

**BYLAWS**  
**of the Assessment of SpondyloArthritis international Society (ASAS)-foundation**  
**(ASAS-foundation)**



**1. MISSION STATEMENT**

ASAS is an international society of experts in the field of spondyloarthritis.

The mission of ASAS is to support and promote translational and clinical research of spondyloarthritis. The ultimate goal is to improve the wellbeing and outcome of patients with spondyloarthritis.

The means to achieve this goal include:

- Increasing awareness of spondyloarthritis
- Facilitating early diagnosis
- Developing and validating assessment tools
- Evaluating treatment modalities

**2. INTERPRETATION**

In these Bylaws:

***The Executive Committee (EC)*** means the group of nine voting committee members who make strategic decisions on the running of the Society. This includes the president, the past-president, the treasurer, the secretary and 5 ordinary members. The EC can be expanded by two former non-voting EC members (advisors) if deemed necessary by the President.

**The Advisory Committee (AC)** means a group of six committee members who give advice to the EC.

**Young-ASAS (Y-ASAS)** consists of full and associate members under the age of 45 years. Two Y-ASAS representatives are elected by Y-ASAS to represent Y-ASAS in the EC as non-voting members.

Subject as aforesaid, words or expressions contained in these Bylaws shall, unless the context requires otherwise, bear the same meaning.

## **ARTICLE 1 – NAME, PURPOSE**

**1.1 Name.** The name of the organization is the ASSESSMENT OF SPONDYLOARTHRITIS INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY, herein known as “ASAS”.

**1.2 Purpose.** ASAS is organized exclusively for non-profit, educational, and scientific purposes, specifically to facilitate sharing of information related to spondyloarthritis, networking among different medical disciplines that see spondyloarthritis patients and to enhance research, diagnosis and treatment of spondyloarthritis.

## **ARTICLE 2 – MEMBERSHIP**

**2.1 Members.** Eligibility will be open to all health professionals, especially rheumatologists with proven interest and knowledge in clinical and translational research and treatment of spondyloarthritis.

Membership will consist of those health care professionals who represent those diseases.

### **2.1.1. Full member of ASAS**

Full ASAS membership is provided for experts with an established record in the field of

spondyloarthritis. Full members receive all mailing and information from the ASAS EC, are entitled to attend ASAS meetings and events and are able to vote in general meetings, to propose new projects, to participate in existing ASAS activities and to be elected in the ASAS EC. Full members are also included in voting processes and Delphi exercises. Full membership needs to be renewed every year.

Reimbursement of expenses made by full members for attending the annual workshop is subject to EC-decision in the EC-meeting preceding every annual meeting.

Full ASAS member candidates should fulfil the following criteria:

1. Expression of special interest in the field of spondyloarthritis, such as active participation in educational, research, clinical and national groups activities.
2. Authorship of at least 3 publications in the area of spondyloarthritis, published in peer reviewed journals in English during the last 5 years.
3. Working in a setting allowing to actively participate in ASAS research projects.
4. Letters of support from two current full ASAS members.

Applications should be submitted via the dedicated form on the ASAS website <https://www.asas-group.org/members/apply-to-become-a-member/>

Criteria for the prolongation of the full ASAS membership are:

1. Attendance of at least 3 ASAS meetings over the last 3 years, being at least one of these in physical format.
2. Participation in at least 65% of the ASAS questionnaires/surveys (should this not be possible or feasible for any reasons, a notification has to be sent by email to the persons conducting the Delphi exercise) over the last 3 years.
3. Authorship in at least 3 publications in the area of spondyloarthritis, published in peer reviewed journals in English during the last 5 years.
4. Active participation in ASAS initiatives, such as ASAS research projects or Y-ASAS teams. This can compensate criterion number 3.

### **2.1.2. Associate member of ASAS**

Associate members are either trainees in rheumatology or those persons who are developing a scientific record in the study of spondyloarthritis. Associate members are receiving all mailing and information from the ASAS EC, are entitled to attend ASAS meetings and events, and to participate in existing ASAS activities including Delphi exercises. They do not have the ability to conduct independent research projects within ASAS, and are not able to vote in general meetings. Associate membership can be upgraded to a full membership after 2 years or extended for another 2 years (a maximum of 2 renewals is allowed) if the upgrade criteria are not fulfilled.

Reimbursement of expenses made by associate members for attending the annual workshop is subject to EC-decision in the EC-meeting preceding every annual meeting.

Associate ASAS member candidates should fulfil the following criteria:

1. Expression of special interest in the field of spondyloarthritis, such as active participation in educational, research, clinical and national groups activities.
2. Authorship of at least 1 publication in the area of spondyloarthritis, published in peer reviewed journal in English during the last 5 years.
3. Working in a setting allowing to actively participate in ASAS research projects.
4. Letters of support from two current full ASAS members.
5. Associate member candidates must also name a 'mentor' who should be a current ASAS full member and will oversee their scientific development during the associate membership time.

