IUGA Special Interest Group (SIG) Guidelines

1. Purpose

The purpose of each IUGA Special Interest Group (SIG) is:
1) collecting and disseminating information concerning its special interest or topic area;
2) advising the IUGA Board on matters pertaining to the Group's special interest or topic area;
3) organizing at least one SIG activity per calendar year; and
4) at the request of the Board or Committees established by the Board represent the Society in certain activities or projects (at the discretion of the Board and/or Committee).

The focus and work of all SIGs must align with the strategic priorities and direction of IUGA.

2. Principles & Scope

IUGA SIGs are self-organizing and self-sustaining communities of IUGA members who share similar interests or specialties to connect with one another to share knowledge, ideas, and expertise with the goal of advancing IUGA's mission.

Besides managing the SIGs for the benefit of the members and organizing at least one SIG activity per year, SIGs are also asked to provide a brief report twice a year and encouraged to raise issues of interest with the Board and IUGA Office. Although SIGs are not commissioned by the IUGA Board, SIGs are encouraged to collaborate with committees and with each other where this will advance each of their purposes and IUGA's mission. The Board may also from time to time approach relevant SIGs for advice on policy or strategic issues.

Membership in a SIG is open to any IUGA Member as participation in a SIG provides IUGA members with opportunities to grow professionally and to establish new professional relationships within the individual SIG community and the larger organization. IUGA members can participate in multiple SIGs. IUGA members within a SIG are entitled to take part in any of the SIG's activities. Any IUGA member can join (and leave) a SIG at any time through (un)subscribing using their IUGA online membership profile on www.iuga.org. No restrictions nor application reviews/confirmations are required nor may apply to join/leave a SIG.

Each SIG will facilitate open and ongoing communications. Such communications may result in IUGA SIG members sharing ideas and/or making recommendations to develop projects, programs, publications, meetings or other activities within the topic area of the SIG. In order for such ideas and/or recommendations to be executed, Board review and approval is required (see chapter 5).

3. SIG Application & Set Up Process

Members interested in forming a SIG should contact the IUGA Executive Director first to make their intent known to the IUGA Board and to check if it is in line with IUGA's mission and does not overlap with already existing groups and/or planned/executed activities. Once the Board has confirmed its support for the formation of the proposed SIG, the process of applying to set up a SIG is:

1. Members interested in forming a SIG should acquire the support of 50 or more current and active IUGA members by having them sign a petition to form the SIG. The signatories should be from different countries and represent a range of disciplines.
2. The petition form with all names and signatures, along with a written proposal, should be sent to the IUGA Staff Liaison. The written proposal to establish the SIG must include a purpose statement, the motivation to form the SIG, the initial SIG Steering Group members including a Chair and Vice Chair (see 4.1 Group Leadership below, minimum 3 persons), and proposed focus areas and/or activities.

3. The proposal will be reviewed by the IUGA Executive Director to ensure compliance with the IUGA SIG guidelines and policies. If complied and complete, it will be submitted to the IUGA Board for approval. If the IUGA Board approves the proposal and the formation, the special interest group will be officially established.

4. Officially established IUGA SIGs will have the name structure **"IUGA [topic area] Special Interest Group"**; for example, IUGA Pelvic Floor Rehabilitation Special Interest Group.

4. Infrastructure

4.1 Group Leadership

While each SIG functions independently and in a way that best meets the needs of the group's participants, each SIG must have a Steering Group in place to include a minimum of 3 persons including a chair and vice chair. The SIG Steering Group will be responsible for the overall and day-to-day management of the SIG as well as for facilitating communications within the SIG and with other SIGs, IUGA committees, staff and Board. The IUGA members who submitted the original proposal to establish the SIG will be responsible for forming the initial SIG Steering Group (part of application process, see chapter 3).

The SIG Chair and/or Vice Chair will serve as the SIG's main contact person(s) and will be the focal point for receiving communications from and sending communications to the SIG as well as to the IUGA Office. Notwithstanding the above, all SIG Steering Group Members, including the Chair and Vice Chair, are expected to respond promptly to all inquiries and requests, both from IUGA SIG members as well as from the IUGA Office.

Terms
The SIG Chair serves a non-renewable three-year term in his/her respective position. Other SIG Steering Group Members, including the Vice Chair, all serve three-year terms that are renewable twice (maximum 3 terms of 3 years each). No one can serve on the SIG Steering Group for more than 9 years.

Chair (non-renewable 3-year term)
- Provides overall leadership to the SIG.
- Leads the organization of on-going communication (such as newsletters and discussion groups) to and among SIG members.
- Serves as the first liaison to the IUGA Office.
- Submits all SIG suggestions and/or proposals to the IUGA Office for IUGA Board review.
- Organizes and chairs/facilitates all SIG activites.
- Submits a report of the SIG activities to the IUGA Board twice per year.
- Organizes the succession planning/election of new SIG Steering Group Members.

