

**GOVERNANCE POLICY #6 – STATUS REVIEW FOR PRACTITIONERS  
FOR SOKA GAKKAI INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CANADA  
ASSOCIATION DE LA SOKA GAKKAI INTERNATIONALE DU CANADA**  
(a federal corporation)  
hereinafter referred to as “SGI Canada”

Policy Type: Governance

Policy #6

Status: Approved by Corporate Members on September 27, 2014

This Governance Policy emanates from General Operating Bylaw No. 8 for SGI Canada, as amended from time to time, and is to be read in conjunction with Bylaw 8 and the other Policies adopted pursuant to Bylaw No. 8.

The definitions contained in Bylaw No. 8, as amended from time to time, shall apply to the provisions of this Governance Policy.

**INDEX**

1.01	Practitioner Status Review.....	2
1.02	Procedure for Practitioner Status Review.....	3
1.03	Preliminary Review.....	3
1.04	Hearing Process.....	4
1.05	Results of Status Review .....	5

**INTRODUCTION**

In the history of the Soka Gakkai and the SGI, there have been individuals who have sought to undermine or harm the organization, and there have been individuals who have caused extensive suffering to others through abusive behaviour or self-serving schemes to enrich themselves at the expense of their fellow practitioners. In order to protect the organization and those who belong to it, it is therefore necessary to have in place a procedure for dealing with extreme situations like these. In some cases, criminal activity may be at the heart of the situation.

When criminal activity is involved, the police and the criminal justice system must be brought in, and this Policy would not play a role in determining the innocence or guilt of the Individual in question under governmental criminal laws.

Practitioner Status Review would be exercised only in the most extreme cases, where deliberate and ongoing negative behaviour is causing suffering to individuals in the organization, or where a deliberate attempt is being made to cause harm to the SGI Canada organization.

**BRIEF EXPLANATION OF THIS POLICY**

This Policy describes the Status Review procedure for Practitioners that applies where a Practitioner is alleged to have breached a Practitioner Standard described in Section 1.03 of the Governance Policy on Practitioners. The primary aim of Status Review is to restore the Practitioners into a healthy relationship with other Practitioners and Leaders of SGI Canada in accordance with the principles of Soka Gakkai

Nichiren Buddhism. Practitioner Status Review will only be carried out in the most difficult situations, where a Practitioner has breached a Practitioner Standard contained in section 1.03 of the Governance Policy on Practitioners and refuses to discontinue the breach despite SGI Canada's repeated attempts to resolve the issues through informal discussions as outlined in section 1.04 of the Governance Policy on Practitioners. Practitioner Status Review would only occur after completion of the extensive informal discussion process with responsible Leaders, described in Section 1.04 of the Governance Policy on Practitioners, to ensure every effort has been made to informally resolve an alleged breach of a Practitioner Standard through dialogue with the Practitioner in question. There is also a requirement to informally consult with any individuals alleged to have been harmed by the breach, in order to obtain their perspectives as well.

If the matter is not resolved by the time the informal discussion process has been completed, the General Director may, after consulting with the other applicable Leaders, determine that Practitioner Status Review is needed. In that case the General Director would initiate the Practitioner Status Review process by providing a written summary of the alleged wrongdoing to the Chair of the Board. The written summary would also be provided to the Practitioner in question at a later time. A determination by the General Director to proceed with Practitioner Status Review must be approved by the Board of Directors at a meeting of the Board and must also be reviewed and approved by the Executive Council in order to provide checks and balances in the process. In this regard, if either the Board or the Executive Council determines that the allegations are invalid, then the allegation will be dropped and no further review of Practitioner status will proceed.

Where the Executive Council determines on a preliminary basis that the allegations require further investigation, the hearing process set out in section 1.04 of this Policy will be followed. Where a situation involves an extraordinary case of an alleged breach by a Leader of both Practitioner and Leadership Standards, the Practitioner Status Review procedure to apply to both types of breaches may be held at the same time to avoid duplication.

Where a Practitioner under Practitioner Status Review has been charged with a criminal offence, the Practitioner Status Review procedure outlined in this Policy will be suspended until the criminal investigation or court proceedings have been completed. However, suspension of the Practitioner Status Review procedure does not preclude SGI Canada from taking interim steps, including suspension from status as a Practitioner or barring the Practitioner under Practitioner Status Review from attending SGI Canada programs. These measures may be necessary in certain situations to protect the other Practitioners from potential harm that may be caused by the Practitioner under Practitioner Status Review.

