

Aims and Requirements for Research Committees

Approved by ISA Research Council in Montreal, Canada, August 1997
Amended in 2002, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2015, 2017 and 2020

I Research Committees Statutory Rights and Obligations

1. Research Committees (RC) are expected to carry out the relevant policies of the ISA and to follow the ISA Statutes. Each member of each RC should have a copy of the Statutes of the ISA (available at the ISA website <http://www.isa-sociology.org/>)

The points below follow the spirit of the ISA Statutes. Where the Statutes do not cover relevant details, they have been supplemented to give guidance on practical interpretation.

2. Each RC is required to have written Statutes which reflect the principles and Statutes of the ISA, and have been approved by the majority (more than one-half) of the RC members in good standing (members who had paid membership dues for the current year). The approved Statutes of each RC must include among others the following three important provisions:
 - (a) Rules on the election of a Steering Board with a definite term of office. Such an election must be carried out by democratic procedures as approved by the ISA Research Council, representing all of the RC members in good standing. The election rules must include Provisions on how to fill in vacancies arising between World Congresses (for example, vacancies may be filled by appointment by the RC president).
 - (b) The Steering Board should consist of a president, a secretary, and at least 3 other members; all its members must be regular individual members in good standing of the ISA.
 - i) President can serve maximum 2 terms;
 - ii) Officers (Vice-Presidents, Secretary, and Treasurer) can serve no more than 3 consecutive terms;
 - iii) Board Members: each RC sets its limit on how many terms Board Members can serve
 - (c) Provision for the payment of dues, without which no member will be in good standing in the ISA and in the RC.
 - (d) Clear regulations on the procedures to amend the RC Statutes.
3. RC must distinguish between regular or affiliated members. All regular members are expected to be ISA individual members in good standing who have paid both their ISA and RC dues. Affiliated members in good standing are those who have paid RC dues but are not ISA members in good standing. RC may allow affiliated members to participate in the scientific activities of the group and to vote in its elections and business meetings, but affiliated members may not act as Board members except in the case covered in the below point 4.
4. Scholars from other disciplines who are only affiliated members of a RC may act as Board members, as well as participating in the scientific activities of the group and voting in its elections or business meetings, if that group is organised jointly with another disciplinary

association to which they belong, and the joint arrangement for double affiliation has been approved by both associations. See also point 9.

5. To maintain its status as an RC of ISA, each RC must continue to meet the conditions laid down as necessary for eligibility to become a new RC. That is, the RC should have at least 50 individual ISA members in good standing with geographical diversity as determined by the Executive Committee: members from at least 10 countries in 2 continents or 7 countries in 3 continents.
6. Each RC is expected to include within its activities a broad range of areas and approaches; here appropriate, this may be reflected in the creation of sub-committees with sufficient autonomy to pursue their more specialized research interests. Each RC is also expected to organise a program of activities at each World Congress, and to arrange at least one independent meeting between one World Congress and the next.
7. Each RC should have a newsletter for communication among members covering the RC activities and other relevant types of material.
8. Each RC is represented on the Research Council, on which it has one vote. Each RC is entitled to elect one representative, and one alternate who may stand in for the representative. The alternate member may also attend the Research Council meetings as an observer when the representative is present, but is not entitled to vote. Please note:
 - (a) The Research Council plays a vital role in the ISA's formal structure as it represents the entire constituency of individual ISA members organised in Research Committees (RCs), Working Groups (WGs) and Thematic Groups (TGs).
 - (b) The Research Council together with the Council of National Associations, which represents the collective members of ISA, form the highest decision-making body of the ISA, the Assembly of Councils.
 - (c) The Research Council elects half of the members of the ISA Executive Committee; oversees and promotes research activities among the RCs, WGs, and TGs; and makes decisions on the establishment, demotion and abolition of RCs, WGs, and TGs.
 - (d) The Research Council meets every two years: at each World Congress and at each Forum of Sociology.
9. Policy guidelines for Research Committees with double affiliations
 - (a) An agreement needs to be signed between the RC, ISA and other international associations.
 - (b) At least 50% of Board Members have to be ISA members in good standing.
 - (c) Research Committee has to have a minimum of 50 ISA members in good standing.

- (d) Allocation of grants and of slots at the World Congress/Forum of Sociology is based on the number of ISA members in good standing.

