations, research, and advocacy. The new WorldShare network will facilitate easier and more efficient sharing among institutions.

OCLC's governance structure has significantly evolved over the past decade. The organization has become more global and the information technology environment has migrated and transformed, making the resources of libraries around the globe more accessible. Beginning with the "transitional delegates" who were added to the then-Members Council from six unrepresented countries in 2001, OCLC has sought to increase and diversify representation in order to understand the global library market and to connect libraries worldwide.

Over the past decade, OCLC has purchased several companies that produce integrated library systems. Many of these libraries are unrepresented in the governance process because their systems do not integrate easily with WorldCat, so setting holdings and using global resource sharing, a prerequisite for membership, is not possible. OCLC has embarked on an ambitious program to bring these current services (and others under development) together in a new WorldShare network. OCLC now seeks to add the voices of future and potential WorldShare network users to governance by providing membership to libraries using OCLC services that have not previously qualified for that status. The goal is to nurture an environment that values the sharing of intellectual content and mutual institutional support across the new network from its earliest stages. The network will provide all participating institutions with the opportunity to share intellectual content, making sharing the default rather than an option.

This transformation offers opportunities for inclusion while staying true to its purpose of “furthering access to the world’s information and reducing the rate of rise of library costs.”

To live up to this purpose, OCLC must serve its member institutions with a clear process that honors tradition while accommodating new models. Both the transitional delegates to Members Council in the mid-2000s and the lively and productive discussions in the various product user groups prove that great ideas come from many places. Input from individuals who work in institutions that have not previously participated in governance under current rules could benefit the entire cooperative.

For purposes of this document, the following definitions shall apply:

- **Administratively independent entity:** An OCLC member is “administratively independent” if it directs its own policies or expenditures; is recognized as being independent for tax or legal reasons; or, if it is the highest reporting operational unit, with, for example, sub-units reporting to it and it reporting to a board of trustees, college president, dean, provost, vice-president, or some other lead operating officer or office. Similarly, a member is “administratively independent” if it is at the highest level of its administrative hierarchy, that is, if sub-units report to it (if there are sub-units).
- **Corporation, or Nonprofit Corporation:** See “OCLC.”
- **OCLC:** OCLC is a library service and research membership organization dedicated to the public purposes of furthering access to the world’s information and reducing the rate of rise of library costs. Under US tax laws, OCLC is recognized as a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization. In other countries, OCLC operations may be structured under local tax law as a wholly owned, for-profit subsidiary of the US organization.
- **OCLC cooperative:** The phrase “OCLC cooperative” references collectively: OCLC members (typically libraries, archives, or museums), the OCLC governance structure (Board of Trustees and Global and Regional Councils), and the OCLC corporation.
- **OCLC Partner Program:** A program managed by OCLC’s Business Development Division where for-profit entities contract for OCLC services.
- **Qualifying OCLC Product:** A Qualifying OCLC Product means a subscription to software or hosted services that are owned and licensed annually by OCLC to an individual entity or group of entities.

II. MEMBERS

Qualifying institutions

Article IV of the OCLC Code of Regulations states, “Members shall be those entities that meet the minimum but continuing threshold of engagement with OCLC, as set forth in OCLC’s Membership and Governance Protocols.” Article IV, Section A of the Code empowers the Membership Committee to develop the definition of Membership for the review and approval of the Global Council and the Board of Trustees. Libraries, archives, or museums embracing the OCLC values of cooperation and sharing are welcome to join.

An institution may be an OCLC member if the institution has a subscription to a Qualifying OCLC Product.

As a matter of policy, whenever possible, agreements with such local or regional cooperatives or consortia, state or provincial libraries, or national libraries should include language giving OCLC reasonable access to all of the participants in the group represented by those organizations.

An institution may decide to opt out of exercising its membership rights at any time. Institutions may request to be removed from mailing lists by clicking on the appropriate links included with each e-mail. To opt out of voting rolls, institution directors may contact the Global and Regional Councils Division at OCLC.

Organizations who are part of OCLC's Partner Program are not eligible for membership.

The cooperative is strengthened by its membership's diversity, such as geographical, institutional type, or size. Members are united by similar and complementary content and processes and connected through mutual purpose; shared enterprise; and the creation, sharing, and stewardship of metadata, content, and other resources. For example, WorldCat is maintained through the cooperative, efforts of OCLC members.

Commitment to innovative cooperation and mutual success

Members are guided by pertinent OCLC policies, specifying good practices for members in the cooperative based on shared values, trust and reciprocity in understanding rights and responsibilities. These policies focus on members' rights and responsibilities with the aim of fostering innovation and sharing, as well as maintaining the integrity and fiscal viability of the cooperative's shared resources.

