Welcome to your Branch Handbook. We have developed this Handbook to provide a comprehensive guide to everything you need to know to run your branch or chapter.

We appreciate that this all might seem a lot to take in, but remember that the worldwide secretariat is always on hand to offer further help and guidance, and to assist you in running your branch or chapter.

We have divided this Handbook into six sections, separated by tabs to help you find what you are looking for.

But before you move on, we want to say thank you: our branch and chapter network is a vital part of STEP, and your commitment and hard work is hugely valued.
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ABOUT STEP

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FACTS AND FIGURES

- 20,000+ MEMBERS
- 96 COUNTRIES
- 14,000 TEPs
- 100+ BRANCHES

REGIONAL MEMBERSHIP

- UK & IRELAND: 38%
- CONTINENTAL EUROPE: 13%
- CROWN DEPENDENCIES: 12%
- CANADA: 11%
- ASIA & AUSTRALIA: 11%
- CARIBBEAN & LATIN AMERICA: 8%
- USA: 5%
- AFRICA & ARABIA: 2%
OUR VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

VISION
To be the pre-eminent worldwide professional association for those advising families across generations.

MISSION
To help families plan their assets across generations by:

- promoting high professional standards
- educating professionals
- connecting advisors and families globally
- informing public policy
- acting in the public interest

VALUES
In all of its work, STEP will:

- promote professional educational attainment
- act transparently
- uphold professional standards
- serve our members, whatever their professional background, wherever they are based
- recognise our responsibility to the public interest
OUR STRATEGY

OUR STRATEGIC AIMS

To achieve STEP’s vision to be the pre-eminent worldwide professional association for those advising families across generations we have set out the following strategic aims:

1. To ensure STEP’s membership offer is both highly rated and delivered consistently and effectively across our membership wherever they are based.

2. To ensure all STEP members feel they have an effective voice in developing STEP’s membership offer.

3. To build STEP’s external reputation as a leading global professional body with widely recognised qualifications and professional standards.

OBJECTIVES TO DELIVER THESE AIMS

1. To ensure all STEP members feel they have an effective voice in developing STEP’s membership offer.
   a) Ensure transparency and fairness of governance processes with clear accountabilities
   b) Encourage members at all levels to get involved in STEP

2. To ensure STEP’s membership offer is both highly rated and delivered consistently and effectively across our membership wherever they are based.
   a) Provide a comprehensive package of central resources to support members in their careers
   b) Strengthen STEP’s branch and regional structure to ensure effective and consistent delivery across the network
   c) Develop STEP’s internal infrastructure to provide effective support to members, branches and regions

3. To build STEP’s external reputation as a leading global professional body with widely recognised qualifications and professional standards.
   a) Work to strengthen STEP’s professional standards and membership entry criteria to ensure quality and consistency
   b) Raise public awareness of what STEP is and what STEP members do
   c) Develop partnerships with leading academic institutions
   d) Maintain and build on relationships with policy makers internationally
OUR BRAND

THE EVOLUTION

STEP has grown dramatically since our beginnings as a niche society for UK-based accountants and lawyers working with trusts. Now with more than 20,000 members across the world from a range of professional backgrounds, our emphasis has broadened and trusts are just one part of the wider role our members play in advising families on inheritance and succession planning.

In the 2021 consultation exercise, members felt strongly that STEP needed to be more outward facing— to look beyond our members to our relationships and our reputation with the public, media and external stakeholders such as governments and regulatory bodies.

As a result, in 2015 we launched a refreshed visual identity to represent us as an international, professional and outward-facing organisation.

We are now simply known as STEP, and have introduced a strapline that says more about what we and our members do.

Our branding is clear and flexible for effective use across all communications platforms, both traditional and digital.

Our Brand Guidelines, as well as various other elements— including a video explaining our brand, fonts, templates and logos— are available for branches and chapters to download at www.step.org/brand

If you need any information, advice or help with our branding, please contact the Marketing or Communications teams.
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STEP
WORKS
HOW STEP WORKS

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OUR STRUCTURE

STEP is formed under Articles of Association, supported by Standing Orders and Admission Rules and Disciplinary Rules. You can find all of these governance documents at www.step.org/governance

STEP’s governing bodies and committees, and our worldwide network of regions, branches and chapters are all run by members.

These members are supported by STEP staff, who look after the day-to-day management and operation of the Society.

Our central operations are run by our Worldwide Secretariat in London, UK, where we have a staff of 40.

In addition, we also have a number of regional staff who provide support to branches and chapters in those regions. These include:

• STEP Canada, which has a staff of eight in Toronto and looks after the needs of our Canadian members
• STEP Verein office in Zug, which administers the membership in the Lucerne-Zug, Lugano, Vaduz and Zurich centres.
• Admin staff in Australia, Bahamas, Guernsey, Jersey, Hong Kong, Malta, Singapore, USA.

Contact details and information on who does what is available at www.step.org/contact
GOVERNANCE

WORLDWIDE BOARD

COUNCIL

REGIONAL COMMITTEES (WHERE APPLICABLE)

BRANCH COMMITTEES

MEMBERS

BOARD COMMITTEES AND PANELS

- Audit and Risk Committee
- Branch Development Committee
- Disciplinary Panel
- Governance Committee
- HR and Remuneration Panel
- Membership Committee
- Oversight of Conferences Committee
- Professional Development Committee
- Professional Standards Committee
- Public Policy Committee

GLOBAL SIG STEERING COMMITTEES

- Business families
- Charities
- Contentious trust and estates
- Cross-border estates
- Digital assets
- International client
- Mental capacity
- Philanthropy advisors

HOW STEP WORKS
WORLDWIDE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board is responsible for setting the overall strategic direction of STEP. Its members are the legal Directors of STEP with the legal authority and responsibility for the organisation. Directors are appointed by Council from the serving Council members. One member of the Board serves as Chair of STEP, and up to two serve as Deputy Chairmen. There are currently eight members in all, including the Chief Executive ex officio.

YOUR BOARD FOR 2018

PATRICIA WASS (CHAIR)
SIMON MORGAN (DEPUTY CHAIR)
DAVID RUSSELL QC (DEPUTY CHAIR)
NANCY GOLDING QC
IAN HUDDLESTON
BILL AHERN
DAYRA BERBEY DE ROJAS
GEORGE HODGSON (CHIEF EXECUTIVE EX OFFICIO)
REGIONAL REPRESENTATION

STEP Council members are the primary channels for communication and representation between branches/chapters and central governance bodies. They are your first port of call if you have an issue you would like referred to Board or any of its committees.

Council consists of 30 members elected by members or their representatives from branches and chapters globally, with regional representation proportionate to membership numbers.

Some regions have also formed regional committees, which exist to support branches and chapters in serving the members within the region.

The regions and their respective Council and regional committee (where applicable) representatives for 2018 are outlined below.

Region: AFRICA AND ARABIA
Membership: 2%
Branches/chapters: 6
Council members: 1
• Assad Abdullatif
Regional committee: N/A

Region: ASIA
Membership: 6%
Branches/chapters: 3
Council members: 2
• Bill Ahern (Hong Kong)
• Lionel Choi Heng Yen (Singapore)
Regional committee: N/A

Region: AUSTRALASIA
Membership: 5%
Branches/chapters: 7
Council members: 1
• David Russell QC
Regional committee: STEP Australia Board of Directors
Regional chair: Neil Wickenden
Region: **CANADA**
Membership: **11%**
Branches/chapters: **11**
Council members: **3**
  - William Fowlis QC
  - Nancy Golding QC
  - Tim Grieve
Regional committee: STEP Canada Board of Directors
Regional chair: Ruth March

Region: **CARIBBEAN AND LATIN AMERICA**
Membership: **8%**
Branches/chapters: **16**
Council members: **3**
  - Dayra Berbey de Rojas
  - Roland Jones
  - Alan Milgate
Regional committee: STEP Caribbean and Latin America Regional Committee
Regional chair: Ivan Hooper

Region: **CROWN DEPENDENCIES**
Membership: **12%**
Branches/chapters: **3**
Council members: **4**
  - Tracey Greenwood (Isle of Man)
  - Alasdair McLaren (Guernsey)
  - Simon Morgan (Jersey)
  - Tony Pitcher (Jersey)
Regional committee: N/A

Region: **EUROPE**
Membership: **5%**
Branches/chapters: **11**
Council members: **2**
  - Peter Economides
  - Panicos Loizou
Regional committee: STEP Europe Regional Committee
Regional chair: Paolo Panico
Region: **SWITZERLAND AND LIECHTENSTEIN**
Membership: 8%
Branches/chapters: **3 + Verein (4 centres)**
Council members: 2
• Felicity Keller
• Philippe Pulfer
Regional committee: Swiss & Liechtenstein STEP Federation (SLSF)
Regional chairs: Cecile Vuillier and Felicity Keller

Region: **UK AND IRELAND**
Membership: 38%
Branches/chapters: 27
Council members: 10
• Ian Huddleston (Ireland/NI/Scotland)
• Ian Macdonald (Ireland/NI/Scotland)
• Amanda Simmonds (E&W North East)
• Anthony Nixon (E&W South)
• Jennie Pratt (E&W East)
• Stephen Lawson (E&W North West)
• Peter McGeown (E&W Midlands)
• Toby Crooks (E&W City of London)
• Richard Frimston (E&W London Central)
• Patricia Wass (E&W West and Wales)
Regional committee: STEP England & Wales Regional Committee (none for Ireland/NI/Scotland)
Regional chair: Rita Bhargava (E&W)

Region: **USA**
Membership: 5%
Branches/chapters: 17
Council members: 2
• Stanley Barg
• Babetta Von Albertini
Regional committee: STEP USA Board of Directors
Regional chair: Katharine Davidson
YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES
YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

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BRANCH PURPOSE AND COMMITMENT

All STEP members are affiliated to a specific local branch/chapter in the country of their usual residence.

The Branch Regulations, which are included in full on pages 36 to 42, set out the high-level requirements for branches and chapters to educate members, be economically self-sufficient and regulate their own affairs to the prescribed standards to ensure democracy, good governance, financial responsibility and transparency.

For the most part, branches/chapters govern themselves and the Board, Council, regional committee and STEP Worldwide office will not become involved in their internal affairs except under exceptional circumstances, such as failure to operate on at least a breakeven basis, leadership or succession issues, inactivity or complaints from branch/chapter members.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

STEP members who serve on central, branch and regional committees are subject to the Code of Best Practice for Council and Committee Members (see page 24) and should adopt the standards outlined in the guidance document: Elected Members – Acting in STEP’s Interests (see page 23).

Upholding professional standards

STEP prides itself on the high standards and competence of its members. In order to maintain clients’ trust and respect, all members must behave professionally and ethically, comply with all relevant regulations and legislation, and keep their skills and competencies up to date.

As a branch/chapter officer you have a responsibility to let us know if you have a concern about a matter affecting your branch or region, whether a member may be under investigation by a local regulator or police, an issue is under scrutiny in local media, or for any other reason you have questions or concerns. It is important that we are consistent in the way in which matters are handled across our global network, and in these instances you should contact STEP’s Professional Standards Manager at standards@step.org
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

At the first meeting of a branch/chapter after its formation and at each AGM you need to elect the committee for the ensuing year. As a minimum the committee must comprise a Chair, Deputy Chair, Secretary and Treasurer, and other officers where necessary for the operation of the branch/chapter. The responsibilities of the committee-member positions are outlined below:

Chair
The Chair is responsible for the overall activities of the branch/chapter. At the branch/chapter AGM they shall present a report on the year’s activities specifying the number of events that have been held, which should be sent to the Worldwide office within 14 days of the AGM.

Secretary
The Secretary is responsible for the formal aspects of branch/chapter administration, including calling meetings, taking or arranging for minutes of meetings, and handling statutory matters as required (such as government filings). Minutes of branch/chapter meetings should be sent on request to the STEP Worldwide office so they can be reviewed for items of significance to the worldwide organisation.

Treasurer
The Treasurer is responsible for accounting for the branch/chapter’s activities, banking matters, which will include bank deposits, approving expenses, and writing cheques, and other financial matters (such as cash flow projections and budgets). The branch/chapter treasurer should be familiar with the points noted on page 34.

