

Section Professional Activities Chair Quick Start Guide

Welcome Message

Welcome to the [Section](#) Professional Activities Chair Quick Start Training. This training assumes you have been recently appointed as your Section's Professional Activities Chair and you want to quickly learn the basics of your position. You've found the right place to get started!

As part of your Section's Executive Committee, the Professional Activities Chair's role is to promote Professional Activities at the pre-university, university and engineering professional levels within your IEEE Section. Professional activities deal with the non-technical side of a technical professional's set of knowledge and skills. Both technical and professional knowledge and skills are important. Indeed the technical professional who is balanced in both domains – technical and professional – has a solid foundation for his or her career. Professional activities focus on topics such as communication effectiveness, career growth, ethics, and leadership just to name a few examples. Since just about every non-technical activity that you help implement in your Section is a "Professional Activity", a number of topics have been identified to help expedite your career as a Section Professional Activities Chair. This Quick Start Training Module will help you be successful in this important Section position.

There are a number of topics that are important to address as you commence your work in your new role.

- Review Your Job Description
- Know Your Section/Chapter/Regional Officers
- Planning and Goal Setting
- Develop Your Network
- Getting Organized With Tools
- Program Resources and Ideas
- Available Resources
- Financing Your Professional Activity Event
- Reporting Project Completion

Review Your Job Description

If you are the Professional Activities Chair for your local section or chapter, your "job description" includes the following responsibilities:

A. Have a working understanding of the IEEE organization:

- a. Contact the Professional Activities Committee (or equivalent) for your Region
- b. Contact your Section's previous Professional Activities Chair for background and suggestions.

B. Know the professional issues of concern to IEEE and those of concern to your membership:

- a. Talk to members of the Executive Committee and Section members to find out their areas of interest or concern.
- b. These areas might include employment, job skills, support for student activities, soft skill training, or entrepreneurial skills, among others.
- c. Keep in touch with colleagues to determine shifts in areas of concern
- d. Communicate this information to your Regional or Divisional Coordinator.
- e. Use these insights to help plan activities of interest to the members of your Section and possibly the local community.

C. Communicate items of professional interest to your membership:

- a. At Executive Committee meetings.
- b. At Section, Chapter, Student Branch, and Affinity Group meetings.
- c. Through articles in Section newsletters or social media postings.

D. Develop, coordinate, and present professional programs:

- a. In support of your Section or Society's goals and objectives.
- b. Guided by the Professional Activities Committee's goals and objectives.
- c. Directed toward meeting your membership's professional interests and concerns

Know Your Section/Chapter/Regional Officers

Communication from your Region provides updates on themes, project ideas and funding for programs that are initiated by the IEEE. One of the first things you should do is to make sure that your appointment has been reported to the IEEE organization by submitting officer reporting changes via IEEE vTools.OfficerReporting. This will insure that you appear in the IEEE Geographic Roster and enables you get all the appropriate communication. You should also get in touch with your Region's Professional Activities Coordinator for guidance on your Region's program goals and objectives. Finally, be sure to establish good communication links with your Section's leadership team.

Planning and Goal Setting

Planning for the future is important when you want to be an effective leader who is known for successful events. Organizing an event can take months, so start early to develop the plan, especially establishing intermediate goals and objectives.

In addition, your Section's previous Professional Activities Chair can provide valuable background information regarding program ideas, networking contacts and available facilities.

Develop Your Network

Planning and executing a professional activities event is just like doing any other project. The more volunteers you involve, the easier it is to make all the necessary arrangements. Likewise, the more people who are aware of the event, the better the attendance will be. Everyone likes to have successful, well attended events!

You need to have close contact with your Section leadership and the Regional Professional Activities Chair. You should use available social media tools (LinkedIn, Face Book etc.), in addition to the suite of available IEEE communication options, to engage your membership. If you choose to utilize any available social media tool, you should be aware of, and become familiar with, IEEE's Social Media Policy. Another effective technique is to conduct a survey of your members using vTools.Surveys (or equivalent, such as SurveyMonkey) or IEEE vTools to identify your members interests or concerns. These tools are essential to recruit volunteers and to organize the planned events. vTools is especially useful because your events announcements are automatically posted to the IEEE community

Getting Organized With Tools

Here is a list of useful IEEE tools and their functions:

SAMIEEE	The IEEE member database. Authorized users (normally Section officers) can query the database to obtain member contact information, mailing addresses and a wealth of other information regarding the membership of your Section.
IEEE vTools	A collection of software tools which allows you to schedule an event, send notices to the members of your Section and file the L31 meeting report at the conclusion of the event. (new capabilities are continually being added)
IEEE E-notice	An email tool which allows you to contact the members of your Section, or a subset of those members.

Program Resources and Ideas

Professional activity projects span a wide range of possible topics. The primary criteria are that the event be largely non-technical, that it enhances member benefits and that it promotes the profession of engineering. Possible ideas for professional activity events include:

- Enhancing employment skills through resume reviews, mock interviews and job clubs.
- Supporting science fairs.
- Organizing or supporting robotics competitions.
- Initiating Teacher In-Service Programs (TISP).
- Programs to support Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education.
- Organizing "Future Cities" competitions.

- Sponsoring professional engineer (PE) exam preparation sessions.
- Supporting university student professional activity conferences (SPAC).
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Available Resources

Each [Section](#) conducts professional activities in a way that reflects their local operating environment, the needs of their members and objectives of their [Region](#). Thus, your Section's previous Professional Activities Chair will be your best source for program ideas and resources. Your Regional Coordinator will also be able to provide guidance regarding funding or program objectives at the Regional level. They should be your first contacts.

In addition, for members in [Region 1-6](#), the IEEE-USA has extensive material on Section and National level professional activities. The "PACE Leaders Handbook" is an important resource of program ideas, procedures and background information. For members in Regions 7-10, Parts III through VI of the Handbook provide general guidance for organizing activities pertinent to your Region.

Financing Your Professional Activity Event

Many professional activities projects can be financed from project income such as registration proceeds. It may also be possible to obtain funding from your [Section](#) or Chapter. Local industry may also volunteer to contribute. Some IEEE committees make funds available for local initiatives. The IEEE-USA Board provides funding for special projects within [Regions 1-6](#). Your Regional Professional Activities Chair will have information available regarding potential sources of funds.

To apply for Regional funds, the Section's Professional Activities Chair must complete a project plan. The content and format of the plan will vary by Region. In many cases Regions provide a funding request form. When available, this form has a self-contained planning guide. Contact your Regional Professional Activities Chair for details and procedures.

Reporting Project Completion

It is important that your Professional Activities projects are communicated throughout your [Region](#). This publicity is a way of sharing best practices. This increases the chances that other organizational units will undertake projects similar to the ones you report, thereby providing a multiplication effect. Each Region will have its own reporting requirements. However, most will require the submission of Quarterly reports listing a summary of the event, costs, dates and attendance.

Be sure to stay in contact your Regional Professional Activities Coordinator to insure that any financial reimbursement is properly credited to your [Section](#)'s treasury.

As a minimum, all professional activity events should be reported through the vTools (L31) reporting system and categorized as a "professional" meeting.