The Oncology Nursing Society (ONS) is a national organization of more than 35,000 registered nurses and other healthcare professionals dedicated to excellence in patient care, teaching, research and education in the field of oncology. The prime goal of ONS is to provide a network of peer support and exchange for oncology nurses. In 1988, the Society introduced the formal structure of Special Interest Groups (SIGs) to facilitate networking of ONS members in identified subspecialty or interest areas. These groups offer ONS members education, information and peer support in a variety of areas.

ONS also established an informal network called Focus Groups, which are composed of ONS members with interests in areas where SIGs have not been established. Focus Groups are established by ONS members who have petitioned the Membership & Component Relations Director and have received approval from the Director.

Benefits of Focus Group Involvement
ONS provides meeting time and space during the ONS Annual Congress for Focus Groups to meet, share information and support, and consider working toward formal SIG status. Additionally, focus group leaders may send members two written communiqués per year for informational purposes. A Focus Group Virtual Community (http://focusgroup.vc.ons.org/) is available to help recruit new members and improve networking among the Focus Group members. Each Focus Group has an advisor, the Membership & Component Relations Director, who provides advice and support to the group. Focus Groups which demonstrate sustained interest among their membership and have interest in a leadership role may apply for Special Interest Group status after meeting specified application criteria.

Membership Criteria
Focus group members must be ONS members in good standing. There are no additional dues or fees required for focus group involvement. Members may belong to more than one Focus Group.

How Focus Groups are Formed
ONS members may register support for a Focus Group by attending a focus group meeting at the ONS Annual Congress; or by emailing (cdemarco@ons.org) the ONS Office. Upon signing-up, the member’s name is added to the focus group list maintained by ONS, and forwarded to the group’s Contact. If a member is interested in organizing a focus group on a particular topic, the Membership & Component Relations Director will contact the member to determine their willingness to serve as the Contact person for the group.

The Focus Group Contact works with the Membership & Component Relations Director and ONS Office to communicate with members, identify issues, and serve as the contact for the group. The Contact receives lists of focus group members upon request. Focus Groups do not require a minimum number of members.
Services Provided by ONS to Focus Groups
* The availability of the Membership & Component Relations Director to address focus group needs.
* A Focus Group Virtual Community (http://focusgroup.vc.ons.org/)
* Maintenance of focus group membership lists.
* Focus Group membership list emailed Focus Group Contact upon request.
* The availability of two written communiqués per year.
* Meeting space provided at Congress.

Focus Group Responsibilities
* Advance the mission of ONS.
* Identify and meet the needs of the focus group membership.
* Identify issues of specialty/interest area.
* Communicate with Membership & Component Relations Director.
* A minimum of one written communiqué with members per year unless planning to apply for SIG status – 2 communiques within a year.
* Facilitate meeting at Congress. If unable, find someone to facilitate meeting.

Currently there are 21 ONS Focus Groups. They are:

- Caring for Prisoners with Cancer
- Computers in Nursing
- Evidence-Based Practice Change
- Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Issues
- Gerontology/Oncology
- Health Policy Issues
- International Oncology Nursing
- Multiple Myeloma
- Nurse Entrepreneur
- Nursing Informatics
- Nutrition
- OncoDermatology Nursing
- Oncology Case Management
- Oncology Quality Management/Outcomes
- Oral Adherence
- Pediatric, Adolescent & Young Adult
- Prostate Care
- Rural Health
- Sexuality
- Vascular Access & Oncology
- Veterans Affairs Oncology Nursing Care

(rev. 8/14)
Focus Groups

A Focus Group is an informal group composed of ONS members who have an interest in a specific area of practice.

A Focus Group may exist for an unlimited time as long as a Contact Person is in place and performing his/her responsibilities.

