



Procedures for Developing SOT Statements

Approved November 2014; Revised September 2015

This document outlines the definitions of and procedures/timeframes for developing and distributing various types of SOT-sanctioned Statements.

Statements by SOT:

- Offer brief, balanced presentations of the science and related issues underlying an area of relevance to SOT and the field of toxicology; or
- Advocate for the inclusion of toxicology and/or research in policies, rules, regulations, etc.; or
- Support balanced, well-designed toxicological research; or
- Correct misconceptions or false assumptions about toxicology and/or its research.
- Are always framed in a professional and respectful manner.

Statements by SOT do not necessarily:

- Take a position on a controversial toxicology topic.
- Support or oppose specific aspects of policies, rules, regulations, etc.

For consideration, all statements must be proposed by completing the attached [Form 1](#).

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Abbreviations:

IS Issue Statement
ExS Express Statement
MPC Member of the SOT Presidential Chain
CM SOT Communications Manager
ED SOT Executive Director

DEFINITIONS

An **Issue Statement (IS)** is a statement (generally < 2,500 words) intended for policymakers, the media, and/or the general public. IS are usually developed proactively based on current events of interest and relevance to SOT and, ideally, are completed within a three to six-month timeframe, so as to remain topical. The statement may or may not conclude with a consensus viewpoint on the issue, but may present multiple opinions with the rationale behind each. If a consensus viewpoint is not offered, the statement should identify the critical knowledge gaps and provide recommendations for actions to address those gaps.

Topics proposed for an IS should be benchmarked against the following considerations:

- Is the topic relevant and timely?
- Will developing an IS on the topic move the science of toxicology forward?
- Would the IS portray SOT as an authoritative source of balanced information on the topic?
- What is the impact of the topic on society at large?
- What is the impact for SOT?
- Who would benefit from the IS, e.g., decision-makers, the public, SOT?
- Is there a broad interest in the topic, either in the general public or scientific/toxicology communities?
- Does sufficient information/data exist from which to draft an objective, balanced IS?

An **Express Statement (ExS)** is a brief (generally < 1,000 words) communication on recent news and/or other activities that impact the understanding of toxicology. To remain relevant, ExS need to be developed quickly (within a week). Examples of the “form” an ExS can take include, but are not limited to:

- Letters to the Editor
- Editorials
- Quotes and/or press releases in reaction to breaking news

Express Statements will always be directly attributed to a member of the SOT Presidential Chain (MPC) or MPC-appointed delegate and not issued under the SOT name only. Even those statements attributed to a specific individual have a strong potential to be misconstrued as representing the views of the Society, which means specific content parameters are necessary to ensure the brand integrity of SOT. Express Statements should not take a position on a controversial toxicology topic unless the position has been SOT-approved through an Issue Statement.

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PROCEDURES

Procedure for Developing an Issue Statement (refer to [Table 1](#) and [Schema 1](#)):

(Note: all references to “days” refer to calendar days)

1. Anyone may propose a topic that appears to warrant comment by SOT. Although not required, endorsement by Component groups (e.g., Specialty Sections, Regional Chapters, Special Interest Groups) is encouraged with the submission, as Council may require an endorsement before approving the IS topic for drafting. Topics should be submitted to the SOT Communications Manager using the attached proposal form (refer to [Form 1](#)). The proposal form requires that the Submitter provide the names of three potential authors to form the IS Writing Team. The three proposed authors should be comprised of experts in the proposed topic and should represent various viewpoints and/or scientific fields as related to the topic. Council will review and vote on the acceptability of the proposal (in-person meeting, teleconference, or email) within seven days of submission and return a decision with an explanation to the Submitter within three days of such decision. Approval of the IS topic by Council requires a majority vote from Council. Council has the option to either approve the proposal without revisions, approve the proposal with revisions, or decline the proposal.
2. If the proposal is approved (with or without revisions), within seven days of approval, the SOT President in consultation with Council will appoint two Council members to join the SOT Vice President-Elect on the IS Advisory Subcommittee of Council, which will oversee and assist the IS Writing Team in the completion of the IS. During these seven days, the SOT Communications Manager (CM) will create a ToXchange community for use by the IS Advisory Subcommittee and IS Writing Team. The SOT Communications Manager will serve as the staff liaison to both the IS Advisory Subcommittee and the IS Writing Team.
 - a. If the proposal is approved without revision, process immediately progresses to Step 3.
 - b. If the proposal is approved with revisions, the IS Advisory Subcommittee will work with the proposed IS Writing Team to develop a proposal/topic outline that is found acceptable to said Subcommittee. This process could involve, but is not limited to, changes to the scope and/or changes to the IS Writing Team membership and should take no more than seven days.
3. All drafts by the IS Writing Team should be developed and maintained within the private ToXchange Community site so that the IS Writing Team and IS Advisory Subcommittee have access to all versions and iterations of the document during its creation. The Writing Team, which is responsible for adhering to the process timeline, should also use this Community to track and monitor the document’s progress.
 - a. The IS Writing Team should prepare a first draft within 14 days.
 - b. The IS Advisory Subcommittee will review and share feedback regarding this first draft within seven days of the first draft’s completion.

