

AALHE VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Welcome!

AALHE recognizes that our volunteers are crucial to the viability of the organization. To accomplish our strategic goals, we need volunteers such as yourself. AALHE appreciates your time, contribution, and dedication. Thank you.

We provide this handbook to help volunteers be successful, to understand expectations, and to know where to go for assistance.

Introduction to AALHE

The Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education (AALHE) is an organization of practitioners interested in using effective assessment practice in higher education to document and improve student learning. As such, it serves the needs of those in higher education for whom assessment is a tool to help them both understand and develop processes to improve learning. AALHE offers assessment practitioners a variety of ways to learn and share their thoughts about assessing and improving learning. Therefore, the viability and success of AALHE depends on its members and the many people who volunteer their time to the organization. AALHE encourages its members to seek formal and informal professional development; to network with others; to collaborate on presentations, research, and/or publications; and to be engaged in all that AALHE has to offer.

AALHE has a Board of Directors that manages the Association and consists of 12-15 members, including the President, Past President/Secretary, President-Elect, Treasurer, and the Executive Director/Conference Director/Assistant Treasurer.

More information about AALHE: [History](#), [Legal](#), [Board of Directors](#), [Bylaws](#), [Organizational Chart](#).

Mission Statement

AALHE is the national membership community of assessment professionals who promote, advocate for, inform, and lead ethical and equity-minded assessment practices in higher education. The Association serves as a central assessment resource that empowers our members to cultivate and improve student learning and institutional quality. We do this by facilitating scholarship and professional development, generating knowledge and resources, and providing networking and idea-sharing opportunities.

See our [Strategic Goals](#).

AALHE Volunteers

AALHE welcomes any member in good standing to become a volunteer. Volunteer opportunities include contributing time to support AALHE conferences or events; working on a committee, subcommittee, or task force; and becoming a Board member through the annual election. Qualities of effective AALHE volunteers include creativity, innovation, passion for student learning, reliability, and a willingness to dedicate time to the organization.

Our volunteers come from diverse professional backgrounds and include:

- assessment practitioners who support, organize, and manage assessment-related activities

- faculty, student affairs, and institutional effectiveness professionals who use assessment strategies to understand their students' learning
- graduate students from a variety of disciplines
- institutional researchers who develop systems to support the use of data to continuously improve student learning
- institutional leaders who support and direct learning-quality initiatives
- consultants, authors, and researchers who focus their work on documenting and improving student learning
- professionals in assessment-related support organizations and technology providers and
- individuals who have retired professionally from the above roles but continue to share a passion for this important work.

AALHE Committees

The AALHE Board of Directors develops the charge for each Board committee, subcommittee, task force, and ad hoc committee. Committee goals and metrics are drafted by each committee, aligned to the strategic plan, and approved by the Board. While most volunteers are assigned to an AALHE standing committee, service opportunities may also be available on task forces and ad hoc committees. A volunteer can be on no more than two committees at one time. All committees are led by AALHE volunteers; Board members serve as committee liaisons and members. AALHE has eight standing committees:

- Assessment Learning Exchange (ALE)
- Conference
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Emerging Dialogues
- Intersection
- Member Engagement
- Professional Development
- Sharing Professional Assessment Reading and Knowledge (SPARK)

What Volunteers Do

Volunteers do many different things, and there is something for everyone. Examples:

- Chair or Vice-Chair a committee, subcommittee, or taskforce
- Collaboratively write materials for members and volunteers
- Interpret survey results and make recommendations
- Locate potential webinar facilitators
- Participate in collaborative projects
- Participate in committee meetings
- Review and/or edit articles
- Review conference proposals
- Serve on the Board of Directors (through an election process)
- Help select and/or lead conference networking opportunities

How to Volunteer and Length of Service

AALHE members volunteer by completing the current [Volunteer Form](#). The form is updated annually and must be completed by all volunteers on a yearly basis.