A Focus Group may submit a formal application to become a Special Interest Group once it has:

* demonstrated to the Membership & Component Relations Director satisfaction that it cannot achieve its mission within an existing SIG
* been in existence as a Focus Group for a minimum of one year
* established group goals
* have a minimum of 25 members
* demonstrated viability and identified a qualified leadership (including a coordinator and associate to serve, once approved as a SIG)
* emailed at least 2 communiques to their membership within a year

To apply for Special Interest Group status see pages 11-19.
MEMBER INTEREST IN FOCUS GROUP

Decision Tree C

ONS member indicates interest in Focus Group and is referred to ONS Office.

ONS member’s name added to national list of Focus Groups.

If established Focus Group, ONS adds person’s name to Focus Group’s list and mails Contact updated list upon request. (See Focus Group Contact responsibilities/page 5)

If ONS member proposes a new Focus Group, ONS will send “Proposal to Form a Focus Group Form” (See page 6 & 7).

Member sends completed proposal form to ONS. ONS sends a copy of proposal to Membership & Component Relations Director.

Membership & Component Relations Director reviews proposal and calls ONS member completing proposal form and name(s) of potential leaders if different from person submitted proposal.

If approved by the Membership & Component Relations Director, identified leader notified in writing and sent “Confirmation of Focus Group Contact” letter, Focus Group Contact Person Packet and Letter of Agreement.

If denied, identified leader will be notified by Membership & Component Relations Director.

General ONS membership notified of formation of new Focus Group via ONS Connect and marketing materials.

(Rev. 8/14)
RESPONSIBILITIES OF FOCUS GROUP CONTACT

1. Review Focus Group Contact Person Packet and sign Letter of Agreement.

2. Serve as Contact and resource for Focus Group.

3. Provide ONS with newly acquired names of Focus Group members obtained through direct contact.

4. Check the Focus Group Discussion area for any questions you can respond (http://sig.vc.ons.org/).

5. Determine if your Focus Group can sustain/maintain an individual Focus Group virtual community. If so, recruit a focus Group Virtual Community web administrator.

6. Identify issues of Focus Group and inform Membership & Component Relations Department of same at least annually.

7. Complete the SIG Application and identify a Focus Group member willing to assume the responsibility of Associate should the Focus Group decide to apply for SIG status.

8. Initiate and work with ONS regarding communiques.
   A. Send a minimum of one communiqué between May of one year to April of following year via the ONS Office.
   B. May send additional communiques in any given year via the ONS Office.
   C. In the year a Focus Group applies for SIG status, ONS will solicit members using a third communiqué.

9. Facilitate meeting at Congress. If unable, find someone to facilitate the meeting.

Rev. (8/14)
PROPOSAL TO FORM A FOCUS GROUP

Proposed Focus Group Name: _____________________________________________

Focus is on the following specific area of practice:

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

Potential goals of Focus Group:

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

Name(s)/Address/Phone Numbers of potential leader(s) of group:

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

Has this group been meeting informally already?  ____ Yes  ____ No
If yes, number of potential members should this Focus Group be approved  ____.
What three-letter code do you suggest for the Focus Group?  ____________
(Please Print)

__________________________  Name  ______________________________________
Signed

__________________________  Address  ____________________________________

__________________________  Phone  __________________________ (B)
Date  ________________________ (H)

Fax: _________________________  E-mail: ___________________________

(8/14)  6
FOCUS GROUP CONTACT LETTER OF AGREEMENT

Date: ________________________

Dear Membership & Component Relations Director:

I have read and understand that in the position of Focus Group Contact, I will:

ROLE/RESPONSIBILITIES OF FOCUS GROUP CONTACT

1. Review Focus Group Contact Person Packet and sign Letter of Agreement.

2. Serve as Contact and resource for Focus Group.

3. Provide ONS with newly acquired names of Focus Group members obtained through direct contact.

4. Check the Focus Group Discussion area for any questions you can respond (http://sig.vc.ons.org/).

5. Determine if your Focus Group can sustain/maintain an individual Focus Group virtual community. If so, recruit a focus Group Virtual Community web administrator.