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- c. Once the edits and recommendations from the IS Advisory Committee are shared with the IS Writing Team, that Team should prepare a second draft within seven days and notify the CM of its availability.
4. The CM will immediately deliver the second draft of the IS to SOT Council. Council should provide comments on the draft to the CM within seven days. The CM will immediately relay these comments to the IS Writing Team and IS Advisory Subcommittee via the ToXchange community.
5. The IS Writing Team will address Council's comments within seven days and return a third draft to the CM for sharing with Council for approval. Council will approve the third draft within seven days. Additional review/comment cycles may be added if necessary.
6. After approval of the third or relevant draft by Council, the IS is posted by the CM on ToXchange for seven days to allow apply time to solicit broad SOT membership comment and input. The names and affiliations of the IS Writing Team will be identified in the draft.
7. The IS Writing Team in conference with the IS Advisory Subcommittee will have seven days to review and address the comments of the membership at their discretion and return a fourth draft to the CM for sharing with SOT Council for review and approval.
8. Within seven days of receipt of the fourth draft, SOT Council will vote on the approval and release of the IS through either an in-person, teleconference, or email vote. Release of the IS requires a majority vote from Council.
9. When the IS is released by Council, the names and affiliations of the IS Writing Team will be removed (Note: Writing Team members will be acknowledged internally to Society members, when possible, through various recognition platforms, such as signs at the Annual Meeting, blog posts, listing in the Membership Directory, etc.). The IS will be posted on the SOT website in a publicly accessible domain. Throughout the entire process, the SOT CM, in concert with the IS Advisory Subcommittee and IS Writing Team, will develop additional distribution strategies for the IS that can be implemented as soon as the IS is approved and released by Council.
10. When a statement is completed, an SOT group (committee, Regional Chapter, Special Interest Group, Specialty Section) will be assigned internally to that statement. If a statement does not align well with any particular group(s), it will be assigned to SOT Council. The assigned group is responsible for reviewing the statement once per leadership year with a report due to SOT headquarters by March 31 of the leadership year.
 - a. This report should be a recommendation that the assigned statement be: a) retained as is; b) retired; or c) updated.
 - b. If the recommendation is to update the statement, the assigned group should have the updated statement ready for review by March 31.
 - c. SOT Council will review the recommendations during the May Council meeting following the March 31 deadline and will relay their decisions to the assigned groups.

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Procedure for Developing Express Statements (Refer to [Schema 2](#))

