

AARE Handbook for Special Interest Group (SIG) Convenors and Co- Convenors

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Overview

A Special Interest Group (SIG) is a group of 15 or more AARE members with shared research interests within a specialised domain. SIGs support networking with fellow researchers and are a benefit of their membership with AARE. They undertake a diverse range of activities such as; organizing and contributing to the annual AARE conference, organising events, discussion groups, research training, convening symposia, developing workshops, and contributing to AARE NEWS and *The Australian Educational Researcher*. SIGS are allocated program time for meetings and symposia at each Annual AARE Conference. They proactively involve both their SIG members and other members of AARE to develop networks and research capacity in their area of interest.

SIGs meet annually and are managed through an online democratic process of nominations and elections. SIGs are encouraged to develop academic excellence in their special interest area by proposing candidates for the AARE awards

<http://www.aare.edu.au/pages/page34.asp>

SIGs are led by a Convenor and Co-Convenor(s) who are responsible for organizing the group's activities and delegate responsibilities. All members of SIGs must be current financial members of AARE. Non-AARE members are strongly encouraged to join the Association to help support the infrastructure provided to SIGs by AARE.

The SIG Coordinator is a member of the AARE Executive, and is responsible for liaising with SIG Convenors, Co-Convenors and members in all aspects of SIG governance, operations, policies and procedures.

SIG Convenor Roles and Responsibilities

The role of SIG Convenor is voluntary and their work is highly valued and respected by AARE and its members. The position provides the opportunity to demonstrate leadership in their field and offers access to many networking opportunities.

Convenors actively:

- Liaise with the SIG Coordinator and, through the SIG Coordinator, the AARE Executive
- Work collaboratively with the SIG Co-Convenor
- Communicate regularly with members of the SIG to advise and disseminate developments in their field
- Disseminate, if asked, any communications from the AARE Office directly to the SIG members

Convenors general responsibilities include:

- Work in collaboration with the Co-Convenor and SIG members to increase the membership of the SIG
- Consult with SIG members regarding application for and expenditure of annual funding
- Liaise with the SIG Coordinator and AARE office manager regarding administrative matters such as reimbursement of funds
- Correspond with the SIG Coordinator to contribute items to the AARE newsletter in order to promote events and communicate with the broader association membership about activities and developments within the SIG
- Liaise with the AARE Communications Officer to ensure that any events supported by AARE funding are appropriately acknowledged and promoted
- Update and maintain the relevant SIG information on the AARE website

Convenors' conference-related responsibilities include:

- Liaise with the conference organisers, the Chair of the Conference Standing Committee and the SIG Coordinator regarding preparation for the annual conference
- Work with the Conference Convenor to program relevant sessions at the annual conference

- Oversee the coordination of the review of abstracts of papers that have indicated that they belong within the relevant SIG
- Coordinate the review of abstracts and papers relevant to their SIG. Full papers require two reviewers from within the SIG
- Liaise with conference organisers to arrange an annual SIG dinner
- Attend the SIG Convenors and Co-Convenors Meeting chaired by the SIG Coordinator at the annual AARE conference
- Chair their SIG meeting held at the annual AARE conference

Contacting SIG members

The AARE Office can provide an up-to-date list of SIG members. Because new members join SIGs throughout the year, SIG Convenors should contact the AARE office at aare@aare.edu.au for an updated list each time they correspond with members.

Term of office

The SIG Convenor holds the term of office for two years and may nominate for re-election for one consecutive two-year term. Should the position become vacant prior to the two-year term, the SIG Co-Convenor will normally assume the role of Convenor until a call for nominations is distributed by the SIG Coordinator. If only one nomination is received then the nominee will be confirmed in the position uncontested. If additional nominations are received, an election will be held. Newly elected Convenors will formally commence their new roles with an official handover at the relative SIG meeting at the AARE Annual Conference.

SIG Co-Convenor Roles and Responsibilities

The role of a SIG Co-Convenor is voluntary and their work is highly valued and respected by AARE and its members. The role provides opportunities to develop leadership in a field of interest, to access and develop networking opportunities, and to collaborate with the SIG Convenor and members in a range of activities. In addition, Co-Convenors are responsible for supporting the work of the SIG Convenor.

The Co-Convenor is responsible for assisting the Convenor to undertake their role and responsibilities. In the event that the Convenor cannot enact their role, due to illness or absence, then the Co-Convenor will undertake the role in an acting capacity

As with the Convenor, the Co-Convenor holds the term of office for two years and may stand for re-election for one consecutive two-year term. Should the position become vacant prior to the two-year term the SIG Coordinator will notify the SIG members with a call for nominations. Should only one nomination be received then that member will be confirmed in the position uncontested. If further nominations are received an election will be held. Newly elected Co-Convenors will formally commence their new roles with an official handover at the relative SIG meeting at the AARE Annual Conference. Co-Convenors may also be called upon to act as Convenor in an interim capacity in the event that the Convenor is unable to continue in the role.