Applications should be submitted via the dedicated form on the ASAS website <https://www.asas-group.org/members/apply-to-become-a-member/>

Criteria for the prolongation of the associate ASAS membership (max. 2 extensions) are:

1. A letter of support from the previously mentioned mentor.
2. Attendance of at least 2 ASAS meetings over the last 2 years, being at least one of these in physical format.
3. Participation in at least 65% of the ASAS questionnaires/surveys (should this not be possible or feasible for any reasons, a notification has to be sent by email to the persons conducting the Delphi exercise) over the last 2 years.
4. Authorship in at least 1 publication in the area of spondyloarthritis, published in peer reviewed journals in English during the last 5 years.
5. Active participation in ASAS initiatives, such as research projects or Y-ASAS teams. This can compensate criterion number 4.

A maximum of two renewals (i.e. maximum 6 years as associate member) are allowed.

For upgrade of associate to full membership the following is required:

1. Authorship in at least 3 publications in the area of spondyloarthritis, published in peer reviewed journals over the last 5 years and
2. A letter of support of previously named 'mentor' submitted together with the application for membership upgrade.

Applications should be submitted via the dedicated form on the ASAS website

<https://www.asas-group.org/members/apply-to-become-a-member/>

**2.1.3. Corporate membership.** Corporate partnership will be available and open to pharmaceutical companies with vested interests in the field of spondyloarthritis. Corporate partnership implies an annual contribution in the form of an unrestricted grant to ASAS-foundation that will be employed to facilitate ASAS-aims as outlined in the ASAS-MISSION STATEMENT (1). Contributions can be made in four predetermined sponsor levels corresponding to different service levels, as outlined on the website of ASAS. The EC decides on an annual basis about the amount of the contributions per service-level and about the content of the services.

**2.2 Acceptance of membership applications.** The EC will decide about membership approval by majority voting at least two times per year. The EC reserves the right to temporarily put new membership approvals on hold.

The membership lasts as long as the above-mentioned requirements are met. This implies for example for full members ongoing interest in clinical research and participation in ASAS activities, and for corporate members that they have paid their annual dues.

### **ARTICLE 3 – Executive Committee Members**

**3.1 Role of Executive Committee Members.** The EC is responsible for overall policy and direction of ASAS and delegates responsibility for day-to-day operations to committees, or task forces or working groups. The EC will receive no compensation others than reasonable expenses actually incurred that are approved by the EC.

**3.2 Executive Committee Meetings.** The EC will hold meetings at no less than two times per year and agreed upon time, format and place. The EC meetings will be conducted for the purpose of discussing and planning the affairs of ASAS.

**3.3 Executive Committee Elections.** Members of the EC who rotate off will be replaced as part of an election held at the annual meeting of ASAS. Applications for EC-membership has to be submitted to the President not later than 4 weeks before the annual ASAS-meeting. Only full ASAS members are entitled to vote. Election will be on the basis of simple majority. Non-attending full ASAS members are entitled to vote following the standardized procedure established by the EC for this purpose, which will be announced by email prior to the annual meeting. One full ASAS member can only vote on behalf of a maximum of two other full ASAS-members.

**3.3.1. Election of the President.** The President will be elected by voting members of the current EC. The candidate president does not take part in this voting and should have served in the EC for a period of at least two years.

**3.3.2. Election of the Treasurer.** The Treasurer will be elected by voting members of the current EC. The candidate treasurer does not take part in this voting and should have served in the EC for a period of at least two years.

**3.4 Terms.** All members serving on the EC, with the exception of president, past-president and treasurer (see below), will serve a term of six years. EC members may be re-elected following the standardised procedure for EC elections (article 9) for a maximum of two consecutive terms.

**3.4.1. Term of the President.** The term of the president is four years and may be extended by two years at the discretion of the EC.

**3.4.2. Term of the Treasurer.** The term of the treasurer is six years and can be extended with terms of two years at the discretion of the EC.

**3.4.3. Term of the Past-President.** The term of the Past-President is four years and can be extended with terms of two years at the discretion of the EC.

**3.5 Quorum.** At least 5 of the 9 voting EC members should be present for voting before business can be transacted or motions made or passed.

**3.6 Notice.** An official EC meeting requires that each member has written notice one month in advance. Notices will be sent by the President or Secretary by email.

**3.7 Non-attendance.** EC members should attend at least one EC meeting per year. Attendance at less than this number would mean disqualification from the EC and replacement by election at the next annual meeting.

**3.8 Resignation, Termination and Absences.** Resignation from the EC must be in writing and received by the President. An EC member will be discharged for excess absences if s/he

has been absent from all society and EC meetings in one year. An EC member may be discharged for other reasons at the discretion of the EC after majority voting.

**3.9 Limited Authority.** No EC member is authorized to make a non-budgeted expenditure.

**3.10 Special Meetings.** Special meetings of the EC will be called upon the request of the President or two EC members or two thirds of the Advisory Board for the purpose of discussing issues needing immediate attention. Notices of special meetings will be sent out by the President or Secretary to each EC Member at least 2 weeks in advance.