Beyond the points listed above, each RC is free to organise itself as it wishes, to administer its own funds, to engage in any activities it considers appropriate to its objectives, and to cooperate with other academic and non-academic bodies.

II. Services provided to Research Committees, Working Groups and Thematic Groups

The ISA Secretariat provides a range of services to RCs, WGs and TGs which include:

1. Grants

The grants will be allocated to the Research Committees to support activities, such as conferences, workshops and the production and distribution of their newsletter (printed and/or electronic).

Every Research Committee in good standing is entitled to apply for a grant once between the two World Congresses, which implies the following conditions:

- (a) The Research Committee must send to its members and to the ISA Secretariat at least two newsletters every year (printed or electronic).
- (b) The Research Committee must send a detailed report of its activities to the ISA Secretariat every two years: a mid-term report and a full-term report in Congress years.
- (c) The Research Committee must organise an international conference where all its members can participate. The theme must be sufficiently general to attract most of the members and not related only to the interests of a small group of individuals.
- (d) The Research Committee must hold regular elections of its board.
- (e) The Research Committee must have its own membership dues. The current minimum fee set by the ISA Executive Committee is US\$10 discount fee for a 4 year period.
- (f) The Research Committee must submit a short proposal to support its grant application and must send a report at the end of the period for which the grant was allocated.

Grants will be allocated according to the following scale approved in 2013 and on the basis of RC membership as of October of the Congress/Forum year:

Number of ISA members as of October of the Congress/Forum year	
Members	Amount EUR
250 above	1960
225-249	1820
200-224	1680
175-199	1540
150-174	1400
125-149	1260
100-124	1120
75- 99	980
50- 74	840
25- 49	700

Grants will be paid in two installments: upon approval and upon receiving a final report.

2. Collection of dues on behalf of RCs, WGs and TGs

Dues for RC/WG/TG affiliation can be paid through ISA membership portal.

The amounts collected on behalf of the RCs, WGs, TGs, are transferred on request, free of charge, to each RC, WG, and TG bank account (or, if preferred, sent by cheque). President and Secretary/Treasurer should sign requests for funds release from RC/WG/TG funds kept at the ISA Secretariat.

How does this service benefit Research Committees?

- (a) Research Committees do not lose money on banking charges: they are absorbed by the ISA which processes all individual payments.
- (b) Research Committees do not have to maintain any tedious membership administration and book-keeping: the ISA Secretariat does it for them.
- (c) Although Research Committees officers change every four years a continuity of the membership administration is secured by the ISA Secretariat.

Note that the ISA only deals with the payment of RC/WG/TG dues by ISA members. Dues (if any) from RC's affiliated members, guests or special participants have to be dealt with by the RC/WG/TG.

3. Preparation of membership lists.
RC/WG/TG Presidents and Secretaries can create current list of ISA members who have paid their RC dues through ISA membership portal. Such a list can be obtained in excel or pdf format.
4. Sending out renewal reminders.
ISA Secretariat each year in autumn sends out renewal reminders to ISA members whose dues to ISA and relevant RCs, WGs TGs have to be paid.
5. Internet service.
ISA Secretariat uses e-mail for daily correspondence and also for the circulation of announcements of meetings, calls for papers, etc., which come from the RCs, WGs and TGs.

ISA website provides general information about the ISA (structure, activities, and publications) as well as about each Research Committee, Working and Thematic Group.

The content of the home page relating to RCs is constantly being updated on the basis of the information received directly from the RCs, WGs, TGs. If a RC, WG or TG has its own home page, a direct link is established and thus each group can alter its home page itself.

According to the UE Data Protection Policy no personal contact addresses shall be made available on Internet. Mailing lists cannot be rented or sold to any third party.

III. Duties of RCs, WGs and TGs

RCs, WGs and TGs are expected to submit to the ISA Secretariat:

1. Reports every two years of their activities when requested (every two years: a mid-term report and a full-term report in Congress years). These reports should include:
 - (a) A list of current officers and dates of the next Board elections.
 - (b) Information on RC income from affiliation fees and ISA grants, as well as on use made of those funds.
 - (c) Details of past and planned meetings and other activities.

- (d) Details of publications made and planned, both newsletters and other types of publication.

The reports are reviewed by the Research Coordinating Committee at its meetings every two years.

2. The current list of members whose dues are collected directly by the RC, WG, TG and not by the ISA. Such list should be received at the ISA Secretariat by January 31 of each year for inclusion in the ISA data base.
3. A copy of each issue of the newsletter as soon as it is produced.