Programmes Secretary
The Programmes Secretary is normally responsible for all aspects of a branch/chapter’s events programme, including the design of a programme itself, arranging speakers, venue, hand-out materials, etc., and other related logistics. While tasks can and should be delegated and shared, experience has shown that one person must ultimately be responsible.

SIG Officer
Satellite SIG operations within a Branch Committee structure necessitate a member to assume the position of SIG Officer. The SIG Officer leads the satellite activities for the branch (specifically events), ensures SIG content is on the agenda for event programming, and upholds Satellite SIG reporting requirements. See more on Satellite SIGs on page 68.

Membership Secretary
The role of Membership Secretary is important, particularly in the first few years of a branch/chapter’s life. During this period, there should be a concerted membership drive, and a large number of membership applications can be expected. In addition, it will be necessary to maintain the monthly member list, check on members whose applications are in process, prospective members’ details, and ensure members update their contact details on the STEP website www.step.org/user/login
The Membership Secretary should be familiar with the process for joining STEP, details of which can be found on page 45.

Student Liaison Officer
The Student Liaison Officer (SLO) should take responsibility for ensuring that the branch/chapter programme includes at least two events each year aimed specifically at student members. However, the responsibility for seeing to the mechanics of putting on these events should rest with the branch/chapter Committee, not the SLO.

NB: A person shall cease to be a member of the branch/chapter Committee if he resigns or ceases to be a Member or a Member of the branch/chapter. (Branch Regulations 3.5)
ELECTED MEMBERS
ACTING IN STEP’S INTERESTS

EXPERCTATIONS OF BEHAVIOUR

The majority of STEP members serving our committees act completely appropriately, taking their roles and responsibilities seriously. However, STEP acknowledges that instances of poor behaviour which remain unchallenged have a negative effect on both the workings of its committees and the Society.

Members have a shared responsibility and accountability to STEP to demonstrate personal behaviour which pays attention to the values and attitudes required to act in STEP’s and the wider public’s interest.

Members are expected to show a commitment to the purpose of the committee to which they are appointed, demonstrating probity and integrity during their tenure. In carrying out their role, members are expected to show care, diligence and skill, respecting those they interact with, whether member or Secretariat.

Members should be able to listen to others, consider their views and show tolerance for their opinions. Debate and the challenging of others opinions is considered healthy and members should be able to accept challenges to their views with good grace. It is the role of the Chair of any meeting to ensure disagreements are managed appropriately within that environment, ensuring there is an opportunity to explore all sides to arguments.

Members are bound by a collective responsibility once the committee on which they serve has arrived at a majority decision. All committee members are bound by that decision and must not seek to undermine or frustrate its implementation.

Individuals who repeatedly raise issues with little or no merit, which requires a disproportionate level of staff and committee time or causes stress to an individual, may be viewed as displaying vexatious behaviour. Should such a situation arise, we may consider such behaviour under our Habitual and Vexatious Policy.

Members, senior members of the Secretariat, and Committee Secretaries all have a responsibility to challenge attitudes, discourteous language and behaviour which could be perceived as underhand, manipulative or disruptive. At all times, the strategic direction of STEP should remain the focus on the work of committees, with conflicts of interest actively managed.

STEP’s governance arrangements are covered within our Articles of Association, Standing Orders, Committee Terms of Reference and Code of Best Practice (“the Code”). The Code places explicit expectations on members to show judgement, professionalism, maturity, courtesy and wisdom in their dealings with the Society and its members. Members must justify the confidence of members of the Society in the governance of the Society.

The Code describes the widely accepted seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

In addition, STEP expects Members to demonstrate respect and dignity towards others and value equality and diversity. Breaches of the Code can ultimately trigger a formal investigation under STEP’s disciplinary process.
CODE OF BEST PRACTICE

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES FOR COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This document sets out the principles with which members of the Society’s Council and members of committees / panels / other groups of the Society (together known as ‘the Members’) are required to comply.

1.2 No exposition can be all encompassing and so Members are expected to show judgement, professionalism, maturity, courtesy and wisdom in their dealings with the Society and its members and in the application of these principles. They are expected to set an example and justify the confidence of members of the Society in the governance of the Society.

2 CORE PRINCIPLES

2.1 Selflessness
Members must act in the best interests of the Society whilst having regard to the wider public interest.

Members must not improperly make decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their families or friends or persons with whom they have a business connection.

2.2 Integrity
Members must not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations which influence them or might reasonably be perceived to influence them in their performance as Members.

Members must not misuse information gained in the course of their role as a Member for personal gain or political purposes.

Members must act in good faith in the stewardship of funds.

2.3 Objectivity
Members must act in good faith and observe the highest standard of objectivity in carrying out their role.

All decisions must be made on merit.

In carrying out their role, Members must put STEP’s interests first and must not act as representatives of any other organisation to which they may belong.
2.4 Accountability
Members are accountable for their conduct and should be prepared to justify their conduct and to submit to appropriate scrutiny.

2.5 Openness
Members must be as open as possible about the decisions and actions they take. They should give reasons for their decisions. They should restrict information only where the interests of the Society or the law require it.

2.6 Honesty
Members must be honest and disclose relevant financial and other interests where those interests affect or may be reasonably perceived as affecting their duties as Members.

2.7 Leadership
Members should promote these principles and lead by example.

2.8 Respect, Equality and Diversity
Members should lead by example in demonstrating respect and dignity for others, to include valuing diversity and conducting themselves in a non-discriminatory manner at all times.

3 DUTIES

3.1 Members have a duty to ensure compliance with the Society’s Articles of Association and Standing Orders, with the Society’s Code of Professional Conduct, all other regulations issued by the Society from time to time, and with all relevant legislation.

3.2 Members who sit on Branch Committees additionally have a duty to ensure compliance with the Prescribed Branch Regulations.

3.3 Members who sit on the Board additionally have a duty to ensure that the Society does not exceed its powers or functions.
Members who have control over the use of funds have a duty to ensure that those funds are properly used and safeguarded and that there is compliance with any restrictions on the level or purpose of expenditure.

3.4 Members must properly account for their expenses incurred or fees paid to them.

4 REPRESENTATION OF CONSTITUENTS

Members are representatives of their constituency members but not delegates. Members should seek to represent the views of their constituents but should also have regard to the interests of the Society as a whole and the wider public interest. Members should keep their constituents informed.

5 COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

The expression of individual views by Members is an important source of counsel. However, Members should recognise that decisions may be made by a majority of the Council/committee with which they disagree. Once a majority decision has been reached all Members are bound by that decision and must not seek to undermine or frustrate its implementation.
5.2 At the meeting at which the decision is taken, a dissenting Member may request that their dissent is recorded in the Minutes.

5.3 A dissenting Member must communicate the decision to his constituents and adopt a constructive approach in doing so.

6 ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

Whilst it is acknowledged that they are volunteers, Members should be prepared to commit sufficient time and energy to carry out their functions effectively. In particular Members must attend meetings of the Council and of any committee to which they belong unless prevented from doing so by compelling personal or professional reasons.

7 STANDARDS OF DEBATE

Members must uphold high standards in Council / committee debates. Members must conduct such debates with courtesy and respect for differing views whilst allowing frank and robust discussions. Members should avoid making personal attacks on other Members.

8 CONFIDENTIALITY

Members must not communicate information which is explicitly given to them in confidence or which comes into their possession in circumstances where a duty of confidentiality arises.

9 DEALING WITH THE PUBLIC AND MEDIA

9.1 When speaking in public about the work of the Society or its policies (whether to the press or in any public forum, including the use of the social media) Members must ensure that they reflect the current policies and views of the Society. Members should ensure that their comments are well informed, well considered and that none of their comments brings the Society into disrepute.

9.2 If a Member is expressing a personal opinion it must be made clear that it does not necessarily represent that of the Society.

9.3 Before speaking to the media Members should where possible consult the Chief Executive or Deputy Chief Executive. If that is not possible they must report the contact to the Chief Executive as soon as possible thereafter.

9.4 Guidelines may be published from time to time in this area and Members must comply with any such guidelines.

10 RELATIONS WITH SOCIETY STAFF

10.1 Members must recognise that staff are part of a line management structure. Members should respect the role of the staff, which is to implement the decisions of the Society.

10.2 A Member who is concerned about the capability or performance of a member of staff should raise the matter in accordance with the Society’s line management structure. Members should not seek to discipline a member of staff themselves nor seek to criticise them in open session meetings.

10.3 Members must not engage in any behaviour towards members of staff which might reasonably be interpreted as discrimination, bullying or harassment.
11 CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS AND PROFESSIONAL SANCTIONS

11.1 Members undertake to inform the Society of any past conviction or current investigation for criminal offences and of any sanctions imposed on them by regulatory bodies, in accordance with the Code of Professional Conduct.

11.2 Where a Member is being investigated by his or her professional regulatory body or by the Police or is subject to professional regulatory or criminal proceedings and his or her continued membership of the Council or Committee, as the case may be, is detrimental to the interests of the Society the Member should relinquish his or her position. This provision applies equally to candidates for such positions.

12 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND THE REGISTER OF INTERESTS

12.1 Members are required on taking up office to declare their interests for registration in the Register of Members’ Interests held by the Council or Committee on which they sit and to ensure that the information is updated as soon as it changes.

12.2 Members must declare all relevant interests including (but not limited to):

12.2.1 Membership of a body (including a Trade Union, professional organisation or political party) whose purposes include influencing public opinion or policy in areas relevant to the Society’s work

12.2.2 Any appointments or contracts which could lead to a commercial conflict of interest

12.2.3 Sponsorship

12.2.4 Potential conflicts arising from the possession of confidential information.

12.3 Members must also declare any relevant interests of a spouse, partner, dependent or other close family member where (a) the Member is aware of the interest and (b) a fair-minded observer might reasonably perceive a conflict of interest.

12.4 Members have a duty to declare any personal or pecuniary interest in proposed transactions or arrangements or any other interest that they think may relate to any decision being taken. Where their conflict of interests makes it appropriate to do so, Members must limit their participation in debate and or decision-making.

12.5 Members must ensure that they declare any potential conflicts of interest in advance if they wish to speak in debate where the subject of the debate could potentially lead to such conflicts.

12.6 Members must also declare if they have been lobbied by any body, organisation or individual in relation to the debate.

12.7 When Members are representing the Society in other forums they must do so exclusively and must not at that forum represent any other body, organisation or individual.

13 SELF-PROMOTION

Members must not use their position to market themselves or their business although they may refer to their position in their curriculum vitae.
14 GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

Members must not accept gifts or hospitality where this might cause their integrity or independence to be questioned. Such gifts and hospitality over the value of £200 (or equivalent value in local currency) must be reported to the Chief Executive within 28 days of receipt.

15 COMPLAINTS AGAINST MEMBERS IN RESPECT OF THEIR OBLIGATION UNDER THIS STATEMENT

Any complaint against a Member will be dealt with in line with our ‘Handling Complaints against Elected Members’ policy and process which can be found as Appendix A of this document.

16 INTERPRETATION

Questions about the interpretation of this statement should be referred initially to the Chief Executive.
MEDIA INTERACTION AND CRISIS COMMS

With increasingly intense media scrutiny into the areas in which a number of STEP members operate, it is more important than ever that STEP maintains a united and clear policy message when approached for media comment.

While we appreciate that members in different jurisdictions and regions around the world may have different reactions to, and opinions on, current events, STEP must act in the best interests of all of its members and protect their reputation, and our messaging will reflect that responsibility.

It is therefore important that all committee members, as representatives of STEP, adhere to STEP’s Code for Best Practice for Council and Committee Members, in relation to ‘Dealing with the public and media’ (see page 26).

If an actual or potential media situation has arisen in your region please inform STEP Worldwide as soon as possible so we can monitor the situation and help develop holding statements and manage any press enquiries as appropriate.

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PROTOCOL

Should a crisis situation arise, we have developed the following template, which would be sent out to relevant branches.

The following communications protocol will be effective from [TIME AND DATE] and will remain in force until further notice from STEP’s Director of Communications.

This protocol is designed to manage interaction between the media and other external audiences and STEP employees, volunteers and members to protect from unintentionally providing unplanned or unapproved information.