6. Identify issues of Focus Group and inform Membership & Component Relations Department of same at least annually.

7. Complete the SIG Application and identify a Focus Group member willing to assume the responsibility of Associate should the Focus Group decide to apply for SIG status.

8. Initiate and work with ONS regarding communiques.
   A. Send a minimum of one communique between May of one year to April of following year via the ONS Office.
   B. May send additional communiques in any given year via the ONS Office.
   C. In the year a Focus Group applies for SIG status, ONS will solicit members using a third communique.

9. Facilitate meeting at Congress. If unable, find someone to facilitate the meeting.

I am willing to accept the above described responsibilities in agreeing to function in the role of Focus Group Contact for the ____________________________ Focus Group.

_________________________________________
Signature

_________________________________________
Print Name

(Rev. 8/14)
HELPFUL HINTS FOR FOCUS GROUP CONTACTS

1. Maintain contact with your Membership & Component Relations Director.

2. The Group must propose the title of the Focus Group. The name should clearly identify the interest area. The Group may not use the Oncology Nursing Society name or logo in any form until the Group has been formally approved by the Membership & Component Relations Director as a Focus Group.

3. Work with the Membership & Component Relations Department to use ONS Connect to provide ONS membership with status report to stimulate interest in the focus area.

4. Consider taking advantage of Congress meetings to meet and hold a discussion with the Focus Group regarding:
   A. The purpose and goals for the Focus Group.
   B. Level of interest among members.

   (Arrangements for meetings and space as available must be made in advance with the ONS Meeting Services Team through the Membership & Component Relations Director.)

5. The staff at ONS is available to assist. They will:

   * Maintain the Focus Group list.
   * Send names of interested ONS members to Focus Group Contact to answer/direct inquiries.
   * Answer/direct inquiries.
   * Market the Focus Group through the ONS Connect.

Contact: Brian K. Theil, Membership & Component Relations Director
         Carol DeMarco, Membership Specialist
         Oncology Nursing Society
         125 Enterprise Dr.
         Pittsburgh, PA  15275-1214
         (412) 859-6244
         FAX: (412) 859-6163
         email: btheil@ons.org

Rev. (8/14)
FOCUS GROUP COMMUNIQUES

Each Focus Group must send one communique (may send additional communiqus) each year (May - April) for informational purposes via the ONS Office. Communiques are now being sent via email. An additional mailing to solicit members during the process of applying for SIG status is provided. Focus Groups applying for SIG Status are required to have had two communications within the year prior to their application.

Communiques may be used to announce Congress meetings, solicit goals and share ideas.

FOCUS GROUPS

MAINTENANCE

In relation to Focus Groups, ONS via the & Component Relations Membership Director and the Membership Specialist, will:

* Respond to requests for information or registration materials from the ONS membership.
* Maintain a record of the number of ONS members registered for a Focus Group and maintain a computerized mailing list of same.
* Provide a roster of membership of each Focus Group to the Focus Group Contacts upon request.
* Coordinate the process, whereby, Focus Group members are petitioned for SIG registration and work closely with Contacts.
* Prepare and process communiques under the direction of the Membership & Component Relations Director.
* Serve as a resource at ONS for Focus Group Contacts.

(Rev. 8/14)
**DISSOLUTION OF FOCUS GROUPS**

Dissolution of a Focus Group occurs if:

1. Group has no Contact Person, in this case the following will occur:
   a. a letter to call for a volunteer will be sent to the group's membership
2. Insufficient interest among members to maintain Group
3. Group is not abiding by the policies and procedures and by-laws of ONS.

**MERGING FOCUS GROUPS**

Interest groups may develop with complementary, similar or supportive concerns.

Groups which otherwise might not be able to obtain sufficient numbers to achieve and maintain SIG status or accomplish the expected activities as single entities might be better able to do so when combined.

