**WSO Literature Development Policy**

**Introduction**

Literature plays a critical role in carrying ACA’s message of hope and recovery to adult children of dysfunctional families. As the fellowship grows through time, so must its literature.

ACA WSO has an open literature policy. This means that ACA groups have the right to use nonconference approved literature, conditional upon their group conscience and that various other considerations are taken into account, e.g., that the ACA 12 Traditions are used as their guideline, etc.

Development, review, design and publication of new literature is time-consuming; major projects can take years to complete. Evaluation involves a wide range of ACA members and viewpoints. In proposing new ACA literature, an author should be motivated by service, and surrender any notion of personal ownership.

The Literature Development Policy guides the ACA World Service Organization (ACA WSO) process for the creation, vetting, approval and publication of new literature, and the revision of existing literature. Questions about this policy, and how to use it in submitting a literature proposal, should be addressed to [litstaff@adultchildren.org](mailto:litstaff@adultchildren.org).

WSO conference-approved literature should be easily understood and give individuals practical help in grasping and working the ACA program. ACA literature should support emotional sobriety, self-love, and gentle reparenting.

Any ACA member or group is invited to submit proposals at any time to create or revise ACA literature. Proposals also may come from the WSO board and Literature Committee.

**Submitting a Literature Proposal**

Generally, ACA literature is any book, trifold, booklet, or other format (including e-books and audio books), which communicates information relevant to ACA recovery and can be individually purchased or downloaded.

Proposals from the fellowship to create or revise ACA literature should be submitted to [litstaff@adultchildren.org](mailto:litstaff@adultchildren.org), and the subject line should clearly identify the email’s purpose. To assist WSO’s initial assessment, the proposer should closely review this entire policy and include the following criteria in his or her email:

* Except for trifolds, initial proposals for new literature should be brief and should not include a full manuscript. For textbooks or workbooks, an outline and a maximum of 1-2 chapters is encouraged. A cover note, with contact information, should answer these questions:

1. *How is the proposal different from existing ACA literature?*
2. *What fellowship recovery need does the proposal address? And is there any specific audience that the literature is intended to reach?*
3. *Is it best described as a trifold, a small booklet, a textbook/workbook, a workshop guide, or something else?*
4. *Is there an identified author or team of authors?*

* When an individual or group submits a piece of literature to WSO, they must sign a release form that gives WSO the right to make changes and/or include it in a larger publication. Without a signed release, no work can be done by ACA WSO. The release is available online at <http://www.adultchildren.org/uploads/all/AC_WSO_COPYRIGHT_RELEASE.pdf>. Where space permits, the originating group or individual will be given credit in an acknowledgement section.
* Proposals to revise existing literature should include an introduction with contact information, that explains why existing literature should be altered, the nature and location of proposed changes, and whether there is an identified author or authors to execute the proposed changes.

**Initial Evaluation**

All literature proposals that meet the submission criteria are referred to the Literature Evaluation subcommittee, which assesses a proposal’s potential value to the fellowship based on consistently applied, objective criteria, similar to the questions addressed in the email introduction. The Literature Evaluation team may contact the authors to ask questions and propose different approaches that might make a project more suitable for publication.

Proposals are placed in a queue, which is periodically updated, and evaluation priorities are determined based on perceived benefit to ACA’s broad global fellowship. This includes budget considerations and whether the needs of non-English-speaking ACAs are being met.

The ultimate justification of any new ACA literature is rooted in our Fifth Tradition: if the proposal would materially help adult children carry the message of recovery to those who still suffer, it should decidedly be considered — including balancing the proposal’s potential value against other demands on the fellowship’s resources.

Upon completion, the Literature Evaluation subcommittee sends its written recommendations to the Literature Committee, and the author is invited to attend an evaluation discussion. If the Literature Committee votes to seek full development and Conference approval, the proposal will be forwarded to the WSO Board for conceptual approval.

WSO also may, at its option, return an author’s copyright privileges if a proposal is not accepted for publication.

**Development**

Should the board approve an initial literature proposal, a development team will be assigned (with every effort to give a significant role to those who submitted the proposal), and a final proposal and tentative production timetable will be established. During development, the author team will give periodic progress reports to an assigned liaison from the Literature Committee. All development team members must sign non-disclosure agreements and copyright releases, and the content created will be the property of ACAWSO.