1. Anyone may submit a request for an Express Statement (see [Form 1](#)) to a MPC, the SOT Executive Director (ED), or CM, as well as provide a recommendation for the form (Letter to the Editor, editorial, press release) the statement should take.
2. If the MPC, ED, and CM agree that a response is warranted, they will immediately designate a “Writer” for the statement and inform the Writer of the form the Express Statement should take and to whom it will likely be attributed. The Writer is not necessarily the “Author” to whom the final ExS will be attributed, but is responsible for developing the first draft of the response and consulting on subsequent drafts. If the MPC, ED, and CM are unsure if a response is warranted or are in disagreement, the request will be distributed to the full SOT Presidential Chain via email or telephone within eight hours of the issue’s submission. Votes from the Presidential Chain are due within 24 hours — the ED and CM have no voting rights and serve only as consultants once the Express Statement Proposal goes to the Presidential Chain. If the issue receives a majority vote from the Presidential Chain, a Writer will be immediately assigned. The decision to develop an ExS or to not develop one will be communicated to the submitter within 24 hours of the submission.
3. In order for an ExS to be effective, it must be executed as quickly and as accurately as possible — the total turnaround time for any ExS should be less than one week, but ideally, less than 72 hours. Recommended total time frames for some of the ExS forms are:
 - a. Letter to the Editor: 3 business days
 - b. Editorial: 5 business days
 - c. Quote/Press Release: 1 business day
4. Once assigned, the ExS Writer should submit a first draft to the Presidential Chain as quickly as possible. While the Writer is completing the first draft, the Presidential Chain, in consultation with the CM, should:
 - a. Designate the Author to which the ExS will be attributed;
 - b. Develop a distribution strategy for the ExS;
 - c. Select any accompanying media, such as photos, as appropriate;
 - d. Identify a Quality Review Expert(s) — an SOT member who has detailed, first-hand knowledge of the topic being discussed — to critically review the draft ExS; and
 - e. Identify a MPC (other than the Author) to approve the ExS.

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5. The goal of the Presidential Chain is to review the ExS only once; therefore, detailed and thorough comments are needed when the Writer delivers the first draft. This also will be the final stage that the full Presidential Chain sees the Express Statement, so if a MPC believes that the draft needs significant alteration and needs review by the full Presidential Chain again upon revision, that belief should be communicated to the rest of the Presidential Chain for agreement at this stage.
6. After receiving feedback from the Presidential Chain, the Writer should submit the semi-final draft to the designated Author, MPC Approver, and Quality Review Expert(s) as quickly as possible. The Author, Approver, and Expert should finalize the draft at this stage and submit it to the CM and other necessary parties according to the previously developed distribution plan (Step 4).
7. When a statement is completed, an SOT group (committee, Regional Chapter, Special Interest Group, Specialty Section) will be assigned internally to that statement. If a statement does not align well with any particular group(s), it will be assigned to SOT Council. The assigned group is responsible for reviewing the statement once per leadership year with a report due to SOT headquarters by March 31 of the leadership year.
 - a. This report should be a recommendation that the assigned statement be: a) retained as is; b) retired; or c) updated.
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ADDENDUMS

Form 1: SOT Statement Proposal Form

Issue Statement Topic:

Abstract (< 300 words):

Statement Objective:

- Offer brief, balanced presentations of the science and related issues underlying an area of relevance to SOT and the field of toxicology.
- Advocate for the inclusion of toxicology and/or research in policies, rules, regulations, etc.
- Support balanced, well-designed toxicological research.
- Correct misconceptions or false assumptions about toxicology and/or its research.
- Provide only constructive, polite criticism.
- Other. Explain: _____

Target Audience:

- General Public
- Scientific/Toxicological Community
- SOT Members
- Policymakers/legislators
- Other. Explain: _____

Importance and Urgency of Issue:

- Issue is critical and requires a quick response.
- Issue is important, but will require time for review.
- Issue is informative for various audiences, but requires amply research and review.

Proposed Venue for or Form of Final Statement:

- SOT Website

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- Letter to the Editor. Targeted news source: _____
- Editorial/Op-ed. Targeted news source: _____
- Message to SOT Membership
- Webinar
- Other. Explain: _____

Name and Affiliation of Submitter:

Names and Affiliations of Three Proposed Writing Team Members (separate from submitter):

Endorsements (Regional Chapters, Specialty Sections, Special Interest Groups):