Vice Chair (3-year term)
- Assists the SIG chair.
- Assists in the communication with all SIG members.
- Chairs or co-chairs SIG meetings in coordination with Chair.
- Serves as the second liaison to the IUGA Office.

Steering Group Members (3-year term)
- Provides continuity for SIG activities.
- Serves as a consultant to the Chair and Vice Chair.
- Assists in the communication with all SIG members.

4.2 Changes in Group Leadership

Any member from the SIG Steering Group, including the SIG Chair and the Vice Chair, can step down from their role at any time. IUGA staff should be informed of such decisions to do so preferably with at least 1 month's' notice if possible. SIGs plan for their own succession and need to democratically find another community member to chair the group. The longer lead time there is, the better IUGA staff can support this process, if necessary.

Therefore, following the end of the term of the SIG Chair, Vice Chair or any other SIG Steering Group Member, all IUGA members within the SIG will be invited to submit their CV and a letter of interest if they are interested in serving in the vacant position. This call for new leaders will be announced on the IUGA SIG's E-Discussion Forum and will be open for at least 2 weeks (14 days). If there are more SIG members expressing interest in serving on the SIG Steering Group than there are available positions, then an election will be held among IUGA members who are part of the SIG. The election will be facilitated by the IUGA Office using the E-Discussion Forum polling functionality and the voting window will be open for 2 weeks (14 days). The candidate for each open position with the **most votes** wins, meaning that if there are 3 or more candidates for the same position then a majority vote is not required for a candidate to be elected.

4.3 Resources & Support

IUGA will provide all SIGs by default with the following:

- A dedicated SIG channel on the IUGA E-Discussion Forum which will be accessible to all SIG members through www.iuga.org (after log in);
- A listing on the IUGA website on the special interest groups page: https://www.iuga.org/membership/special-interest-groups/about-the-sigs
- Disseminating SIG communications on the IUGA communication channels, including social media, e-mailings, newsletters, all subject to editorial policy, availability and scheduling.
- Support with the dissemination of approved outputs on the IUGA website.

We can provide on request (based on availability of resources and with the Board's approval, also see chapter 5):

- Zoom meeting links for your regular calls (subject to availability, SIG leader will be assigned as host);
- Support with managing your SIG e.g., facilitating connections with or communications to other IUGA groups, committees and/or members interested in your topic, general advice on managing workflows and support with reporting (templates, guidelines).
- Project Management & Coordination on Board approved projects.

4.4 Role of the IUGA Office

IUGA SIGs are meant to be self-organizing and self-sustaining communities of IUGA members. Although this should require only minimal staff involvement, IUGA has a dedicated SIG staff liaison serving as the main contact for all SIG related business and communications.

The IUGA SIG Staff Liaison will educate and assist SIG leaders and members to use the E-Discussion Forum for dissemination of information to SIG members and setting up polls for surveying the SIG (e.g., with elections), while at the same time monitoring the discussions and ensuring compliance with the forum's rules of engagement. The IUGA Staff Liaison will be able to help with disseminating SIG information through other IUGA communication channels like the IUGA Insider or social media accounts. The scheduling and arrangements for SIG activities will also be supported by the Staff Liaison. The IUGA Office will maintain a log of SIG members and ensure that all members can subscribe to and unsubscribe from a SIG, of which periodic updates (statistics, no personal information) will be provided to SIG leadership.

5. SIG Meetings, Projects, Programs, Activities, and Reporting

5.1. Meetings of the SIG

All IUGA SIGs will conduct at least one activity for the SIG members per calendar year. The IUGA Annual Meeting Committee will offer a specified time slot to provide all SIGs the opportunity to meet (in parallel) during either the pre-congress days, inside the IUGA Annual Meeting regular program days, or directly following the main programming. The allocated time may be used for planning programming for the upcoming year and must be open to all members of IUGA who have registered for the Annual Meeting. Should the SIG wish to take advantage of this opportunity, a formal request must be submitted to the IUGA Office no later than 3 months prior to the Annual Meeting. Programs must be submitted through the IUGA Program Committee and the IUGA Board as part of the program approval process at least 30 days prior to the meeting. SIGs are encouraged to collaborate with other SIGs and/or organize joint sessions where possible.

Besides the Annual Meeting, the Steering Group of any SIG can initiate additional live SIG meetings. To ensure an open, transparent, and democratic organization process, the criteria below apply to any SIG meeting, whether at the Annual Meeting or separately and whether in person or virtual.

