



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF RELIGION

COMMITTEE MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

Purpose of AAR Committees

We all are the AAR. We exist because scholars of religion want to connect, collaborate, and share their work. We provide scholars of religion spaces and opportunities to engage each other and grow.

Our committees participate in and support these connections and collaborative spaces. The role of our committees is threefold:

- 1) meet their charge by supporting the connections, scholarship, and networking relevant to the committee's constituency.
- 2) provide programming related to their charge – at the November and June Annual Meetings and/or year-around.
- 3) advise the board of directors on matters related to their charge.

Committee Composition

AAR Committees consists of from four to nine members who are appointed by the AAR President for one 4-year, non-renewable term. Each committee has a chair, a vice-chair, members, and a staff liaison.

Committee Role, Expectations, and Duties

The role of standing committees is to convene a subgroup of the AAR membership to work collectively on a specific issue or on behalf of a specific constituency to foster a sense of inclusion, belonging and full participation in shaping the life of the organization.

- Convene AAR members that share the interests and concerns that define the committee, e.g. women, contingent faculty, etc.
- Provide spaces for peer support, mentorship, and welcoming. This may include formal mentoring programs, informal gatherings, etc.
- Gather information that can help AAR members and leadership learn about their constituency—including data about participation in the AAR, trends in employment, etc.
- Organize programming to inform AAR members about the issues facing the constituency in the professions and share ideas about how members can help address those challenges in their institutions. These can be Special Topics sessions at the Annual Meetings or webinars made available throughout the year.
- When needed, solicit feedback and provide the AAR Board of Directors with relevant member information relating to AAR policies and practices.
- When needed, the board will solicit input from particular committees about policies or processes under consideration.
- Develop guides and best practices relevant to the work of AAR members when needed, e.g. hiring and promotion practices, teaching resources, etc. These are available to all members through the AAR website.

- Recognize ongoing shifts in membership needs that may require assistance to the board in reorganizing Standing Committee structures.
- Facilitate communication with AAR members.
- Maintain professional confidentiality with all pertinent committee meeting information.

Committee Work

AAR Standing Committees, under the leadership of the chair and with collaboration of the vice- chair and committee members, pursue the committee’s goals, timelines, and activities through the execution of current programming and development of new initiatives.

Roles and Expectations

All committee chairs, vice-chairs, and members are expected to maintain their AAR membership and keep their profile information current in the AAR database.

Committee Chair

- Lead the committee in the development and execution of annual goals and programming.
- Preside at all committee meetings.
- Designate a committee member to keep meeting minutes and ensure the staff liaison has a copy of the minutes for archival purposes.
- Ensure the committee’s activities and programming are aligned with the committee’s charge.
- Communicate with the staff liaison regarding committee meeting schedules for June and November Annual Meetings.
- Solicit, encourage, and submit nominations for open committee positions during the open call for nominations.
- Submit reports in a timely manner.

Committee Vice-Chair

- Preside over meetings in the chair’s absence.
- Consult with chair on feedback regarding all nominations for vacant positions.
- May lead occasional subcommittee or related special projects that contribute to the committee meeting its charge.
- Participate in all scheduled meetings and programming organized by the committee.
- Participate in all committee work with particular attention to the important deadlines and necessary administrative steps in order to be familiar with all standard processes when transitioning to the chair role at the end of the two-year term.

Committee Member

- Collaborate with the committee to meet its charge and annual goals.
- Regularly participate in the committee’s meetings and actively engage in committee communications around programming and planning.
- Accept and complete particular assignments that contribute to the work of the committee.
- Participate in the committee’s activities and events.

AAR Staff Liaison

The staff liaison supports the AAR standing committee in its charge.

- The AAR executive director appoints a designated AAR staff member to serve as staff liaison to each standing committee.
- The primary role of the staff liaison is to facilitate communication between the committee and the larger organization. The staff liaison:
 - attends committee meetings and works with the committee to help the committee accomplish its goals.
 - keeps the committee apprised of larger organizational issues that may affect the committee's work.
 - addresses committee matters that may have implications for wider organizational work.
- The staff liaison is not a designated administrative support person for the committee, but the staff liaison may be able to help the committee with logistical issues, such as:
 - setting up a virtual committee meeting.
 - scheduling programming at the June and November Annual Meetings and year-round programming.
 - assisting the completion of required paperwork, such as the committee's annual report to the board.
 - archiving all committee minutes and records for the purposes of historical record and to provide continuity.
 - working with the committee and the AAR Executive Director to seek grant funding for special initiatives and carry out grant-funded projects.
 - facilitating the committee's annual discretionary budget for year-round programming.

Typical Meeting Schedule

- *January-May:* One online meeting to plan committee programming
- *June:* One online meeting at the June Sessions of the Annual Meetings
- *November:* One in-person meeting at the November Annual Meetings
- Additional meetings as necessary

Nominations and Appointments

The annual nominations and appointment process ensures that the members rotating off a committee are replaced in an efficient, timely, inclusive manner.

An open call for nominations is typically held from April 1 to June 1. All AAR members are encouraged to nominate themselves or other AAR members for any of the openings.

- Nominations must be submitted through the AAR's online nomination system.

To be eligible for consideration, a completed nomination form must include all of the required support materials:

- A statement describing the nominee's interest in the position
- A current copy of the nominee's CV

Nomination Review

In the early summer, AAR staff will send the committee's compiled nominations to the committee chair, inviting the chair to complete the *Chairs Comment Form* in an effort to allow the committee to offer insights to the AAR President who, as specified in the [AAR bylaws](#), has the responsibility for making committee appointments.

Appointments

Late summer and early fall, the AAR President will make committee appointments for the new term that begins January 1st of the following calendar year. In the cases where a chair is rotating off, the vice-chair will become the new chair.

Terms of new appointments are generally one 4-year, non-renewable term.

If a member is no longer able to serve on their committee or if there is an unexpected vacancy, a replacement can be appointed by the AAR President.