**3.11 Officers and Duties.** The EC will consist of nine elected members with voting rights, including President, Past-President, Treasurer, Secretary and 5 ordinary members. A maximum of two advisory EC members without voting rights and two Y-ASAS members without voting rights will be added for advisory or training purposes, and have the right to attend EC-meetings. The duties of the EC members will be as follows:

The President will convene regularly scheduled EC meetings, will preside or will arrange for other members to preside at each meeting in the following order: President – Past-President – Secretary – Treasurer - Other EC member.

The Past-President will take over the role of President on demand of the President or inability of the President to perform the tasks required to run the society.

The Secretary will be responsible for keeping records of actions of the EC, including overseeing the taking of minutes at the meetings, sending out meeting announcements, distributing copies of minutes and the agenda to each EC member, and assuring that corporate records are maintained.

The Treasurer will make a report at each EC meeting. The Treasurer will make arrangements for establishing financial accounts, assist in the preparation of the budget, oversee fundraising



plans, and make financial information available to EC members and authorities. The Treasurer will oversee a written account of all financial transactions to be made available to the EC and the Advisory Board at the annual meeting.

#### **ARTICLE 4 – BUDGET**

**4.1 Minimum Balance of Funds.** The EC will assure that a minimum balance of €30.000 remains in the treasury for the next year's initial operating expenses.

**4.2 Fund Raising.** All possible fund-raising projects will be overseen by the EC.

**4.3 Annual Budget.** The Treasurer shall oversee the annual budget and ensure adequate funds to fulfill the aims of the organization. These aims will include the organization of annual meetings, attendance of group members at special meetings, and the provision of funds to establish research projects.

#### **ARTICLE 5 – ANNUAL MEETINGS**

**5.1 Annual Meeting.** A minimum of one meeting for all members will be held annually. The Annual Meeting is conducted for the purpose of allowing the entire membership of ASAS to discuss affairs of the organization and to elect new EC members. Prior announcement of date, time, format and place of the Annual Meeting will be made through email to all members of ASAS. At least half of the EC members should be present at the Annual Meeting. The date, time, format and place of the Annual Meeting will be set by the EC.

**5.2 Notice.** Notice of the Annual Meeting will be given to each member, by email not less than 4 weeks before the meeting.

**5.3 Decisions Requiring Approval.** Any decision requiring EC approval may be conducted by the Secretary or another EC member as requested by the President instead of a meeting. The process will be as follows:

1. The Secretary will attempt to communicate the issue requiring approval to all EC members by their preferred method.
2. EC members will have one week to communicate their vote (Approve/Reject) to the Secretary.
3. The measure will pass if a simple majority of respondents approve the measure. To be valid, a quorum (half) of the EC members must reply to the measure.
4. The Secretary will record all responses, and communicate the results to all EC members, and whether the measure is approved or rejected.

**5.4 Records.** The Secretary will keep an accurate record of all decisions requiring EC approval.

## **ARTICLE 6 – COMMITTEES**

**6.1 Formation.** The EC may establish committees as needed, such as a research committee, publications committee, etc. The EC will appoint a chair to each committee established. Always one EC member will be participating in such a committee.

**6.2 Advisory Committee.** The AC means a group of members who give advice to the EC. This includes up to six members from those who rotate off from the EC, and is nominated by the EC. Usually, the term for each of the AC member is six years.

**6.3 Finance Committee.** The Treasurer is chair of the Finance Committee, which comprises the other members of the EC. The Finance Committee is responsible for developing and reviewing fiscal procedures, a fundraising plan, and annual budget. The EC must approve the budget, and all expenditures must be within the budget. Any major change in the budget must be approved by the EC. The fiscal year will be the calendar year. Annual reports are required

to be submitted to the EC showing income, expenditures and pending income. The financial records of ASAS will be made available to the EC.

**Hiring of Administrative Staff.** The Treasurer will have oversight over identifying and negotiating a contract to hire staff who will be administrative support for ASAS. A contract with staff will be reviewed and renewed each year, prior to the start of the fiscal year. The Treasurer will solicit feedback from the EC regarding hiring and contracting of administrative staff.

## **ARTICLE 7 – QUORUM**

**7.1 Of ASAS Members.** One-sixth of ordinary members will constitute a quorum for a general or special meeting.

**7.2 Of EC Members.** One half of the EC Members will constitute a quorum for an Executive Session.

## **ARTICLE 8 – DUES**

**8.1 Dues.** There are no dues to be paid.

## **ARTICLE 9 – ELECTIONS**

**9.1 Elections.** Elections for Members of the EC will be carried out as follows:

1. The President will announce by email at least three months before that an election will take place at the next Annual Meeting of the society. All full ASAS members have the right to propose themselves for election until one month prior to the meeting to the President. At the time of the election, the Secretary will read the names of these nominees. Additional nominations from the floor will not be accepted.
2. The election for each office will be run by a person not running for that office.

## ARTICLE 10 – AMENDMENTS

**10.1. Amendments.** These Bylaws may be amended, when necessary, by a two-thirds majority of the EC. Proposed amendments must be submitted to the Secretary to be sent out with regular EC announcements.

These Bylaws were approved by the ASAS Executive Committee on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024.