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IAB, IESG, and IAOC Selection, Confirmation, and Recall Process:  
IAOC Advisor for the Nominating Committee

## Abstract

This specification formalizes an ad hoc practice used to provide advice to the IETF Nominating Committee (NomCom) about the operations of the IETF Administrative Oversight Committee (IAOC).

This document updates [RFC 7437](#).

## Status of This Memo

This memo documents an Internet Best Current Practice.

This document is a product of the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF). It represents the consensus of the IETF community. It has received public review and has been approved for publication by the Internet Engineering Steering Group (IESG). Further information on BCPs is available in [Section 2 of RFC 7841](#).

Information about the current status of this document, any errata, and how to provide feedback on it may be obtained at <https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc8318>.

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## 1. Introduction

This specification formalizes an ad hoc practice used to provide advice to the IETF Nominating Committee (NomCom) about the operations of the IAOC (described in [RFC4071]).

This document updates [RFC7437].

Proposed future changes to BCP 10 should be discussed on the public IETF NomCom discussion mailing list, at [<https://www.ietf.org/mailman/listinfo/ietf-nomcom>](https://www.ietf.org/mailman/listinfo/ietf-nomcom).

## 2. Background on 'IAOC Liaisons' to Nominating Committees

When RFC 7437 [RFC7437] was approved, it explicitly charged the nominating committee with selecting and reviewing certain members of the IAOC. However, [RFC7437] did not provide for the IAOC to send a liaison to the nominating committee.

This was not thought to be an obstacle because [RFC7437] allowed any committee member to propose a liaison from the IAOC:

Any committee member may propose the addition of a liaison from other unrepresented organizations to participate in some or all of the deliberations of the committee. The addition must be approved by the committee according to its established voting mechanism. Liaisons participate as representatives of their respective organizations.

Beginning in 2010, the IAOC provided a liaison to each nominating committee. In 2016, the IAOC did not provide a liaison because the nominating committee was not appointing an IAOC member. The previous nominating committee had filled a mid-term vacancy (using the process described in Section 3.5. of [RFC7437]) by appointing an IAOC member for a term longer than two years. In 2017, the NomCom was selecting an IAOC member, but the opportunity to request a liaison from the IAOC was overlooked, because this practice wasn't part of the documented process in [RFC7437].

This specification adds the previously ad hoc role to [RFC7437] so that future nominating committees will be less likely to overlook it.

Although past ad hoc practice has characterized this role as a "liaison", this specification labels the role as an "advisor". The rationale for this change in nomenclature is provided in [Appendix A.1](#).

### 3. BCP Text Changes

This section provides the updated BCP text for [RFC7437].

For each OLD text selection, NEW text is provided that replaces the OLD text in [RFC7437].

#### 3.1. Change to Section 4.3 of RFC 7437, 'Structure'

OLD

Any committee member may propose the addition of an advisor to participate in some or all of the deliberations of the committee. The addition must be approved by the committee according to its established voting mechanism. Advisors participate as individuals.

NEW

Any committee member may propose the addition of an advisor to participate in some or all of the deliberations of the committee. The addition must be approved by the committee according to its established voting mechanism. Advisors participate as individuals.

Committee members are encouraged to propose the addition of an advisor who is knowledgeable about the operations of the IAOC, whether or not that nominating committee is reviewing an IAOC position. The nominating committee may choose to ask the IAOC to suggest an advisor who is knowledgeable about IAOC operations but may select any advisor they vote to approve.

### 4. Security Considerations

This document updates an IETF process BCP and has no direct Internet security implications.

### 5. IANA Considerations

This document has no IANA actions.

## 6. Normative References

- [RFC4071] Austein, R., Ed. and B. Wijnen, Ed., "Structure of the IETF Administrative Support Activity (IASA)", [BCP 101](#), [RFC 4071](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC4071, April 2005, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc4071>>.
- [RFC7437] Kucherawy, M., Ed., "IAB, IESG, and IAOC Selection, Confirmation, and Recall Process: Operation of the Nominating and Recall Committees", [BCP 10](#), [RFC 7437](#), DOI 10.17487/RFC7437, January 2015, <<https://www.rfc-editor.org/info/rfc7437>>.

## Appendix A. Discussion Points

This section preserves discussions and explanations that came up during document discussions. Ordinarily, this section might be deleted during the evaluation process, but some questions came up repeatedly, so the editor has included them for anyone who also shares those questions.

### A.1. Why Is This Role an Advisor?

The editor of this document briefly considered proposing a new and IAOC-specific role to [RFC7437] but considered such a proposal to be complex. Anticipating every corner case in IETF process BCPs is challenging and prone to error, and as this specification was being written, the IETF Chair was sponsoring a design team reviewing all aspects of the IETF Administrative Support Activity (IASA). Therefore, the structure and membership of the IAOC itself could change in the near future. Instead, the specification describes how the nominating committee requests advisors and builds on mature text that has survived many nominating committee cycles.