### **1.01 Practitioner Status Review**

- (a) The primary aim of Practitioner Status Review shall be the restoration of the Practitioner in question to a healthy relationship with the other Practitioners of SGI Canada. SGI Canada has not only the right but the duty to practise such Practitioner Status Review in a manner that reflects adherence to the principles of Nichiren Buddhism. Practitioner Status Review will only be carried out in the most difficult situations where a Practitioner has breached a Practitioner Standard contained in section 1.03 of the Governance Policy on Practitioners and refuses to discontinue the breach despite SGI Canada's repeated attempts to resolve the issues through informal discussions as outlined in section 1.04 of the Governance Policy on Practitioners.
- (b) A Practitioner shall be deemed to be under the Practitioner Status Review of SGI Canada if the General Director, in his sole discretion determines that Practitioner Status Review is necessary in light of a breach of any of the Practitioner standards by a Practitioner (as

referred to in section 6.02 of General Operating Bylaw No. 8 and described in section 1.03 of the Governance Policy on Practitioners) (“Practitioner Standards”) after completion of the informal discussion process outlined in section 1.04 of the Governance Policy on Practitioners in order to attempt to resolve a suspected breach of the Practitioner Standards by any Practitioner. Before making a decision to proceed with Practitioner Status Review, the General Director shall: 1) consult with one or more of the Leaders who were involved with the informal discussion process outlined in section 1.04 of the Governance Policy on Practitioners, and 2) consult with any individuals who were alleged to have been harmed by the situation involving the alleged breach of the Practitioner Standards. For greater certainty, the General Director shall not require the approval of the said Leaders or the allegedly harmed individuals in order to make a decision to proceed with Practitioner Status Review, as the purpose of the consultations is to elicit the perspectives of the said Leaders and said harmed individuals for informational purposes only. Any decision by the General Director to proceed with Practitioner Status Review must be ratified by the Board of Directors by Consensus Resolution in accordance with Section 1.03 of this Policy.

- (c) Status Review as a Practitioner under this Policy does not preclude Status Review as a Leader under the Governance Policy on Status Review for Leaders. Status Review for Leaders may proceed based on the same facts and at the same time as Status Review for Practitioners.
- (d) Where the General Director is suspected of having breached a Practitioner and/or a Leadership Standard, the determination of whether Leadership and/or Practitioner Status Review is necessary and the decision on the Status Review procedure to be followed shall be made by the Chair of the Board in his or her sole discretion after completion of the informal discussion process outlined in section 1.04 of the Governance Policy on Practitioners. Where the General Director is suspected of having breached a Practitioner Standard, the Written Summary referred to in section 1.03 of this Policy shall also be prepared by the Chair of the Board.

## **1.02 Procedure for Practitioner Status Review**

The Status Review procedure for Practitioners of SGI Canada is set out in sections 1.03 to 1.05 of this Policy.

## **1.03 Preliminary Review**

Where the General Director determines Practitioner Status Review is required to address a breach of a Practitioner Standard as outlined in the Governance Policy on Practitioners, after completion of the informal discussion process outlined in section 1.04 of the Governance Policy on Practitioners to address a suspected breach of a Practitioner Standard by any Practitioner, the following process shall be followed:

- (a) The General Director shall provide a written summary (“Written Summary”) of the alleged wrongdoing committed by the Practitioner (“Practitioner Under Review”) to the Chair of the Board, together with a formal written request that the matter be referred to the Executive Council for Practitioner Status Review. The Written Summary shall also include the General Director’s recommendation on whether the alleged wrongdoing is to be addressed solely in accordance with this Policy or solely in accordance with the Policy on Status Review for Leaders (if the individual is a Leader) or whether the matter will be

addressed under both Policies on a parallel basis as outlined in section 1.01(c) of this Policy. The Written Summary shall outline the grounds for Practitioner Status Review and a copy will later be provided to the Practitioner Under Review as the notice outlining the grounds for Practitioner Status Review against him or her.

- (b) Upon receipt of the Written Summary the Chair of the Board shall call a meeting of the Board of Directors to determine by Consensus Resolution whether the matter will be referred to the Executive Council in order to proceed with the Practitioner Status Review.
- (c) If the Executive Council determines by Consensus Resolution on a preliminary basis that the allegations against the Practitioner Under Review are invalid *prima facie*, then the allegation shall be dropped and no further action against the Practitioner Under Review shall proceed.
- (d) If the Executive Council determines by Consensus Resolution on a preliminary basis that the allegations against the Practitioner Under Review require further investigation, then the Executive Council shall proceed to the hearing process set out in section 1.04 of this Policy.