In writing new literature, we strive to keep our message universal, welcoming, and practical. It should be rooted in our fellowship experience, not in unproven theory or esoteric concepts.

To maximize comprehension and to support translation into other languages, sentences and words should be plain and simple.  Mindful that many will read with their Inner Child, the narrative also should be gentle in tone. And authors should continually ask themselves, “How will this sentence, paragraph, or idea help a suffering adult child experience healing and recovery?”

**Getting to Conference Approval**

Because major publication projects can take a long time to develop and finalize, and then be very hard for the Annual Business Conference to provide a detailed review of as a mass body, the approval process tries to balance the need for speed in moving forward and enabling the ABC and the rest of the fellowship to provide meaningful feedback.

This balance is achieved by a series of approval processes, interspersed with extended feedback periods. By the time final ABC approval is sought, the fellowship and ABC will have had ample time to review completed publication, and WSO will have had time to incorporate changes based on fellowship comments. This allows a deliberate and considered approval by the fellowship and its ABC delegates.

Here are the specific stages of approval for major literature projects:

1. Initial review of a project proposal by the Literature Evaluation subcommittee. A proposal may simply be an outline, with a statement of purpose and an assessment of fellowship need and why that need is not met by existing literature. It may also include enough chapters or text to give a sense of how the new literature would accomplish the proposal’s purpose. Where appropriate, the subcommittee may seek expert and fellowship opinion before approving a piece or returning it to the authors with guidance for additional work.
2. Review and approval of a proposal by the Literature Committee.
3. WSO Board conceptual approval: When the proposal is ready, it is presented to the Board for final input and authorization to present the proposal to the ABC Delegates.
4. ABC conceptual approval. This is a first level of Conference approval and authorizes WSO to complete the literature and publish it for sale so that it can be read and reviewed by a significant number of ACA members. Although it is published, at this stage the literature remains a “first draft,” subject to additional review and revisions.
5. Fellowship input: For a period of six to nine months after publication, the fellowship is invited to submit comments and suggested revisions to the Literature Evaluation subcommittee and author team. The fellowship comment deadline will be prominently stated in the literature and on the WSO website.
6. Revision: After the review period, constructive revisions are incorporated and a finalized manuscript is prepared for Literature Committee and WSO board review.
7. Conference Approval: Following approval by the Literature Evaluation subcommittee, the Literature Committee, and WSO board, the revised manuscript is submitted to the ABC for final Conference approval. This should occur within two years of the book’s initial publication. By this time, the fellowship and Conference will have had ample time to familiarize themselves with the new literature and consider it as a Conference-approved publication.
8. Expedited approval: On shorter or less complex projects, such as trifolds, WSO may seek immediate Conference approval. In this scenario, the fellowship will be given a three-month period to review and submit comments and suggested revisions, either before or after the Conference vote. If the resulting revisions are minor, and the ABC has approved the manuscript, it will be considered to be Conference-approved.

**Publication and Distribution**

Publication can take many forms, including traditional book publishing, e-publishing and audio books. Before publishing commences, the Literature Committee’s Business Operations Subcommittee will propose a publishing and distribution plan based on its assessment of fellowship demand, production and distribution costs, design considerations, availability of distribution partners, and other factors.

On projects that will be produced and/or distributed outside the United States or Canada, the International Literature Subcommittee will help draft the publishing and distribution plan.

WSO literature staff will assist in the development of this plan, which must be approved by the Literature Committee and full WSO Board.

**Timetable**

Anyone submitting a proposal should expect an email acknowledgment within two weeks. If that does not occur, a follow-up email requesting a status update is invited.

ACA literature development is largely a volunteer activity, supported by limited professional staff resources. Often, there are many projects at varying stages of review and development, which can strain the Literature Committee’s capacity. Therefore, it is impossible to guarantee a set timetable for review and action on specific proposals.

ACAWSO will provide a status report, updated quarterly, to those who have submitted literature revision and development proposals, to ensure that no project “gets lost,” and so that submitters are not left in a state of mystery about their proposals.

The Literature Development subcommittee will also report major developments, and answer questions, about new literature projects during the Literature Committee’s quarterly call.  A complete status report on pending literature development projects will be provided in the annual Literature Committee report at the Annual Business Conference.

Please direct any questions about ACA WSO literature to [litstaff@adultchildren.org](mailto:litstaff@adultchildren.org).