It is important to ensure a consistent public response across STEP, so we would ask branch/chapter/Regional Committee, Council and Board members to not reply directly, but instead forward any queries to STEP’s Communications Team at the STEP WW offices in London following the below protocol.
THE ISSUE

[A brief outline of the situation, any action taken, key facts]

PROACTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

No employee, volunteer or individual member, speaking on behalf of STEP, should proactively communicate with the media, or any other external audiences, about the issue without the prior knowledge and consent of STEP’s Director of Communications.

REACTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

If you are contacted by a journalist or stakeholder, the first response should be to read out or copy-and-paste the agreed initial holding statement, which is as follows:

[The agreed holding statement]

If this statement is not suitable for the query you have received, or if you are pushed for more comment or detail, you should follow the wording set out below as closely as reasonably possible:

‘I am sorry. I am not able to comment further on this matter. Let me take your details and we will get back to you as soon as we are able to do so.’

You should then request and note down the following details:

• Name
• Company / media title
• Telephone number and email address
• Main queries
• Copy deadline (where relevant)

Once you have ended the conversation, you should immediately send an email to the following people including all details noted:

• Joanna Pegum, PR and Media Executive
  joanna.pegum@step.org
  +44 (0)20 3752 3771
• Louise Polcaro, Director of Communications
  louise.polcaro@step.org
  +44 (0)20 3752 3750
DATA PROTECTION

Please note, the European General Data Protection Regulation will apply in the UK from 25 May 2018. As a result of this we are currently reviewing our processes and will inform branches/chapters of any changes as soon as these are confirmed. In the meantime the following rules apply.

HANDLING REQUESTS FOR MEMBER INFORMATION

Members of the public can search for a STEP member on the website www.step.org/online-directory

Any requests for a list of members should be forwarded to the STEP Worldwide office. The STEP database contains a filter for those members who do not wish their details to be released in this way.

The STEP mailing list is never to be released for commercial use and STEP members must not use the mailing list for their own promotional purposes.

TRANSFERRING STEP MEMBER DATA TO ANOTHER DATABASE APPLICATION

STEP member data should not be transferred to another database. This is both for data protection reasons and to ensure data integrity is maintained. Some branch officers have been approved to access their branch reports online. These reports provide the most up-to-date membership data and a new report should be downloaded every time a mailing or email is issued.

NON-MEMBER CONTACTS

The membership team manages non-member contact lists for a number of worldwide branches. If your branch has a list of non-member contacts and you would like the STEP Membership Team to manage these centrally and allow you to download the report from the branch report webpage, please email us on step@step.org

EMAIL BOUNCES/RETURNED MAIL

Help us to keep the data up to date by advising of any bounced or undeliverable emails and returned mail. Please forward the emails to step@step.org and the Membership Team will ensure the central database is updated. This will, in turn, immediately update your online branch reports.
**SENDING EMAILS**

When sending emails to your branch members, you must ensure that members’ email addresses are in the BCC field so that the email addresses are not visible to everyone on the list.

**COMPLIANCE WITH THE DATA PROTECTION ACT 1998**

STEP takes data protection compliance seriously. In order for STEP to comply with its obligations under the UK Data Protection Act 1998, Personal Data will only be transferred to the branch if the branch agrees to and acts in accordance with the following terms.

1. Use the Personal Data only to the extent, and in such a manner as is necessary for the purpose of contacting STEP members in the area of the branch about local STEP events or about products and services that are related to such member’s STEP membership and membership administration (the ‘Purpose’) and shall not use the Personal Data for any other purpose unless authorised in writing by STEP to do so.

2. Use the Personal Data in compliance with all applicable laws, enactments, regulations, orders, standards and other similar instruments.

3. Take appropriate technical and organisational measures against the unauthorised or unlawful processing of, and against accidental loss or destruction of, or damage to, the Personal Data.

4. Ensure that access to the Personal Data is limited to those employees or branch members who need access to the Personal Data for the Purpose; and ensure that such access is only granted to such parts or parts of the Personal Data as is strictly necessary for the employee or branch member to carry out the purpose.

5. Ensure that all of its employees or branch members:
   a. are informed of the confidential nature of the Personal Data;
   b. have undertaken training in the laws relating to handling Personal Data;
   c. are aware both of the branch’s duties and their personal duties and obligations under such laws and this letter.

6. The branch shall immediately notify STEP if it becomes aware of any unlawful processing, loss of, damage to or destructions of the Personal Data.

7. The branch acknowledges and agrees that between the branch and STEP, the Personal Data and all intellectual property rights in the Personal Data and any modifications to the Personal Data shall belong to STEP absolutely.

8. To the extent that any intellectual property rights in the Personal Data or any modifications to the Personal Data vest in the branch (whether by operation law or otherwise), the branch hereby assigns and shall procure that branch staff shall assign absolutely with full title guarantee all rights, title and interest in respect of the Personal Data to STEP absolutely.

9. If a STEP member notifies the branch of any change in their personal data, the branch will immediately pass details of such change to STEP.
FINANCE

SUBSCRIPTIONS / RENEWALS

All members are required to pay an annual subscription to the Society. The subscription year runs from 1 April to 31 March of the following year.

Subscription invoices are issued annually by the STEP Worldwide office on or before 1 March and several reminder invoices follow by email and hard copy. All subscriptions must be paid directly to the STEP Worldwide office (unless otherwise agreed).

Failure to pay the invoice will result in the member being suspended. The branch/chapter has access to outstanding subscription renewals and suspended members’ reports via their online branch reports. It can be useful to chase ceased members from the local level once the deadline has passed to try to get members reinstated.

Once full payment has been received, membership may be reinstated if it is within that particular year. However persons who let their membership lapse beyond two years will have to follow our re-joining policy.

BRANCH/CHAPTER RESOURCES

Members’ annual subscription fee funds the operations of the STEP Worldwide office to run the Society and to develop central resources and support for members worldwide, as well as to fund the costs of STEP’s Council and Board.

Central resources such as the STEP Directory and Yearbook, the STEP Journal, the Trust Quarterly Review and the News Digest emails are funded by advertising revenue. International events, including conferences, seminars and awards, are also supported by sponsorship revenues, producing a profit for STEP that can be invested back into the Society.

Branches/chapters are self-sufficient and must support their own activities. Unfortunately the STEP Worldwide organisation is not in a position to subsidise branches/chapters other than by limited grants for specific purposes and some seed money.

The treasurer of the branch/chapter must report to the Society and to the members of the branch/chapter its financial position at 31 March of each year by 15 June of each year and its financial position at 30 September of each year by 15 November of each year in the form of a Report, a Balance Sheet and an Income and Expenditure Statement and otherwise subject to such requirements as may be specified by STEP’s Worldwide Board. Such Report, Balance Sheet and Income and Expenditure Statement of the branch/chapter must be sent to the members of the branch/chapter at least 14 days before the AGM of the branch/chapter. Any personal financial benefit obtained from the branch/chapter by any member must be disclosed in the Income and Expenditure Statement.
GUIDELINES FOR BRANCH/CHAPTER TREASURERS

Branch/chapter treasurers are appointed by their membership as officers of their branch/chapter committee. Their primary responsibility is to maintain financial control over branch/chapter funds and to report regularly to the branch/chapter membership and the branch/chapter committee on the movements in those funds.

Full regulations and restrictions are detailed in the Branch/Chapter Regulations (see page 39).

UK branch/chapter treasurers are responsible for submitting quarterly VAT returns to STEP Worldwide. Non-UK treasurers are responsible for complying with all taxation matters in their own jurisdictions.

All treasurers have responsibility for providing annual and (where specifically requested) half-yearly returns, to STEP Worldwide.

Non UK branch/chapter treasurers have responsibility for official accounting requirements in their own jurisdictions.

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

The Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners is a company limited by guarantee, incorporated in England & Wales under the Companies Act 1985 Registered Number 2632423.

All branches/chapters throughout the world are either:

- unincorporated Branches/chapters (as in the UK and some branches/chapters elsewhere)
- companies with a share capital wholly owned by STEP
- non-share corporations incorporated in Canada with STEP as the Special Member
- foreign associations controlled by local members on behalf of STEP (some branches/chapters in Europe)

The Income and Expenditure Accounts and Balance Sheets of all of these branches/chapters and subsidiaries have to be consolidated with the STEP Worldwide accounts for each year ending on 31 March.

POINTS FOR BRANCH/CHAPTER TREASURERS

- An email requesting the submission of your branch/chapter accounts will be sent to all branch/chapter treasurers by STEP Worldwide at the beginning of April, along with a standard form/template to enable you to complete and submit your accounts, and a request for any further information required by the Council, Board and auditors. For uniformity on consolidation, it is important that the template issued by STEP Worldwide is used to submit your accounts.
- The consolidated accounts have to be approved by the Worldwide Board of Directors at their September meeting and then laid before the AGM, which is usually held in November. Working backwards, the accounts have to be audited after consolidation at STEP Worldwide. To enable this programme to be maintained, all branch/chapter accounts need to be with STEP by 15 June at the latest. If this does not happen, STEP incurs extra audit costs.
• The consolidated accounts are required by Council to be audited and this involves all branches/chapters. Where the branch/chapter is incorporated and local law necessitates an audit, the STEP Worldwide auditors will normally rely on that audit. Where there is no local audit, the STEP auditors may on occasion call for the books of some branches/chapters to be sent to STEP Worldwide for them to audit. Branches/chapters that are affected will be notified by the end of March so that the books can be shipped to London in good time for the audit.

• It is appreciated that it will not always be possible for the accounts that are to be audited locally to be supplied as ‘audited’ accounts by 15 June. However, it is vital that we receive the ‘unaudited’ accounts by this date and that we are consulted on any amendments requested by the local auditors. It is also important that we receive copies of ‘audited accounts’ before the start of the Worldwide audit, which is usually in the first week of August.

• In the past, several branches/chapters have sent in accounts that contained different opening reserves to those consolidated at the previous year end. This is not acceptable and Worldwide needed to establish the reasons for this and adjust the current year’s accounts accordingly. Any previous year adjustments need to be reflected in the following year’s figures once the previous year’s figures have been consolidated. Please communicate with Worldwide if in doubt on the timing.

• Where there are ‘inter-company’ debts or loans, usually with STEP Worldwide or STEP Canada, these balances must be agreed before your annual accounts are submitted to STEP on 15 June. STEP Worldwide will advise relevant branches/chapters of balances held at 31 March, by Mid-April.

CONTACTS
For any questions about branch/chapter finances, please email accounts@step.org
These Regulations are made pursuant and are subject to the Memorandum and Articles of Association ("the Memorandum and Articles") from time to time in force of the Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners registered in England under company number 2632423 ("STEP") and regulate the relationship between Branches and STEP and Members and Branches. These Regulations incorporate the Admission Rules, the Intellectual Property Rules and the Disciplinary Rules.

1 DEFINITIONS

Unless the context otherwise requires, terms not specifically defined in these Regulations shall bear the same meanings as in the Memorandum and Articles. The definitions in the Memorandum and Articles most relevant to these Regulations are listed below and in addition the following terms shall bear the meanings set out below unless the context otherwise requires:-

Admission Rules
The rules as set out in Schedule 1 to these Regulations as amended, replaced or supplemented from time to time.

Board
The Board of Directors of STEP.

Branch
A group of Members who come together (whether as an incorporated body or an unincorporated body) in any Region for the purpose of the furtherance of the objects of STEP and are recognised as such by the Membership Committee and Branch Development Committee. For the purposes of these Regulations any reference to a Branch shall include a Chapter. (A list of Branches and Chapters as at the date of adoption of these Regulations is included in Schedule 5).

Branch AGM
The Annual General Meeting of the Branch.

Branch Committee
The committee of management for the time being of a Branch referred to in Regulation 3.

Branch Member
Any Member who has elected to join the Branch or who has been allocated to the Branch by the Board and Branch Members shall be interpreted accordingly.

Chapter
A group of members which the Directors consider to be too small to constitute a Branch and which may or may not become a Branch.

Code of Professional Conduct
The rules as set out in Schedule 2 to these Regulations as amended replaced or supplemented from time to time.

