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SPIE Chapter Annual Report & Grant Application Timeline (2025–2026)

Below is a sequence of key tasks, aligned with an academic year, to help a graduate student manage the 2025 SPIE Student Chapter Annual Report and the 2026 Chapter Activity Grant Application. Each task outlines deadlines, requirements, and opportunities to integrate chapter duties with lab outreach and proposal obligations.

1. Review Chapter Requirements & Timeline (Summer 2025)

- **Confirm Deadlines:** Mark the **Annual Report/Grant submission deadline** (typically around **1 December** each year [1] ; SPIE historically set 1 October as the target for funding requests [2]). The application portal usually opens in mid-August. Plan to submit by fall 2025 to avoid late penalties (late funding applications are *not* reviewed [1]).
- **Check Eligibility:** Ensure your chapter meets SPIE's basic expectations: *at least 10 student members* and a faculty advisor who is an SPIE member (common requirements for chapter recognition [3]). Also verify the chapter held **≥3 meetings/events** during 2025, as SPIE expects regular activity for good standing (a minimum of three chapter meetings per year is recommended [4]).
- **Good Standing Status:** Understand that maintaining good standing (timely reports, membership count, faculty advisor, etc.) each year is crucial for funding. Failing to meet all requirements for three consecutive years triggers a chapter review or "revitalization" process by SPIE staff [5] , so it's important to stay on track annually.

2. Gather Report Content & Documentation (Aug–Sep 2025)

- **Collect Activity Details:** Assemble a summary of **all chapter activities** since the last report (i.e. throughout the 2025 calendar year). For each event or project, note the date, purpose, participants, and outcomes. Include **outreach events, technical seminars, networking activities, etc.** along with any photos or relevant media. These will feed into the "Chapter activities since last report" section [6] .
- **Member and Officer Lists:** Prepare an updated roster of **current chapter members** and the **elected officers** for 2025 [7] . (SPIE requires listing the names of officers and a full member list for the year coming to a close in the annual report.) Ensure this information is accurate and reflects any new members or mid-year officer changes.
- **Financial Records:** If your chapter received an SPIE Activity Grant for 2025, gather all **expense receipts** and record how the funds were spent. SPIE will require a financial accounting in the report – *"Receipts are required for all expenditures if the chapter received SPIE activity funding during the year of report."* [8] . Even if no SPIE funds were used, summarize other funding sources and expenses (university grants, department support, etc.) to present a clear financial picture.
- **Plan Proposed Activities:** Start brainstorming and outlining **activities for 2026** that your chapter wants to organize, since the annual report doubles as a *grant application for next year's funding*. Think about events that align with your chapter's mission and note tentative details (e.g. "technical

workshop on optics design in March 2026" or "community STEM outreach day in April 2026"). You'll need to include "details of planned activities for the next year and the requested funding for them" in the application [6] , so having a draft plan now will help.

3. Draft the Annual Report & Grant Application (September 2025)

- **Follow the Required Structure:** Begin writing the annual report as a cohesive document (often a PDF upload is expected [9]). Cover all required components: an **introduction**, the **officer and member lists**, a narrative of **this year's activities**, and a **plan for next year's activities with a budget request** [7] [6] . Ensure the format meets any SPIE guidelines (check if SPIE provides a template or specific formatting instructions in their portal or handbook).
- **Justify Funding Needs:** In the grant request portion, clearly **describe how the previous grant was used** and **justify the amount of funding you're asking for** in 2026. For example, *"$X was spent on 2025 outreach materials and seminars, as detailed; we request $Y for 2026 to expand these events."* SPIE expects chapters to *"describe exactly how chapter grant funding was spent"* and to **demonstrate a need** for the requested amount [10] [11] . (Award decisions will be based in part on the quality of your report and funding proposal [11] .) Include an itemized budget for proposed events to show how you arrived at the requested total.
- **Highlight Impact and Goals:** Remember that SPIE (and other evaluators) will look at the **impact** of your activities. Emphasize how your chapter's work **raises awareness of optics and photonics** or benefits the community, since "potential to increase optics and photonics awareness among students or the larger community" is a key criterion in evaluation [12] . Also stress the educational and professional development outcomes for chapter members. A clear, well-structured proposal with defined goals, an audience impact statement, and a timeline/budget for events will score better in review [12] .
- **Advisor Review:** Before submission, have your faculty advisor (or another mentor) **review the draft report**. They can ensure it meets expectations and may need to provide an endorsement in the application. Incorporate any feedback, and double-check that all required pieces (like the faculty advisor's name and contact, if requested) are included. This pre-submission check can catch omissions or formatting issues early.