IV. Guidelines

Four sets of recommendations were approved by ISA Research Council, Montreal, 6 August 1997; amended in 2010 and 2014.

- A. Basic minimum requirements
- B. Good practices for Research Committees (RCs)
- C. Support and incentives from ISA Executive Committee and Secretariat
- D. Dealing with shortcoming

A. Basic minimum requirements

- A1. Submit to ISA Secretariat current list of RC members whose dues are collected directly by the RC.
- A2. Maintain a minimum of 50 ISA paid-up members
- A3. Members from at least 10 countries in 2 continents or 7 countries in 3 continents
- A4. Statutes should reflect the ISA Statutes
- A5. Appropriate activity between World Congresses as indicated in B5 below
- A6. Communicate and provide routine information to Secretariat and appoint Delegate and alternate to ISA Research Council

B. Good practices for Research Committees

B1. Membership

- B1.1 Keep up-to-date membership list with dues renewal status and dates.

B1.2 Systematic reminders on dues payment and deletion of those who have lapsed.

B1.3 Special dues categories for students and low GNI countries.

B1.4 Membership services should be only for paid-up members.

B1.5 Provide ISA and Research Committee information to members regularly.

B2. Finances

B2.1 Keep accounting system and report accounts to members regularly.

B2.2 Aim at self-financing.

B2.3 Report subsidies received and avoid dependency on any one external body.

B2.4 Encourage participation of sociologists from low GNI countries.

B3. Officers

B3.1 Hold regular elections for Board officers providing for turnover of officers.

B3.2 Make provision for continuity of business across elections.

B3.3 Set up clear division of labour among Board members.

B3.4 Set up system to ensure participation in decision-making of all Board members.

B4. Relations to ISA

B4.1 Encourage individual ISA membership among all RC members.

B4.2 Organise full programme of high quality sessions at ISA World Congresses.

B4.3 Meet deadlines set up for the organisation of the World Congress.

B4.4 Respond promptly to ISA Secretariat's request for routine information and send copies of newsletter to Secretariat and VP(Research).

B4.5 Ensure that your representative to ISA Research Council will be able to attend the meetings.

B5. Activities

B5.1 Have regular newsletter with at least two issues per year.

- B5.2 Have at least one interim conference (or other academic activity) and business meeting between World Congresses.
- B5.3 Have a system of paper selection to ensure quality & geographical representation.
- B5.4 Encourage membership from different countries.
- B5.5 Encourage scholarly publications from RC activities.

C. Suggestions for ISA Executive and Secretariat on support and incentives

- C1. Produce booklet on ISA philosophy, aims and requirements for Research Committees.
- C2. Provide training for Research Committee officers at World Congresses.
- C3. Use RC's framework to consult RC officers and involve them organisationally.
- C4. Offer a computer template via e-mail for response to Secretariat's requests.
- C5. Set up annual prizes on one of these aspects:
 - C5.1 best reporting of activities;
 - C5.2 greatest increase in ISA membership;
 - C5.3 most useful newsletter;
 - C5.4 greatest improvement in running of RC over specified period;
 - C5.5 best-run small and large RCs;

D. Suggestions for ISA Executive and Secretariat on dealing with RCs' shortcomings

- D1. Send a communique of the action(s) likely to follow with one year time limit.
- D2. RCs receiving communique will be put on probationary status.
- D3. Provide advice or support to RCs in dealing with shortcomings through either experienced individuals, or a group nominated by the ISA Research Council, or the Research Coordinating Committee.
- D4. When there is refusal to meet ISA criteria, appropriate action involves the number of World Congress sessions allocated.
- D5. Demotion or closure of a RC is appropriate only when warning had been given and sufficient improvement had not been shown by the specified deadline.

E. Transition policy for low-membership RC/WG/TG

Approved by the Research Coordinating Committee in April 2017

E1. If the membership of an RC (WG) falls below the newly required 50 (25) ISA members in good-standing, the ISA Executive Secretariat will alert President and Secretary of that unit and encourage measures to increase its membership.

E2. If an RC (WG) has been unable to reach a threshold of at least 50% of the newly required threshold of 50 (25) ISA members in good standing for more than two consecutive years, the Vice-President for Research, or a representative appointed by her or him, will contact the Board of the RC (WG) to discuss the situation and measures for increasing the membership numbers.

