

RULEBOOK FOR CASE REVIEW AND POLICY GUIDANCE



**IMPROVING HOW META TREATS PEOPLE
& COMMUNITIES AROUND THE WORLD**



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Introduction

The Oversight Board was created to make principled, independent, and binding decisions on what content Facebook and Instagram should allow or remove, based on respect for freedom of expression and human rights.

This Rulebook provides the framework for the Oversight Board to meet its responsibilities as established in the Charter and implement the operational procedures outlined in the Bylaws. The Rulebook is not legally binding, but provides practical guidance to Oversight Board Members and the Oversight Board Administration by detailing case review and policy guidance procedures.

In line with the *UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights*, the Rulebook provides greater transparency to users and the general public regarding the functioning of the Board. By sharing this Rulebook, the Board aims for its processes to be accessible and predictable. Opportunities for public engagement are specified within the Rulebook and will be published on the Board's website.

The procedures outlined in the Rulebook were established by the Oversight Board Co-Chairs and Members. The Rulebook will be updated periodically, and any modifications will be noted.



Glossary

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| Case Development Team | The division of the Administration that assists Board Members from panel assignment through to decision publication. |
| Case Management Tool (CMT) | The platform created by Meta and used by the Oversight Board to receive and review case submissions, and collect and store case files. |
| Case Selection Committee | A sub-committee of the Board, comprised of at least five Oversight Board Members with membership rotating every three months, formed to address case selection. |
| Case Selection Team | The division of the Administration that assists the Case Selection Committee with identifying cases for panel review. |
| Co-Chairs | The Board Members that supervise the affairs of the Oversight Board. |
| Drafting Committee | A sub-committee of the Board, comprised of at least five Oversight Board Members, formed to develop Policy Guidance. |
| Meta Content Policies | Facebook and Instagram's content policies and procedures that govern content on the platform (e.g. Community Standards or Community Guidelines). |
| Meta-referred Case | A case submitted to the Oversight Board for review by Meta. These cases will generally be subject to standard procedures, but in exceptional situations, Meta may require they be subject to expedited procedures. |