A standing committee assignment is a one-year commitment; however, it is highly encouraged for volunteers to remain on a committee for at least two years for continuity of work. In addition, this allows for the natural progression to Vice-Chair and Chair roles, for those interested in committee leadership. For example, in year one the volunteer would serve as a member of the committee, then Vice-Chair in year two, then Chair in year three. Task forces and ad hoc committee assignments may be less than one year.

Expected Workload for Volunteers

By serving, volunteers enter into an agreement with the organization. AALHE is a vibrant, healthy organization because its volunteers and staff are committed and hard working. There is plenty to do, and AALHE wants volunteers it can rely on to see tasks through. Thus, AALHE asks members to evaluate their current situation for availability, flexibility, and commitment before volunteering.

The time commitment will vary by committee and assignment, but volunteers should plan on a minimum of the following:

- attending one or two virtual, 1-hour meetings every month.
- completing 4-8 hours of work every month in addition to attending the virtual meetings (e.g., write/review articles or other types of written products, participate in AALHE-initiated mentoring/consulting, or conference planning).

Attendance Policy. If a volunteer misses three consecutive committee meetings, the Board Liaison will follow up to identify how to support the members' engagement. If no response is received, members may be removed from the committee.

Committee Technology Platform

AALHE uses the Basecamp project management system to manage the work of our committees and volunteers. Volunteers are added to Basecamp once they are placed on a committee(s), and will have access to a general volunteer space (AALHE HQ) and the workspaces for their respective committee(s). Training resources on how to use Basecamp are available [here](#).

Expected Conduct from Volunteers

AALHE strives to offer an exceptionally high-quality environment for its volunteers. To that end, AALHE volunteers are expected to participate in and conduct any AALHE business in a professional manner, emphasizing the highest ethical standards. Essential qualities expected in all volunteers include:

- *Integrity.* Volunteers are good stewards of AALHE resources and represent the organization in an ethical, honest manner.
- *Courtesy.* Disagreement and debate are expected and even welcomed. However, volunteers are always expected to be civil and to treat others with respect.
- *Respect for others.* The Association does not discriminate based on the following characteristics

including, but not limited to: race, color, ethnicity, national origin, citizenship status, religion, sex, age, affectional/sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, pregnancy, veteran status, personal appearance, genetic information, political affiliation, familial status, marital status, or disability in any of its policies, procedures, or practices. Volunteers are expected to avoid disrespectful behaviors, such as non-constructive or uninvited comments on assessment practices; shunning; offensive jokes; yelling or screaming; bullying behavior; abusive language or behavior; name-calling; unwanted physical contact; or rude gestures.

- *Completion of work in a timely manner.* If circumstances change and a volunteer is unable to complete work on time, we ask the volunteer to communicate this with the appropriate committee Chair.
- *Avoidance of conflicts of interest.* Conflicts of interest arise when volunteers' financial, personal, or professional interests prevent them from performing their volunteer duties in an unbiased manner. Volunteers are expected to disclose possible conflicts of interest and to remove themselves from situations where conflicts of interest prevent them from acting in the best interest of AALHE.
- *Protecting the rights of students and others when engaged in research.* Volunteers, when engaged in research, are expected to uphold the highest standards of protection for research participants. Volunteers are expected to protect the rights of participants by avoiding disclosure of confidential information, including following the appropriate guidelines and regulations such as the Protection of Human Subjects (45 CFR 46) and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99).
- *Confidentiality and privacy of AALHE members.* There are times where member names, institutions, email addresses, or other sensitive information about AALHE members may be made available to volunteers. Volunteers must keep all member information confidential and at no time are volunteers allowed to use member information for any purposes beyond the scope of their volunteer duties, including but not limited to forwarding, sharing, selling, or disclosing any member information to others (including AALHE members within your assigned committee, active AALHE members in general, vendors, or other associations). The Board Liaison will determine information to be shared and will arrange for the information to be directly sent to those who need such information.

