

# Terms of Reference for the WHO Academy Advisory Group on Quality

The World Health Organization (WHO) Academy is a priority initiative of the WHO transformation agenda. The Academy will support accelerated learning and skills recognition of staff and external stakeholders to advance implementation of WHO's strategic plan.

The Academy aims to reach millions of health learners with innovative learning via a state-of-the-art digital learning experience platform and a flagship campus in Lyon with a campus network of learning centres embedded in the six WHO regions. The Academy Lyon hub will feature high-tech learning environments, a world-class health emergency simulation centre and collaboration spaces for learning, co-design, research and innovation.

The Academy will bring together adult learning and behavioural science, cutting-edge learning technologies such as artificial intelligence and augmented, virtual and mixed reality with WHO's expertise, norms, standards and evidence to deliver high impact, validated and tailored multilingual learning to meet multicultural and diverse needs. The Academy will be open to a wide range of multisectoral stakeholders who can influence health, including leaders, educators, researchers, health workers, digital technologists, WHO staff, patient and community advocacy organizations. WHO will ensure strong coordination and collaboration with all WHO Member States, thereby optimizing the learning assistance provided to all. The Academy will also harness the strength of the WHO's partnerships, experts, collaborating centres and networks.

The Academy's establishment was initiated in 2019 in preparation for its official launch and opening of its Lyon Hub campus in 2024. The WHO Academy Advisory Group on Quality (the "AG") will act as an advisory body to WHO in this field.

## **I. Functions**

In its capacity as an advisory body to WHO, the AG shall have the following functions:

The AG is a standing advisory committee that provides expert and strategic advice and recommendations to support WHO in its implementation of world class standards and quality management system for the WHO Academy. Specifically, the AG responsibilities include:

- Review and make recommendations on the development and evolution of the Academy's standards, quality management system and metrics to ensure alignment with best practice, evidence and international standards in lifelong learning.
- Provide strategic recommendations, best practices and insights on lifelong learning systems and technologies that will enhance the Academy's quality efforts in delivering its programs and services.
- Provide guidance and recommendations on quality frameworks that ensure adaptability in the marketplace given the rapid evolution of skills acquisition and competency based lifelong learning.

## **II. Composition**

1. The AG shall have up to 9 members<sup>1</sup>, who shall serve in their personal capacities to represent the broad range of disciplines relevant to:
  - Quality standards and management systems for lifelong learning, lifelong learning development and regulatory authorities.
  - Expertise in working with patient and community advocacy organizations, dedicated to promoting the rights and perspectives of health care users and their multicultural needs.
  - Other areas of expertise may be considered from health workforce, digital technologies for learning, adult learning and learning science.
  - Expertise, gender, demographic and geographical balance is required for the AG and any potential working groups the AG may define. (see bullet above)
2. Members of the AG, including the Chairperson and Vice-chair, shall be selected and appointed by WHO following an open call for experts. The Chairperson's functions include the following:
  - to chair the meeting of the AG; and
  - to liaise with the WHO Secretariat between meetings.

In appointing a Chairperson and Vice-chair, consideration shall be given to gender and geographical representation.

The Chair is responsible for collaborating with the WHO Secretariat on agenda development, facilitating the meeting, determining when special initiatives will advance the quality aspects of Academy programs and ensuring members are actively engaged and participating. The term for the Chair is for a period of two years.

The Vice-chair co-facilitates the meetings of the AG with the Chair, supports preparations and consensus building. The term for the Vice-chair is for one year.

Working group leads are responsible for collaborating with appropriate Academy staff on agenda development, facilitating working group meetings, assisting with thought leadership development, and ensure working group members are actively engaged and participating.

Members of the AG shall be appointed to serve for a period of 2 years and shall be eligible for reappointment. A Chairperson is eligible for reappointment as a member of the AG, but is only permitted to serve as Chairperson for one term. Their appointment and/or designation as Chairperson may be terminated at any time by WHO if WHO's interest so requires or as otherwise specified in these terms of reference or letters of appointment. Where a member's appointment is terminated, WHO may decide to appoint a replacement member. WHO reserves the right to terminate the AG and/or the membership of any Member for any reason. If a Member misses two consecutive meetings with no explanation, such Member may be deemed by WHO to have resigned.

3. AG members must respect the impartiality and independence required of WHO. In performing their work, members may not seek or accept instructions from any Government or from any authority external to the Organization. They must be free of any real, potential or apparent

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<sup>1</sup> Members serve as full participants and partake in the decision-making process of the meeting in which they are involved.

conflicts of interest. To this end, proposed members/members shall be required to complete a declaration of interests form and their appointment, or continuation of their appointment, shall be subject to the evaluation of completed forms by the WHO Secretariat, determining that their participation would not give rise to a real, potential or apparent conflict of interest.