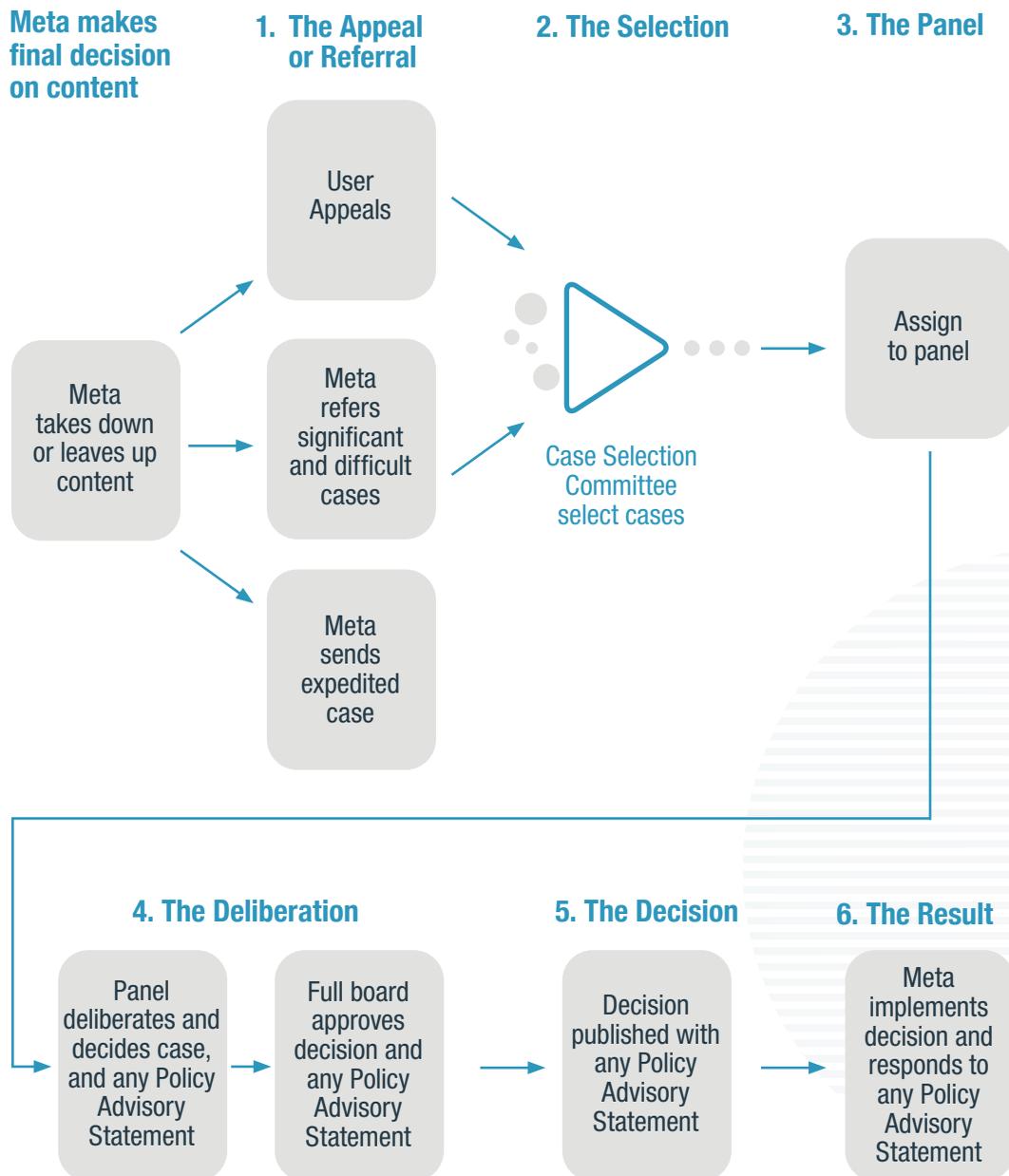
Glossary

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| Oversight Board Administration | The full-time professional staff of the LLC providing support to the Oversight Board in its day-to-day operations. |
| Panel | Five Members of the Oversight Board assigned to review a case. |
| Policy Advisory Statement | A statement appended to an Oversight Board decision on a specific case that reflects policy considerations beyond the binding content decision. |
| Policy Guidance | A recommendation made by the Oversight Board regarding Meta content policies not appended to a case decision. |
| Presiding Co-Chair | The Co-Chair that supervises Policy Guidance development. |
| Presiding Panelist | The Board Member that leads the panel during case review. |
| Rapporteur | The Board Member that leads the Drafting Committee during Policy Guidance development. |
| Research and Policy Team | The division of the Administration that assists Board Members with research and policy questions. |
| User-generated Appeal | An appeal submitted to the Oversight Board for review by a Facebook or Instagram user. |



Case Review

For standard case review, the Oversight Board will aim to issue a decision within 90 days of receiving a user-generated appeal or a Meta-referred case. For expedited case review, the Oversight Board will aim to issue a decision within 30 days of the case being referred to the Oversight Board.





Case Selection

Case Selection is the process through which the Case Selection Committee selects user-generated appeals and Meta-referred cases for panel review and decision. The Case Selection Team supports the Board in this process, using the Case Management Tool (CMT) to identify cases that meet pre-determined selection criteria for consideration by the Case Selection Committee.

Step 1: Selection of Cases for Manual Review

1. Based on the overarching selection criteria established by the Oversight Board and specific selection criteria established by the Case Selection Committee, the Case Selection Team will filter user-generated appeals and Meta-referred cases in the CMT.
2. The Case Selection Team will manually review the filtered cases to present a reviewable longlist to the Case Selection Committee, alongside statistics about both the longlist and non-selected cases.
3. The Case Selection Committee will identify a shortlist of cases from the longlist that it will consider for selection. The Case Selection Committee may review and adjust the specific criteria if they wish to include more cases.