Council
The consultative body of STEP established under the Standing Orders which shall be elected by the Regions from time to time.

Director
A director of STEP and "Directors" shall be interpreted accordingly.

Disciplinary Rules
The rules as set out in Schedule 3 to these Regulations as amended, replaced or supplemented from time to time.

Intellectual Property Rules
The rules as set out at Schedule 4 to these Regulations as amended, replaced or supplemented from time to time.
Material Asset
Any one physical asset with a value of £5,000 or over.

Material Contract
Any legally binding agreement (including any contract in respect of STEP conferences) which is either outside the Branch’s normal course of business or which is in consideration of at least £10,000.

Member
Any Full, Technician, Affiliate, Student, Honorary or Judicial member of STEP.

Office of STEP
The registered office of STEP presently at Artillery House (South), 11-19 Artillery Row, London SW1P 1RT, United Kingdom, but which may be changed from time to time.

Region
A group of Branches which come together for the purpose of the furtherance of the objects of STEP and are recognised as such by the Board.

Technical Branch Meetings
Events arranged by the Branch Committee in pursuance of Regulation 4.2.

The headings of these Regulations are inserted for convenience of reference only and shall not affect the construction or interpretation of these Regulations.

2 FUNCTIONS OF BRANCHES
To enable Members to put into practice at a local level the objects of STEP including:

2.1 To provide a forum for individuals from the legal, accountancy, corporate, trust and related professions whose occupation includes a significant involvement at specialist level with any of the planning, creation, management of and accounting for, trusts and estates, executorship administration and related taxes.

2.2 To discuss aspects of tax, accounting, administration, statute and case law which are of general concern.

2.3 To advance knowledge and learning in respect of trusts, estates and allied subjects; and encourage and promote the study of trust and estate practice and to educate members of the public including practitioners.

2.4 To organise and hold fully insured conferences, meetings and assemblies to provide a forum for the discussion and dissemination of relevant information and data to promote a better understanding of the practical aspects of the foregoing.

2.5 To provide a localised forum for Members to engage with special interest group (SIG) activity, to include the organisation of local SIG seminars and conferences.

2.6 To undertake research and make suggestions and representations of a technical (strictly non-political) nature to governmental and other persuasive bodies to promote a better understanding of the foregoing and to improve the law relating to and practice of trusts and estates.

3 BRANCH COMMITTEE
3.1 At the first meeting of a Branch after its formation and at each Branch AGM thereafter there shall be elected from the Full, Technician and Affiliate Branch Members a Branch Committee. As a minimum the Branch Committee shall comprise a Chairman (who shall always be a Full Member), a Deputy Chairman, a Secretary and a Treasurer, and such other officers and members as the Full, Technician and Affiliate Branch Members or the Branch Committee shall from time to time determine. The Branch Committee Members shall remain in office until the election of a new Branch Committee at the next following Branch AGM, when they may be re-elected – save that without the express permission of the Board of Directors no Chairman may serve for more than three consecutive years and no other officer may serve for more than six consecutive years in any one post.

3.2 The Branch Committee may from time to time co-opt such Members on to the Branch Committee as they think fit either to fill a vacancy or as additional members and such co-opted person or persons shall hold office until the next following AGM.

3.3 The Branch Committee may delegate any function to any sub-committee which shall report to the Branch Committee, shall be chaired by a Branch Committee Member and may include Members who are not Branch Committee Members.

3.4 The quorum for all meetings of the Branch Committee shall be the lesser of a majority of the Branch Committee and five. Questions arising shall be decided by a majority of votes. In the case of an equality of votes the Chairman shall have a second or casting vote.
3.5 A person shall cease to be a Branch Committee Member if he resigns or ceases to be a Member or a Branch Member.

3.6 Meetings may be held by any electronic means, including telephone or video conferencing, which permit all those present to communicate with each other simultaneously.

4 FUNCTIONS OF BRANCH COMMITTEES

4.1 To manage the Branch with a view to carrying out the objects of STEP and the Branch Committee shall have all powers they may require to do so (subject to any restrictions in these Regulations) including the power to acquire and/or dispose of property, to employ and/or dismiss staff, to borrow monies and to establish a company to incorporate the Branch.

4.2 To hold Committee meetings at such times and frequency as may be agreed but always provided that there shall be a minimum of four such meetings per annum one of which shall be held prior to 15 June annually in order to approve the financial statements for the year end.

4.3 To arrange regular events to facilitate Members’ continuing professional development in furtherance of the objects of STEP to which all Branch Members shall be invited. The Board may apply conditions to the organisation of events.

4.4 To support Members’ specialised interests as required in the form of Satellite SIG operations. This includes the organisation of local SIG events and upholding reporting arrangements for Satellite SIG activity as determined in the Satellite SIG Terms of Reference.

4.5 To expand the membership of STEP by inviting suitable candidates to apply.

4.6 In jurisdictions where admission is not by examination, to vet carefully applicants to ensure that they come within the criteria for membership of STEP as the Board shall determine and to make recommendations to the Board for the admission of new members who so qualify.

4.7 To regulate its own budget and be self-financing as soon as possible after recognition of the Branch by STEP.

4.8 To ensure that no liability of the Branch falls to be paid by STEP without the express prior approval of the Board and not to commit the Branch or STEP to any expenditure which, in the absence of related budget income, may cause the Branch to become insolvent or otherwise unable to meet any of its liabilities as they fall due.

4.9 To comply with any regulations set by the Board.

4.10 To use its reasonable endeavours to ensure that these Regulations, the Memorandum and Articles, the Code of Professional Conduct and all other rules and regulations issued by the Board from time to time are adhered to by Branch Members.

4.11 To advise the Board of any matters which the Branch Committee thinks should be brought to its attention, for example significant changes to local regulations which might affect members, and to respond to any questions raised by the Board or their agent or delegate.

4.12 To agree to the oversight and management of its activities by the Board where the Board reasonably considers that those activities may produce a risk to either the reputation or the assets of STEP.

5 SUBSCRIPTIONS

5.1 The Branch Committee shall, upon request, assist the Board to ensure that the Members’ annual subscription due to STEP shall be paid within three months of falling due.

5.2 The Branch Committee may levy from Branch Members such additional charge or charges, which it may apply for the furtherance of the objects of STEP, as the Branch Committee may from time to time consider appropriate, subject to any regulation thereof by the Board.

6 BANK ACCOUNTS

A Branch Committee shall maintain its own separate bank account or accounts, subject to the following conditions:-

6.1 All bank mandates shall have at least two Full Branch Members as the Branch Committee shall nominate as signatories. Such mandates shall require at least two signatories to operate any accounts. No bank accounts may be opened without notifying STEP within 14 days. This Regulation is subject to any other regulations and dispensations issued by the Board from time to time. Copies of bank statements and other banking documents shall be sent to STEP within seven working days of being requested.
6.2 Unless otherwise allowed by the Board only one employee / partner / officer / director of any particular firm, company or organisation (excepting STEP and the Branch) may be a signatory to any bank account of a Branch at any one time.

7 RESTRICTIONS ON A BRANCH

A Branch shall not without the prior consent of the Board:

7.1 borrow any money or incur any monetary obligation so that at any time this borrowing exceeds £3,000 (three thousand pounds in British sterling) or the equivalent in the local currency of the Branch;

7.2 enter into any Material Contract;

7.3 enter into any other contract or arrangement outside its ordinary course of business;

7.4 enter into any service agreement with, or vary the terms of service or remuneration of any employee of the Branch or appoint or dismiss any employee;

7.5 acquire or dispose of any property of the Branch (or material part thereof) or any other Material Assets

7.6 enter into any lease, agreement, licence or arrangement of real property for a period of longer than 12 months; and/or issue or threaten to issue Court proceedings against a Branch or the Society.

8 USE OF INCOME AND PROPERTY

8.1 The income and property of the Branch, howsoever derived, shall be applied solely towards the objects of STEP as set forth in the Memorandum and Articles and no Member may receive any salary, profit or emoluments from the funds or activities of the Branch, except for professional services rendered at the request of the Branch Committee.

9 GENERAL MEETINGS

9.1 Subject to any derogations granted by Council the Branch shall hold an Annual General Meeting ("Branch AGM") before 30 June in every calendar year at such time and place reasonably accessible to Branch Members as may be determined by the Branch Committee for the purpose of approving the accounts of the Branch for the period ending on 31 March prior to the Branch AGM, electing the Branch Committee for the ensuing year, voting on any resolutions which shall have been notified to the Branch Committee at least 14 days before the meeting and such other business as the Branch Committee shall decide.

9.2 At least 21 days before any Branch AGM a notice of such meeting and of the business to be transacted shall be given to the Branch Members and STEP.

9.3 The Branch Committee may at any time for any special purpose call a Special General Meeting and shall do so immediately upon the requisition in writing of any 20 Full, Technician or Affiliate Branch Members or 20% of the total of Branch Members entitled to vote, whichever is the lesser, stating the purpose for which the meeting is required.

9.4 At least 14 days before any Special General Meeting, a notice of such meeting and of the business to be transacted shall be given to the Branch Members and no business other than that of which notice has been given shall be brought forward at such meeting.

9.5 The Treasurer of the Branch shall report to STEP and to the Branch Members its financial position at 31 March of each year by 15 June of each year and its financial position at 30 September of each year by 15 November of each year in the form of a Report, a Balance Sheet and an Income and Expenditure Statement and otherwise subject to such requirements as may be specified by the Board. Such Report, Balance Sheet and Income and Expenditure Statement of the Branch shall be sent to the Branch Members at least 14 days before the Branch AGM. Any personal financial benefit obtained from the Branch by any Member shall be disclosed in the Income and Expenditure Statement.

9.6 At General Branch Meetings, the Chairman (failing whom the Deputy Chairman, failing whom the Branch Secretary, failing whom a Full Branch Member selected by the Branch Committee) shall take the chair.

9.7 At the Branch AGM the Chairman shall present a report on the year’s activities which shall specify the number of Technical Branch Meetings which have been held and which shall be sent to STEP within 14 days of the Branch AGM.

9.8 At General Branch Meetings questions shall be decided by a majority of votes. Every Full, Technician or Affiliate Branch Member present shall be entitled to one vote upon every motion and in case of an equality of votes the Chairman shall have a second or casting vote.
9.9 The quorum for all General Meetings shall be the lesser of 20% of the Full, Technician or Affiliate Branch Members or 10 Full, Technician or Affiliate Branch Members present in person or by proxy.

9.10 No amendment (other than a motion for adjournment) shall be moved to any resolution proposed at any General Meeting of the Branch without the Chairman’s consent at the meeting or unless written notice of the amendment shall have been sent to the Secretary of the Branch not less than 7 days prior to the meeting.

10 MINUTES OF MEETINGS

10.1 Formal minutes shall be taken of all General Branch Meetings and of Branch Committee Meetings and any Members entitled to attend such Meetings shall be entitled to request copies of such minutes. Copies shall also be sent to STEP on request.

11 CESSATION OF MEMBERSHIP

11.1 A person shall cease to be a Branch Member if he ceases to be a Member.

12 VISITORS

12.1 Any STEP Member (in addition to the Branch Members) may attend the Technical Branch Meetings of any Branch with the agreement of the Branch Secretary, which shall not be unreasonably withheld, subject to the payment of any admission fees of the Branch prescribed by the Branch Committee.

12.2 With the agreement of the Branch Secretary, non-Members may observe Technical Branch Meetings and General Branch Meetings subject to the payment of any admission fees prescribed by the Branch Committee.

13 ADMISSION RULES

13.1 The Branch must comply with the Admission Rules.

14 DISCIPLINARY RULES

14.1 The Branch must comply with the Disciplinary Rules.

15 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RULES

15.1 The Branch must comply with the Intellectual Property Rules.

16 REGIONAL COMMITTEE

16.1 The Branch shall co-operate with the Regional Committee for the Region to which the Branch belongs to promote STEP.

17 CESSATION OF A BRANCH

17.1 Council may declare that a Branch shall cease to be a Branch of STEP forthwith by giving written notice to the Branch if the Branch is in breach of any these Regulations or any other rules of STEP.

