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Preparing the Way Forward for Facebook's Oversight Board

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By Brent Harris, Director of Governance and Global Affairs



Note: For future Facebook updates about Oversight Board cases, please visit the [Transparency Center](#).

Since Mark Zuckerberg first laid out his vision for oversight of content decisions at Facebook, we've been laying the groundwork for a new independent organization to review cases and make binding content decisions. At the end of last year, we shared an update on the establishment of the Oversight Board Trust and LLC, which will manage Facebook's funding for the board, oversee its operations and hold contracts with members. Today, we are proposing a set of bylaws and a summary chart, providing more details on Facebook's process for implementing a board decision, and announcing the Director of Oversight Board Administration.

The bylaws set the rules for the board's operations and procedures, and while we've taken inspiration from traditional corporate and non-profit bylaws, this document reflects the unique arrangement between the Oversight Board, Facebook and the Oversight Board Trust. They spell out the authorities and responsibilities of each entity, as well as the role of the people who use Facebook's services. Once approved by the board, the bylaws will govern the board's day-to-day operations and a final version of this document will be published on the board's website. ***(Update on March 2, 2021 at 05:00AM PT: Article 1, Section 3 (Oversight Board Case Review and***

Decisions) and Article 2, Section 2 (Facebook Case Submissions, Information for Board Review and Implementation) of the bylaws have been amended. To learn more about these changes please see the [board's announcement](#) or the complete, updated [Oversight Board bylaws](#).) (Update on November 2, 2021 at 6:00AM PT: Article 1, Section 3 (Case Review and Decisions) of the bylaws have been amended. To learn more about these changes please see the [board's announcement](#) or the complete updated [Oversight Board bylaws](#).) (Update on February 1, 2022 at 08:00AM PT: Article 2, Section 2 (Facebook Case Submissions, Information for Board Review and Implementation) of the bylaws have been amended. To learn more about these changes please see the updated [Oversight Board bylaws](#).)

Case Timeline

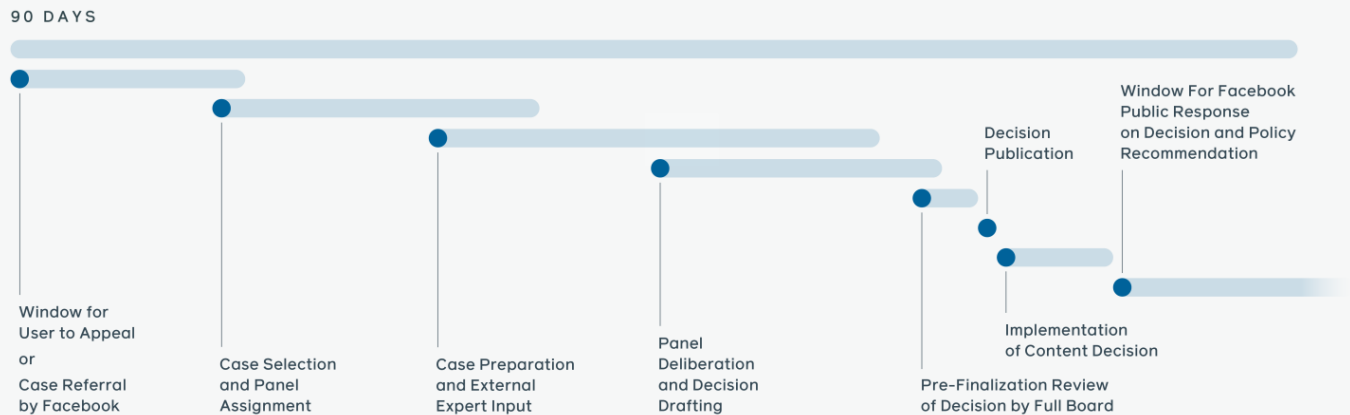
We are also building a case management tool that will ensure user privacy and provide secure access for board members to review case information.

