



FAQ: What is the OPWG?

A: The Oncology-Pathology Working Group (OPWG) was established in 2011 as an initiative within the Veterinary Cancer Society to foster and promote an integrated working relationship between veterinary oncologists (medical, surgical, & radiation) and pathologists (anatomic and clinical) to facilitate and ensure the highest standard of pathology support and reporting for the advancement of veterinary clinical oncology and cancer research. In 2013, the American College of Veterinary Pathologists (ACVP) expressed interest in the mission of the OPWG, after which the initiative became a joint venture of VCS and ACVP as it stands today. For more detailed information about the OPWG and its mission, visit the [OPWG website](#).

FAQ: Who can join the OPWG?

A: Anyone interested in veterinary oncology and pathology is welcome to join the OPWG, including board-certified and board-eligible specialists, veterinary residents, interns, students, technicians and researchers (PhDs, PhD students, etc); however, active membership in ACVP, VCS, ECVP, ESVONC or other international equivalent is required. Membership in AAVLD or ASVCP is also recognized for membership eligibility for residents in training. Membership type and voting eligibility is determined by members' credentials. Detailed information regarding membership type is provided at the bottom of this document.

FAQ: How do I join the OPWG?

A: If you are interested in becoming a member of the OPWG, please download and complete the [OPWG Membership Application Form](#) (located at the bottom of the [OPWG website](#)) and submit to opwg.vcs@gmail.com. Active membership in VCS, ACVP, ESVONC, ECVP or other international equivalent is required for OPWG membership eligibility. Your application will be reviewed and you will be contacted with additional information.

FAQ: Are there dues associated with the OPWG?

A: No dues are owed directly to the OPWG for membership; however, dues associated with membership in either the Veterinary Cancer Society (VCS), American College of Veterinary Pathologists (ACVP), European Society of Veterinary Oncology (ESVONC), European College of Veterinary Pathology (ECVP) or other international equivalent are indirectly required as active membership in one of these organizations is required to be eligible for membership of the OPWG.

FAQ: When is the annual OPWG meeting?

A: The annual OPWG meeting is held at either the annual VCS or ACVP conference (alternating years). Specific information regarding the location, date, and time of the annual OPWG meeting can be found on the [OPWG website](#).

FAQ: What is the difference between the VCS website and the VCS (OPWG) online discussion forum?

A: The VCS website (<http://www.vetcancersociety.org/>) houses an overview of the Veterinary Cancer Society and offers links to pet information, cancer links, cancer trials as well as information regarding various VCS sponsored groups (i.e. Veterinary Cooperative Oncology Group/VCOG, Veterinary Technician Cancer Society/VTCS and the Oncology Pathology Working Group/OPWG <http://vetcancersociety.org/vcs-members/vcs-groups/oncology-pathology-working-group/>). The VCS online forum is a separate site (<http://vetcancersociety.ning.com/>), sponsored by the VCS, which provides a platform for online discussions for the various VCS sponsored groups, including the OPWG. A username and password are required to access the site. All members of the OPWG are provided with information regarding how to join the forum site.

FAQ: How do I access the VCS (OPWG) online discussion forum?

A: Access to the discussion forum is by invitation only. Once you complete your OPWG membership application and submit it to opwg.vcs@gmail.com it will be reviewed and you will receive information regarding how to create an account and access the online discussion forum.

FAQ: How do I join the OPWG “room” on the VCS discussion forum site?

A: Once logged in to the online forum, click on the OPWG link (“OPWG (Onc-Path)”) in the top navigation bar. Then, click on the request to join the OPWG in a yellow banner that should appear. If you encounter any problems, please contact us at opwg.vcs@gmail.com.

FAQ: How do I know if a new discussion is posted in the discussion forum?

A: To be notified by email when a discussion is posted or when there is a response to a discussion, there are a few quick and easy steps to follow as listed below.

1. Enter the OPWG “room” (click on “OPWG (Onc-Path)”) in the top navigation bar)
2. Scroll halfway down the page and find the “Discussion Forum”
3. Scroll to the bottom of the “Discussion Forum”
4. Click on “View All” in the bottom right-hand corner of the Discussion Forum
5. A new page will appear. Scroll to the bottom of this page and click “Follow”!

• You will now be notified by email when a new discussion topic is posted (similar to an email on a listserv).

- If you want to continue to follow the discussion of that particular post, you will need to enter that specific discussion, scroll to the bottom, and click “Follow” (bottom left-hand corner) for that specific discussion.
- If you reply to (i.e. participate in) the discussion you will automatically receive email notifications when others reply.
- As an OPWG member, you can also initiate a new discussion (post a new topic) at any time by clicking on “Add a Discussion”.

To further ensure you receive notifications of new discussions . . .

1. Click on “My Page” (far left on top navigation bar)
2. Click on “Settings” (4th option down under your name)
3. Click on “Email” under “My Settings”
4. Scroll to “Activity” (second heading from the bottom) and
5. Be sure to check the box “In my groups”
6. Click “SAVE” at the bottom
7. Done!

FAQ: How do I join a specific OPWG subgroup?

A: If you’re interested in actively participating in a specific OPWG subgroup, you can contact the subgroup Chair directly (as listed on the OPWG website), or send an email to opwg.vcs@gmail.com indicating your interest. It will be forwarded to the appropriate individual.

FAQ: What are the current OPWG subgroups?

