| Title | Guidelines for AARE Special Interest Group (SIG) Grant Application |
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# AARE Special Interest Group (SIG) Grant Application Guidelines

**March 2023**

## Contents

## Overview

The Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) recognises the importance of Special Interest Groups (SIGs) to the work of building research capacity and strengthening collegial networks within our research community. AARE obtains its funding via membership fees and conference income. It is important to recognise that any services or funding provided by AARE is in fact drawn from the financial contributions that members make to the association. As such, it is imperative that AARE can justify expenditure to members and ensure that this expenditure is made with due diligence and in a transparent and consistent manner.

AARE encourages SIGs to explore different ways of achieving scholarly research capacity building outcomes for SIG members, AARE members and the wider education research community. To support such endeavours, AARE provides an annual funding scheme.

Applications for funding may be made for grants in three categories: Major Grants, Minor Grants and Major+ category (introduced in 2022). Once funding has been announced the funding levels will be advertised on the AARE website. All current SIGs are entitled to apply for grants in each financial year funding period.

SIG activities supported by this grant program are outlined at page 5 of this document. Activities should be open to all members of the relevant SIG and should benefit as many SIG members as possible. SIG Convenors should consult with the members of the SIG for feedback prior to making their application.

Proposals that benefit AARE members beyond the SIG are highly encouraged. This may include advertising the events widely, access to keynotes (in real-time or recorded), proceedings, etc. All applications for grants will be assessed by the AARE Executive Committee via a competitive process, on merit against the selection criteria outlined within this document.

These guidelines may be updated from time to time, and SIGs are advised to check the AARE website before developing and submitting applications to ensure that the most current version is being used: www.aare.edu.au/funding-opportunities/sig-funding/

## Eligibility

To apply for an AARE grant the SIG Convenors and Co-Convenors must be current financial members of AARE. The SIG must be up to date with previous funding reports. A SIG's eligibility for funding in the next round will be restricted if reporting requirements for previous AARE grants have not been met.

## Selection Criteria

Selection criteria for grants are:

- **Evidence of consultation with SIG members**
- **Reach**
    - Activities must be open to all members of the relevant SIG and should benefit as many SIG members as possible
    - Proposals that benefit AARE members beyond the SIG are highly encouraged
    - Promotion of AARE through the proposed activities
    - Preference will be given to events/initiatives that are held outside of the conference period (i.e. events/initiatives are spread across the financial year). This is an opportunity for AARE members to engage with the Association at more times throughout the year.
- **Scholarly contribution of proposed activities**
    - Contribution of proposed activities to education research capacity building for SIG members
    - Contribution to AARE members and/or scholarly community through the proposed outcomes
- **Financial stewardship**
    - Detailed budget and project timeline provided
    - Budget items should be justified based on current quotes
    - Feasibility and appropriateness of proposed expenditure of funds

## Assessment Process

The SIG Coordinator will convene a sub-committee of the AARE Executive to undertake assessment of funding applications. Ordinarily the sub-committee will include representatives from the Executive Management Committee, as well as the ECR and/or Postgraduate representatives on the AARE Executive and a representative who is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person.

Applications will be assessed on merit and adherence to the criteria outlined within this document.

AARE may exclude proposals at any time during the selection process. Grounds for exclusion include but are not limited to:
- not meeting the eligibility criteria set out in these Guidelines
- providing incomplete, inaccurate, or misleading information

Decisions made by the AARE Executive regarding grant applications are final and are therefore not open for negotiation. AARE reserves the right to provide full or partial funding, and where circumstances warrant, to withhold all or part of a funding allocation.

All SIGs who have submitted applications will be notified of the outcome of their proposal by mid-July. Outcomes and grant allocations will also be published on the AARE website and in the AARE Member newsletter.

## Funding

**Level and period of funding**

Three levels of grants are available: Minor grants, Major grants and Major+ grants for the value advertised on the AARE website.

Applications need to demonstrate that the level of funding is appropriate to achieve the proposed reach and scholarly contribution as per the selection criteria. In addition, for Major+ grants the application needs to provide evidence of the existing, sustained capacity and activity of the SIG.

Applications for smaller grant amounts will also be considered. The funding period runs on a financial year, from 1 July to 30 June.

An application for the expenditure of the SIG grant must be made prior to finalising any commitments to ensure that funds are available for the planned activities.

