



AIC Position Paper Guidelines

Definition

Position papers are designed to present an organization's opinions or stance regarding a particular topic.

Goal

The goal is to educate, inform, and influence users of conservation services about appropriate practices, procedures, and political positions regarding conservation and preservation topics. Arguments should be brief and to-the-point, always keeping the goal and reader in mind. The readers may be museum leadership, curators or other professionals, collectors, gallery owners, or potential clients. Ideally the reader is a decision maker or an influential person addressing conservation or preservation issues. The aim is to provide solutions, establish authority, or create awareness of an issue in an easily read document that is readily available. Position papers are not aimed at professional conservators and are not a format to present research or treatments.

Proposing Topics for AIC Position Papers

Topics may be put forward in writing by any individual member, committee, specialty group, or network of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC). Proposals are sent by mail or email to the Chair of the AIC's Education and Training Committee (ETC)ⁱ. Members submitting a proposal must include their name(s) and contact information, and may include a list of suggested authors.

Proposals will be accepted and reviewed on a quarterly basis. Deadlines for submission are **March 1st, June 1st, September 1st, and December 1st**.

The document should clearly indicate that it is a proposal for a position paper and include a topic title. The proposal should contain a brief synopsis of the topic and its relevance for AIC, its mission, and the larger conservation community. The AIC Board of Directors will make the final decision on the selection of a topic.

Once the AIC board has approved a topic, all efforts will be made to publish according to the following timeline. Proposals should note time-sensitive topics that require a faster completion.

Timeline

1. ETC proposes topics and suggested author(s) to the Board on a quarterly basis
2. Board approves/disapproves topic (within 2 weeks)
3. ETC notifies author(s) of Board decision
4. Author(s) completes work and submits to the ETC (within 3 months)
5. ETC reviews first draft and suggests author revisions (within 1 month)

6. Author(s) makes revisions and resubmits to the ETC (within 1 month)
7. Executive Director reviews draft and submits comments and edits to the ETC (within 1 week)
8. ETC submits final draft for review and approval by the Board; professional design and editing of paper by AIC (within 1 month)
9. Publication/release

Please Note: from time to time a topic may be of such importance or time sensitivity that the Board may deem it necessary to bypass this proposed timeline and issue a quick statement or position paper. In these situations, the Board and Executive Director will either draft the document or identify and work directly with an appropriate author.

Criteria for accepting AIC Position Paper Proposals

The AIC Board of Directors will make the final decision on the selection of a topic. The board bases its decision on the topic and its relevance for AIC, its mission, and the larger conservation and preservation community.

Selection of Authors

The AIC Board of Directors will select an author. Consideration will be given to authors suggested in the proposal, research into established authors relevant to the topic, the Board's larger understanding of the issues, and any proposed author's ability to complete the task within the stated timeline. Should an open call for an author be required, it will be posted on the AIC website and the AIC membership will be notified by email of the posting.

Position papers from any organization or institution reflect the official position of that body and, as such, are not appropriately associated with individual authors. AIC may assume official positions on some issues that are controversial and best defended by AIC itself, not individuals. For this reason, individual authors will not be credited on the position paper and AIC will undertake full responsibility for the position paper and defend its position as necessary.

Authoring a position paper provides a valuable service to both AIC and the conservation community as a whole by helping to educate decision makers and allied professionals about important issues in the conservation field.

Guidelines for Writing AIC Position Paper

Because position papers are dated and posted on the AIC website and remain available until the information is no longer up-to-date or important, as decided by the AIC Board of Directors, the papers must be written at a high level.

AIC position papers should not exceed 1,500 words (1 to 5 pages) including references. Examples, case studies, and graphics can be used for emphasis in the text or as side bars.

The paper must be written in a persuasive style and in the third person.

References that can easily be accessed by the general public should be included to reflect the professional credibility of the positions expressed.

Once author submissions and revisions have been received by the ETC, the authors will not be asked for approval of changes or editing of board-approved text.

A brief paragraph describing the AIC will be added at the end of the position paper and will not count in the total number of words.

The final, board-approved paper is submitted by the ETC as a Microsoft Word document to Eryl Wentworth, AIC Executive Director (ewentworth@conservation-us.org), and Bonnie Naugle, AIC Communications Manager (bnaugle@conservation-us.org), for design, layout, and publication.

Activities related to position papers are the responsibility of the AIC Board President in cooperation with the AIC Executive Director.

Organization of position paper:

- 1) Introduction should include the problem, question, or issue. A summary may be used to immediately give browsers the main point.
- 2) Present background facts related to the issue. Focus on the single topic. Use active present tense whenever possible. Establish AIC as the authority where appropriate.
- 3) Present the solution or answer. Motivate and persuade the reader to accept the solution/position.
- 4) Make a final conclusion and closing. Push for the appropriate action by the reader.
- 5) References should follow the guidelines for authors in the *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* (JAIC). References are not mandatory but are strongly encouraged.

Review of Position Papers

Position papers will remain available on the AIC website until the information is no longer up-to-date or important, as decided by the AIC Board of Directors. ETC will review position papers on an annual basis and, if it feels that a paper is outdated or no longer relevant, it will recommend to the AIC Board that the paper either be revised or removed. ETC may consult with the Specialty Groups or AIC Networks as needed to determine the relevance of a position paper. If a paper requires revisions, the original authors will be contacted and asked to consider revising the position paper. If they are unable to do this, either a new author will be approached or the paper will be removed from the website. If a paper is removed from the AIC website, the author(s) will be notified.

Resources and Examples

Please note that the term “white paper” is also sometimes used to refer to position papers.

http://docs.joomla.org/White_Papers Accessed 11/5/2012.

Focused on publicizing white papers. 4 p.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_paper Accessed 11/5/2012.

Very brief. Distinguishes government white papers from commercial white papers. 2 p.

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/546/01> Accessed 11/5/2012.

Writing a White Paper. “Summary: a white paper is a certain type of report that is distinctive in terms of purpose, audience and organization. This resource will explain these issues and provide some other tips to enhance white paper content.” 4 p.

<https://aamd.org/standards-and-practices> Accessed 11/5/2013.

AAMD has eight position papers available on topics from restitution of works stolen by Nazis to governance and non-profit integrity (2001-2007).

<http://www.writerswrite.com/journal/sep02/srikanth.htm> Accessed 11/5/2013.

Srikanth, Anjana. September 2002. Effective Business Writing: The White Paper in Writers Write: The Internet Writing Journal. Gives technical guidance on writing a position paper and online sources for style, grammar, and editing. 10 p.

-Approved by the AIC Board of Directors on 5 February 2013

¹ The composition of the committee can be found on the AIC website at: www.conservation-us.org/educationandtrainingcommittee