Policy 6000: MTS Sections

Sections and the MTS mission

A Section consists of a minimum of fifteen (15) members in good standing of Marine Technology Society (MTS) residing or having a place of business within a specified geographic area [global in case of the Early Career Ocean Professionals], that has been authorized by the MTS Board of Directors (hereafter "Board'). Because they provide immediate access to local economies, industries, and educational institutions, the Sections are integral to meeting the objectives of MTS. They provide the face-to-face networking critical to members' careers and professional development, ready access to information regarding critical political, business, and technical issues of importance in the area, and hands-on interaction with students. Through various forums, such as luncheon meetings and social events, members benefit from networking and sharing of information.

Sections and Society Structure

MTS is chartered under the Not-for-Profit Laws of the State of New York and qualifies as a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. As an organizational unit within MTS, each Section is extended the same tax-exempt status. Status as a non-profit, tax-exempt organization gives MTS and its Sections special privileges. It also imposes special obligations for accounting for receipt and disbursement of funds and a necessity for each Section to file a fiscal year financial report to Headquarters to meet the obligations of maintaining the 501(c)(3) status. Separate Incorporation of a Section is not permitted. There shall be no additional dues assessed by a Section for membership.

The Council consists of the Board, the Chairs of the Sections, and the Chairs of the Professional Committees. The President of MTS shall serve as Chair of the Council. The Council shall serve in an advisory capacity to the Board and shall have such other functions and responsibilities as are assigned to it from time to time by the Board.

The Section structure of MTS is mandated by the MTS Bylaws. *Section chairs* are elected by the Section membership.

Section Governance

Vice President, Section Affairs

The Vice President of Section Affairs (VPSA) is the nationally elected Board member responsible for and representing the MTS Sections and their interests. The VPSA shall be responsible to the President for the activities of all MTS Sections and shall serve on the Membership Advisory Group (MAG), Council, and Professional Committees and Sections Advisory Group (PSAG). The term of office for the VPSA is defined in the MTS Bylaws.

The VPSA facilitates dialogue and interaction among Sections and assists in finding speakers and topics to energize Section meetings. The VPSA advocates on behalf of the Sections for programs and support and, with the VP of Education, they oversee the development of the Student Sections and Student Section issues.

In specific, the VPSA:

- Maintains, enhances, and support the Sections. This includes development and implementation of an annual plan and program for each Section.
- Encourages Sections to plan, develop, implement, and complete at least one technical event (symposia, seminar, etc.) per year.
- Leads the Council Meetings as directed by the MTS President.
- Encourages Journal article submissions from Section membership.

Section Officers

Section Officers must be members in good standing of the MTS. They are nominated and elected pursuant to the Bylaws of the Section.

Section Chair

The Chair of each Section shall serve as a member of the MTS Council. The Section Chair is responsible to the Vice President of Section Affairs. The Chair is responsible for the overall administration and leadership of the Section. The Chair presides at all Section meetings, appoints committee chairs, and serves as liaison between the Section and the MTS Headquarters. The Chair is responsible for all required reporting of the Section, and providing support for national programs such as awards programs, nominations for national election, and the student scholarship program.

Vice-Chair

The Vice-Chair is responsible for the duties of the Chair in the latter's absence. It is important that definite responsibilities be assigned to the Vice Chair so that all aspects of Section operations are covered.

Secretary or Secretary/Treasurer

The Secretary or Secretary/Treasurer is responsible for recording minutes of Section business meetings, maintaining the Section correspondence files and archives, preparing meetings notices and arranging for their mailing to the Section membership, and preparing and submitting an Annual Report to the MTS headquarters.

Treasurer or Secretary/Treasurer

The Treasurer or Secretary/Treasurer is responsible for the receipt and disbursement of Section funds in accordance with the budget and for the preparation of all required financial reports, including the financial Section of the Annual Report to MTS headquarters. The Treasurer shall ensure that the MTS Chief Executive Officer is included as a signatory on all accounts holding MTS

funds. This is required by the national Bylaws to ensure MTS access to funds.

Executive Committee (Optional)

Composition of the Section Executive Committee is determined by the Section Bylaws. Normally, it consists of the elected officers: a Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary/Treasurer. Procedures for the election of officers and the filling of vacancies should be stipulated in the Section Bylaws. The responsibilities and duties of the Executive Committee should be specified in the Section Bylaws.

Councilors or Directors (Optional)

The Section Bylaws may establish additional elective officers together with responsibilities and authorities.

Other Committees or Chairs (Optional)

Each Section should establish the standing or ad hoc Committees it deems necessary for the size and goals of the Section or solicit volunteers to be chairs to accomplish those goals.