After assessing the situation carefully by the Board Liaison and Committee leadership, volunteers who do not abide by these expectations may be removed from their volunteer position by the Board Liaison to that committee or by an Executive Committee member. If the removed volunteer is the Chair or Vice-Chair, an election should occur following the guidance on page 6 of this Handbook. An appropriate conversation between the Board Liaison and the suggested removed member before termination is strongly recommended when the situation is allowed.

We understand that circumstances change and unexpected life events can arise. If something comes up that prevents you from completing your volunteer responsibilities, please let your Chair or Board Liaison know as soon as possible. Stepping aside can be temporary (ex. for a few months) or for the duration of the one year volunteer term.

How to provide feedback on the volunteer experience

AALHE recognizes that our volunteers are crucial to the viability of the organization, to assist in accomplishing our strategic goals. Communication is key to helping us to improve our experience. AALHE encourages its volunteers to reach out to their committee Chair/Vice-Chair, Board Liaison, or any member of the Board of Directors to discuss their experiences anytime throughout the year. If you, as an AALHE volunteer, experience or witness harassment or disrespectful treatment, please report it immediately to the AALHE Executive Director, President, Past President, or President-Elect.

How to be a leader in the organization

Engagement is key to becoming a leader within AALHE. Volunteers have the opportunity to lead a committee, task force, ad hoc committee, and/or oversee the successful execution of the organization's outputs (e.g., *Intersection of Assessment and Learning* journal, Emerging Dialogues, webinars, etc.). The below guidance on the Chair and Vice-Chair roles should be followed by all committees. If a committee needs to create a new leadership position to effectively run the committee, the Board Liaison will bring this request to the Board of Directors for review.

Serve as a Chair of a committee or subcommittee. Chair level responsibilities include:

1. Scheduling, hosting, and leading meetings.
 - a. regular meetings should occur each month
 - b. regular meetings should be scheduled with at least one month's notice [Note: in addition to regular meetings, ad hoc meetings could be scheduled on an as needed basis with a much shorter notice]
 - c. regular meetings should be scheduled the same day/time each month
 - d. if the Chair cannot attend the regularly scheduled monthly meeting, the Vice-Chair will act on behalf of the Chair.
2. Agenda setting.
 - a. agenda setting is critical to keeping the committee on task
 - b. agendas, which are located in Basecamp, should be drafted in collaboration with Vice-Chair and/or the Board Liaison
 - c. agendas should be shared with the committee members at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting.
3. Committee Goals.
 - a. collaborate with members to draft short-term and long-term goal statements
 - b. collaborate with members to draft tasks and metrics.
4. Delegation.
 - a. the Chair should not be doing all the work
 - b. create (as needed) work groups to share multiple tasks.
5. Roster maintenance.
 - a. communicate any changes in committee membership to the Executive Director.

Serve as a Vice-Chair of a committee or subcommittee. Vice-Chair level responsibilities include:

1. Taking minutes at each meeting
2. Documenting decisions made in meetings and commitments for future action
3. Ensuring the meeting minutes are completed in Basecamp within one week after the meeting takes place
4. Ensuring accuracy of attendance in the minutes - include all committee members and indicate who was in attendance or absent (excused or unexcused)
5. Following up with committee members who are absent from meetings without sending prior notice

As mentioned earlier, each committee is assigned a Board Liaison. Board Liaison level responsibilities include:

1. Communicate to the Board any committee proposals needing a Board vote
2. Report Board actions/outcomes back to the committee
3. Share with the committee any Board actions that may impact the committee and/or committee work
4. Attend all meetings as a non-voting member
5. Fill in as needed for the Chair and/or Vice-Chair
6. Ensure all committee work is shared with the Board
7. Track activity on Basecamp for their committee and respond to any inquiries
8. Assist in transitioning Chair and Vice-Chair roles

Serve on the Board of Directors. Nominations for any open Board seats are accepted in January. Board nominations and self-nominations are accepted from active AALHE members, except for those holding Associate Member status. Serving in a leadership role, such as being elected as a committee Vice-Chair or Chair, is one of the most successful paths toward being nominated for and elected to the AALHE Board of Directors.