Step 2: Meta Legal Review

1. The shortlist will be sent to Meta for legal review. Meta may exclude from the shortlist cases that are not eligible for review by the Oversight Board, in accordance with the Bylaws, such as cases that could result in criminal liability or adverse government action if reviewed. The Case Selection Team will keep statistics on Meta exclusions.
2. The Case Selection Team will ensure that case files in CMT are accurate and complete for all cases that remain on the shortlist. The Case Selection Team will note previous Oversight Board cases which have set precedent for the shortlist, as well as any changes to Meta's content policies since Meta's enforcement decision was made.



Step 3: Case Selection Committee Review

1. The Case Selection Team will summarize the shortlisted cases for the Case Selection Committee, which will then meet to discuss the shortlist.
2. The Case Selection Committee will select cases from the shortlist to assign to panels for review and decision. The Committee will aim to select by consensus, though only a simple majority vote is required to assign a case to a panel.
3. The process may be repeated if sufficient cases are not identified. The Case Selection Committee may alter the specific criteria for identification of additional cases for review.



Case Development: Standard Procedure

Case Development is the process of assigning cases to panels, deliberation, decision, and publication. The Case Development Team supports the Board in this process.

Step 1: Assign Panel and Case Development Team

1. Following case selection, the CMT will constitute a panel with five Board Members, including at least one Member from the region the content primarily affects and ensuring gender diversity. Panelists will be notified of the assignment and invited to review the case file.
2. The presiding panelist will be the Board Member with the most time elapsed since they last served as presiding panelist. For the initial round of cases, the Co-Chairs will act as the presiding panelists.
3. Panelists will declare any relevant conflicts of interest, which will be addressed in accordance with the Code of Conduct annexed to the Bylaws..

Step 2: Case Development

1. When a case is assigned to panel, Meta must complete the case file with the case history and policy rationale for the decision. For Meta-referred cases, Meta will notify the user that the case has been assigned to a panel and provide them with the option to provide a statement to the Oversight Board. The user's consent is required for identifying information to be included in any decision. A case may proceed without a user statement, though a decision will not include information that could be used to identify a user absent their consent.
2. The panel may request from Meta additional information reasonably required for it to make a decision, although Meta may decline this request in accordance with the Bylaws. The Case Development Team will transmit the panel's requests and establish a deadline for Meta to submit this information.
3. The Board may request public comment briefs. Calls for public comment briefs will be posted on the Board's website with requirements for form and substance, and a deadline for submission. Submissions will be shared with the panel.



4. The Administration will provide, at the panel's direction, research on case context (e.g. cultural, linguistic, political), relevant international standards on freedom of expression and human rights, and Meta's content policies and values. This may be sought through external partners.
5. The Administration will complete an impact assessment to identify potential harms resulting from an Oversight Board's case decision and possible mitigation actions. This will be updated throughout the process and reviewed post-decision for evaluation and learning.

Step 3: Panel Review

1. Prior to panel deliberation, the Case Development Team will ensure the CMT case file includes all additional information requested by the panel and notify panelists.
2. Panelists may choose to convene a preliminary meeting to review the case file, request further information from Meta or the Administration, or exchange questions.

Step 4: Deliberations

1. All panelists must participate in deliberations. Should a panelist be unable to participate, the panel must reschedule, or Co-Chairs must appoint a temporary or permanent replacement.
2. The presiding panelist will lead the deliberations, ensuring equal opportunity for panelists to present their views, aiming to reach a consensus decision during the time reserved.
3. If the panel determines further information is necessary to decide a case, this may be requested.
4. At the panel's discretion, a decision may include a policy advisory statement regarding Meta's content policies. Such a statement will relate to content policy issues raised by the case. Meta will consider policy advisory statements as recommendations and publicly disclose any action taken in response.
5. While panels should strive for consensus, decisions and policy advisory statements may be reached by majority vote. All panelists must vote.