17.2 Council may also at its sole discretion declare that a Branch shall cease to be a Branch of STEP for any reason whatsoever by giving the Branch three months prior written notice.

17.3 Upon such a declaration the Branch shall no longer be a Branch of STEP and shall forthwith immediately cease to hold itself out as such.

17.4 The cessation of a Branch shall be without prejudice to any rights of the Branch or STEP against the other which may have accrued up to the date of such cessation.

18 WINDING UP OR CLOSURE

18.1 In the event of a winding up or closure of the Branch, the assets of the Branch shall be paid or transferred to STEP.

19 INDEMNITY

19.1 The Branch Committee, and Branch Members, shall be entitled (to the extent permitted by law) to be indemnified from the assets of the Branch, against liability and expense properly incurred by them by reason of their actions as Branch Committee Members or Branch Members. If the assets of the Branch are insufficient to meet the liabilities of the Branch a Special General Meeting shall be called to consider the position; any decision decided upon at that meeting shall be officially notified to all Branch Members and to STEP forthwith and a further General Meeting shall be held within fourteen days to ratify or reject this decision. The Branch Committee shall advise the Board immediately by sending notice to STEP if the assets of the Branch are insufficient to meet its liabilities.

20 AMENDMENTS TO THESE REGULATIONS

20.1 The Board may amend these Regulations from time to time as it thinks fit and shall notify all Branches of any such amendments promptly.

21 CONFIDENTIALITY

21.1 The Branch agrees that, both during the period whilst it remains a Branch and after it ceases to be a Branch, it will not, whether by itself its servants or agents or otherwise (except in the proper course of exercising...
its rights under these Regulations) use, copy, disclose or communicate to any person, firm, company or organisation any confidential information of STEP.

21.2 Where disclosure is made to any employee, consultant or agent, it shall be done subject to obligations equivalent to those set out in this Regulation and the Branch shall be responsible to STEP in respect of any disclosure or use of such secret or confidential information by a person to whom disclosure is made.

21.3 The obligations of confidentiality in this Regulation shall not extend to any matter which is in or becomes part of the public domain otherwise than by reason of a breach of the obligations of confidentiality in these Regulations or which it can show was in its written records prior to the date of disclosure of the same by STEP or which it receives from a third party independently entitled to disclose it or which it is required by law or other regulatory authority to disclose.

22 PARTNERSHIP AND AGENCY

22.1 Nothing in these Regulations shall constitute and/or be deemed to constitute a partnership between the Branch and STEP and the Branch shall not act, nor purport to act, as an agent for STEP but solely as an independent contractor.

23 WAIVER

23.1 The rights and remedies of STEP in respect of these Regulations shall not be diminished, waived or extinguished by the granting of any indulgence, forbearance or extension of time by STEP to another nor by any failure of or delay by STEP in ascertaining or exercising any such rights or remedies. Any release, waiver or compromise or any other arrangement of any kind (a 'release') by STEP shall not affect its rights and remedies as regards any other party nor its rights and remedies against the party in whose favour it is granted or made except to the extent of the express terms of the release and no such release shall have effect unless granted or made in writing. The rights and remedies in these Regulations are cumulative and not exclusive of any rights and/or remedies provided by law.

24 THIRD PARTY RIGHTS

24.1 For the avoidance of doubt nothing in these Regulations shall confer on any third party any benefit or the right to enforce any provision of these Regulations.

25 LOCAL REQUIREMENTS

25.1 These Regulations are subject to any legal and other requirements in the jurisdiction in which a Branch operates. Where such requirements are in conflict with these Regulations the Branch Secretary shall advise the Board immediately by sending notice to the Office of the Society whereupon the Board may issue revised regulations for the Branch concerned.

26 INTERPRETATION

26.1 Words importing the singular include the plural and vice versa.

26.2 These Regulations constitute the entire agreement between STEP and the Branches in relation to their subject matter and supersede all prior agreements understandings or discussions.

26.3 If any provisions of these Regulations is ruled by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid for any reason, that invalidity will not affect the rest of the Regulations, which will remain valid and enforceable in all respects.

27 LAW AND JURISDICTION

27.1 Except as otherwise provided in clause 27.2 with respect to procedural matters, these Regulations shall be governed by and construed in accordance with English law.

27.2 (1) If a dispute arises concerning the interpretation or application of these Regulations, the parties to the dispute will endeavour in good faith to settle the dispute by mediation with a professional mediator before seeking any other recourse.

(2) Failing a mediated resolution, the dispute shall be referred to a single arbitrator, if the parties can agree on one, or, failing such agreement, to three arbitrators, one of whom shall be appointed by each party to the dispute and the third of whom shall be named by the two arbitrators so appointed and shall chair the arbitration, and the decision of a majority of the arbitrators shall be deemed to be the decision of the arbitrators.

(3) Unless the parties to the dispute agree upon and choose another arbitration regime,

(a) if the Society as a whole is a party to the dispute, the arbitration shall be subject to the Rules of Conciliation and Arbitration of the International Chamber of Commerce. The place of
arbitration shall be London and the language of arbitration shall be English;

(b) if a Branch, and not STEP as a whole, is a party to the dispute and the legal jurisdiction in which the Branch is situated or has its principal office has legislation that could apply to govern the arbitration of the dispute, the arbitration shall be subject to that legislation;

(c) in any other case, the arbitration shall be subject to the legislation or other procedural rules designated by the Board.

(4) Unless the law, if any, applicable to the arbitration requires otherwise, the decision of the arbitrator or arbitrators shall be final and binding on the parties to the dispute and shall not be open to appeal to or review by a court or other tribunal.

28 NOTICES

28.1 A notice may be served on the Branch by sending it to the Secretary of the Branch at his registered address as appearing in the Register of STEP.

28.2 A notice may be served on STEP by sending it to the Company Secretary of STEP at the office of STEP.
NEED TO KNOW
NEED TO KNOW

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**HOW DOES SOMEONE JOIN STEP?**

STEP is an open society. Any prospective member with the requisite qualifications and/or experience may apply for membership. A branch/chapter does not have the right to discriminate in its membership selection.

The Membership Admission Rules are available at [www.step.org/governance](http://www.step.org/governance)

### JOINING STEP FROM 2018

From February 2018, STEP is introducing a new, globally consistent system for joining STEP comprising of three routes to entry, all of which are equally rigorous in assessing a potential member’s suitability for membership.

The three routes are: Assessment by Exam; Assessment by Essay; and Assessment by Expertise.

A potential member can select the route that is most appropriate for their level of experience, joining at one of STEP’s three membership levels: Affiliate, Associate or TEP. As each of the requisite levels of experience and qualification are reached, a member can move up through STEP’s membership framework to reach the top level of membership – the TEP, which confers the greatest level of benefits, including the ability to use the globally recognised ‘TEP’ designation.

### Membership Levels

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<th>AFFILIATE</th>
<th>ASSOCIATE</th>
<th>TEP</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Exam</strong></td>
<td>60 CREDITS</td>
<td>Affiliate requirements + 60 CREDITS</td>
<td>Affiliate and Associate requirements + 120 CREDITS</td>
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<td>Acquired through a combination of:</td>
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<td>• Experience and / or</td>
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<td>• 2 further Advanced Certificates (to make up a full Diploma) or equivalent accredited qualifications</td>
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<td>• Prior qualifications and / or</td>
<td>or equivalent accredited qualifications</td>
<td>• 2 years’ relevant experience</td>
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<td>• STEP Certificate(s)</td>
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### NEED TO KNOW

- HOW DOES SOMEONE JOIN STEP?
- WHAT ARE THE MEMBERSHIP RULES?
- WHAT IS THE EMPLOYER PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME?
- HOW DO I ACCESS BRANCH REPORTS?

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**EXAMESSAYEXPERTISE**
JOINING PROCESS

Assessment by Exam

The most common route to membership is through STEP exams or accreditation of prior learning and/or experience.

Once a member has completed their educational route and can demonstrate a minimum of two years’ mid-senior experience, they can apply to upgrade to become a Full member. Only Full members have the right to use the designation ‘TEP’. The joining process is outlined:

1. Applicant enrolls on either a certificate or diploma through CLT International or another accredited education partner
2. Applicant details are forwarded to STEP Membership Team
3. Applicant receives welcome email
4. New member details are listed on branch/chapter reports that can be downloaded online
5. Once the educational route is successfully completed, applicants can apply to upgrade their membership or remain at the Affiliate or Associate level, dependent on the number of credits accrued. Upgrade forms are approved by the STEP Membership Committee
6. Applicant receives confirmation email of Full membership and can use TEP designation

* Students who have accumulated 60 Entry Level credits are auto-upgraded to Affiliate membership and can choose to remain an Affiliate member, apply to be upgraded to Associate membership once they’ve accumulated 120 credits, or work towards TEP. Affiliate/Associate members can use the term ‘STEP Affiliate/Associate on their CV, business cards, stationery and email signature. There are no post-nominals or letters for these categories.
Assessment by Essay

1. Applicant completes relevant application form and submits with CV to the STEP Membership Team
2. Applications are reviewed and approved where they meet the entry requirements of having a recognised professional qualification or vocational degree and five years’ relevant experience
3. Applicant receives confirmation email and becomes an Affiliate member
4. When wanting to submit first essay(s), member selects topic(s) from the published list, completes the ‘Topic Registration Form’ and sends this back to STEP with appropriate payment
5. Member writes paper(s) using the Student Guidance and other resource aids, submits to the STEP by relevant deadline
6. Once the member has passed all three papers, completes upgrade form, which is approved by STEP Membership Committee
7. Applicant receives confirmation email of Full membership and can use TEP designation

Assessment by Expertise

1. Applicant completes region-specific ‘Membership Application Form’ and submits with CV and supporting documents to STEP Membership Team
2. Applications are reviewed and sent to the branch/chapter, who complete a page supporting or not supporting the application based on the application and/or any additional knowledge they might have of the applicant
3. Applications are returned to the STEP Membership Team
4. Applicant receives confirmation email
5. STEP Membership Committee meets monthly to approve new applications (dates of meetings can be found at www.step.org/central-governance Applications should be received a week before the meeting date)
6. Applicant receives approval confirmation email
7. New member details are listed on branch/chapter reports that can be downloaded online
JOINING MATERIALS

All the latest versions of the STEP membership joining materials can be found on the STEP website at [www.step.org/joining](http://www.step.org/joining).

Details of all STEP’s qualifications, accreditation of non-STEP qualifications and experience can be found at [www.step.org/qualifications](http://www.step.org/qualifications).

Please always download copies of any application forms from our website to ensure you have the most up-to-date version.

ACCREDITATION OF LOCAL QUALIFICATIONS

STEP’s business strategy includes building closer ties with universities across the world as a way of providing entry routes into STEP membership. University courses at degree level or above that cover subject areas relevant to STEP’s work can be recognised as providing the equivalent of a STEP Diploma, particularly in regions where STEP itself doesn’t yet provide a relevant qualification.

If you know of a degree-level qualification in your jurisdiction that teaches the skills that a TEP needs, please contact [pd@step.org](mailto:pd@step.org).

The Professional Development team can review qualifications on behalf of branches. In some countries it has been possible to accredit local qualifications as part, or all, of a route to membership of STEP.

CONTACTS

You can contact the Membership Team at [step@step.org](mailto:step@step.org).
WHAT ARE THE MEMBERSHIP RULES?

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

STEP prides itself on the high standards and competence of its members. In order to maintain clients’ trust and respect all members must behave professionally and ethically, comply with all relevant regulations and legislation, and keep their skills and competencies up to date.

All STEP members are expected to abide by the STEP Code of Professional Conduct, which sets out the key ethical and professional standards a member should uphold.

Members practising in England and Wales must also abide by the STEP Code for Will Preparation and all members who advise on UK tax matters must adhere to guidance on Professional Conduct in Relation to Taxation.

All codes are available at www.step.org/code-conduct

DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

STEP has a disciplinary process in place to investigate any report suggesting that a member may have acted in contravention of these codes of conduct.