Individuals attempting to decide which SIGs to join might be more interested in a SIG which meets several of their needs as a single entity.

Focus Group Contacts will use communiqué(s) to solicit input from members regarding interest in merger.
FOCUS GROUP REQUIREMENTS PRIOR TO SIG APPLICATION

Be in existence at least one year

Commitment of a minimum of 25 ONS members by application deadline

Completion of SIG application package

Sent two communiqués to their membership within a year

Receipt of membership registration of at least 25 ONS members

Review and recommendation for approval by Membership & Component Relations Director

Approval from ONS Board of Directors

Viability of the Focus Group as demonstrated by:

• Working with Membership & Component Relations Director

• Using communiques

• Identifying leadership; proposed Coordinator must have been a group member for a minimum of one year

• Identifying purpose and suggested goals for the Focus Group

• Focus Group must have met at least once during the immediate one year period prior to application

The application must identify on-going projects

(Rev 8/14)
APPLICATION PROCESS FOR FORMATION OF A SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP (SIG)

**One Year**
Meet at Congress at least once as a Focus Group.
Sent 2 communiques within a year.

**Anytime during the year**
1. Draft copy of application from Contact Person to Membership & Component Relations Director.
2. Membership & Component Relations Director reviews application.
3. Membership & Component Relations Director sends to Board of Directors for approval or discuss revisions with Contact person to resubmit.
4. ONS emails letters to Focus Group membership.

**<25 members**
Contact Person notified application put on hold membership held by ONS until 25 applications received.

**25 or > members**
ONS notifies Membership & Component Relations Director receipt of 25 or > applications received.

**Letter of Approval to new SIG Coordinator**

**Official Certificate Presented at Next Congress.**
SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP
APPLICATION PROCESS

Determining Readiness to Apply
A Focus Group must meet the following criteria to be considered for SIG status:

1. Be identified as a Focus Group (FG) for a minimum of one year;
2. Have met at least once at Congress;
3. Have had at least two written communiques within a year to members (not counting ONS's letter calling for membership applications) via the ONS Office.

Preparation of the Application

1. Application must be legible and complete.
2. The Standing Rules Statement Item #2 must state that the membership is open to ONS nurses with an interest in the proposed area of the group e.g., radiation, ambulatory care. It cannot require experience or expertise in that area.
3. The action plan for year one must include:
   a. Mission and Goals: establishing one goal supporting the ONS Strategic Plan Pillars: Knowledge, Leadership, Quality and Technology.
   b. Ongoing Projects: identify any projects initiated as a Focus Group that are expected to continue. Note: SIG projects/activities must be in accordance with the rules and regulations established by the ONS Board of Directors as described in the SIG Policy and Procedure Manual.
   c. Proposed Activities/Projects: describe anticipated activities that will promote achievement of your goals. Keep in mind that these should be realistic and achievable within the one-three year time frame.
4. Discuss the application process and intent to apply with the Membership & Component Relations Director, as early as possible to be able to plan for meeting the requirements in a timely manner.

(Rev. 8/14)
**Application Process** (Refer to Decision Tree F on page 12)

1. Application can be submitted to the Membership & Component Relations Director anytime during the year.

2. A cover letter to be emailed by the ONS Office with a SIG membership application indicating the intent to form a SIG. This will be sent to all potential members identified by the Focus Group Contact requesting their completed SIG application from those wishing to join and notifying them of the minimum number of 25 members for the application to be processed.

3. Membership & Component Relations Director reviews the application and discusses suggestions or comments and any needed additions/changes to the application with the Contact Person.

4. The Focus Group Contact revises the application as indicated and submits to ONS Office at least 4 weeks prior to the application review.
   a. The application should be sent via email and a copy must be kept by the Contact for the Group's files. This is necessary to assure adequate documentation of the application's submission.