Process of Chair/Vice-Chair Rotation and Election

In March of each year, the Board Liaison will send an email to all members on the committee requesting self-nomination for Vice-Chair. The goal is to allow anyone interested in leading the committee to have an opportunity. By self-nominating for Vice-Chair of a committee, the volunteer is committed to two full years: as Vice-Chair in year one and Chair in year two. If more than one person self-nominates, voting by committee members will take place. Before the vote, the nominees will submit a brief bio (no more than 200 words), including the experience and expertise they would bring to the committee as Vice-Chair.

What volunteers can expect from AALHE leaders

AALHE leaders are the Board of Directors, Executive Director, and any volunteer assigned to lead a committee/ subcommittee. The Board of Directors and Executive Director have responsibility for general management and control of the activities of the Association. Volunteers can expect that AALHE leaders will conduct themselves with integrity and professionalism as they fulfill the mission and strategic goals of the organization; develop policies, resources, and opportunities for AALHE member interaction and networking; and continually monitor the effectiveness of the organization, its services, and staff.

Volunteers can expect timely email correspondence regarding agendas, meeting minutes, Board reports, and/or the status of assigned tasks. Volunteers can expect to be treated fairly and respectfully.

Intellectual property ownership policy

AALHE encourages its members, volunteers, committees, and task forces to contribute to scholarship through the production of books, articles, web sites, blogs, and other scholarly materials. AALHE members, volunteers, committees, and task forces will also regularly be engaged in the production of content that are essential for the operation of the organization, including conference promotional materials, social media posts, brochures, and advertisements. For ownership purposes, all materials created will be classified into one of four categories:

1. Materials created as part of the routine operation and business of AALHE. This includes but is not limited to: materials created by committees (such as conference advertisements; meeting minutes; organizational policies; committee plans and strategies; advertising materials; etc.). These materials will be owned solely by AALHE. The contributions of the authors and committees who created the materials will be recognized by AALHE in a manner determined by AALHE.
2. Materials given to AALHE for the purpose of publication. Unless otherwise agreed, authors of materials published by AALHE in the Intersection of Assessment and Learning, Emerging Dialogues, Conference Materials, and video and audio content in webinars and podcasts agree to grant AALHE a non-exclusive license to share those materials at AALHE's discretion.
3. Materials commissioned by AALHE. Materials that AALHE directly requests be produced will be solely owned by AALHE. For example, if AALHE charges a task force with creating a book on Assessing Civic Engagement, then AALHE will solely own the project. All contributors to the materials will be recognized by AALHE in a manner determined by AALHE. The agreement for AALHE's ownership of the commissioned material between AALHE and the contributors to the material shall be collected as close to the beginning of the project as practicable.
4. Non-commissioned materials that are not part of the routine operation and business of AALHE. Unless described by categories #1, #2 and #3 above, all created materials are owned by the individuals that contributed to the creation of that material. For example, if members of the Membership Engagement committee decided, on their own, to create a proposal for a book that would chronicle the lives of several AALHE members, this material would be jointly owned by all of the authors who contributed to that project. AALHE reserves the right to withhold endorsement of or promotion of any non-commissioned project. AALHE may, at its sole discretion, prohibit the use of AALHE resources in the production of any non-commissioned project. AALHE recommends authors involved in non-commissioned projects develop written agreements with each other.

Contact AALHE

For all AALHE-related questions please contact our Executive Director, Peggy Moede.

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The AALHE Volunteer Handbook was created by the Membership Engagement Committee (fka Recruitment & Retention) with approval from the Board. The Governance Board Sub-Committee reviews and updates the handbook on a yearly basis. As such, the Sub-Committee encourages volunteers to provide suggestions for additional content to be considered. Please send suggestions to info@aalhe.org.

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