

AMSA Board of Trustees

Remote Participation Process Policy

Background

The AMSA Board of Trustees has approved the use of remote participation in meetings. This policy describes the process for using remote participation in Board meetings including executive session, Committee meetings, and other meetings subject to Open Meeting Law (OML) within the jurisdiction of the AMSA Board of Trustees.

The AMSA Board of Trustees strongly recommends that members physically attend all posted meetings whenever possible. The AMSA Board of Trustees acknowledges their responsibility to ensure that remote participation is not used in any way that defeats the purposes of the OML, namely promoting transparency with regard to deliberations and decisions on which AMSA Board of Trustees policy is based.

Permissible reasons for remote participation

1. Personal illness
2. Personal disability
3. Emergency
4. Military service
5. Geographic distance

Remote participation requirements

Meetings using remote participation are subject to the following procedures and restrictions:

1. A quorum of the Board, Committee, or Task Force must be physically present at the meeting location. Members who participate remotely shall not be deemed to be absent.
2. A member who wishes to participate remotely must, as soon as reasonably possible prior to a meeting, notify the Chair or, in the absence of the Chair, the person chairing the meeting, his/her intention to do so and the reason and facts supporting the request.
3. The Chair or the person chairing the meeting shall make the determination of whether the request for remote participation is valid.
4. The Chair must announce at the beginning of the meeting the name of the member(s) participating remotely, the reason for the remote participation and the means of remote participation.
5. The acceptable means of remote participation is conference telephone or any other technology that is available that enables the remote participant and all Committee members and visitors present to be clearly audible to one another.
 - a. If video technology is used, the remote participant must be clearly visible to all persons present at the meeting location.
 - b. The Chair or, in the Chair's absence, the person authorized to chair the meeting shall make the determination on the means of participation.

6. When feasible, the Chair or, in the Chair's absence, the person chairing the meeting, shall distribute to remote participants, in advance of the meeting, copies of any documents or exhibits that he or she reasonably anticipates will be used during the meeting.
7. All votes taken in the meeting must be roll call votes and recorded in the minutes.

Remote participation meeting minutes requirements

When a member participated remotely, the minutes shall reflect the following:

1. Means by which remote participation was delivered
2. Beginning time for remote participation
3. Technical difficulties noted
4. Interruption in the remote participation, if applicable
5. Time of interruption or disconnection of remote participation, if applicable

At the Chair's discretion, discussion may be suspended in the event of any technical difficulties or disconnection by the remote participation of member(s).

Executive session requirements

A member participating remotely may participate in an executive session, but shall state at the start of any such session that no other person is present and/or able to hear the discussion at the remote location, unless presence of that person is approved by a simple majority vote of the public body.

Legal Ref.: 940 CMR 29.10; M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Chapter 39: Section 23A and 23B

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