5. ONS Office will notify of receipt of the application to the Focus Group Contact Person.

6. Membership privileges will commence on the date that the SIG receives final approval from the ONS Board of Directors (not the date the applications are submitted).
   a. If the Focus Group fails to accrue 25 applicants in the required time frame, the applications will be held by the ONS Office and the applicants will be notified of the pending status of the Group. The application will be processed if the required number is reached.

7. After review by the Membership & Component Relations Director the following recommendations are made for:
   a. **Approval**: No required revisions, board action item recommending approval is drafted and forwarded to the ONS Board of Directors.
   b. **Approval pending revisions**: Board action item recommending approval is drafted and held pending receipt of final application containing the required changes.
   c. **Disapproval**: The Focus Group Contact Person will be notified in writing of disapproval by the Membership & Component Relations Director (or subsequently by the Board of Directors). The Focus Group may invoke the appeals process if they believe that reasons for the rejection are not valid. Note: this action should rarely be necessary if the Focus Group Contact Person and Membership & Component Relations Director have communicated effectively prior to submission deadlines to assure that all potential problems/concerns are properly addressed.

8. Upon final approval the ONS Board will notify the new SIG Coordinator and Associate in writing. The date of this notification will be the official start date and membership privileges will follow the same as members’ individual ONS membership.

9. Certificate of Approval will be presented to the SIG Coordinator at the next ONS Annual Congress.

(Rev. 8/14)
APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL OF A SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

LETTER

Initial Submission Date:

Reapplication Date(s):

Dear Membership & Component Relations Director:

Enclosed is the complete SIG Application for formation of the SIG. Included with this letter are:

1. Application Form
2. History/Activities of the Focus Group
3. Standing Rules
4. Action Plan for Year One
5. Provisional Mission Statement

Sincerely,

Focus Group Contact Signature  Proposed SIG Coordinator

Focus Group Name  Three Letter Code

For Completion by the Membership & Component Relations Director and ONS Office:

I have received and support the application of the above proposed Special Interest Group and I certify that this group has _____ members:

Membership & Component Relations Director  Date

(Rev. 8/14)
1. Proposed Name:

2. Current Focus Group Contact Person:
   Name:
   Address:
   Phone:

3. Will Focus Group Contact assume SIG Coordinator role?
   yes [ ]   no [ ]

   If no, who will assume that role?
   Name:
   Address:
   Phone:

4. Current Focus Group Co-Contact Person:
   Name:
   Address:
   Phone:

5. Will Focus Group Co-Contact assume the Associate role?
   yes [ ]   no [ ]

   If no, who will assume that role?
   Name:
   Address:
   Phone:

6. Newsletter Editor of proposed SIG:
   Name:
   Address:
   Phone:

7. Web Administrator:
   Name:
   Address:
   Phone:

8. Optional Officer: Title:
   Responsibility:
   Name:
   Address:
   Phone:

9. Optional Officer: Title:
   Responsibility:
   Name:
   Address:
   Phone:

Above leaders verified by: ____________________________
ONS Membership & Component Relations Director

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

ONS Member #
SIG Member?
Yes   No

ONS Member #
SIG Member?
Yes   No

ONS Member #
SIG Member?
Yes   No

ONS Member #
SIG Member?
Yes   No

ONS Member #
SIG Member?
Yes   No

ONS Member #
SIG Member?
Yes   No

ONS Member #
SIG Member?
Yes   No

ONS Member #
SIG Member?
Yes   No
History/Activities of the Focus Group:

History
1. Length of time this Focus Group has been in existence _____
2. Has this Focus Group ever been a SIG? yes □ no □
3. Number of Focus Group Meetings at prior Congresses
4. Number (avg.) in attendance (yr 1), (yr 2), (yr 3), (yr 4).
5. Do you have recorded minutes from the previous meetings? yes □ no □
6. Has there been a consistent group of individuals in attendance at meeting? yes □ no □
7. Have there been largely new members attending Congress meeting? yes □ no □