1. To ensure that all SIG members have the opportunity to contribute to and participate in a SIG Meeting, the SIG Steering Group, normally through its Chair or Vice Chair, will post a message on the E-Discussion Forum asking if there is an interest in and support for organizing a SIG meeting on a specific topic and whether there are SIG members interested in taking an active role in the SIG Meeting either to plan/program or to present.

2. All SIG Members can express their interest in participating by replying to the post on the E-Discussion Forum where they should confirm their motivation to participate.

3. Once the interest has been confirmed, names of the interested members should be gathered, out of which the SIG Steering Group will select the best presenters following a democratic group selection process (i.o.w. not the Chair who solely decides) and develop a draft program.

4. The SIG must adhere to the IUGA Online Event Guidelines. Once the program has been established, the SIG Chair must first submit the proposed topics, session host(s)/moderator(s), speaker(s), date, and time of their meeting to the IUGA Board for approval. This can be done working with the IUGA Staff Liaison. The IUGA Board will be given one week to review and approve the meeting program or request changes.

5. Once approval has been received from the IUGA Board, the SIG Steering Group, through its chair, vice chair or members, will reach out to the proposed speakers, ask them to confirm that they are available on the suggested date and connect them with the IUGA Staff Liaison to ensure that all proper paperwork is completed (including, but not limited to, speaker release forms).

6. The SIG Steering Group, through its Chair or Vice Chair, will announce the meeting on the IUGA E-Discussion Forum. The IUGA Office will support communication of the meeting and advertise it in the IUGA Insider, on the website homepage, and on the IUGA Meeting Calendar.

7. If the SIG meeting is an in-person meeting, the SIG will coordinate the logistical and organizational requirements with the IUGA Office. If the SIG Meeting is a virtual meeting, the IUGA Office will set up the meeting in the IUGA Zoom account.

8. The SIG will be solely responsible for moderating/running the session, whether in person or virtual. In case the IUGA Zoom account will be used, the IUGA Office staff will assign the role of ZOOM host to the appointed moderator(s) of the respective SIG meeting.

9. If a SIG meeting requires any staff support, this request will need to be requested in writing and approved by the Board in advance.

5.2. Projects, Programs, Webinars and Other Activities

IUGA SIG members may share ideas and/or make recommendations to develop projects, programs, publications, meetings, or other activities within the topic area of the SIG. In order for such ideas and/or recommendations to be executed, Board review and approval is required before the planning of such an undertaking begins.

To obtain Board approval for any SIG project, (live) meeting, program, publication or any other initiative, a written proposal should be submitted to the IUGA Staff Liaison which should include a detailed description of the proposed activity, its purpose/scope, the SIG members involved, realistic timelines and, if applicable, required resources and/or staff support. Complete applications will be forwarded to the IUGA Board and/or respective committee(s) for their review and feedback.

Examples of initiatives that **must receive prior approval of the IUGA Board** include, but are not limited to:
- Agenda/Program of the yearly SIG Meeting that will take place at the IUGA Annual Meeting;
- Proposals for organizing IUGA SIG-endorsed or branded projects, meetings, webinars;
- Developing IUGA SIG-endorsed or branded publications, including promotional materials, recommendations, reviews, statements, white papers, guidelines, terminology, standardization documents, etc.;
- Speaking or acting on behalf of IUGA or the SIG;
- Promoting any individual or commercial interests on behalf of IUGA or the SIG;
- Providing information, materials, products, or services in exchange for compensation of any kind.

If approved and if the required resources are available, the IUGA Board will involve one or more of IUGA's standing committees to supervise the project, provide guidance, and further implement and/or assist in executing the program. The Board may also appoint an oversight committee to support the development of the project by and/or within the SIG itself. E.g., for an educational SIG meeting/webinar the IUGA Education Committee will be involved for a program review while the SIG itself can organize and run the webinar. E.g., for the development of terminology, the T&S Committee will be put in charge where SIG members will be motivated to apply and become part of the writing group.

5.3. Reporting

Twice a year, the SIG Chair provides a brief written report to the Board on behalf of the SIG Steering Group and its members. The first report is a brief update report, to be provided 4 weeks (normally at around end of May/beginning of June) before the start of the IUGA Annual Meeting summarizing the activities of the current calendar year up to the date of reporting. The second report is a full year report, summarizing all activities/communications of a full calendar year, which is due by January or February of the year following the reporting year. The IUGA Office will provide more information including a template as appropriate.

6. Responsibilities & Conditions (Compliance)

IUGA welcomes contributions from all those who share our goals and want to contribute in a healthy and constructive manner within the IUGA SIGs. IUGA therefore encourages all IUGA members to participate in either new or existing SIGs. Both SIG Leaders in the Steering Group as well as anyone who participates in a SIG are bound by the following terms and conditions:

IUGA Bylaws, Policies, and Code of Conduct
All IUGA (SIG) members are bound by the IUGA Bylaws, Policies, and the IUGA Code of Conduct, all of which can be downloaded from the IUGA website https://www.iuga.org/about/leadership-and-governance (scroll down to bottom of page for an overview of all IUGA policies).