E3. If an RC (WG) has been unable to reach a threshold of at least 50% of the newly required 50 (25) ISA members in good standing for more than a term of four consecutive years, the Research Coordinating Committee will consider proposing to the EC sanctions, which could include demotion or closure, while duly weighing the unit's level of activities, plans, and other circumstances.

E4. The percentage thresholds in (2.) and (3.) shall be increased to 65% at year-end 2018 and to 80% at year-end 2022, with the full requirements being phased in at year-end 2026.

V. Policy for ISA awards

Approved by the ISA Executive Committee, Brisbane 2002

1. General principles

- (a) Any ISA awards should be for significant contributions to sociology, to international issues directly related to the ISA's mission, or to the ISA as such.
- (b) All proposals for new awards should need the approval of the ISA Executive Committee. Any proposal for a new award should specify its purpose and form, indicate who would be eligible for it, estimate its costs and show how those could be covered, and provide information on whether there were any existing awards or prizes of similar character.
- (c) There should not be more than one award of a similar nature (e.g. specifically for junior sociologists, or general whole-career achievement), and overlap with awards or prizes given by other bodies (in particular, the Rokkan Prize of the International Social Science Council for comparative research by a younger person) should be avoided.
- (d) Unless awards are aimed at a particular category of person, special care should be taken in the procedures and personnel involved to ensure that gender, language, nationality etc do not stand in the way of equal opportunity to win the award.
- (e) Issues of general policy for ISA awards should be decided by the Executive Committee, though it would probably be appropriate to have a subcommittee responsible for formulating proposals. However, such issues will not arise often, so it would be unnecessary that this should be a standing subcommittee.
- (f) If Research Committees have awards or prizes, they should be consistent with the ISA's general policy, and should be described as an award of Research Committee X of the ISA (not of the RC without mention of the ISA, or of the ISA alone); proposals for the establishment of such awards or prizes should be submitted to the ISA Executive Committee for approval.
- (g) The award of any awards from the whole ISA, the Research Council or the CNA should be announced at a World Congress (where this might form part of a special ceremony), so they should be given every four years. The timetable leading up to this would need to be planned so that recipients could be sure to be able to attend the World Congress. If there were awards associated with a particular Research Committee or region, they could be given at interim meetings of the appropriate body.

VI. Policy for Research Committee Journals

Approved by the ISA Research Coordinating and Publications Committees 2011; all the points made here would apply equally to Working Groups and Thematic Groups.

ISA warmly encourages RCs to run their own journals if the market and the resources of personnel and intellectual work are there. However, there are some guidelines, listed below, which should be borne in mind.

1. RCs do not require permission to set up their own journals; however, they should inform the ISA Secretariat if they propose to do so, notify the Secretariat when one is actually established, and include information about the journal's progress in their annual reports.
2. RC journals may be run entirely by one RC, or cooperatively with another RC or some other body outside ISA. (If an outside body is potentially involved, the Vice-President for Publications should be informed before any decisions are reached in case issues are raised about the suitability of the partnership.) Whichever is the case, the journal and associated material such as web sites should acknowledge the ISA connection, for instance by including a statement that the RC is an RC of the ISA. However, it must not be stated that the journal is sponsored by ISA (as distinct from the particular RC), or the ISA logo used on it, unless the proposal to do so has been approved by the ISA Publications Committee.
3. It is expected that any RC journal will set up arrangements for journal governance and continuity, and follow customary academic practice. It should establish an editorial board if one is wanted, an appropriate division of labour for editorial tasks, a system of refereeing, and provision for the observation of relevant ethical standards. It is also expected that these arrangements, and the practical working of the journal, will observe ISA's commitments to internationalism and to the goal of equality in opportunities for participation.
4. Sage is currently the ISA publisher. Our contract with them does not require all journals associated with ISA to be published by Sage, though to create one which could reasonably be seen as in direct competition with the Sage ISA ones would not be acceptable. Sage would be interested to consider proposals to publish any new RC journals.
5. The only funding that ISA might provide for an RC journal is the regular activity grant from the RCC, of which each RC may apply for one during a four-year period, which the RC could use for that purpose. No office support is available, but the Publications Committee would, however, be happy to offer advice on the practical issues involved in running a journal, and to help publicise RC-sponsored journals. A link to the journal from the ISA web site can be provided.