Cases will initially only involve individual pieces of content that we have taken down, and will be referred to the board through two avenues. First, anyone who disagrees with the outcome of Facebook's decision to take down their content on Instagram or Facebook, and has exhausted appeals, will have 15 days to submit an appeal to the board. Second, Facebook itself will be able to directly refer significant and difficult cases.

As we continue to improve and expand the technology that makes appeals to the board possible, we want to also make it possible for people to refer cases where Facebook decided not to remove a piece of content. Similarly, the types of content that the board can review will grow over time, such as Groups and Pages, as described in the bylaws. The Oversight Board is meant to be dynamic. It will need to remain responsive to shifts in how people use Facebook's services.

Given the large number of content decisions Facebook makes, as well as the time it will take to hear cases, we expect the board will choose cases that have the greatest potential to guide Facebook's future decisions and policies. We expect the board to come to a case decision, and for Facebook to have acted on that decision, in approximately 90 days.

Case Timeline



In order to ensure the board can weigh in on the most significant decisions facing Facebook, including those with real-world implications, we have included a mechanism for expedited review. In these situations, Facebook can refer urgent cases straight to the board for immediate consideration. This process was created in response to feedback from external stakeholders, who stressed that the board will need to review some cases much more quickly than others.

Once the initial group of board members is in place and begins operations within the next few months, the board will determine the type of cases it prioritizes and the cadence at which it reviews them.

Implementing Board Decisions

Facebook is committed to implementing the board's decision on individual pieces of content within seven days, as outlined in the bylaws. Facebook will also assess the technical and operational feasibility of applying the decision to identical content with parallel context, as explained in the bylaws.

When the board provides an additional policy recommendation, Facebook will review that guidance. Some recommendations may involve only minor modifications to current policies or practices, while others may involve more substantial or complex changes. The latter will go through our full policy development process or other appropriate channels. This will allow for a thorough and considered analysis of the proposed policy recommendation, as well as additional stakeholder engagement.

As stated in the bylaws, Facebook will provide a public response regarding any policy recommendations and follow-on action within 30 days. This is a crucial aspect of our commitment to the board, as well as to public transparency.

Implementation & Response

Oversight Board Decision

Facebook will bring together team members from across the company — including product, policy, operations, legal and others — to review the board's content decision and policy recommendation. Key steps we will take following the board's decision include:

Take action on the board's binding content decision

In cases where the board has overturned our decision, Facebook will take action to restore or remove the content within 7 days of the board's final decision.

Consider action at scale on identical content

Facebook will also determine the operational and technical feasibility of applying the board's decision to identical content with parallel context, which people may have posted elsewhere on the platform.

Assess the board's policy recommendations

Facebook will also analyze the board's policy recommendations and determine next steps. Considerations may include; applicability across regions, cultures and types of content and the status of other policies currently under development.

Facebook's Response

Facebook will respond publicly through the newsroom to the board's decisions and recommendations and will include information on:

- Whether we have implemented the board's binding content decision
- If we have applied that decision at scale to identical content with parallel context
- Our decision and next steps on the board's policy recommendation, including rationale

Staffing and the Director of the Oversight Board Administration

An important piece of feedback that we incorporated from our global consultation was that the board should have a dedicated staff. Staff members won't be deciding cases, but their duties might involve supporting case selection, facilitating board meetings and ensuring the board has the support necessary to make considered and thoughtful decisions. The staff will also support the trustees regarding their fiduciary and other responsibilities.

Today, we're announcing that the first Director of Oversight Board Administration will be Thomas Hughes, former Executive Director for Article 19, an international non-governmental organization with a focus on freedom of expression and digital rights. Hughes will lead the board's administrative staff.

In the coming months, we will announce board members and trustees as the LLC and Hughes continue to hire staff to support the board as it prepares to hear its first cases.

Downloads

[Bylaws Summary Chart](#)

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[5:30AM Press Call Transcript](#)

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