Activities
1. Has your group identified a likely corporate funding source? yes □ no □
   If yes, please identify:
2. Has your group presented/submitted an Instructional Session, Pre-Congress Workshop, Session? yes □ no □
   If yes, please identify: (topic, year)

Leadership
1. Have you identified a core leadership group? yes □ no □
   If yes, does this group include members other than those listed on this application?
2. Have you communicated with the Membership & Component Relations Director? yes □ no □
3. Have you held a prior position at the ONS level? yes □ no □
4. Have you held an elected position at the Chapter level? yes □ no □
   If yes, what position
5. Do you currently hold an elected/appointed position in ONS/ACS or other professional organizations? yes □ no □
   If yes, indicate position and organization
6. Are you a member of a SIG(s)? yes □ no □
   If yes, which one(s)?
Leadership (cont.)

7. What do you see as the greatest strength of your Focus Group?

8. What are your concerns regarding your Focus Group?

9. Does the mission of your Focus Group warrant the establishment of a new SIG?
   yes ☐ no ☐

   If yes, justify why your proposed SIG could not carry out its mission in the context of a previously chartered SIG.
Special Interest Group of the Oncology Nursing Society

STANDING RULES

I. Provisional Mission Statement

II. The Special Interest Group (SIG) is bound by the Bylaws of the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS). These Standing Rules are part of the minimum requirements for maintaining SIG approval. Other Standing Rules may be added and/or revisions made with the approval of the Membership & Component Relations Director and ONS Board of Directors. No Standing Rules may be deleted by an individual SIG.

Identify Target Membership

A. The ____SIG shall include nurses working in or having interest in:

B. The purposes of this SIG are:

* To support the mission statement of ONS.
* To provide and promote a dynamic network for subspecialized nurses within ONS.
* To serve as a forum for communication within the interest area.
* To identify and explore patient care issues within the interest area.
* To address current trends and issues within the interest area.
* To share educational resources and clinical expertise with other special interest groups and the membership-at-large.

C. Leadership:

A. The initial Coordinator will serve a term of two years. After the first full year of operation, a Coordinator-Elect will be elected. The initial Associate will serve a one-year term until the election is held.

B. The Coordinator-Elect will assume the Coordinator position after one year then serve for two years. The retiring Coordinator will serve in an Ex-Officio capacity to assist the Coordinator as designated for the year during which there is no Coordinator-Elect.

C. Elections will occur every other year at the time ONS elections are held online.

D. In the event of a vacancy in the position of Coordinator, the Associate, the Coordinator-Elect will assume the Coordinator office until the next election of a Coordinator-Elect.

E. The Editor and other officers may be appointed by the Coordinator or elected to meet specific needs of this individual SIG.
D. Written Communications:

In order to keep members informed of SIG activities, a minimum of two newsletters per year is required in year one. In addition, the SIG may produce communiques as needed.

History of communications to date:

1. Communiques (#)
2. Other

III. ACTION PLAN FOR YEAR ONE

1. Projects that are expected to be continued and current source of funding (if applicable):

2. Proposed goals for year one:
   Goal 1 Knowledge:
   Deadline
   Action
   Measurable

   Goal 2 Leadership:
   Deadline
   Action
   Measurable

   Goal 3 Quality:
   Deadline
   Action
   Measurable

   Goal 4 Technology:
   Deadline
   Action
   Measurable

The ONS Board of Directors decided the SIGs will no longer be required to do strategic plans. In place of the strategic plan each SIG needs to create 4 goals. Each goal addressing one of the pillars of the ONS Strategic Plan – knowledge, leadership, quality and technology. The goal form is on the main page of the SIG VC http://sig.vc.ons.org

These goals should be:
- reviewed each year
- need to be revised/updated every 3 years
- include your quarterly communication to your membership (via newsletter(s), communique(s), Virtual Community Posting(s) – need to include timeline for communication
- your SIG membership does not need to vote on the goals or actions