OCLC members share in a variety of ways, such as (not limited to):

- Contributing metadata, including authority records, to WorldCat;
- Sharing holdings information;
- Sharing staff resources and expertise, such as in a reference cooperative;
- Making digital content available to other members;
- Sharing materials using OCLC services; or
- Subscribing or contracting for an OCLC library management system or other Qualifying OCLC Products.

Reciprocally, in their budgeting and development decisions, the Board of Trustees and the management of OCLC should support services that attract and retain members and that encourage collaboration.

Voting rights

Voting rights for members are as set forth in the OCLC Code of Regulations. Membership shall continue for as long as the institution meets the definition of OCLC Member. Institutions also may voluntarily cancel their memberships by notifying the Global and Regional Councils Division at OCLC, and thus no longer participate in OCLC governance.

Global Council Member Delegates (as described below in Section V) come from member institutions. All elected delegates are full voting members of the Global Council itself.

III. REGIONS

There are currently three OCLC Regions: OCLC Europe, the Middle East and Africa; OCLC Asia Pacific; and OCLC the Americas. These regions may be increased, merged, subdivided, or otherwise changed as needed to reflect changes in the working environment.

As OCLC grows and evolves, the Regional Councils may be similarly increased, merged, subdivided, or changed. Changes in the number or definition of Regional Councils require a change in these Protocols, as outlined in Section VII, below. Nothing in this document is intended to eliminate, reduce, or discourage other advisory groups composed of OCLC members.

IV. REGIONAL COUNCILS

Within each region, a Regional Council will advise OCLC. The Regional Council is defined as the delegates elected to represent the constituency of the OCLC members in that region.

Purpose

Regional Councils will serve as:

- A two-way conduit to allow the broadest, most inclusive conversation among OCLC staff, members, participants, and interested parties;
- Incubators for new ideas and initiatives within the cooperative;
- An inclusive forum and a vehicle to allow interested library, archive, or museum representatives to learn more about OCLC and opportunities for participation in the cooperative.

The Regional Councils participate in OCLC governance as delegates to the Global Council (see below, and Article IV, Sections C–G of the OCLC Code of Regulations). The Regional Councils facilitate discussion of issues with the OCLC cooperative.

Governance

Each Regional Council will have a chairperson, who shall be an employee or a member of the governing board of an OCLC member within that region. The chairperson may not be an employee of OCLC. Each Regional Council will be guided by a unified set of bylaws and internal procedures that are respectful of regional needs and differences. Where the internal procedures are silent, the current edition of *The Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure*, by Alice Sturgis, shall be the procedural authority.

Meetings

Organization. The chairperson, in cooperation with OCLC staff, shall plan and execute at least one Regional Council in-person or virtually meeting annually.

Funding. Each region will receive an annual appropriation from the OCLC budget for running this meeting. The appropriation will be determined as part of the annual budget process.

Organizing committee. The chairperson, in consultation with OCLC staff, may appoint an organizing committee to plan an agenda and carry out the Regional Council meetings. The members of the organizing committee may be reimbursed for actual expenses they incur in the performance of their duties.

Agenda. Each Regional Council agenda shall include a mixture of regional and global issues and should include discussion of OCLC's strategic direction.

OCLC Staff and Board of Trustees Participation

At each Regional Council meeting, the OCLC staff shall be represented by senior management of the cooperative, including the President and CEO or appropriate Vice President(s) who can respond meaningfully to questions and concerns of the members. OCLC will make every effort to ensure that at least one trustee attends each Regional Council meeting.

Voting

At the Regional Council meeting, each OCLC member shall be entitled to cast one (1) vote in person, electronically, or by proxy on each matter properly submitted to the Regional Council for vote, consent, waiver, release, or other action. Each OCLC member shall designate a representative to cast its vote at Regional Council meetings.

Open meetings

The Regional Council meetings shall be open, although only OCLC members are eligible to participate and to vote.

Costs

Except as noted above, costs and expenses of attendance shall be the responsibility of the OCLC member or the individual attending.

Committees

The Regional Councils shall create such committees as set forth in the bylaws or as they deem necessary or desirable to carry out their purposes, within the budget limitations of each Regional Council.

Officers

The Regional Council shall create such offices and select such officers to conduct their internal business as set forth in the bylaws, provided, however, no such officers shall have or represent to any third party the authority to bind OCLC.

Other meetings

Additional meetings of the Regional Council may be held from time to time at the joint call of the Chairperson and the President and CEO of OCLC or his/her designee.

Nothing in this document is intended to prohibit or discourage other types of meetings, such as meetings of national advisory committees or ad hoc groups addressing specific topics.

V. GLOBAL COUNCIL

Purpose

The Global Council is part of the member governance structure. Global Council is comprised of the elected regional council delegates from each of the three regions.