Applicability

The activities of the SIG should be and are always limited to those addressed in their purpose statement. If the SIG wants to revise their purpose statement, then this should be documented in writing and resubmitted to the IUGA Board for approval.

Disclaimer

Information exchanged in a SIG and all related communications are intended for discussion purposes only as this does not necessarily represent the views of IUGA or any of its officers, directors, employees, agents, and representatives thereof.

Diversity & Inclusion

IUGA welcomes diversity and inclusion in our international organization and is therefore dedicated to ensuring that all our members, regardless of sex, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, physical appearance, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, education, career stage or socio-economic status, have a solely positive experience participating in the IUGA SIGs.

Leadership

SIG Steering Group Members, led by and including the Chair and Vice Chair, are expected to lead and maintain an active SIG. As such, the Steering Group is responsible to initiate discussions of interest to the SIG community, share relevant news and/or (links to) important publications, be responsive to queries both from members and staff, organize the annual SIG meetings, and deliver brief written reports twice a year.

SIG Steering Group Members must refrain from abusing their position or the association's staff, services, equipment, resources, or property for their personal or third-party gain or pleasure and shall not represent to third parties that their authority as a SIG Steering Group member extends any further than it does.

Conflicts of Interest

All Steering Group Members, including the Chair and Vice Chair, must agree to fully comply with the IUGA conflict of interest policy and are required to annually submit the conflict of interest disclosure form to the IUGA Office. SIG leaders should maintain and promote high ethical standards including good-faith SIG leadership and avoiding any actual or perceived conflict of interest with other activities, interests, and/or organizations with which they may be involved.

SIG members may **never** use the SIG for self-promotion, to promote personal or local agendas, or ideas that do not support the IUGA mission. All SIG members should act in the best interests of the association and not for personal or third-party gain or financial enrichment.

Authority

SIGs and/or (groups of) SIG members, whether individually or as a group, are only allowed to execute ideas, projects, or publications on behalf of IUGA or on behalf of the IUGA SIG if and once written approval from the IUGA Board has been obtained prior to the commencement of the project. SIGs and/or (groups of) SIG members are not allowed to independently implement such programs without prior approval from the Board.

Staff Support

IUGA staff do not necessarily envisage being active members of every SIG in the IUGA community nor do we have the resources to co-lead and/or coordinate each SIG. Staff support is aimed to support our SIGs and their members in meeting their needs collaboratively. However, in cases of particular strategic importance of a SIG, staff would join groups and aim to participate in a way that is both sensitive to their status and collaborative in orientation.

Resources and (Commercial) Funding

If a SIG itself requires substantial resources (funding, staff/hours, etc.) for its activities, a specification of required resources (hours/funding) should be included in the written proposal as submitted to the Executive Director for

Board review (see section 5.2). If it is suggested and/or recommended that such resources may be funded by external sources (e.g., through grants/sponsors), then the approach needs to be discussed with the IUGA Executive Director to ensure coordination with IUGA's overall industry relations strategy. For more information, please consult with the IUGA Executive Director.

E-Discussion Rules of Engagement

By participating in member communications on the IUGA E-Discussion Forums, all IUGA members are automatically bound by and agree to the Rules and Conditions of the IUGA E-Discussion Forum as stated here: https://discussion.iuga.org/faq and here: https://discussion.iuga.org/tos.

Non-Compliance

Any individual who is non-compliant to any of the above rules, responsibilities and conditions, puts oneself at risk for either a temporary or definite ban from either the E-Discussion Forum and/or the actual SIG. If applicable and required, the Board will appoint a replacement.

7. Dissolution

IUGA reserves the right to dissolve and/or close any SIG at any time. The IUGA Board will dissolve a SIG if it fails to meet the criteria for maintaining a SIG, if it does not have any activity for an entire calendar year, if its membership drops below 10 members, or if the IUGA Board decides that it is not in the best interests of IUGA to have the SIG as presently structured. A SIG that has been inactive for several months and/or whose leaders are unresponsive to attempts to communicate with them may also be closed, although the Board may opt for any other measures to reactivate the SIG in a different way. The IUGA Board will always endeavor to give adequate notice of such action and to preserve any resources generated by the group.

A recommendation to dissolve may also come from the SIG itself e.g., because it has met its original objectives or there is no longer interest in it. Interest in the subject area covered by a SIG may also change, its members may decide that there are other ways within IUGA to accomplish the SIG's purposes, or other factors may lead to the need to dissolve a SIG. Its members may propose dissolution, but it will always need the IUGA Board's approval.

Approved by the IUGA Board June 17, 2024