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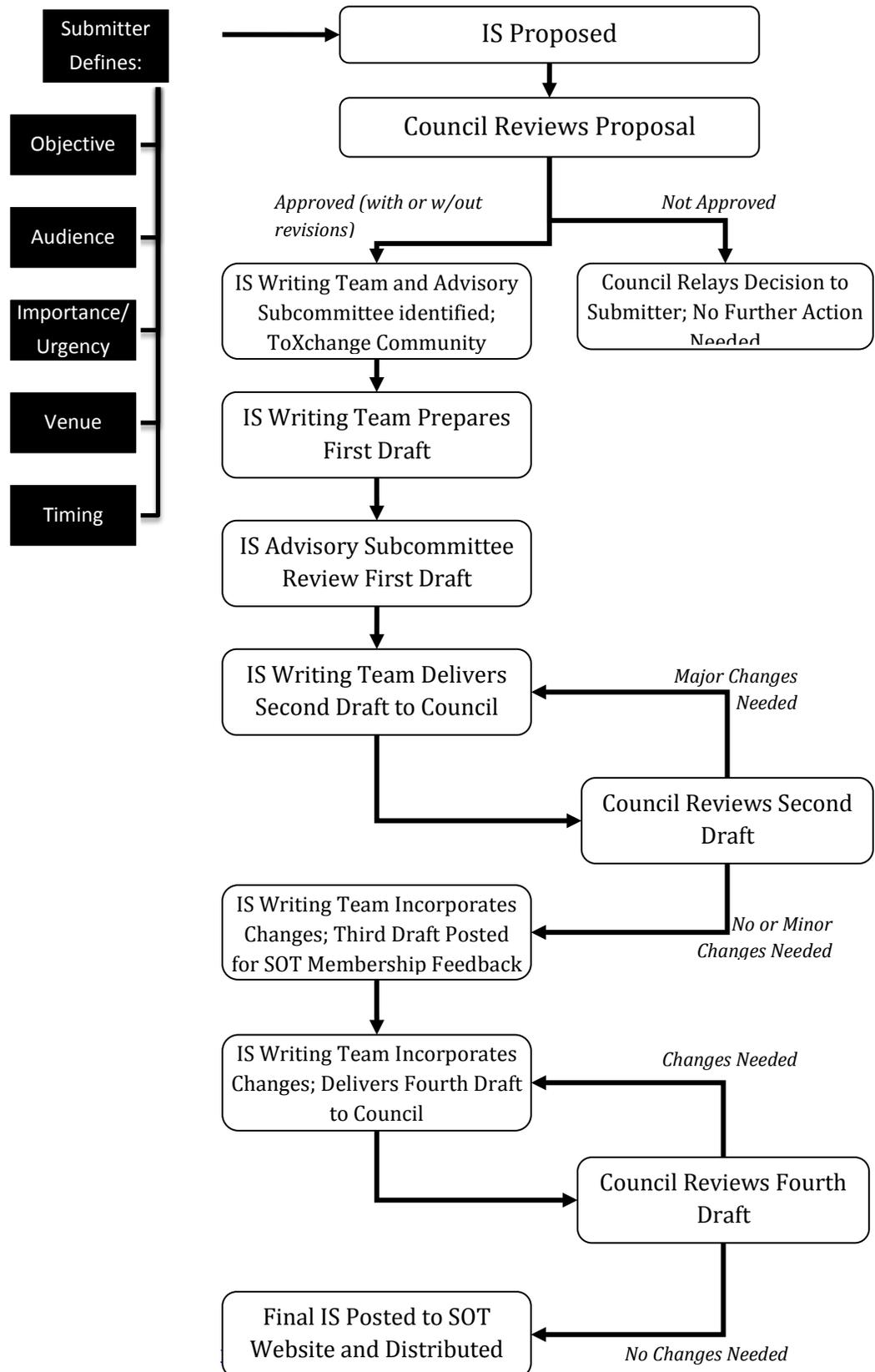
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Table 1: Issue Statement Completion Timeline

Process Steps	Completion Time (days)	Cumulative Time Elapsed (days)
Proposal Submission	0	0
Proposal Approval	7	7
Proposal Decision Communication to Submitter	3	10
IS Advisory Subcommittee Formed & ToXchange Community Formed	7	17
First Draft Completed by Writing Team	14	31
First Draft Review by Advisory Subcommittee	7	38
Second Draft Completed by Writing Team	7	45
Council Review of Second Draft	7	52
Third Draft Completed by Writing Team	7	59
Council Review/Approval of Third Draft	7	66
SOT Membership Feedback (draft on ToXchange)	7	73
Fourth Draft Completed by Writing Team	7	80
Council Approval of Fourth/Final Draft	7	87

This table contains the suggested minimum task completion durations (calendar days). Depending on the topic and necessary research, timelines may be extended or constricted.

Schema 1: Issues Statement Flowchart



- Submitter Defines:**
- Objective
 - Audience
 - Importance/ Urgency
 - Venue
 - Timing

Schema 2: Express Statement Flowchart