Applications are due by the date listed on the AARE website: www.aare.edu.au/funding-opportunities/sig-funding/

The AARE Executive reserves the right to recommend funding amounts for an activity that may differ from those requested in the proposal.

**SIG collaboration:**

A SIG can collaborate with one other SIG to offer an activity to the combined value of two grant levels, up to a maximum of $8,000.  Each SIG can apply for only one grant in total per year (whether as the sole or a joint applicant). A joint application can include only one Major+ grant.

## Budget items supported

All budget items must be justified in the application to the satisfaction of the AARE Executive. Budgets need to be detailed and based on quotes and/or published costs.
AARE welcomes innovative approaches to building research capacity and does not aim to be overly prescriptive about budget items that can be supported. However, grants must be used for activities that promote the aims of AARE and SIGs.

These include activities that:
- Address the research needs of education researchers at all career stages
- Advance high quality educational research in Australia and internationally
- Promote understandings of educational issues
- Inform education policy
- Provide a research forum for education researchers to debate current problems and issues

Budget items supported include:
- Costs associated with hosting mini conference, symposia, workshops or other events of an academic nature for SIG and AARE members (face to face observing covid-safe practices or online).
- An event with a guest presenter or series of speakers, who can provide a talk on a particular SIG theme. This could extend to a well-respected overseas academic attending virtually.

- A hybrid event that allows for participants to meet in smaller venues across multiple sites (observing covid-safe practices) and includes the simultaneous use of online platforms.
- A program of members' support and mentorship with a series of meetings and activities.
- Webpage with resources (e.g. videos, presentations, interviews) relevant to the SIG theme to sit on the AARE Website Members portal.
- Webinars
- Printing of workshop materials
- Editing of filmed online events for access via the AARE website
- Transcription of filmed or recorded interviews
- Supports for Research Students and ECR linked to a mentoring program

**Note:**
- Each budget item will be funded only once. No duplication of funding is permitted for items already supported by funding from external sponsors.
- Where a registration fee exists for participants at a funded event, AARE members must receive a discounted registration rate.
- If a sponsored or co-sponsored activity is expected to generate delegate fees (for example event registration) then this should be indicated on the proposed budget along with an indication of what he proposed fees will pay for (how any delegate fees will be used to cover costs on a break-even basis).
- It is an expectation that funded SIG initiatives are non-profit, therefore any underspent funds or unexpected delegate fees will return to the AARE operating budget.
- Only those items included on the proposed budget will be funded. Should there be a need to make budgetary changes after award of the grant, a request to change expenditure against an approved budget must be made in writing to the AARE Executive Management Team and approval will be at the discretion of the AARE Executive Committee. Awardees are required to request any changes to the awarded budget prior to changes being made to plans to ensure that costs can be covered.
- Where recordings of events are made, written approval from presenters must be obtained to allow AARE to place these recordings on their website to be accessed by AARE members.

## Budget items not supported

The use of AARE Grants does not support:

- Items that only benefit a small number of SIG members, unless approved by AARE and there is a transparent and equitable process for identifying the recipients of the funds. For example, if funds are to be used for the external engagement of an editor to edit a small number of individual's material, then an equitable process for identifying the individuals must be provided to AARE.
- International travel, interstate air travel, and accommodation will only be supported if such travel meets Australian government travel requirements. AARE will not be held liable for any changes to travel restrictions while a person is attending an event.
- Event dinners at restaurants that are outside of the actual event. NB catering for a face to face event, such as a light luncheon can be funded.
- Competitions
- Payment of honoraria to persons who are currently employed where there is a reasonable expectation that presenting at such events is part of their employment. For example, academics employed at universities and persons employed at government departments. Small payments for services or presentations may be considered if the person presenting is not employed or employed in the private sector where there is not this expectation, e.g. someone providing a 'Welcome to Country' or an academic who is currently unemployed.
- Duplication of funding from co-sponsors

- The purchase of alcohol
- Payment of preparation fees of guest speakers/presenters that would normally be part of their presentation, or workshops
- Reimbursement of SIG Convenors time
- Employment of Research Assistants. For administration assistance please see the section below.
- Prizes/Awards with monetary value

## Co-sponsorship

SIGs may seek co-sponsorship from outside organisations to provide additional support for the work in their field. SIG events that are co-sponsored need to ensure that consultation occurs between the SIG Convenor and the SIG Coordinator prior to arrangement being made.

