



AO Spine Europe and Southern Africa (AOSESA)

Community Development (CD)

Proximity Activities: Description and Rules of Engagement

Proximity activities are launched in an experimental phase in our region in February 2024.

The main **goals** of this initiative are:

- To multiply the opportunities for members to participate in AO Spine activities at a local level (city, province or small geographic area)
- To promote the formation of local professional communities under AO Spine
- To enhance the chances for members to gain experience as faculty
- To increase the opportunities for AO Spine faculty to gain experience organizing activities
- To provide members with activities in their national language
- To disseminate the awareness about the AO Spine activities and to extend the membership

Proximity activities include in its first release the following **modalities**:

- Proximity Seminars. Are face-to-face activities that include lectures, case discussions, practical exercises other than surgical hands-on, debates. Seminars do not include hands-on with implants, anatomical models, etc.
- Proximity Webinars. Are on-line seminars that include lectures, case discussions, debates

To remain compliant with the AO Spine regulations and its agreements with industrial partners, proximity activities must respect the following **rules of engagement**:

1. The proponent of the activity is its Chairperson
2. The Chairperson must have completed one of the following training programs in AO:
 - a. Faculty Education Program (FEP)
 - b. Chairperson Education Program (CEP)
3. Proximity activities are Zero-Cost activities. This implies that:
 - a. There is no financial AO Spine budget allocated for the activity
 - b. There are no financial expenses associated to the activity
 - i. The location is a hospital premise or equivalent that has no hiring cost.
 - ii. Chairpersons and faculty do not receive any compensation or per-diem.
 - iii. No registration fee is requested to participants. In the event food or coffee is provided, the cost can be shared among the participants and faculties.
 - iv. No sponsorship is provided by any industry or commercial party.
 - v. No commercial exhibition and no hands-on exercises with surgical instruments, implants or similar are included in the activity or otherwise connected to it. No industry or pharma parties representatives are present at the event or take part in its promotion.
 - vi. No advertising of companies or products is made.



- vii. Travel, accommodation or meals are paid by the faculty and participants themselves.
 - 4. No human resources time is allocated for these activities from the AO Spine Office. This means that:
 - a. **The Chairperson will be responsible for:**
 - i. *Definition of the program and appointment of the faculty.* This includes definition of the learning goals and supervision of the output of the faculty, particularly regarding:
 - 1. Scientific soundness
 - 2. Educational quality
 - 3. Use of AO Spine templates for the presentations
 - 4. Absence of commercial bias
 - 5. Ethics and respect to patients' confidentiality and dignity
 - 6. Avoidance of offensive and discriminatory messages and languages
 - 7. Respect the contents of the AO Code of Ethics [aof_code-of-ethics-and-conduct_en.pdf \(aofoundation.org\)](#) and country (and, where applicable, European) regulations.
 - ii. *Submission of the proposal*
 - iii. *Organization of the activity*
 - 1. Availability of room (Seminar) or videoconference tools (Webinars)
 - 2. Availability of the required tools (video projection, computer, etc.)
 - 3. Advertising within their professional network
 - 4. Registration of participants
 - iv. Ensuring a welcoming and comfortable environment for the participants and faculty.
 - v. *Ensuring compliance* with the data protection regulations. [ao_data_privacy_notice.pdf \(aofoundation.org\)](#)
 - b. The process of submission of the proposal is automated and no Event Owner (formerly Course Manager) is designed to manage the organization in the AO Spine Office.
- 5. Proximity Webinars can have:
 - a. A maximum duration of two hours
 - b. Generally, a maximum of three faculties (+ the Chairperson). Exceptions can be proposed when the content or the methodology of the meeting makes it convenient to have more faculties.
- 6. Proximity Seminars can have:
 - a. A maximum duration of five hours
 - b. Generally, a maximum of three faculties (+ the Chairperson). Exceptions can be proposed when the content or the methodology of the meeting makes it convenient to have more faculties.
- 7. Faculty in Proximity Activities do not need to have completed the Faculty Education Program. The Chairperson must assist them to ensure the quality of the activity and will also provide feedback to the faculty to help improve both the educational quality and their continuing improvement as learning facilitators.
- 8. The Chairperson is encouraged to appoint a diverse faculty team, as these activities are also conceived as faculty and leadership incubators in AO Spine.
- 9. In the welcome session (first session of the Seminar/Webinar) the Chairperson will introduce the activities of AO Spine and upcoming events and invite participants to become members. A slide deck will be made available to the Chairperson for this purpose.



10. Proposals will be submitted by filling-in the online Proximity Activities proposal form, the following information needs to be provided:
 - a. Chairperson's name, email address and phone number
 - b. Title of the activity
 - c. Venue, date and hours
 - d. Description of the activity
 - e. Learning goals
 - f. Target participants
 - g. Details of the program
 - h. Names of the faculty
 - i. Language of the event
11. The proposal needs to be approved by:
 - a. The Chairperson of the AO Spine Country Council
 - b. The Community Development Regional Board Officer.
 - c. In addition, the requirement of Chairperson trained in FEP or CEP will be verified
12. Once the activity is approved, the proponent (Chairperson) will receive by email a confirmation. In the same email the Chair will receive the official flyer of the activity, which must be used for promotion. It cannot be modified without authorization of the AO Spine Regional Office.
13. If the proposal was not approved, the proponent will receive an email that will include the comments of the reviewers that motivated the rejection. If these comments can be addressed with modifications of the proposal, the proponent can forward a new proposal.
14. Upon completion of the activity, the Chairperson will submit to the AOSESA office a copy of the presentations, cases and other materials used during the activity. They will be archived as part of the quality and compliance assurance process. These materials will not be made public or disseminated for other purposes than quality and compliance assurance without authorization of the authors.
15. Certificates of attendance will be provided to the Chairperson upon completion of the post-course feedback form, that will include the list of participants. The automatically generated certificates of attendance must be used and sent to the participants "as they are", without modifications.
16. The Chairperson is the only person responsible for the content and delivery of the activity and is accountable for it. AO Spine Europe and Southern Africa declines any responsibility for misconduct or inappropriate content, venue, organization or delivery of the activity. [Disclaimer \(aofoundation.org\)](#)
17. By submitting the proposal, the proponent and Chairperson accepts these rules.