6. Should a majority of the panel determine that deliberation would benefit from the expertise of a Board Member not on the panel, such advice can be requested.
7. Should a majority of the panel determine that a case requires plenary Board deliberation due to its significance or complexity, this may be requested through a Co-Chair, and a plenary deliberation will be held.

Step 5: Decision Drafting

1. The presiding panelist may draft the decision or appoint with their agreement another panelist to draft the decision, considering equal distribution of work. The Case Development Team will be available to support drafting as requested.
2. Once a draft decision is complete, the Case Development Team will notify the panel.
3. Panelists will review the draft decision and provide any comments for panel consideration. Panelists may discuss and convene as necessary to resolve comments.
4. The presiding panelist will inform the Case Development Team when the draft decision has been approved by all panelists.

Step 6: Board Approval

1. The draft decision will be circulated to all Board Members for review. Board Members will have the opportunity to suggest edits.
2. In exceptional circumstances, if a Board Member informs a Co-Chair that a draft decision has serious implications requiring a plenary discussion, such a meeting will be convened.
3. The decision will be circulated to all Board Members for review and approval. If the Board decides by majority vote to reassign the case to a new panel for reconsideration, a new panel will convene promptly.



Step 7: Decision Publication

1. The Administration will send the decision to Meta Legal for privacy review.
2. The Administration will publish the decision on the Board's website in all the languages supported by the Board.



Case Development: Expedited Procedure

The Case Development process may be expedited in exceptional circumstances. This process must be completed within 30 days of the case reaching the Board. Should the Board expedite its analysis of a case, the following modifications will be made to case development standard procedure:

1. Upon receipt of a request from Meta for an expedited case review through the CMT, the Administration will notify the Co-Chairs immediately.
2. The Co-Chairs will decide a deadline to complete review.
3. The Co-Chairs will assign the case to a sitting panel where possible, substituting a Board Member from the region the content primarily affects if needed. Alternatively, a new panel of five Members will be constituted considering Board Member availability, expertise and relevant experience, ensuring one panelist is from the region the content primarily affects. A plenary meeting may be called for the purpose of constituting the panel.
4. Panelists will be notified of the assignment and requested to review the case file immediately. In coordination with the Case Development Team, the panel will establish an accelerated timeline to complete all steps of the Case Development process by the deadline the Co-Chairs determined.



Policy Advisory Opinion

Separate from the review of an individual case, Meta may request a Policy Advisory Opinion from the Board to advise on Meta’s policies and practices or clarify a decision.

The Case Selection Committee may propose topics for Policy Advisory Opinions to the Board. Subject to simple majority approval of the Board, these topics shall be submitted to Meta for consideration. Any Board Member can suggest Policy Advisory Opinion topics for the Case Selection Committee to consider. All requests to Meta will be reflected in the Board’s quarterly transparency reports.

Step 1: Assign to Co-Chair and Determine Timeline

1. When Meta sends a Policy Advisory Opinion request, a co-chair will be assigned as Presiding Co-Chair.
2. Co-Chairs may decide by majority vote to expedite the process for a Policy Advisory Opinion. The presiding Co-Chair will propose amendments to the procedures below, subject to majority approval of Co-Chairs.
3. The Administration will complete an impact assessment to identify and mitigate potential harms that could result from the Oversight Board accepting a request for a Policy Advisory Opinion.

Step 2: Board vote on request

1. The request for a Policy Advisory Opinion will be sent to all Board Members for review. Where the presiding Co-Chair requests, the Administration will provide a supplementary briefing on information relevant to the request, including on prior Board decisions, recommendations, and their implementation status.
2. There will be a simple majority vote of Board Members to accept or to reject the request. If the request is rejected, the process ends. Board Members will be invited to share views on questions the Board should ask Meta, and issues to engage external stakeholders on, if the request is accepted.
3. Where the Board votes to accept the request, the Board will publish its acceptance of the request, a summary of the request, and call for public comments. The public comment period will be at least 21 days.