Section Bylaws

Each Section must have Section Bylaws, as mandated by the MTS Bylaws. Example Bylaws are available in the Section Handbook. Bylaws must be approved by the Section and the MTS Board. They must also be consistent with the MTS Bylaws.

After they are first developed, Bylaws are updated through an iterative process. As MTS and the Section grow and evolve, so should the Bylaws to reflect the changes in the governance needs of the Sections. To that end, the Section Bylaws should be evaluated every three to five years and updated, as necessary.

Section Activities

Regularly Scheduled Meetings

A program of scheduled meetings is a basic function of Sections. Meetings do not need to follow a fixed format but should be scheduled and arranged to accommodate the Section membership's interests and availability. Wherever possible, it is advisable to hold Section meetings on a regular basis. This will foster regular participation and allow arrangement of accommodations with local establishments. Luncheon or dinner meetings, with a speaker or panel discussion on subjects of timely interest, generally produce the greatest attendance and participation. It is important to note, however, that meetings cost, time, and locations require preplanning and compromise among the membership.

Regular meeting programs and announcements should be developed and distributed to the Section membership on a regular basis. The Section website and listserv should be used for information dissemination.

Cooperative Activities with other Societies

In planning and conducting Section events, cooperation and participation with the local activities of other professional societies and groups can lead to greater synergy, excitement, and attendance. This may encompass joint meetings where the speaker or roundtable (panel) discussions are of common subject interest to the participating groups. Opportunities to recruit new members frequently result from interactions with other societies and professional groups.

If the collaborative/cooperative activity proposed is planned for or expected to draw interest and involvement beyond a Section's geographic area, it is mandatory that the Vice President of Section Affairs be informed prior to the Section's commitment to the event to avoid conflicts with other programs.

Section Activity and MTS Technical Committees

Sections are encouraged to support and cooperate with the Technical Committees of MTS in developing technical program activities of joint interests.

Other Technical/Professionally Oriented Events

The Section is expected to be an active participant in MTS-sponsored and co-sponsored technical events which take place within the Section's geographic area. MTS welcomes Section initiatives in hosting symposia, webinars, seminars, and comparable technical activities which have relevance to MTS objectives and are of interest to individuals beyond the Section's geographic area. When initiated by the Section, it is imperative that they be proposed to the Vice President of Section Affairs at the earliest possible date in order to avoid scheduling conflicts, elicit wider MTS participation, to ensure that fiscal requirements are met, and that funding can be properly allocated.

Social Events and Fundraisers

The Section is encouraged to establish social events and fundraisers to support and underwrite Section activities. Examples of Social Events include barbeques, annual Holiday Dinners/Socials, and summer picnics.

Student Section

The Sections are encouraged to interact with local universities that have an oceanography or ocean engineering department to proactively establish and – where possible-- support a Student Section. An MTS member must sponsor the Section and must be a faculty member associated with the educational institution at which the Section will be formed. At least eight MTS students must sign a petition to form the Section. The completed petition is then sent to headquarters. To start the Section, the students must join MTS. This can be done concurrently, i.e., signing up for membership and signing the student Section petition at the same time. MTS provides motivation to expedite the process. Headquarters will pay the $25 membership fee for all the students who join to start the Section for the first year. They will have all the benefits of membership, including receiving the newsletter. They will also be eligible for the MTS scholarships. Students have reduced fees at all our conferences and workshops. We also offer the Student Section a free webpage on www.mtsociety.org. Additional information is available in the Section Handbook. MTS Student Sections are encouraged to participate in MATE/ROV competitions and in MTS Summer Camps.

Legislative Activity

Sections are prohibited from lobbying for or against specific legislative proposals any level of government in the jurisdiction where the section resides. Members of MTS are encouraged to participate in the public affairs domain; members may appear in an individual capacity before legislative bodies or committees to express individual opinions and many cite MTS membership as a personal qualification and credential.

However, MTS members must distinguish their personal views from those positions which have received full and explicit support of MTS. This applies regardless of the form or medium of communication, and includes but is not limited to written, verbal, and internet testimony.

Individuals may not, however, express views on behalf of MTS or of a Section without written authorization as specified in Public Affairs Policy 6010.

OCEANS YYYY MTS/IEEE Conference

A Section may seek to host the Oceans MTS/IEEE annual conference. Guidelines for hosting a national conference may be obtained upon request from the national office.

Conference and Workshop Insurance

MTS carries Non-Profit organization professional liability insurance. Various policies apply to all MTS officers as well as all conferences and workshops sponsored by MTS. Accordingly, additional insurance to cover conference and workshop officers and facilities is not required. All questions concerning additional insurance coverage should be addressed to the Chief Executive Officer. A certificate of insurance can be provided to the facility by MTS staff to support the volunteer conference/workshop organizer.