If co-sponsorship has been gained for a SIG event, details need to be provided to the SIG Coordinator detailing:
- The name of the sponsor
- The level and type of funding received. This must provide a breakdown of funding contribution by each sponsor. If there is part sponsorship of a large expense item, then a percentage of funding provided must be indicated. For example, AARE providing 80% and a university providing 20% funds for an item.
- If there is underspend on this item, the proportion of funding provided by each sponsor is maintained
- Purpose of funding
- Assurance that no duplication of funding will occur
- Advice regarding how AARE will be appropriately acknowledged and publicised at the event
- Confirmation of discount available to AARE members in the case of ticketed events, or events for which registration fees are charged for attendance

## AARE administration support services provided

AARE is pleased to be able to provide the following support services to all successful SIGs:
- Advertising of SIG events/initiatives to all AARE members and also specific SIGs
- Promotion of SIG events/initiatives on AARE website and social media
- Coordination of registration, including income management
- Communication with registered participants
- Uploading and dissemination of any SIG event/initiative recordings/resources via the AARE website and communication channels
- Payment of approved budgeted invoices and reimbursements

To access these administration support services, each successful SIG will be asked to provide an outline of which of the above services they will be utilising. This document should include a detailed timeline for activities and outline responsibilities such as:
- Name and contact details of project lead/s
- Who will be providing the required information / content
- Registration opening/close date
- Advertising emails to AARE members and specific SIG groups
- Advertising content for social media

Once submitted, project leads will receive feedback and information about appropriate lead times for the support activities requested.

## Submission of Proposal

**Proposal**

Proposals submitted for grants must be made by the SIG Convenors and/or Co-Convenors and have been developed in consultation with the SIG group members. The application must also provide details of all information necessary for its assessment without the need for further explanation. The AARE Executive reserves the right to request further information.

Please refer to the following forms and documents available on the AARE website to submit your proposal:
https://www.aare.edu.au/funding-opportunities/sig-funding/

- Review the published SIG Funding Guidelines
- Complete a Project/Event & Budget Plan using the template provided (note you are required to upload this plan to the online Application Form)
- Complete the online Application Form by the advertised application deadline
- Successful applicants will be required to complete a Funding Report using the template provided

Applications should specify the amount of funding support requested and should include an itemised list of the expenses to be covered by the grant. If other funding, such as co-sponsorship or fees to be paid by participants, will be sought for the activity then these need to be specified on the application form.

Additions, deletions and modifications will not be accepted after submission, unless invited by AARE.

If changes to the event are required after funding has been granted a formal written request must be sent to the AARE Executive Management Team for approval.

**Closing date for proposal**

Applications must be received by the AARE SIG Coordinator for approval by the date advertised on the AARE website www.aare.edu.au/funding-opportunities/sig-funding/.

**Offer of funding**

SIG Convenors will be contacted by the SIG Coordinator via email regarding the outcome of their application by mid-July.

AARE will publicise details of successful applications, including the SIG name, activity name and details on the AARE website, and in the AARE Member Newsletter.

**Payment of funds**

For accountability reasons AARE cannot provide funds to individuals on behalf of SIGs. Receipts must be provided for all expenses for which reimbursement is claimed. Receipts should be sent to AARE by the SIG Convenor (identifying the relevant SIG) with detailed information, including relevant payment details (person's bank account details).

AARE is happy to pay in the following ways:

- Direct payment of an invoice within approved budget
- As reimbursement to a person on provision of receipts
- As reimbursement to a university on provision of receipts

All payments must be approved by the SIG convenor or project lead. AARE makes payments on a fortnightly basis and most payments will be completed within this timeframe (may be a few days longer to allow for banking authorisations/clearances). If you have an urgent request for payment please contact the AARE office - aare@aare.edu.au or call 03 5955 2412.

Awarded funds are to be expended by June 30 of the grant period and may not be carried forward. All claims for reimbursement must be received before 15 June of the grant period so that AARE can pay the reimbursement before June 30 in the relevant financial year. To request reimbursement please use the form on the AARE website www.aare.edu.au/funding-opportunities/special-project-paymentreimbursement-request-form/

## Reporting Requirements

A final report is required for all successful applications for competitive funding, refer to the template provided on the AARE website.

Reports should be submitted to the AARE SIG Coordinator by 30 June of the grant period. Applications for further grants will not be accepted if reports for previous grants have not been provided.