Meetings

The Global Council shall meet in person or virtually at least once each year. At this meeting, hereinafter referred to as the Annual Global Council Meeting (“AGCM”), the Global Council shall elect a Chair of Global Council, ratify or reject amendments to the Membership and Governance Protocols and Article IV of the Code of Regulations of the Corporation as proposed by the Board of Trustees, and elect trustees to the OCLC Board.

Member Delegates

Member Delegates to the Global Council are the member delegates from the Regional Councils. Delegates are elected through the process established in the Bylaws and Elections Handbook.

Qualifications

Member Delegates must be employees or members of the governing boards of OCLC members. Employees of OCLC are not eligible to serve as Member Delegates.

Responsibilities

The Member Delegates have two governance responsibilities:

- Elect six (6) trustees to the OCLC Board for four-year terms.
- Ratify or reject by majority vote amendments to the Membership and Governance Protocols and Article IV of the Code of Regulations.

The Member Delegates will also:

- Advise OCLC on member engagement activities across the three regions by informing OCLC on best approaches to member activities, forums, product user groups and product advisory groups
- Be eligible to serve on the Board of Trustees’ Membership Committee
- Reflect and articulate the various interests and concerns of their regions to the Board and OCLC management
- Advise the Board and OCLC management of emerging, critical issues that require OCLC tracking, planning, or other responses so that OCLC’s own strategic planning is informed by this input
- Provide comment to the Board and OCLC management on OCLC’s strategic directions
- Facilitate dialog across the three regions, address global issues and trends, and serve as representatives of the full constituency of OCLC members in each region
- Strengthen the cooperative throughout the world.

Advance notice

In order to permit local discussions to proceed in a timely fashion, the OCLC Board of Trustees shall transmit any proposed amendments to the Membership and Governance Protocols to the

Member Delegates for a vote as early as possible, and no less than ten (10) days in advance of such vote.

Voting

Each Member Delegate shall be entitled to cast one (1) vote, in person, electronically or by proxy, in all votes, consents, waivers, releases, and trustee elections.

Committees

A Nominating Committee to develop a slate of candidates for the OCLC Board of Trustees will be formed. The charge to this committee is to accept nominations and recommendations for the following year's trustee openings. The Nominating Committee will submit a slate of two nominees for each trustee seat open. The Nominating Committee will consist of the Chair and Vice Chair of each OCLC Regional Council. The Nominating Committee shall notify the Global Council and Regional Councils of its nominees for the Board of Trustees no less than sixty (60) days before the AGCM.

Member Delegates shall create other such committees as they deem necessary or desirable to carry out their purposes.

Officers

The Member Delegates shall create such offices and elect such officers to conduct their internal business as they shall deem appropriate, provided however, no such officers shall have or represent to any third party the authority to bind OCLC.

Costs

Costs and expenses of the AGCM and the Member Delegates' attendance shall be paid by OCLC upon such total budgeted amounts as are determined by the Board of Trustees.

Agenda

The agendas of the Global Council meetings will reflect the issues and concerns brought forth from the Regional Councils, as well as issues of global concern to the cooperative.

VI. DELEGATE ALLOCATION FORMULA

OCLC is and will continue to be a membership organization. Member institutions are administratively independent entities, not, for example, branches, service points, or departmental sub-units of lead organizations. While revenue is used as the basis for this formula, revenue alone does not define membership in the cooperative, and is being used only as the metric to approximate relative participation across regions for the computation of representation.

There will be forty-eight (48) Member Delegates to the Global Council. Each December, the Global Council staff will determine the number of delegates to represent each region in the Global Council by applying the following formula:

Twenty-five percent (25%) of the total number of delegates will be set aside as a core number of Member Delegates equally distributed across the regions.

Each region will be allocated a percentage of the remaining 75% of the Member Delegates in proportion to that region's percentage of the total revenue generated by OCLC in the three (3) complete fiscal years prior to the allocation. This revenue basis will be the total revenue to OCLC from all its services and products, measured in US dollars, as specified in the annual audited financial statements.

The number of allocated Member Delegates will be reviewed periodically to ascertain that the number of such Delegates is both effective and representative of the cooperative.

VII. PROCEDURES FOR CHANGING THIS DOCUMENT

Proposed changes to this document will be initiated by the Board of Trustees' Membership Committee. Such changes must be approved by the Board of Trustees by an affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of those trustees voting. In accordance with the Advanced Notice requirements described in Article V above, proposed amendment(s) must then be ratified by a majority vote of Member Delegates present (i) at a Global Council meeting called for that purpose at which a quorum is present, or (ii) by virtue of an electronic vote.

VIII. EFFECTIVE DATE

These Protocols originally took effect 1 July 2009 and were revised effective 21 June 2010, 1 July 2013, 16 November 2016 and 18 September 2020. This revision is effective 1 January 2022.