Forming a new SIG group

General Overview

New SIGs are encouraged and supported within AARE. New SIGs being proposed should be related to a specific topic or area of research that is not the primary focus of any existing AARE SIG. To form a new SIG the Nominator, Convenor, Co-Convenor and all inaugural members of the newly proposed SIG must be current financial members of AARE. Applications to form a new SIG should include the completed proposal form, providing details of fifteen or more AARE members who wish to join the SIG and their affiliations. This form is available online at:

<https://www.aare.edu.au/pages/apply-to-establish-a-sig.html> The due date for submission of proposals for new SIGs is 30 June each year.

All new proposals are considered by members of the AARE Executive. Newly approved SIGs are expected to hold a meeting at the annual conference, with at least ten AARE members in attendance. The meeting must elect a Convenor and Co-Convenor for a term of two years.

SIG Funding

Funding Overview

There are several types of funding support available to SIGs. Annual funding is available to all SIGs. A competitive funding scheme is also available to SIGs. Application forms and funding guidelines for both annual and competitive funding can be accessed on the AARE website at: <https://www.aare.edu.au/pages/sig-grant-funding.html>

Applications for both annual and competitive funding should normally be submitted by the SIG Convenor and Co-Convenor.

Funding from AARE to SIGs must be used for activities that promote the aims of AARE and of SIGs. As outlined in the policy, these include:

- Addressing the research needs of education researchers at all career stages
- Advancing high quality educational research in Australia and internationally
- Promoting understandings of educational issues
- Informing education policy

For accountability reasons AARE cannot provide funds to individuals on behalf of SIGs. Convenors are responsible to seek reimbursement from the AARE office manager for any invoices or receipts that have been approved. All claims for reimbursement must be received before 15 June so that AARE can pay the reimbursement before 30 June in the relevant financial year.

All events that have been organised with the support of AARE funding need to be appropriately acknowledged and promoted in consultation with the SIG Coordinator and Communications Officer of AARE.

Annual funding

Each SIG is entitled to up to \$800 per annum to support their activities. These funds may be used for a variety of purposes, and are primarily intended as a means of

supporting SIG participation and contributing to the work of SIGS within the AARE community. For example, SIGs may wish to utilise annual funding to contribute to the cost of their conference dinners, informal meetings during the year, holding workshops or other special events. Activities supported by annual funding should be open to all members of the relevant SIG. Activities that benefit one, or only a small number of members, are not eligible for AARE annual funding. Annual funding will be awarded only once in each financial year. Annual funding does not accrue, and cannot be carried over to be spent in subsequent years.

Applications must be received by the AARE SIG Coordinator by 30th June. It is within the scope of the SIG Convenor's role to consult members as to the expenditure of the annual funding, and to ensure that applications for funding are consistent with the funding guidelines. Application forms and funding guidelines are available online at: <https://www.aare.edu.au/pages/sig-grant-funding.html>

Proposals need to specify the proposed use of the funding eg. a symposium or annual dinner, please refer to the funding guidelines for further details. Queries regarding applications for spending not outlined within the funding guidelines should be discussed with the SIG Coordinator before submitting the application. Applications for the expenditure of the annual SIG grant must be made prior to finalising any commitments to ensure that funds are available for the planned activities.

Questions about applying for the annual SIG grant should be directed to the SIG Coordinator at: sigs@aare.edu.au

Competitive funding

All SIGs are entitled to apply for annual competitive grants. AARE offers up to ten \$5000 grants per annum, available to SIGs on a competitive basis. offers grants of \$3000 (two available per annum) and \$5000 (two available per annum) available to SIGS on a competitive basis. These grants are intended to build research capacity, and are not to be used for social events. Competitive grants may used for purposes such as hosting an international speaker to present in the SIG strand at the annual AARE conference, to hold workshops, seminars or master classes for members of the relevant SIG, or to host a scholarly event such as a small conference or symposium.

AARE welcomes innovative approaches to building research capacity, and applications for competitive grants will be assessed on merit.

As per the funding guidelines, competitive grants are subject to the following criteria:

- a) competitive funding must be used for the purposes of capacity building amongst SIG members
- b) events or activities funded by competitive grants must be academic in nature, and should ideally be held on an academic site (eg, university or conference venue)
- c) events or activities funded by competitive grants should be open to all members of the relevant SIG

Competitive grants will have a single round of funding each year, with the closing date advertised in the AARE website. Funds awarded are to be expended, and a report provided to AARE by 30 June the following year.