A: As of October 2017, there are eight active OPWG subgroups:

1. MCT Subgroup on Grading
2. MCT Subgroup on Predictive & Prognostic Markers (KIT/*c-kit*)
3. Soft Tissue Sarcoma Subgroup
4. Clinical Pathology Subgroup
5. Canine Mammary Subgroup
6. Canine Lymphoma Subgroup
7. Canine Melanoma Subgroup
8. Canine Prostate Tumor Subgroup

Please visit the [OPWG website](#) to see a list of these subgroups, their respective Chairs, and their specific area of focus. An Education and Outreach Subgroup also exists but, is not currently active at this time. If interested in working with any of the abovementioned subgroups or if you would like to propose and chair a new subgroup, please contact the OPWG at opwg.vcs@gmail.com

FAQ: How many OPWG members are in each subgroup?

A: Subgroups must consist of a minimum of 6 members, including the Chair and Co-Chair, and no more than 20 members (although the maximum number may vary with Executive Council approval depending on the circumstances and goals of the Subgroup). Subgroups are composed of as even a distribution as possible of pathologists and oncologists. The Chair and Co-Chair positions are always held by one oncologist and one pathologist.

FAQ: What does an OPWG subgroup do?

A: The OPWG Subgroups are the core of the OPWG with regard to establishing consensus documents and/or reviews on any number of various oncologic pathology topics including but not limited to species and tumor-specific grading schemes, prognostic markers, predictive markers, biologically relevant surgical margins, and relevant immunohistochemical markers; diagnostic, prognostic, and predictive. These consensus documents are established via diligent and critical review by all subgroup members of respective and relevant peer-reviewed literature followed by, at times, heated debates and rewarding discussion until consensus is reached.

FAQ: What are the responsibilities of a subgroup member?

A: Subgroup members work with the Subgroup Chair and Co-Chair as well as all other members of the given subgroup. Together, the group identifies relevant literature relative to the particular focus of the group. A literature review form, to provide guidelines and maintain consistency between reviews, is provided to all members. Each member diligently, critically, and independently reviews the selected literature, while completing a review form for each of the respective papers. The Chair and Co-Chair collate and review all of the members' reviews and produce a single initial consensus document. This document is then reviewed, discussed, and modified by the group as a whole until consensus is reached.

FAQ: What happens to a consensus document once completed by a subgroup?

A: Once a subgroup's consensus document is submitted to the OPWG, it is posted on the OPWG online forum site for all OPWG members to review and comment on. Following discussions by the OPWG membership (in conjunction with comments from the subgroup members themselves), the consensus document will be voted on by voting members for overall consensus by the OPWG. Once general consensus by the OPWG is established, the document will be circulated amongst other groups (i.e. ACVP, ACVIM Oncology, VCOG, VRTOG, VSSO) for further support (or lack thereof).

FAQ: Are the final consensus documents published?

A: Yes, once a consensus document reaches completion (defined as approval by the OPWG general membership and review with support or not by additional organizations and working bodies as mentioned above), documents will be submitted for publication into appropriate peer-reviewed journals. Primary and senior authors will reflect that of the Subgroup Chair and Co-Chair with additional authors consisting of the subgroup members.

FAQ: What are the other “Groups / Rooms” on the VCS forum site other than the OPWG?

A: The VCS forum site provides a platform for online discussions for various VCS sponsored groups. Thus, you may see a “room” for the Veterinary Technician Cancer Society (VTCS) and the VTCS Executive Committee. All rooms are private and require you to request access to join a specific “room”. Individual OPWG Subgroups often have their own “room”. These are private “rooms” specifically for the members of the respective subgroup where they can hold discussions amongst their subgroup members, share documents, post papers for review, and submit their independent reviews of the literature. If you are an active member of a specific subgroup engaged in the literature review and other designated activities, you will have access to the respective subgroup “room”. If you are not a member of the respective subgroup, you will not be able to access the “room”.

FAQ: What are the different OPWG membership categories?

A: There are four membership categories: Full, Associate, Affiliate, and Honorary. Members from all categories are encouraged to participate in the OPWG via the online discussion boards, individual subgroups, and attending annual meetings. Voting eligibility and holding office as an executive officer or subgroup chair, however, is reserved for full members.

A **Full Member** is a board certified veterinary oncologist, pathologist, radiation oncologist, or surgeon (oncology fellow) as recognized by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), European Board of Veterinary Specialization (EBVS) or other international equivalent.

An **Associate Member** is a board certified veterinarian (i.e. DVM or other international equivalent) who has completed or is in the process of completing a 3-year residency in oncology, pathology, or radiation oncology, or is in the process of completing a surgical oncology fellowship, as recognized by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA), European Board of Veterinary Specialization (EBVS), or other international equivalent.

An **Affiliate Member** is a board certified veterinary specialist in a discipline other than oncology, pathology, or radiation oncology, to include board certified surgeons who have not completed a surgical oncology fellowship, or is a board certified veterinarian (DVM, VMD, or other international equivalent), veterinary technician/nurse, professional veterinary medical student, or graduate student who meet the general VCS OPWG membership requirements.

An **Honorary Member** is an individual who has, through their career, whether veterinary or human, demonstrated a special interest in and excelled in the area of oncologic pathology especially with a goal of standardization and improved reporting for the benefit of diagnostic oncologic pathology and cancer research.

Special modifications regarding membership category can be made by the Executive Committee upon review and approval of a proposal submitted by the respective member requesting membership modification.

Additional details of membership, including maintenance requirements of membership, are available in Section V of the OPWG Constitution which can be accessed via the [OPWG online forum site](#).

FAQ: How did the OPWG get to be SO COOL!?

A: The OPWG coolness factor is from the overwhelming energy, drive, and passion by all the amazing individuals who believed in and still believe in the mission and potential of the OPWG!