If you have any concerns about a matter affecting your branch or region, whether you receive a complaint about a member; a member is under investigation by a local regulator or police or is under scrutiny in local media, or for any other reason you have questions or concerns, please contact STEP’s Professional Standards Manager at standards@step.org – who can assist you and provide advice, which may resolve or diffuse a situation before it escalates. The Professional Standards Manager is secretary to the Professional Standards Committee, which is on hand to develop and issue policy and guidance wherever possible.

More information on our complaints and disciplinary processes is available here www.step.org/disciplinary-process
CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)

CPD is a requirement of maintaining STEP membership. The value of STEP membership depends on all members maintaining and developing their competence. CPD benefits individual members, employers, clients and fellow STEP members worldwide.

CPD is defined as any learning activity which helps to maintain, develop or increase knowledge, for the purposes of maintaining a high standard of professional practice. CPD can be technical or non-technical.

**What is STEP’s CPD policy?**

In 2014 STEP introduced a new CPD Policy and Guidelines, which uses role benchmarking, and no longer requires a specific number of hours of CPD. Instead you identify which CPD activities are most relevant to you in your professional work and tailor a CPD plan based on the specific requirements of your role.

The policy is designed to be relevant to members; flexible enough to cater for individual circumstances; and simple to manage and complete.

STEP’s CPD policy is available at [www.step.org/cpd](http://www.step.org/cpd)

**CPD audits**

STEP conducts an annual CPD audit and selects a group of members at random. Members are asked to provide their CPD records, show compliance with the Code of Conduct. If a member refuses to send records, we must suspend their membership.

If a member is having difficulties submitting a record, for example due to long-term sick leave or redundancy, please advise them to contact [cpd@step.org](mailto:cpd@step.org) to discuss their options. The CPD team treat all information as confidential and can make concessions such as granting an extension, or deferring that member’s audit until they are able to return to work.

**Accreditation of branch events**

For STEP CPD, branch events are automatically accredited by the branch committee. If your members need to have a measure of CPD hours or credits for other professional bodies or regulators and you aren’t sure which parts of your programme count, please email [cpd@step.org](mailto:cpd@step.org) for advice.

Most branches are able to apply to local regulators for CPD accreditation directly, but if you have any difficulty, please contact [cpd@step.org](mailto:cpd@step.org)

**NB: England & Wales branches should note that the Solicitors Regulation Authority and Bar Standards Board no longer accredit external CPD providers so you must not advertise events as accredited by either party.**
WHAT IS THE EMPLOYER PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME?

STEP’s Employer Partnership Programme was introduced in November 2014 as a pilot accreditation scheme and launched officially in 2016.

The Programme was launched in response to feedback from STEP members, who had told us that they wanted the TEP designation to be seen as career essential by employers, and in recognition of the huge benefits for all parties to be gained from establishing close relationships with employers.

The Programme enables STEP to support the professional development of our members and build upon the credibility of the STEP brand by means of:

• providing a comprehensive and structured support programme with access to a wide range of online resources and support from STEP’s professional development team;
• promoting industry-wide recognition of STEP by offering accreditation of employers’ learning and development provision, enabling them to demonstrate their credentials as quality employers; and
• enabling accredited partners to network and share good practice with other employers.

Any organisation that employs STEP students and members may apply to participate in this Programme. Accreditation will only be granted to those employers that have the necessary learning and development provision in place to support their students and members.

Employer accreditation on the Programme is currently free of charge and is for three years, after which time it is reviewed.

CONTACT AND FURTHER INFORMATION

More information is available at www.step.org/epp

If you or any members of your branch have any questions about the Programme, or would like to apply for accreditation, please email the Employer Partnership Programme team on epp@step.org
HOW DO I ACCESS BRANCH REPORTS?

Branch/chapter officers can be granted access to download reports relating to their members. Once access has been granted data is updated in real time and available via a dedicated webpage. This means that officers can always have access to the most up to date list of their members.

UPDATING MEMBER INFORMATION

Members can, and are encouraged to, update their contact information online at: 
www.step.org/user/login

The more information members add to their profiles, the easier they are to find by other members and potential clients – offering huge business development benefits.

Member details are listed in the hard copy Directory and Online Directory, making them visible to both members and potential clients. Users can search by location, profession and specialisation, among other things; so if they want to be found, members need to ensure they have updated their profile with this information.

Members can also update their Communications Preferences online to ensure they are in control of what they receive from STEP.

If you receive notification of any changes to members’ details or circumstances, please pass these on to step@step.org so we can update the central database.

CONTACT AND FURTHER INFORMATION
For access to branch/chapter reports, or for help updating member information please contact step@step.org
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HOW TO...

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RUN A SUCCESSFUL BRANCH

QUALITIES OF A SUCCESSFUL BRANCH

While every branch/chapter is slightly different, there are a number of elements that must be present to be successful. These are:

• Strong, enthusiastic leadership
• A regular branch events programme delivering locally-relevant technical content (see page 58)
• A sustainable financial model (see page 57)
• Engagement with members to secure branch succession (see page 66)
• Communication with your members (see page 70)
• Communication with STEP’s worldwide office (see contacts on page 81)

SUCCESSION PLANNING

The ultimate long-term success of a branch/chapter is dependent on there being a steady stream of willing volunteers who can carry it forward. Encouraging fellow members to get involved is therefore crucial.

There are a number of ways in which you can get members more involved, and this starts with engaging members from the outset:

• Members of the Committee should make an effort to meet and greet branch-meeting attendees, to make them feel welcome and to find out what they might want to get out of their membership at this level. Talking to members and listening to their feedback can help you to build relationships that can be beneficial to both parties.

• Member achievements, such as educational attainment in STEP exams, should be celebrated and rewarded – would they be interested in getting involved with the branch? One UK branch invites top STEP students to join the branch committee, for instance.

• Create smaller, less work-intensive roles on your committees, or share posts between two people to enable members who may have less time to get involved with the branch/chapter without having to give a huge time commitment. When their schedule clears a bit, they might be willing to commit more time.
• Consider mentoring schemes: many members are leading experts in their field, and their experience could hugely benefit younger members at an earlier stage in their career. Where those more senior members are branch committee members they can share their experiences in that role and talk of the benefits of their involvement with STEP.

• Use a portion of each branch meeting to encourage members who might be interested in getting involved to speak to a member of the Committee. Where no role currently exists – don’t turn them down – consider delegating some jobs to get them involved.

ENCOURAGING NEW VOLUNTEERS

There are a number of benefits for members in getting involved, some of which we have listed below:

Improve your skill-set
• Develop a range of skills you would not necessarily learn in your day job
• Broaden your knowledge base in technical areas that may not otherwise be your primary focus

Boost your career
• Build valuable relationships with other professionals
• Raise your professional profile
• Showcase your expertise and share knowledge with other professionals

Have a say in STEP’s strategic direction
• Take an active role in STEP’s development

Influence policy
• Recommend and input on public policy
• Get involved with current debates on industry issues

For information on getting involved, including case studies of committee members see www.step.org/get-involved
MAINTAIN FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

STEP’s branches and chapters need to be financially self-sufficient.

Some ideas for raising branch funds include:

• Charging for event attendance – possibly more for non-members (see page 59).
  o Annual meeting passes at reduced rate can encourage members to sign up for all the events, increasing attendance and providing you with some financial security.

• Sponsorship of events, or of the branch itself (see page 60).

• Collaborate with other local professional groups or nearby branches and share the cost.

• Consider more frequent but shorter and less costly events – such as breakfast seminars or brown-bag lunch meetings, where catering is minimal.

• Ask your members if they can help with supplying meeting facilities at their firms free of charge.

• Look for local talent. Members are experienced practitioners and their knowledge is valuable. Before shipping in someone famous to speak – and possibly taking on the cost of doing so – consider if the technical content could be effectively delivered by a branch member.

“A number of local firms have been happy to host STEP meetings and get involved in organising them. For them it is a prestigious occasion and an excellent opportunity to listen to trust experts in their own surroundings. Apart from saving us money and time, it helps us retain existing members and incentivise new ones by involving them as much as possible in branch activities.”

Diana Palomba, STEP Italy
DEVELOP A BRANCH EVENTS PROGRAMME

Membership growth and effective branch/chapter event programmes go hand-in-hand. It is therefore crucial to develop a series of events to which STEP members and prospective members can be invited.

FINDING SPEAKERS

An important objective of STEP is education of members by members. STEP’s membership includes some of the world’s leading experts in the field. Many STEP members travel internationally on a regular basis, and are keen to speak at branch events.

In many cases, local STEP members will be the foremost authorities on local topics. Where a branch/chapter is trying to develop its membership in its initial phases, it may be necessary to invite non-STEP members to speak. This can be a good way of introducing potential members to STEP.

To help branches/chapters find speakers for their events programmes, we have developed a Speaker Search on the STEP website where you can search STEP members who have registered their interest in speaking at STEP events. You can search by topic and country to find a suitable speaker.

You can access the Speaker Search at www.step.org/speaker-search

FREQUENCY AND FORMAT

You should aim to hold a minimum of four events per year, ideally more. Periods of inactivity with no communication with members can quickly lead to apathy and can result in the collapse of a branch/chapter.

The frequency and format of your meeting programme will depend on the resources available and the format that best suits your members. For example, some branch/chapters organise breakfast seminars or discussion groups, some organise luncheons, while others believe afternoon seminars, possibly followed by dinner or drinks, are the most effective method.
It has been found that branch/chapter programmes that are primarily social in nature and lack technical content are not well received by members over the longer term. As a general rule, members want detailed educational programmes on topics they frequently encounter in day-to-day practice. The more practical a topic, the more likely it will be well received.

Presentations typically come with written materials and visual aids, and in some cases speakers will even present formal papers. A high standard of presentation is expected.

COLLABORATION

It can be advantageous for branches/chapters to forge linkages with other branches/chapters and organisations that may have overlapping interests (for example, estate planning groups, trustee associations or tax institutes). Joint programmes can be considered and can be useful both in sharing the organisation and cost of an event, and in building awareness of STEP with new audiences.

FUNDING

There are two main methods of funding your branch events programme: charging admission and sponsorship.

Charging admission

Many branches/chapters charge admission to their events programmes. This defrays the cost of delivering the programme, and should ideally be priced to generate a reasonable surplus, which can be used to fund other branch/chapter activities.

It is entirely appropriate to have a rate for STEP members, and possibly other cooperative organisations, and a higher rate for non-members. Some branches/chapters will refund the difference if a person becomes a STEP member (i.e., completes a membership application) within, say, 30 days of the event. Some branches/chapters believe that the price differential should be substantial, in order to encourage local membership.

Some branches/chapters have a ‘season ticket’ arrangement whereby members pay in advance to attend all branch/chapter events for the year at a reduced rate. This can provide some financial security.

“We found that building partnerships with the Barbados Bar Association, Institute of Chartered Accountants of Barbados, Barbados International Business Association and Institute of Chartered Secretaries & Administrators assisted greatly in having the wider professional community start attending our events. We requested that they circulate flyers for our events to their membership and we in turn reciprocated.”

Amanda Lashley, STEP Barbados
Sponsorship

Many branches/chapters have adopted a policy of having their events sponsored by one or more organisations, who are prepared to contribute to the cost of the programme in return for having their name and logo associated with the event.

Any sponsorship must be conducted in accordance with STEP guidelines. In summary, these guidelines state that sponsorship and advertising must not be misleading, inflammatory, offensive or pose a legal or reputational risk to STEP. It also states that sponsors must not engage in aggressive sales and marketing tactics towards delegates and makes clear that sponsorship is not in any way linked to content.

It is customary to allow a headline sponsor a five-minute introductory speaking slot. Great care must be taken if a sponsor also wants a lecture slot. It is essential that the speaker is a credible professional who might be invited to speak independent of the sponsorship.

Sponsorship deals can be difficult to negotiate. The rate you charge will depend on many factors, including:

- the type of event
- the numbers attending
- whether the audience are international or domestic practitioners
- the package you offer
- the seniority of the attendees

You may wish to employ a professional sponsorship company to help you negotiate sponsorship deals. They will likely charge a percentage of the overall sponsorship deal.