#### **1.04 Hearing Process**

- (a) Where a Practitioner Under Review has been charged with a criminal offence, the Practitioner Status Review procedure outlined in this Policy shall be suspended until the criminal investigation and the court proceedings, including any appeals (“Court Proceedings”) have been completed. For greater certainty, suspension of the Practitioner Status Review procedure shall not preclude SGI Canada from taking interim steps pending final processing of the Court Proceedings including, but not limited to, suspension from status as a Practitioner and barring the Practitioner Under Review from attending District meetings or other SGI Canada programs until the Court Proceedings have been completed. Where the Executive Council suspends a Practitioner or bars a Practitioner from attending SGI Canada programs, the Executive Council shall advise the Board of Directors of the same.
- (b) If the Executive Council determines by Consensus Resolution on a preliminary basis that the allegations against the Practitioner Under Review require further investigation, then the Executive Council shall proceed with a hearing. The Executive Council, in its discretion, may temporarily suspend the said Practitioner Under Review from any Officer post, Leadership or other official position within SGI Canada until the completion of the Practitioner Status Review process. The Executive Council shall advise the Board of Directors where a Practitioner Under Review is temporarily suspended as Practitioner or a Leadership position within SGI Canada.
- (c) The Executive Council shall then convene a hearing to consider the allegation. The Practitioner Under Review shall be given a minimum of fourteen (14) days written notice by registered mail and email (if available), at his or her last known address (which period of time shall include the date of mailing but shall exclude the date of the hearing), setting out the date, time and place at which the hearing will be held. The notice shall briefly explain the nature of the allegation and advise the Practitioner Under Review that the allegation will be considered by the Executive Council at the hearing. The Practitioner Under Review shall be entitled to attend before the hearing to listen to the details of the allegation made and to respond thereto.

- (d) The hearing shall be conducted as a board of inquiry by the Executive Council and a member of the Executive Council shall be appointed by the Executive Council to act as the chairperson of the hearing. The Executive Council shall have responsibility for carriage of the hearing and shall make the determination on whether the Practitioner Under Review is to have his or her Practitioner Status subject to review at the end of the hearing. Where necessary, the Executive Council is to determine what measures are to be imposed. The Executive Council shall be responsible to ensure that due process and procedural fairness is carried out in relation to all aspects of the hearing, as provided for in this Policy on Status Review for Practitioners, and that any recommendations of the Executive Council are duly and fairly implemented.
- (e) The hearing shall not be open to the public nor to other Practitioners or Leaders of SGI Canada. The Practitioner Under Review shall be entitled, but is not obligated, to be accompanied at the hearing by two Practitioners who may act as observers during the hearing but who shall not be entitled to participate at the hearing.
- (f) Both the Practitioner Under Review and the Executive Council may call any witnesses or evidence that is relevant to the allegation being made. No party to the hearing shall be represented by legal counsel.
- (g) There shall be an equal allocation of time for the presentation of evidence by both the Executive Council and the Practitioner Under Review. The Executive Council may designate a time limitation on the hearing, provided that such limitation is applied equally to the presentation of evidence by both the Executive Council and the Practitioner Under Review and provided further that notice of such limitation of time is first given to the Practitioner Under Review at least three (3) hours before the hearing is required to end.
- (h) All evidence presented before the hearing shall be kept private and confidential by the Executive Council.
- (i) At the end of the hearing, the Executive Council shall convene in private to deliberate on the evidence presented. A Consensus Resolution (as defined in section 1.01 of General Operating Bylaw No. 8, as amended from time to time) of the Executive Council shall be required to conclude that the allegation is true; failing which the allegation will be deemed not to be proven, with the result that the Practitioner Under Review shall no longer be subject to Practitioner Status Review proceedings by SGI Canada and shall be reinstated as a Practitioner in good standing. In the event that the Executive Council determines that the allegation is true, the Executive Council shall decide the appropriate measures to be implemented in accordance with Section 1.05.

#### **1.05 Results of Status Review**

- (a) In the event that the Executive Council determines that the allegation is true, the Executive Council shall decide the appropriate measures to be implemented, which decision shall be determined by a Consensus Resolution of the Executive Council. Appropriate measures shall be determined and implemented with the intent of both protecting the integrity of SGI Canada and restoring the Practitioner Under Review into a healthy relationship with SGI Canada and the other Practitioners pursuant to the principles of Nichiren Buddhism, as much as possible.

- (b) The General Director shall endeavour to orally advise the Practitioner Under Review of the decision of the Executive Council Meeting forthwith after a decision by the Executive Council is made. In addition, the Secretary shall promptly send written notification of the decision made by the Executive Council by registered mail, regular mail and email (if available) to the Practitioner Under Review at his or her last known address within ten (10) days of a decision having been made together with a succinct summary of the reasons thereof.
  
- (c) The decision of the Executive Council on the measures to be administered shall be final and binding, with no right of appeal. In the event that the decision of the Executive Council is to temporarily suspend or terminate status as a Practitioner, then the Practitioner Under Review shall automatically cease to be a Practitioner of SGI Canada upon the date that the decision by the Executive Council is made. Suspension of status as a Practitioner may range from one (1) month to one (1) year. For greater certainty, a decision to suspend or terminate Practitioner status will only be made in situations involving a very serious breach of a Practitioner Standard and after careful consideration by the Executive Council. Once terminated as a Practitioner, the Individual may or may not be re-admitted as a Practitioner of SGI Canada in the future, subject to the sole discretion of the Board of Directors, in accordance with section 1.01 of the Governance Policy on Practitioners which describes the application process to become a Practitioner.