Communications

Newsletters

It is highly recommended that the Section distribute a newsletter aimed at keeping its members informed on Section activities and other events of interest. The newsletter can be in printed or electronic form. MTS does not mandate specifications as to newsletter formatting or style; however, guidance and assistance is available from MTS staff. All responsibility for content and all fiscal responsibility rest with the Section and its officers. A copy of each issue of a Section's newsletter must be provided to the Vice President of Section Affairs and to the MTS staff at MTS Headquarters.

Website

Sections are encouraged to have a webpage. MTS Headquarters can offer a page at the Section's request. This will facilitate information dissemination and provide a consistent location where general Section information is available. MTS staff can assist with the development of the webpage; however, it will be the responsibility of each Section to update its respective webpage to ensure that the most current information is available to members.

Web content should be in line with MTS national guidelines. If in doubt about the appropriateness or legality of member submissions or links, please check with the national office staff. Commercial advertising, political advocacy, and candidate endorsements are not appropriate.

Funding Section Activities and Communications

MTS encourages and expects that all Sections establish mechanisms for generating Section funds. While it is expected that Section activities and communications will be self- supporting, there are mechanisms in place to support Section functions.

Funding is available on a case-by-case basis to those Sections that make specific requests to the national office to support their activities. All projects undergo an approval process based on a proposal. It is expected that all Section activities will be managed by volunteers. Requests for staff support must be approved by the Chief Executive Officer and are based strictly on staff availability.

Available Funding		
Activity	Funding	Approval Process
webpage	There is no exchange of funds. Webpage is provided. Webpage is located on the MTS Website. A maximum of three content managed pages is provided. Managed content can upload graphics, text, and links. Must be managed by the volunteers. Requires approximately three weeks' notice.	None. Approval is automatic.
Tele-conferences	Staff will set up the teleconference; however, volunteers are expected to determine the date, time and people who are participating.	Subject to conference line availability.

Conference Symposia, Workshop	No established policy on lower or upper limits of funding request. Note that it is anticipated that revenue garnered from the activity will be applied towards funding.	Must complete conference proposal form and seek approval of appropriate VP, President and CEO. Categories of expenses include arrangements, exhibits, technical program, publications, publicity, registration, and committee volunteer member expenses.

Funding requests for workshops, conferences, and symposia are considered loans that must be repaid. Funding requests for special or continuing projects must demonstrate the means for the Section to continue funding or find matching funds. Request Forms are found in the Section Handbook.

Finances and financial considerations

There shall be no additional dues assessed by a Section for membership. A Section may request additional funds on a voluntary basis from members and from other marine community groups in its geographic area to defray operating expenses.

Disbursement of Funds from Section Meetings

Surplus funds from MTS condoned activities including Section meetings, luncheons, picnics, social events, and fundraisers are retained by the Section. If MTS HQ collects funds, 3% credit card fees will be deducted from the funds before disbursement into the Section bank account.

Disbursement of Funds/Losses from Other MTS-Affiliated Conferences, Workshops, Tech Surge, and Symposia Other Than OCEANS Conferences

All activities undertaken by a section and/or committee are done on behalf of MTS and therefore the risk and opportunities are a shared responsibility. It is critical that each event is budgeted for and either provided as part of the annual budget or by special request. Sections and committees should strive for a 10% surplus for each event. If an event incurs a loss, section and/or committee funds will first be used to cover the loss. If a section and/or committee is unable to cover the loss, the loss must be absorbed by the overall operating budget of MTS which will affect global programs.

Similarly, events that generate a surplus over the event's expenses will be shared by the organizing entity and the MTS headquarters. The percentage that will be sent to the Headquarters will be negotiated on a case by-case basis and shall be sent within three months (90 days) of hosting the event. These surplus funds are defined as funds from MTS-approved conferences, workshops, and/or symposia that are:

1. Conducted for an industry-wide audience, a community-at-large or for the national membership, and
2. Sponsored/conducted by MTS entities such as MTS Sections and/or MTS Professional Committees.

The Board, commensurate with stipulated Bylaw assigned responsibilities, has ultimate control to change, amend, or modify the funding distribution. Such action may be deemed appropriate when it is essential for MTS fiscal solvency or other dominant professional considerations.

Procurement Policy (where applicable)

MTS Sections are expected to follow the MTS Procurement Policy where applicable.

Reporting

Annual Financial End of Year Report (Due 15 July).

This report includes a listing of sources of income and description of expenses for the past fiscal year and must be accompanied by a 30 June bank statement. This report is used by MTS for its annual tax reporting. MTS has established Internal Revenue Service recognition of federal income tax exemption from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Additionally, a group exemption has been obtained for subordinate units affiliated with or under the general supervision or control of the central organization. A Section is a unit affiliated with MTS. MTS is required to file an annual tax return.

