



Establishment and Maintenance of Special Interest Groups (Version 2, March 2020)

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support members of the AES to pursue specific interests which contribute to the overall mission of the organisation, to strengthen and promote evaluation practice, theory and use.

Linkage to Constitution

An object of the AES is to provide forums for networking, professional development and the discussion of ideas.

Linkage to Strategic Plan

The focus and work of all Special Interest Groups (SIGs) must align with the strategic priorities and direction of the AES.

Principles

Special Interest Groups (SIGs) are groups of AES members with a common interest in an aspect of evaluation.

They should be directly related to the discipline of evaluation, not be commercial in nature (e.g. not be consortiums of evaluation providers) and be open to entry by any AES member. SIGs should encourage membership by new or emerging evaluators so that expertise in the area of interest can be widely disseminated.

SIGs have no functional responsibilities to the Board (other than to manage their SIGs for the benefit of members). However, the Board or Committees of the Board may from time to time approach relevant SIGs for advice on policy or strategic issues. Likewise, SIGs are asked to provide a brief report three times a year and encouraged to raise issues of interest with the CEO and Board.

A SIG may decide to extend the community of interest to others who are not members of the AES. SIGs are encouraged to liaise with other relevant groups,

but should note that they cannot enter any formal agreement with an outside body without AES endorsement.

Informal discussion groups may be created in advance of, or instead of, deciding to create a formal SIG. These two options are described below.

Informal Discussion Groups

It is anticipated that most SIGs will start as informal groupings. In support of the constitutional object of 'provide forums for networking and the discussion of ideas' the AES encourages members with common interests to get together. This may be achieved as a by-product of like-minded members meeting at conferences, seminars or workshops; through referrals by other members, through searches on the AES members' list or by advertising in electronic newsletters. Anyone who wishes to form such a grouping is encouraged to do so. The group can then meet by email or other electronic means, by physical meeting (if practicable) or any other means.

Such a group would need a working title so that prospective members know what it is about, but other than that, no formality, such as a written statement or formal leadership positions is required. The group does not need approval from the AES Board or CEO; if an advert is placed in an electronic newsletters, it must be acceptable to the CEO.

Coordinators of such informal groups will advise the CEO of their existence.

Formation and Implementation

SIGs may be created anew, or grow from an informal discussion group. To create a SIG, an AES member, or group of AES members, needs to submit a proposal to the Board, via the CEO, stating:

- Proposed name of the SIG
- A paragraph on its objectives, showing how these are relevant to the discipline of evaluation and the current AES Strategy
- Names and e-mails of contacts for the SIG (An interim chair and at least two others)
- E-mail addresses of members known to be interested in the SIG
- List of proposed activities. (optional)

Members proposing a new SIG are strongly advised to consult the CEO before formal submission to the Board. This will help to ensure that the aims of the SIG are consistent with the objectives of the AES and are not too similar to an existing SIG.

When the formation of a new SIG is approved by the Board, the CEO will first inform the proposers. On request of the SIG, the AES Office will advertise the SIG through the next AES email alert.

SIG communications and collaboration

SIGs are encouraged to set up LinkedIn, or other professional social media, groups or virtual workspace. These groups or workspaces must be approved by and accessible to the CEO. Note that the AES is unable to set these up on the

SIGs behalf.

Workshops and similar activities

A SIG may prepare a business case for the conduct of activities such as workshops. Such business cases will be considered by the CEO in the same way as a business case from a regional group or others. In particular, there would need to be an assessment of relevance and quality of the proposed workshop, as the financial viability of the activity, and sufficient time allowed for approval and organisation before the proposed date.

Committee

A SIG should establish a committee to manage its activities. Records meeting decisions should be kept and be available on request to members of the SIG, and to the Board. The committee should include at least three members of the AES, including a chair. This position is subject to elections each year by the AES members of the SIG. The mode of election may be decided by the SIG itself. If the SIG chooses, it may call on the AES to organise a poll. Other than this position, the SIG Committee can recruit committee members as it chooses. The SIG should notify the AES Office of all changes to Committee membership.

Meetings

Each SIG will normally conduct one face-to-face meeting in association with the annual AES conference. Other meetings or events will normally be undertaken by technological means (e.g. video conference, electronic communication).

Administrative support to SIGs

As a general rule, each SIG is responsible for the day-to-day management of its activities. The AES is able to provide limited support for SIGs, including:

- Listing of SIG and contact details on website
- Assistance with promoting SIG events

It is not anticipated that a SIG would require a budget, as the support listed above is provided by the AES office, and meetings would normally be electronic other than the annual meeting at the conference. Nevertheless, a SIG chair may put in ad hoc spending requests to the CEO to cover activities.

Reporting

Each SIG is expected to prepare three short Board reports in a one-year period, and a short annual report on its activities. The reporting should highlight the group's activities, the composition of members as well as make recommendations they feel the board should consider.

A SIG should also be responsive to queries from Board or Board Advisory Committee members.

Termination of a SIG

SIGs may have a limited lifespan due to the nature of the evaluation interest it covers. The Chair of the SIG committee should liaise with the CEO should the group decide to no longer meet.

Revision to this policy

Proposed revisions to this policy are welcome. They may be submitted by any member, and are encouraged in particular from SIG chairs. They should be submitted directly to the CEO for consideration by the Board.

Version	Approved By	Approval Date	Effective Date	Sections Modified
1	AES board	July 2011	July 2011	First draft
2	AES Board	March 2020	March 2020	All