SIG Convenors and Co-Convenors should consult with the members of the SIG for feedback prior to submitting funding applications. Should the SIG consider spending that is outside the funding guidelines the SIG Convenor may liaise with SIG Coordinator prior to lodging the application, or making arrangements, to assess suitability.

As is the case with annual funding, applications for competitive grants must be received by the AARE SIG Coordinator by the advertised closing date. It is within the scope of the SIG Convenor's role to consult SIG members as to the proposed expenditure of funding, and to ensure that applications for funding are consistent with the funding guidelines. Application forms and funding guidelines are available online at: <https://www.aare.edu.au/pages/sig-grant-funding.html>

Questions about applying for the SIG competitive grants should be directed to the SIG Coordinator at: sigs@aare.edu.au

[Additional funding and support](#)

SIGs are eligible for additional support from the AARE Office (e.g. web support, advertising of events). Further to this AARE will make available on-line registration pages for SIG events at no cost to SIGs. For details of e-commerce, taxation compliance and registration fee requirements contact AARE Office at aare@aare.edu.au

SIGs are encouraged to seek sponsorship to support their activities. To avoid inadvertent duplicate approaches to sponsors, SIGs are requested to liaise closely with the SIG Coordinator. AARE has a policy of exclusion of some potential sponsors.

[SIG Grant Overspending](#)

Should the SIG group underestimate the amount of funding required and overspending occur AARE will not be held responsible for or bear any additional costs. The SIG Convenor and Co-Convenor will be responsible for securing the overspent amount from sources other than AARE. To remediate any discrepancy, additional funds to cover over-spending may be gained through external sponsorship (in consultation with the AARE Executive) or by amending the SIG budget to cover any additional expense incurred through unforeseen over-expenditure.

[AARE SIG Convenors' Guide to Editing SIG Webpages](#)

With the arrival of the new website, SIG Convenors will have the capacity to edit SIG homepages, create new webpages for SIG members, and easily establish and moderate a SIG discussion forum. This short guide is designed to support SIG Convenors in maintaining their SIG webpages.

1. Log in to the AARE Website

2. Navigate to <http://www.aare.edu.au> (NB, not to the address shown in these images), and log in using your email address and AARE password. (Hint: if you've never changed this it will be your last name, all in lower case letters).
3. Once logged in, navigate to the SIGs homepage by clicking 'SIGS' in the horizontal menu at the top.
4. When the SIGS page opens, you will see the SIGs of which you are a member highlighted in the box on the left hand side. You
5. will also see the option to edit any SIG you are convenor of in the same box. Click the 'edit' link.
6. The Convenor Edit Page will appear. From here you can edit
7. your current SIG Homepage, add additional pages (which can be available for viewing by anyone or closed to members of your SIG), or reorder your SIG pages. Many of the buttons on the editing window will be familiar, but a few tips are provided below. To edit the current page, make the changes you require and click the 'Submit' button at the bottom of the page.
8. Your changes will save and from the next screen you can either preview your changes, abandon your changes (by telling it to 'revert to live version'), or make your changed version 'live'. Until you click 'Make this Version Live', your changes will be saved as a draft. You can return to the draft later by logging back in to the website and selecting it from the menu (NB at this point you will be the only one able to see it on the menu).
9. To re- order Your SIG pages, click the 'Reorder pages' link and the following window will appear. You can drag and drop the pages into your desired order and changes will be saved immediately.
10. Each SIG area has the capacity for a discussion forum available to SIG members. Should you wish to switch this facility on please email website@aare.edu.au. The forum interface is very user- friendly and similar to the rest of the SIG module.
11. Should you encounter any difficulties, please email the AARE Communications Coordinator at website@aare.edu.au for assistance.

Contacts

Position	Contact
SIG Coordinator	sigs@aare.edu.au
Chair of the Conference	Georgina.Barton@usq.edu.au

Standing Committee	
Office Manager	aare@aare.edu.au
Communications Officer	anna.sullivan@unisa.edu.au
Web support, advertising, on line registration pages, e-commerce, taxation compliance and registration fee compliance	website@aare.edu.au

Forms

Form	Link
Forming a new SIG	https://www.aare.edu.au/pages/apply-to-establish-a-sig.html
Application for Annual Funding	https://www.aare.edu.au/pages/sig-grant-funding.html
Application for Competitive Funding	https://www.aare.edu.au/pages/sig-grant-funding.html
Funding guidelines	https://www.aare.edu.au/pages/sig-grant-funding.html