Financial status of each affiliated unit must be reported on the return. Accordingly, each Section does not require a tax return. MTS is required to identify each unit of MTS included in the group exemption annually.

Status Reports (Due prior to fall council meeting).

An Activity Report is due prior to the fall council meeting. The report is forwarded to the Vice President of Section Affairs. The activity report provides a summary of the prior year's activities and proposed activities for the next 12 months. All activities sponsored by the Section should be listed, including regular meetings, workshops, fundraisers, social events and conferences. The report is used to help Sections decipher challenges in attendance, areas of interest for members (by analyzing successes and failures) and to give the Vice President of Section Affairs, an indication as to the status of the engagement of the Section membership. Forms are available in the Section Handbook.

Annual Budget (Due 15 January for the following fiscal year)

All Sections are required to submit a proposed annual budget to the Vice President of Budget and Finance, by 15 January for approval by the Budget and Finance Committee. If the budget is not approved but is sent back to the Section for changes, a revised budget shall be submitted within 15 days. The approved budget becomes effective on 1 July of that year. In the absence of an approved budget, all funds must be returned to Headquarters.

Activity	**No later than**
Section and Committee Budget submissions due to Headquarters	15 Jan
CEO and VP Finance Review of Section and Committee Budgets	15 Feb
PSAG Review of Section and Committee Budgets	15 Feb

Section and Committee Budget requests returned to Chairs	28 Feb
PSAG + CEO + Chairs to discuss proposed Budgets with Chairs and provide guidance for final Budget submission, as needed	15 Mar
Adjusted Budget submission due from Sections and Committees	1 Apr
Section and Committee Budget requests reviewed by Board	15 May
Headquarters to inform Chairs of Board determinations; PSAG + CEO to discuss rejected budgets with Chairs, as needed	15 June
Additional Section and Committee Budget adjustments due	1 Jul
Adjusted Section and Committee Budget requests reviewed by Board	15 Jul
Year end-financial statements reports due– including 30 June bank statement & reconciliation	15 Jul
Section and Committee regular budget request period closed – all Chairs informed	31 Jul
Rebate checks issued to Sections by Headquarters	30 Sep
Annual Activity Report Due from Sections and Committees	Prior to Fall Council Meeting
Section and Committee Budget submission request & instructions sent to Chairs	15 Nov
PSAG + CEO + Chairs to review proposed next FY activities & provide Budget guidance	Nov-Dec
Section and Committee surplus funds transferred to Headquarters in accordance with the Financial Operating Policy	31 Dec

Establishing and Chartering a Section

All members of a Section must be members of MTS.

Members of MTS wishing to start a Section should contact MTS Staff, who will provide a list of MTS members in the region, membership brochures and applications, and provide support for the initiation of a local organizing committee. The MTS VPSA will also provide leadership and advice. A petition is made by not fewer than fifteen (15) MTS members within the geographic area as defined in the petition. The geographic boundaries of a Section will depend on evidence of local interest. A Section's geographic extent should be small enough to permit reasonable travel distances for most members to attend regular Section meetings, yet large enough to encompass a membership of sufficient size for the planning and execution of a program, which will appeal to a variety of interests. The petition is directed to the Chief Executive Officer, who will review for administrative compliance and will forward it to the Board for approval.

Upon approval of the petition by the Board, the organizing committee should prepare a set of Bylaws for the Section. It is expected that Sections may wish to modify these sample Bylaws to suit their own specific needs; however, they must be consistent with the MTS Bylaws. The Section organizing committee must obtain approval of the draft set of Bylaws by its members and forward their Bylaws to HQ. Upon approval by the Board, the Section's establishment will be authorized and formally announced.

Chartering Checklist

- ❒ Seek information, marketing materials and guidance from MTS Staff in generating interest.
- ❒ Define geographic boundaries for the Section.
- ❒ Get the signatures of 15 members in good standing to sign the petition*.
- ❒ Forward Petition to Headquarters, which will seek Board Approval.
- ❒ Upon Approval of the Board, the Section develops and adopts Section Bylaws, using the Bylaws template and seeks a vote approval of its membership.
- ❒ Approved Bylaws are forwarded to Headquarters, which will seek Board approval.
- ❒ The Section is chartered with final Board approval.
- ❒ The Section may next seek startup funds from National.

Section Dissolution

Dissolution will not be proposed without prior notification to the last known Section members and Section officers at least sixty days before the Board meeting that will consider eliminating the Section. All funds, properties and possessions of a terminated Section must be returned to MTS. The assignation of Section funds, properties, and possessions of a Section that is merged into another Section must be approved by the Board.

Section Handbook

To review forms and additional guidance, please refer to the Section Handbook.