You can find the Advertising and Sponsorship Policy and a Sponsor Agreement Template on the Branch Portal – [www.step.org/branch-portal](http://www.step.org/branch-portal)

MARKETING AND FOLLOW-UP

Once you have decided on your events programme, you will want to let your members know about it. This can involve:

- Email marketing
- Branch/chapter newsletter
- Promote at branch/chapter events
- Add your event to the STEP website
- Tell us about it so we can include in our communications

STEP’s Marketing Department can help you to market your event and can also help with sending follow-up emails after your event, to both thank all those who attended and encourage any non-members who attended to join the branch/chapter. You can also perform a brief survey to get feedback from attendees on the venue, speakers, topic, etc.

CONTACT AND FURTHER INFORMATION

For advice on and help with all aspects of developing your branch/chapter events programme, please email [marketing@step.org](mailto:marketing@step.org)
ORGANISE A CONFERENCE

Often one or a number of branches/chapters in a particular region will work together to organise a conference. These usually take the form of a one or two-day event, typically aiming to attract in excess of 100 attendees.

For these larger events, STEP has produced the below Good Practice Framework to assist branches, with the aim of maximising the success of the event, while minimising any risk to STEP.

GOOD PRACTICE FRAMEWORK

If you are planning a conference, we would ask that before making any financial commitment you develop and submit a business plan to events@step.org that covers the following information. This will help us to avoid competition between events, manage any potential problem areas and provide support as necessary to ensure your event has the best chance of success.

Overview

Give a brief overview of the plans and objectives for the conference or event, including:

- Purpose of the event – this may be to raise awareness of the branch, increase membership numbers, to promote the region, or increase branch finances.
- Timing – ensuring adequate timelines for planning and avoiding clashes with other events is crucial.
- Location – considering how accessible / attractive the venue is for people from out of town.
- Attendees – where will the delegates be coming from?

Communicating timings and plans

Provide an outline of timings and plans for all aspects of the organisation, allocating responsibilities for the various tasks involved. STEP WW can provide a detailed breakdown of these tasks on request, but as a general guide these might include:

- Venue contracts
- Programme
- Budget
- Registering delegates and collections of monies
- Speaker liaison
- Sponsor care
- Onsite event management
Budget

Produce a comprehensive budget showing various attendance scenarios before proceeding with plans and securing venues, etc. This should be approved by STEP WW Finance Director.

For guidance on what to include, download our Budget Template from www.step.org/branch-portal

Regarding budgeting and speaker travel costs, please note the following:

- No conference should take place without proper detailed budgets.
- Insurance is required for larger conferences and events. STEP WW can assist with organising this. The insurance cost should be included in the budget along with a contingency fee for unexpected extra costs.
- As a rule, STEP does not pay travel expenses, save that if the organising committee wish to have a speaker whose travel expenses will not or cannot be absorbed, they may consider making a contribution, but this would only be in exceptional cases, and then generally at Premium Economy Rates.
- Should there be a keynote speaker, who would not otherwise attend, and he / she does not work in the wealth management industry, it is normally acceptable, subject to budgetary constraints, for full expenses of business class travel to be paid.
- Otherwise if a branch really wants a speaker who cannot be funded, they would have to see if the budget can accommodate such an expense.
- Sponsorship income is key to the financial success of a conference. Realistic forecasts should be included in the budget and potential sponsors identified.

Timelines

We would recommend a one-year timeline for an international event and six months for smaller, more local events. There would need to be a good business case to support an event with shorter timescales.

When considering a date and location for an event, please note the following:

- It is essential that you provide a proposed date to STEP WW to ensure there are no clashes with other major STEP events.
- It is recommended that you scan the market for other competitor programmes happening in your region, avoiding clashes and competing with your market. The STEP WW team are willing to help and if you can share intelligence about the market with them, this will help them too.
- STEP WW prohibits a branch/chapter from holding any meeting in another branch/chapter’s territory without prior written approval from the branch chair and STEP WW Head of Events.

Programme

When organising a large-scale conference it is essential that you appoint a committed chair and diverse conference committee with knowledge of different speakers and sectors to take responsibility for the programme. A maximum of five committee members including the chair is recommended for a large conference. STEP WW recommend that the conference committee adhere to the following guidelines when planning a conference programme:
• No weight should be given to whether a firm sponsors or supports STEP financially – sponsorship and speaker selection should be kept separate. No sponsor should be a speaker on the programme, unless they are an excellent speaker selected via unanimous vote among the committee.

• No conference committee member should be a speaker or moderator on the programme unless they are an excellent speaker selected via unanimous vote among the committee – they can however Chair Day 1 / Day 2 or morning / afternoon and be responsible for these sessions.

• Conference committee members’ firms should not be featured unless they are excellent speakers selected via unanimous vote among the committee.

• A firm should be featured only once on the programme.

• Committee members are responsible for conducting quality checks on the sessions for which they are responsible: the presenters and their speeches should be vetted, and they must arrange rehearsals in advance of the conference for panel sessions.

• Focus on strong, authoritative speakers – people with flair and intellect who stimulate the audience.

• Include external speakers, perhaps from political, regulatory or technological experts, or someone with interesting or strong views, even if they are challenging. These can make for the most interesting and thought-provoking presentations.

Initial ideas for the programme should be shared with STEP WW.

If the programme is to feature panel sessions, we recommend special attention be paid to these to ensure the presentations are of the expected standard.

Recommendations for panels and speakers:

• All programmes must have well-thought-out and comprehensive bullet points as to what the panel is expected to cover.

• All panel chairs should communicate with all their panel members at least a month before the conference and report to the programme committee to demonstrate that the panel is well prepared on the topics that it is expected to cover.

• The conference committee must satisfy itself that speakers and panels are well prepared and with a contribution of substance and relevance.

• All speakers should be advised that they must not criticise any institution operating in the private wealth sphere in public, or make any reference that could be so interpreted. The speaker must also not bring STEP into disrepute.

Logistics

Due to the sheer amount of detailed work involved in running conferences and events, we would recommend working with professional organisers to deal with the logistics. If financial support from STEP WW is required to underwrite a conference or event, it is a requirement that the events team at STEP WW manage the organisation from proposal stage through to completion.

STEP’s Events Team have a great deal of experience in working with branches to produce successful, profitable events and can offer advice on all aspects of the planning process. For those conferences and events underwritten by the branch finances, STEP WW can offer as much or little support as required.
For those conferences organised by the branch, a comprehensive list identifying all of the key tasks involved in planning, with allocated responsibilities, should be produced. This should be approved by STEP WW Head of Events.

**Sponsorship**

Sponsorship income is of vital importance to the financial success of any conference. Any sponsorship must adhere to STEP’s Advertising and Sponsorship Policy (available at [www.step.org/branch-portal](http://www.step.org/branch-portal)).

If a sponsor wants to furnish a speaker for a seminar, it is essential that the speaker be a credible professional who might be invited to speak independent of the sponsorship.

Any STEP conference uses STEP’s global brand and must ensure that our brand is not brought into disrepute, and that there is no confusion about who is running the conference. For this reason it is important to have standard sponsorship agreements to give clarity to all parties not just regarding the financial arrangements, but also how all parties’ brands will be used, and for what and in what context. STEP WW sponsorship partners, Think Publishing, have a great deal of experience in working with sponsor firms and can assist with this process.

A copy of the standard sponsorship agreement should be provided to STEP WW to ensure all aspects have been covered. For guidance on what to include, download our suggested Sponsor Agreement template from [www.step.org/branch-portal](http://www.step.org/branch-portal)
GROW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

PROMOTING THE BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

STEP membership provides a number of benefits, including:

1. Professional recognition – membership of a professional association that is increasingly widely recognised by employers, regulators, governments and the public at large.

2. Use of the TEP designation and the STEP logo for full members – enhancing your profile with both employers and clients.

3. Access to a global network of more than 20,000 practitioners across 96 jurisdictions.

4. Specialist publications and resources to keep you up-to-date with the latest industry developments.

5. A full calendar of local, national and international events offering leading analysis from expert speakers and extensive networking and development opportunities.

6. Exclusive discounts on courses, events, recruitment, books and other resources crucial to your career and business development.

View all member benefits and services at www.step.org/benefits

ASSISTANCE FROM STEP

To help you to promote the STEP products and services relevant in your area, we can provide the following:

- STEP PowerPoint presentations to present at branch events
- Marketing assistance for member recruitment drives
- STEP-branded pull-up banners
- Brochures on ‘how to join’ and on STEP’s courses and qualifications
- Copies of the STEP journal
- STEP-branded promotional items
- Assistance with event emails and RSVP lists

All the latest versions of the STEP membership joining materials can be found at www.step.org/joining Please download copies of these forms from our website to ensure you have the most up-to-date version.

CONTACT AND FURTHER INFORMATION

For help or advice on promoting membership within your branch/chapter, and to request marketing materials please contact marketing@step.org
If you are finding it hard to attract members to your branch/chapter events, or you know that a number of your branch members have not attended a meeting, it may be that you need to look at your events programme to see whether it is meeting the needs of all of your members.

**RESEARCHING YOUR MEMBERS**

The first thing to consider is who are your members? Are they senior practitioners or do you have a lot of younger members? Are they lawyers, accountants or another profession?

Which members are attending your meetings and which are staying away? Is there a pattern?

Branch/chapter officers can be granted access to download reports relating to their members. Once access has been granted, data is updated daily and available via a webpage (see page 52 to find out how to access branch reports).

Our Membership Team can help you pull various data from the database, including gender, job title, age and specialisms, where members have supplied these details.

Of course the other way to find out more about your members is to ask them. What do they want from their local branch/chapter? We can help you put together a brief online survey to send to members.

“Liechtenstein is a small centre. Many of our members are commuters from Switzerland or Austria. Taking these factors into account, the STEP Vaduz committee have concentrated on providing lunchtime events, which mainly focus on current jurisdictional themes and are usually very well attended. And the latest survey of our members has proven this was the right decision.”

*Dr Johanna Niegel, STEP Vaduz Centre*
TAILORING YOUR EVENTS PROGRAMME

Once you have some answers to the above, look at your events programme to see if it meets the needs of all of your members. What topics are you covering? How technical are the presentations? Are they at the right level?

Consider the timing of your events – could this be a contributing factor to some members not attending? Would an hour-long lunch presentation enable members with family commitments to attend? Would a breakfast seminar sit better with employers of less senior members?

Consider the cost of your events programme. Is it affordable for all your members? Are there ways of reducing your attendance fees by reducing running costs or charging non-members slightly more? What are you supplying at each meeting – and is this necessary/sustainable?

CONTACT AND FURTHER INFORMATION

To request access to your branch reports, and to discuss what information may be useful in researching your members, please contact the Membership Team at step@step.org
LAUNCH A SATELLITE SIG

WHAT IS A SATELLITE SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP (SIG)?

A Satellite SIG is a subsidiary of one of STEP’s Global SIGs, operating on a localised level via a STEP branch. It provides a local forum for members to engage with SIG activity and supplements and supports the Global SIG and your branch in providing interesting and relevant content to members, primarily in the form of events.

WHAT AREAS DO THE GLOBAL SIGS COVER?

There are currently eight Global SIGs:

- **Business Families**: focuses on what makes business families distinct, their particular challenges and how to best address them.

- **Charities**: facilitates the discussion of legal and accountancy issues relevant to the charity sector and the role charitable giving plays in strategic corporate planning and succession planning.

- **Contentious Trusts and Estates**: focuses on international trust and estate jurisprudence while promoting best practice in avoiding, or dealing with, contentious trust and estate disputes and trustee litigation.

- **Cross Border Estates**: addresses the domain of estate planning and the administration of estates/successions across international borders, with a focus on reconciling divergent inheritance rules between civil-code jurisdictions, common law jurisdictions, and other codes of law.

- **Digital Assets**: focuses on emerging issues related to how practitioners effectively assist clients and their fiduciaries in planning for and administering the digital assets of individuals after the individual dies or loses capacity.

- **International Client**: focuses on the needs practitioners worldwide serving, or aspiring to serve, international clients with complex planning needs; focusing on lifelong professional business development and career support.

- **Mental Capacity**: focuses on issues concerning capacity in all aspects of legal work relating to inheritance and succession planning.