Step 3: Constitute panel

1. A panel will be constituted, typically totalling five members, based on regional diversity, gender representation, expertise, availability, and interest. There will be no more than two Board Members from one region, and no more than three members of one gender. Where the request concerns a particular region, the panel will have at least one member from the region concerned. Policy Advisory Opinion panel members may concurrently serve on Committees and case panels.

Step 4: Meta briefing

1. Where the panel requests, Meta may provide an oral briefing of their request to the Board. All Board Members are invited to attend, though attendance is optional.

Step 5: Preliminary meeting

1. There will be a preliminary meeting of the panel for them to agree:
 - a) The lead drafter of the Policy Advisory Opinion;
 - b) Questions to Meta and requests for additional information to send in writing;
 - c) Research tasks for the Administration to undertake and/or commission from external experts.
2. The preliminary meeting may include an initial discussion on the scope of the Policy Advisory Opinion. Where the panel agree, the full Board can be invited to contribute to this part of the meeting.

Step 6: Policy advisory opinion deliberation

1. The Administration will collate public comments and research findings into briefing materials.
2. The Panel will review all research and stakeholder input and deliberate the substance of the Policy Advisory Opinion. This may require several panel meetings. The panel may choose to meet in person if practicable. Deliberations may also result in additional requests for research or information from Meta, which should be provided in writing. Where necessary, the panel can request supplementary oral briefings (see: Step 4).
3. The Lead Drafter will draft the Policy Advisory Opinion for the panel's review. The Policy Advisory Opinion will provide recommendations to Meta and a rationale that includes analysis of Meta's values and human rights responsibilities. The Lead Drafter will also aim to reflect any significant minority viewpoints in the rationale.



4. The Panel will provide written feedback on the draft for the Lead Drafter to incorporate. Additional panel meetings may be required to finalize the text.
5. The draft Policy Advisory Opinion will then be circulated to all Board Members for review and comment. The full Board will be invited to a meeting where Board Members can provide feedback orally, attendance at this meeting is optional.

Step 7: Policy advisory approval and publication

1. The Lead Drafter will update the draft to reflect full Board feedback on the Policy Advisory Opinion. They will circulate a new version to the Panel for approval. While the Panel should aim for consensus, the draft Policy Advisory Opinion may be approved or rejected by a simple majority of the panel members.
2. The final Policy Advisory Opinion will be circulated to the full Board. Prior to Step 7.3 commencing, any Board Member can request an additional meeting to discuss specific proposals to further change the Policy Advisory Opinion. A meeting will take place if Co-Chairs agree by a majority.
3. Absent a request for any additional meeting, the Policy Advisory Opinion will be placed before the full Board for a vote, with approval requiring a simple majority.
 - a) If approved by the Board, the Policy Advisory Opinion will be sent to Meta for privacy legal review. Following privacy legal review by Meta, the Policy Advisory Opinion will proceed to publication and translation.
 - b) If rejected by the Board, there will be a Co-Chair discussion on the reasons for the rejection and the Co-Chairs will determine whether to request the panel to reconvene and seek a resolution of the issues that caused majority rejection, returning the process to Step 6.3, or assign a new panel, returning the process to Step 3.
4. The final Policy Advisory Opinion will be translated into the official language the Oversight Board within 21 days. Where a Policy Advisory Opinion relates to a particular region, the Policy Advisory Opinion will be translated into the applicable languages.



Step 8: Follow up and implementation

1. Meta may submit written questions to the Board about the published Policy Advisory Opinion recommendations for the presiding Co-Chair, in consultation with the panel, to respond in writing prior to the publication of Meta's public response to the Policy Advisory Opinion. These may be supplemented with meetings where the presiding Co-Chair considers it necessary.
2. The Board will include information on the implementation status of Policy Advisory Opinion recommendations in its transparency reporting.