4. Submit the Annual Report & Grant Application (Fall 2025)

- **Complete Online Submission:** Log in to SPIE's SurveyMonkey Apply (SMApply) portal once the application opens (mid-August). **Fill out all online form fields** and upload your final PDF report. Only a designated chapter officer should submit the application (SPIE notes that one officer should be responsible for uploading the report) [9] . Aim to finish this well **before the deadline** in case of technical issues.
- **Meet the Deadline: Submit by the official deadline** (for the 2025 report/2026 grant cycle, expect around **1 December 2025** unless SPIE specifies otherwise) [1] . *Note:* SPIE in recent guidance has moved the deadline to 1 December, though some chapter resources still cite **1 October for funding requests** [2] . To be safe, check SPIE's announcements in mid-2025 and consider 1 October as a **soft deadline** for full funding consideration, with absolute final submission by 1 December. Missing the deadline has serious consequences: a late annual report can be filed to maintain chapter status, but **late funding applications are not accepted** [1] (meaning your chapter would forfeit the Activity Grant for 2026).

- **Double-Check Your Package:** Before clicking submit, verify **all components are included**: the PDF report, answers to any SMApply questions, itemized budget, receipts (uploaded scans) for 2025 expenses, and any required signatures or endorsements (some applications may require advisor approval within the system). After submission, record a copy of what was submitted (PDF and confirmation page) for your records. SPIE typically notifies chapters of the **funding decision within 1–2 weeks after the deadline**, so keep an eye on email in December for the result.

5. Plan Upcoming Chapter Activities with Funding (Winter 2025–2026)

- **Integrate Funding Results:** Once you receive the 2026 Activity Grant decision (e.g. your chapter is awarded $X), adjust your chapter's 2026 plan accordingly. If you got partial funding, prioritize key events or seek additional resources (perhaps from your university or industry sponsors). If full funding was granted, ensure your proposed events can now be executed within that budget.
- **Schedule 2026 Events:** Develop a **calendar of events for 2026** that aligns with both SPIE's mission and your lab's outreach goals. For instance, you might plan: a **science-themed trivia night** in the spring, an **"Optics 101" demo day** at a local school around the International Day of Light (May 16), a **technical workshop** (e.g. on machine learning in optics), and networking mixers with other science clubs. These are all examples of fundable activities – SPIE chapters have organized everything from trivia socials to STEM nights and coding workshops under their grants [13] [14]. Brainstorm with your chapter members to ensure a mix of outreach, education, and professional development events.
- **Align with Lab and Department:** Identify opportunities to **merge chapter events with your lab's outreach requirements** or departmental initiatives. For example, if your advisor's grant requires K–12 outreach, the chapter's planned STEM night can fulfill that. If your department offers "BOGO" matching funds for student-led outreach (where they'll match external funding), leverage this for your big events. Communicate with your PI and department early – propose that the lab participate in or sponsor certain chapter events. This not only provides extra resources (funds, equipment, volunteers) but also gives your lab credit in its engagement reports. It's a win-win: the SPIE grant supports the event, and the lab's involvement can amplify its impact (and the lab may cover additional costs like venue or catering).
- **Logistics and Delegation:** For each planned event, assign a point person and start the logistical prep well in advance. Book venues or virtual platforms, secure any needed equipment (for example, if doing a laser demo, get lasers and safety gear), and coordinate with partners (schools, speakers, etc.). By winter's end you should have a clear roadmap for executing each activity in the new year.