- **Philanthropy Advisors**: focuses on enhancing the strategic nature of giving and social investing to raise the status of private client philanthropy advisory and help encourage further professionalism.
A Satellite SIG must be formally constituted through a scoping process and proposal document approved by the branch (in consultation with the Regional Committee, Global SIG Steering Committee and STEP Worldwide) before commencing operations. This largely sets out to assess the viability of a new satellite group.

The structure of Satellite SIG activity is to be determined by the local branch from a choice of two default models (with a third specific-case model), as to the best working fit for the branch’s operations. It is the responsibility of the relevant branch to agree the appropriate activity output of a Satellite SIG at a local level and to uphold reporting obligations.

CONTACT AND FURTHER INFORMATION
For more information please see the Satellite SIG Terms of Reference and some FAQs at [www.step.org/sigs-governance](http://www.step.org/sigs-governance)

If you have any questions or would like to explore launching a Satellite SIG, please email [sigs@step.org](mailto:sigs@step.org)
COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR MEMBERS

Regular communication with your members is crucial and serves to remind them that they have a local resource on hand.

We have a number of central channels, which you can use in addition to your own communications channels – which might include email, newsletters and social media.

We encourage you to send us any news or developments you may wish to tell members about – either in your local region or further afield – and we will look at how we can best communicate these.

WEBSITE

STEP has a worldwide website: www.step.org

The website is extensive, and includes a number of resources for members – including regularly updated industry news, jurisdictional information, a number of study and professional development resources, a full library of STEP Journal and TQR articles dating back to 2009, a full catalogue of webcasts on topical subjects, and a searchable Online Directory to help you find and contact other members.

Adding your event to the website

We have an Events Calendar, where we list all local, national and international events happening across the STEP world. We include these events in our publications and newsletters, so it is important to ensure you have added your event to the website.

You can do this in two ways:

• Add and edit your own events using the normal login details used to access the members area.
• We can add the event for you – just send through details as soon as it is scheduled.

Email web@step.org for more information.

Customising your branch/chapter microsite

All branches and chapters are allocated a microsite within the main STEP website at www.step.org/branches-chapters
These microsites are your opportunity to tell your members about what you offer and host locally-relevant resources and information.

The idea of these pages is to save you from needing to run a separate website – saving you time and cost.

We have recently developed a new, more extensive template for branches to use that offers greater flexibility and control.

To find out about how to develop your branch/chapter microsite to best serve your members, please contact the Web Team on web@step.org

PUBLICATIONS

The STEP Journal is sent to all members ten times a year and aims to keep members up to date with the latest developments internationally. Every issue includes regular STEP news pages where we can tell people about local and international developments – including noteworthy branch and chapter news.

For both the STEP Journal and the Trust Quarterly Review, we value feedback and welcome suggestions and contributions from members, subject to approval of the Editorial Board.

If you have any news or there is a particular topic of relevance to your region you think we should cover, please email us at editor@step.org

eNEWSLETTERS

We produce a number of email newsletters to keep members informed about what is happening both within STEP, and in the industry.

News Digests

The News Digests provide a round-up of industry news for members. They also feature job listings from our jobs site and list local branch and chapter events and conferences. We currently produce four News Digests:

- International News Digest: twice-weekly international news round-up
- UK News Digest: twice weekly UK news
- North America News Digest: twice monthly news focusing on US, Canada and Mexico
- LATAM News Digest: twice monthly news focusing on Latin America

Membership Newsletter

We produce a monthly Membership Newsletter, tailored to different STEP regions, which includes the latest STEP news and developments. It is a great way to tell members about local events and developments – so every month we ask you to send in any news or developments to include in this – the more local, relevant news the better. If you have anything you would like us to include in this, please email us at editor@step.org
Committee Member Briefing
This is a monthly newsletter specifically for you, as branch/chapter committee members, to keep you informed about the latest developments so you have all the necessary information to help you in your role.

BRANCH NEWSLETTER

Some branches/chapters have established newsletters for their members. The size of the branch/chapter will determine the level of sophistication and extent of the newsletter, as well as its frequency. Often these newsletters are distributed by email.

If you wish to create a branch newsletter, we have developed a basic Branch Newsletter Template. If you would like any advice or help in creating your newsletter please contact communications@step.org

And don’t forget to send us a copy – we can add this to your branch/chapter page on the website for you, and we can include any relevant news in other communications we are sending out.

SOCIAL MEDIA

We have a number of central social media channels, including Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+ and YouTube. These channels offer us a valuable way to talk to our members: responding to feedback, joining in discussions and explaining what we do. Beyond our members, using social media channels increases our presence on the web, giving potential members, the media and the public numerous ways of finding out about our organisation and our members.

We encourage branches and chapters to explore social media as a means of communicating with both members and potential members at a local level. The various channels can be used to promote branch activities, network with other members and discuss locally relevant topics. We have therefore developed a set of Social Media Guidelines for Branches and Chapters to explain how and why we are using social media, and how branches and chapters can get involved. These are available on the Branch Portal (www.step.org/branch-portal)

CONTACT AND FURTHER INFORMATION
If you would like further information, or help with or advice on communicating with your members, please email communications@step.org
As leading experts in the field, STEP members are well-placed to contribute to public policy debate on trust and estates issues through engagement with policymakers in governments and international institutions.

**KEY MESSAGES**

We have produced a flyer – What is STEP? – which aims to explain what we do and what our members do. This is available to view and download on the STEP website (www.step.org/media-centre), and hard copies can be ordered from the STEP office free of charge by emailing communications@step.org

**ENGAGING WITH POLICYMAKERS**

Our policy team has provided the below tips and best practice suggestions for engaging with policymakers at a local level.

**Help not harass**

You want to be part of the solution, not part of the problem. Acknowledge where problems exist and help to develop solutions that meet the needs of both your members and the policymakers.

**Keep calm**

You may feel strongly about an issue, but you must remain professional and practical in any negotiations with policymakers. Consider the language you use and avoid confrontational statements. Policymakers will respond more positively to constructive, rather than confrontational, feedback.

**Keep it simple**

Policymakers are not necessarily technical experts and any points need to be made in clear, non-technical language. Any written responses should be succinct and to the point.
Balanced view
Any advice should focus solely on how best to address the issue and be independent of political bias.

Tell us about it
Our Policy Team has developed excellent working relationships with a number of national and international bodies. Before embarking on any activity, please first contact us to determine if working relationships are already established.
If you have provided a consultation response, send it to us to include on our online Consultation Tracker.

Establish a Technical Committee
A number of branches and regions have established Technical Committees to consider local issues and develop responses to local consultations. These Committees generally consist of top industry experts with in-depth knowledge of local or national tax and legal issues. Members of the Committee can be called on as spokespeople as necessary.

Business cards
Some branch/chapter/national committees print STEP business cards for use by their committee members. It may be useful for certain committee members to have these STEP cards (for example in meetings with government on technical matters and approaching potential sponsors of conferences, etc.). However, these cards should be used only for STEP business, recognising that STEP is a professional organisation, and not for the business promotion of an individual member.

MEDIA AND PRESS SUPPORT

Obtaining positive media coverage of local STEP work and achievements can really help to build awareness of STEP and we would encourage you to engage with local press and media in this respect.

We have developed a Media Toolkit for branches and chapters, which contains:
• Media release tips
• Key messages
• Example press releases
• Media FAQs

CONTACT AND FURTHER INFORMATION
If you would like further information, or help with or advice on engaging with policymakers, please email policy@step.org

The Media Toolkit is available on the Branch Portal: www.step.org/branch-portal

For help with or advice on media issues, please email communications@step.org
CELEBRATE STUDENT SUCCESS

Education is at the core of STEP and there are currently more than 4,000 students studying for a STEP qualification across the world. Gaining a STEP qualification is demanding and attaining a top mark even more so.

RECOGNISING SUCCESS

STEP recognises top students twice a year in the Worldwide Excellence Awards. The recipients of these awards are the top-scoring students on each STEP paper globally.

While these individuals have come top globally, there may be many other high achieving students within your branch/chapter that have attained a pass with distinction in their papers, and we would encourage you to recognise and reward this at your branch/chapter meetings.

A PR OPPORTUNITY

This is a great opportunity to take a picture and create a press release to promote members’ achievements in your local media. We would also encourage you to email a picture and press release to editor@step.org and we will include this in the next available newsletter or STEP Journal.

FUTURE LEADERS?

These top-scoring students have demonstrated the highest level of commitment to their studies and this could make them valuable members of your branch or chapter. Some branches invite these top students to get more involved by joining the committee – thus bringing in new ideas and enthusiasm to the committee and helping the sustainability of the branch over the long term.

CONTACT AND FURTHER INFORMATION

To obtain a list of top students within your branch/chapter, please contact the Membership Team at step@step.org.

Worldwide Excellence Awards winners are announced twice yearly and posted on the STEP website at www.step.org/worldwide-excellence-awards.
CONTACTS AND RESOURCES
HOW WE CAN HELP

Below is a summary of some of the ways in which we can provide support:

• Distribution of email announcements for branch events and management of event RSVP lists
• Management of lists of non-member contacts for a branch
• Event logistics support for large conferences
• Marketing campaign support for large conferences
• Assistance with delegate registration system
• Marketing campaign support for new membership drives
• Provision of branch member reports and help in researching your members
• Provision of lists of high scoring branch members and students in STEP exams
• Distribution of AGM notices via email
• Distribution for branch newsletters via email
• Creation of branch email address for Microsoft Outlook (e.g. step.branchname@step.org)
• Development of branch microsites and regional landing pages
• Advice and support creating a branch newsletter
• Assistance in setting up social media channels

If you want help with any of the above, just get in touch.
USEFUL RESOURCES

BRANCH PORTAL

We have gathered a number of useful resources for branch/chapter committee members on the Branch Portal – [www.step.org/branch-portal](http://www.step.org/branch-portal)

Here you can find:

- A PDF version of this Handbook
- An up-to-date staff contact list
- Links to governance documents
- Information on the Employer Programme
- Help and support on
  - Uploading branch events
  - Downloading branch reports
  - Obtaining a template CPD certificate
- Social media guidelines for branches
- Brand Toolkit
- Media Toolkit

COMMITTEE-MEMBER BRIEFING

The Committee-Member Briefing is a monthly e-newsletter sent to members of STEP committees, including branch/chapter committees. Its purpose is to help keep you up-to-date with the latest STEP activities in order to support you in your role.

Any new developments that we think you need to know about will be noted in this newsletter, so it is important to look out for this each month.

The newsletter is also sent to branch and region administrators, to ensure they are also aware of any developments that may affect them.
KEY CONTACTS

- Editorial: editor@step.org
  For contributions to or queries about the STEP Journal, Trust Quarterly Review and newsletters

- Employers: epp@step.org
  For queries on the Employer Partnership Programme

- Events: events@step.org
  For help and advice in organising conferences, seminars and workshops

- Finance: accounts@step.org
  For queries or advice regarding invoicing, subscription renewals and expenses

- Governance: governance@step.org
  For help and advice in relation to elections, by-laws, and branch regulations

- Marketing: marketing@step.org
  For help with marketing your events, promoting membership, and for queries regarding use of the STEP brand and logo

- Membership: step@step.org
  For access to branch reports, and queries regarding membership, (re)joining, upgrading, fees and benefits

- Policy and technical: policy@step.org
  For technical queries, to share responses to government consultations, and for help establishing a technical committee

- Press and media: communications@step.org
  For social media support and to assist with any media enquiries

- Professional development: pd@step.org
  For queries and advice on qualifications and Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

- Professional standards: standards@step.org
  For concerns regarding a member’s conduct, complaints and advice and queries regarding STEP’s codes of conduct.

- Special Interest Groups: sigs@step.org
  For advice on launching a Satellite SIG or holding SIG-related events

- Web and technical support: web@step.org
  For assistance in developing your branch microsite, uploading branch events and for technical advice and support
ABOUT STEP

STEP is the global professional association for practitioners who specialise in family inheritance and succession planning. We work to improve public understanding of the issues families face in this area and promote education and high professional standards among our members.

STEP members help families plan for their futures, from drafting a will to advising on issues concerning international families, protection of the vulnerable, family businesses and philanthropic giving. Full STEP members, known as TEPs, are internationally recognised as experts in their field, with proven qualifications and experience.

www.step.org