After choosing to reuse existing roles defined in [RFC7437], the definition of "advisor" in Section 4.9 of [RFC7437] seemed appropriate.

An advisor is responsible for such duties as specified by the invitation that resulted in the appointment.

Advisors do not vote on the selection of candidates.

The position described in this specification could be filled by an advisor who would be a non-voting member of the nominating committee, who is knowledgeable about the operations of the IAOC, and who has duties that could evolve over time as the IAOC itself evolves.

The only difference between this advisor that requires an update to [RFC7437], and any other advisor is that committee members are explicitly encouraged to suggest that this advisor be appointed as described in this specification. The text updating [RFC7437] is found in Section 3.

## A.2. Why Is This Role Not a Liaison?

Discussions on the IETF NomCom mailing list led to the recognition that "liaison" was not the best description of this role.

The role of liaison defined in [Section 4.7 of \[RFC7437\]](#) places some significant obligations on liaisons beyond what is necessary for someone to answer questions from the nominating committee about the IAOC. These obligations include the following:

- o Liaisons are responsible for ensuring the nominating committee in general and the Chair in particular execute their assigned duties in the best interest of the IETF community.
- o Liaisons from the IESG, IAB, and Internet Society Board of Trustees (if one is appointed) are expected to review the operation and execution process of the nominating committee and to report any concerns or issues to the Chair of the nominating committee immediately. If they cannot resolve the issue between themselves, liaisons must report it according to the dispute resolution process stated elsewhere in this document.
- o Liaisons may have other nominating committee responsibilities as required by their respective organizations or requested by the nominating committee; such responsibilities may not conflict with any other provisions of this document.

Finally, as mentioned in [Section 4.6 of \[RFC7437\]](#), all of the liaisons are included in the pool of people who are eligible to be selected as a replacement for a Chair.

There are a variety of ordinary circumstances that may arise from time to time that could result in a Chair being unavailable to oversee the activities of the committee. The Chair, in consultation with the Internet Society President, may appoint a substitute from a pool comprised of the liaisons currently serving on the committee and the prior year's Chair or designee.

Note: During discussion of this specification, we noted that any liaison would be part of the pool of potential substitute nominating committee Chairs. It wasn't clear to the discussion participants whether there was an intentional decision to make liaisons voted onto the nominating committee eligible to be substitute Chairs. That potential change is out of scope for this specification but may be a conversation worth having separately.

All of these obligations are important, but there are always at least two full liaisons from the confirming bodies that are already responsible for those responsibilities. It is simply not necessary to make the job of helping the nominating committee understand the role and operational practices of the IAOC more demanding than it must be.

So, requiring the IAOC to name a formal liaison to the nominating committee isn't justified.

#### A.3. Why Is This Role Not Required to Be a Sitting IAOC Member?

In addition to the reasons given in [Appendix A.2](#), the requirement that the IAB and IESG liaisons to the nominating committee be sitting members of the organizations they represent, whose positions are not being reviewed by this nominating committee, is especially challenging for the IAOC.

Many IAOC positions are filled by members who are already members of IETF leadership and are subject to review by the nominating committee. This means that limiting an IAOC liaison to one of the sitting members would mean that in some years the only individuals eligible to serve as liaison for the nominating committee would be sitting members of the IAOC that a) were appointed by the previous nominating committee and are not being by the current nominating committee, or b) were appointed by the IAB or IESG and are not being reviewed by the current IAB or IESG. "Eligible" does not also mean "willing and able to serve", so it is possible that an IAOC might find itself with no sitting member to send as advisor in some years.

Although all IAOC liaisons to the nominating committee have served as sitting members of the IAOC, given 10 years of IAOC operation, this specification assumes that other members of the community have sufficient experience to provide guidance if the IAOC chooses to suggest such a person. If any given IAOC thought that was important, they could certainly continue to suggest sitting members, but if no sitting member was willing and able to serve, the IAOC would be free to do the next best thing and would likely be the best qualified group to decide who to send.

#### A.4. Why Does the Nominating Committee Request an IAOC Advisor?

This specification could have described the mechanism in one of two ways:

- o the IAOC could simply provide the name of the advisor to the nominating committee, or



- o the nominating committee could request the name of an advisor from the IAOC.

Either choice could work. The reason that this specification chose to have the nominating committee make the first move is that this is more similar to the way other advisors to the nominating committee are selected, except that the nominating committee is asking the IAOC for a suggestion before inviting the advisor to join the nominating committee.

The suggestion is, in fact, a suggestion; the nominating committee still votes to invite this advisor as they would vote to invite any advisor, as described in [Section 4.3 of \[RFC7437\]](#).

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The input provided by Joel Halpern (2008-2009 nominating committee Chair) and Michael Richardson (2014-2015 nominating committee Chair) is especially appreciated because only a few people can provide a nominating committee Chair's perspective on how useful representation from the IAOC has been in practice.

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