6. Execute Outreach Events and Document Outcomes (Spring–Fall 2026)

SPIE student chapter members at a science-themed trivia night social event – an example of a fun outreach activity that engages students with optics.

- **Host and Engage:** Carry out your scheduled events, making sure to deliver quality experiences. For a **trivia night**, for example, prepare science and optics-related questions to educate participants in an entertaining way (many SPIE chapters report success with this format as a casual science outreach activity [15]). During events, focus on engaging your target audience (whether it's the general public, K–12 students, or university peers) and communicating the importance of optics/photonics. This aligns with SPIE's outreach goals – remember that success is measured by how well you *increase awareness and interest*

in optics and photonics through these activities [12] .

- **Record Everything:** As you run events, **document outcomes** diligently. Have sign-in sheets or headcounts (to report participant numbers), take **photos** of the activities, and if possible collect feedback (e.g. quick surveys) from attendees. Save all **receipts/invoices** from any purchases (materials, snacks, venue fees) related to the events. This documentation will not only be required for the **next annual report** but also is valuable for your lab's reporting and for evaluating the event's success. SPIE's student chapter playbook suggests using a standard form to capture lessons learned, photos, and other info right after each event [16] – doing this will make writing the next report much easier.

- **Leverage in Lab Reports:** Immediately after each event, communicate the results to your advisor or outreach coordinator in your lab. For instance, if your lab needs to report outreach for grant progress, provide them with a short write-up and photos of the chapter event to include. This shows your initiative in fulfilling broader impacts and can strengthen the lab's position in future proposals.

- **Wrap-up and Reflection:** At the end of 2026 (or after each major event), hold a brief internal meeting to **evaluate the activity**. What was the impact? Did it meet the goals (number of students reached, knowledge gained, etc.)? Document any qualitative successes (e.g. "5 students expressed interest in optics majors after our demo") as well as challenges. These reflections will be golden material for the **2026 Annual Report** (due late 2026) and can guide the next cycle of event planning. By integrating chapter work with your academic timeline and research responsibilities, you'll not only keep your SPIE Student Chapter in good standing and well-funded, but also enrich your own graduate experience through outreach and leadership.

Sources: The above timeline and tasks synthesize information from SPIE's student chapter guidelines and outreach program documentation, including submission deadlines and criteria [1] [12] , required report components [7] [6] , and examples of successful chapter activities [13] [14] . These steps ensure that a graduate student can effectively manage the annual reporting and grant process while aligning it with their lab's outreach goals and academic schedule.

1 8 Late Student Chapter Annual Report Application - SPIE

https://spie.smapply.io/prog/late_student_chapter_annual_report_application/

2 4 5 6 7 How to run your SPIE Student Chapter

https://spie.org/membership/student-hub/student-chapters/guide-to-student-chapters

3 SPIE Student Member awards

https://spie.org/membership/student-hub/student-awards

9 [PDF] Leadership Handbook - SPIE

https://spie.org/Documents/Students/SPIEStudentChapterWorkbook20-21.pdf

10 [PDF] SPIE Student Chapter Report 2018 Annual report

http://english.siom.cas.cn/Newsroom/icn/201904/P020190410459131226064.pdf

11 [PDF] SPIE Student Chapter Overview

https://spie.org/Documents/Students/SPIE_Chapter_Activities-Funding.pdf

12 SPIE Education Outreach Grants

https://www.interoperabilitygrants.info/Grant-Details/gid/56427

13 15 2022 - SPIE AT TAMU

https://spietamu.weebly.com/2022.html

14 16 [PDF] A playbook for orchestrating impactful SPIE Student Chapter events

https://spie.org/documents/Membership/Student%20Chapters/Student-Chapter-Event-Planning-Document.pdf