4. Following a determination that a proposed member's participation in the AG would not give rise to a real, potential or apparent conflict of interest, the proposed member will be sent a letter inviting them to be a member of the AG. Their appointment to the AG is subject to WHO receiving the countersigned invitation letter and letter of agreement. Notwithstanding the requirement to complete the WHO declaration of interest form, AG members have an ongoing obligation to inform the WHO of any interests real or perceived that may give rise to a real, potential or apparent conflict of interest.
5. As contemplated in paragraph II.4 above, WHO may, from time to time, request AG members to complete a new declaration of interest form. This may be before an AG meeting or any other AG-related activity or engagement, as decided by WHO. Where WHO has made such a request, the AG member's participation in the AG activity or engagement is subject to a determination that their participation would not give rise to a real, potential or apparent conflict of interest.
6. Where an AG member is invited by WHO to travel to an in-person AG meeting, WHO shall, subject to any conflict of interest determination as set out in paragraph II.6 above, issue a letter of appointment as a temporary adviser and accompanying memorandum of agreement (together 'Temporary Adviser Letter'). WHO shall not authorize travel by an AG member, until it receives a countersigned Temporary Adviser Letter.
7. AG members do not receive any remuneration from the Organization for any work related to the AG. However, when attending in-person meetings at the invitation of WHO, their travel cost and per diem shall be covered by WHO in accordance with the applicable WHO rules and policies.

### **III. Operation**

1. The AG shall normally meet at least one in-person (at WHO headquarters in Geneva or another location, as determined by WHO) and one virtual meeting each year. However, WHO may convene additional meetings.  
AG meetings may be held in open and/or closed session, as decided by the Chairperson in consultation with WHO.
  - (a) Open sessions: Open sessions shall be convened for the sole purpose of the exchange of non-confidential information and views, and may be attended by Observers (as defined in paragraph III.3 below).
  - (b) Closed sessions: The sessions dealing with the formulation of recommendations and/or advice to WHO shall be restricted to the members of the AG and essential WHO Secretariat staff.
2. The quorum for AG meetings shall be two thirds of the members.
3. WHO may, at its sole discretion, invite external individuals from time to time to attend the open sessions of an advisory group, or parts thereof, as "observers". Observers may be invited either in

their personal capacity, or as representatives from a governmental institution / intergovernmental organization, or from a non-state actor. WHO will request observers invited in their personal capacity to complete a confidentiality undertaking and a declaration of interests form prior to attending a session of the advisory group. Invitations to observers attending as representatives from non-state actors will be subject to internal due diligence and conflict of interest considerations in accordance with FENSA. Observers invited as representatives may also be requested to complete a confidentiality undertaking. Observers shall normally attend meetings of the AG at their own expense and be responsible for making all arrangements in that regard.

At the invitation of the Chairperson, observers may be asked to present their personal views and/or the policies of their organization. Observers will not participate in the process of adopting decisions and recommendations of the AG.

4. The AG may decide to establish smaller working groups (sub-groups of the AG) to work on specific issues. Their deliberations shall take place via teleconference or videoconference. For these sub-groups, no quorum requirement will apply; the outcome of their deliberations will be submitted to the AG for review at one of its meetings.
5. AG members are expected to attend meetings. If a member misses two consecutive meetings, WHO may end his/her appointment as a member of the AG.
6. A yearly report shall be submitted by the AG to WHO (the Assistant Director-General of the responsible Cluster). All recommendations from the AG are advisory to WHO, who retains full control over any subsequent decisions or actions regarding any proposals, policy issues or other matters considered by the AG.
7. The AG shall normally make recommendations by consensus. If, in exceptional circumstances, a consensus on a particular issue cannot be reached, minority opinions will be reflected in the meeting report.
8. Active participation is expected from all AG members, including in working groups, teleconferences, and interaction over email. AG members may, in advance of AG meetings, be requested to review meeting documentation and to provide their views for consideration by the AG.
9. WHO shall determine the modes of communication by the AG, including between WHO and the AG members, and the AG members among themselves.
10. AG members shall not speak on behalf of, or represent, the AG or WHO to any third party.

#### **IV. Secretariat**

WHO shall provide the secretariat for the AG, including necessary scientific, technical, administrative and other support. In this regard, the WHO Secretariat, jointly comprised of the Academy and Health Workforce Department, shall provide the members in advance of each meeting with the agenda, working documents and discussion papers. Distribution of the aforesaid documents to Observers will be determined by the WHO Secretariat.

## **V. Information and documentation**

1. Information and documentation to which members may gain access in performing AG related activities shall be considered as confidential and proprietary to WHO and/or parties collaborating with WHO. In addition, by counter signing the letter of appointment and the accompanying terms and conditions referred to in section II (5) above, AG members undertake to abide by the confidentiality obligations contained therein and also confirm that any and all rights in the work performed by them in connection with, or as a result of their AG-related activities shall be exclusively vested in WHO.
2. AG members and Observers shall not quote from, circulate or use AG documents for any purpose other than in a manner consistent with their responsibilities under these Terms of Reference.
3. WHO retains full control over the publication of the reports of the AG, including deciding whether or not to publish them.