

# 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, 2019, and 2026.*

## 1. Rights and Responsibilities of Research Committees (RCs), Working Groups (WGs), and Thematic Groups (TGs)

The following are the rights and responsibilities of ISA RC/WG/TGs:

### a. Adherence to ISA Policies

- i. RC/WG/TGs must comply with all ISA Statutes and policies.
- ii. RC/WG/TG members should have access to ISA Statutes (available at [www.isa-sociology.org](http://www.isa-sociology.org)).

### b. Maintenance of Statutes

- i. RCs must have written statutes aligned with ISA statutes and policies. The former must be updated when the ISA revises its statutes or adds new policies.
- ii. Statutes must be approved by a majority of RC members in good standing.
- iii. They must include:
  1. **Procedures for Board elections:**
    - a. Democratic procedures
    - b. Term limits
      - i. President can serve maximum 2 terms;
      - ii. Officers 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. Procedures for authorising (or not) electronic voting.
  2. **Minimum Requirements for Board composition:**
    - a. A President, Secretary, and at least three other members. Any board member, except the President, should play the role of Treasurer.



- b. All Board members must be Regular members (see para. 1.b.iii.4.a.i)
    - c. Attempts should be made to ensure diversity in the composition of the Board.
  - 3. Procedure for filling vacancies on the Board** due to unforeseen circumstances.
    - a. This can be a simple acknowledgement of Article Four, Paragraph 5 of the ISA Statutes, or it can be more elaborate.
  - 4. Definitions of membership categories:**
    - a. **RCs can have two types of members:**
      - i. Regular Members: Must be ISA members in good standing.
      - ii. Affiliated Members: Can participate in activities and vote (if allowed by the RC Statutes) but cannot serve on the board (except in dual-affiliation cases).
    - b. **Dual Affiliation Policies**
      - i. Dual affiliation with another academic association requires a formal, written agreement between the ISA and the other academic association.
      - ii. As an exception to the general requirement (1.b.iii.2.b), at least 50% of board members must be ISA members in good standing.
  - 5. Procedure for setting membership dues**
    - a. Ensure that dues for regular members are equal to or higher than the minimum rate of US\$10 for a membership period.
    - b. Only members paying the ISA membership fees are considered to be in “good standing” by the ISA (Article Four Paragraph 6.a of the ISA Statutes).
  - 6. Procedure for amending the statutes.**
- c. Maintenance of an active Membership**
  - i. Maintain the minimum membership requirements for achieving and maintaining RC/WG/TG Status
    - 1. At least 50/25/10 ISA members in good standing for RC/WG/TGs, respectively.
    - 2. RCs must maintain geographical diversity:
      - a. Regular Members from at least 10 countries across 2 continents, or
      - b. Regular Members from at least 7 countries across 3 continents.
  - ii. Provide a list of members (i.e., affiliated and dual-affiliated), whose dues are collected independently, to the ISA Secretariat on an annual basis.



- d. **Maintenance of Scientific Activities and Conferences**
  - i. Organize a scientific program at each ISA World Congress.
  - ii. Hold at least one scientific meeting between World Congresses. NB: Participation in the ISA Forum counts towards this requirement.
  
- e. **Communication about the work of the RC/WG/TG**
  - i. Maintain active communication with the RC/WG/TG membership and with the general public.
  - ii. Provide electronic copies of or links to the communication (e.g., news bulletin) to the ISA Secretariat.
  
- f. **Submission of Biennial Reports** (using the template provided) to the ISA Secretariat for review by the Research Coordinating Committee (RCC), including:
  - i. List of board members and upcoming elections.
  - ii. Financial summary.
  - iii. Summary of past and planned activities.
  - iv. Communication objective, indicator (see 1.e.) and proof of performance.
  - v. Details on publications.
  
- g. **Representation on the ISA Research Council**
  - i. Each RC has **one vote** in the Research Council.
  - ii. Each RC/WG/TG elects **one representative and an alternate** to sit on the Research Council.

## 2. ISA Support for RC/WG/TGs

The following are the support provided to the RC/WG/TGs by the ISA:

- a. **Allocation of Activity Grants to RCs**
  - i. Allocated once per four-year period.
  - ii. Conditions:
    - 1. Communication objective, indicator (see 1.e.) and proof of performance
    - 2. Organise an interim international conference (NB: the sessions organised during the ISA Forum count towards this condition).
    - 3. Conduct regular board elections.
    - 4. Maintain RC/WG/TG membership dues.
    - 5. Provide biennial reports to the ISA Secretariat.
  - iii. Grants vary based on membership size.



- b. **Collection of Membership Dues**
  - i. ISA Secretariat collects and transfers regular membership dues to RC/WG/TGs upon request, covering banking fees.
  - ii. ISA Secretariat maintains an internal financial account for each RC/WG/TG.
- c. **Maintenance of Membership Lists**
  - i. RC/WG/TG Presidents and Secretaries can access member lists via the ISA Member Portal.
- d. **Emission of Renewal Reminders**
  - i. ISA Secretariat sends annual reminders for membership renewals.
- e. **Provision of Internet and Communication Support**
  - i. Announcements via ISA email services.
  - ii. A RC/WG/TG-specific email address through ISA's email service.
  - iii. Website updates based on RC/WG/TG-provided content.
  - iv. Personal data protection compliant with EU regulations.
- f. **Provision of training**
  - i. ISA Secretariat provides training for RC/WG/TG officers.

### 3. Research Committee Journal

- a. **RC/WG/TGs may establish independent or joint journals, but must:**
  - i. Include the relationship to the journal in their Statutes
  - ii. Inform the ISA Secretariat
- b. **Journals must:**
  - i. Acknowledge ISA affiliation and use of logo.
  - ii. Follow academic and ethical standards.
  - iii. Ensure international participation.
- c. The ISA Secretariat does not fund journals directly but may assist with publicity.

### 4. Guidelines for the RCC Evaluation of RC/WG/TG Performance

As required by the ISA Statutes, RC/WG/TG activities and health are evaluated by the RCC at least every two years. This evaluation is based on the following minimum requirements. Best practices are encouraged to be put into place by RC/WG/TGs. The measures taken by the RCC to ensure RC/WG/TG accountability to members and to the ISA are included.



### **a. Minimum Requirements**

- i. Maintain 50/25/10 ISA members in good standing for RC/WG/TGs, respectively.
- ii. For RCs, ensure geographical diversity (10 countries, 2 continents or 7 countries, 3 continents) within membership.
- iii. Align RC/WG/TG statutes with ISA Statutes.
- iv. Engage in regular activities between World Congresses. This is demonstrated by:
  1. Defining a communication objective and indicator of performance (see 1.e and 2.a.ii.1).
  2. Organizing at least one interim scientific meeting (the Forum counts for this requirement).
- v. Designate a representative to the Research Council.

### **b. Best Practices**

- i. **Membership:**
  1. Keep up-to-date membership records.
  2. Offer special dues for students and low-income countries.
  3. Provide regular updates to members.
  4. Seek to ensure diversity within the Board membership.
  5. Encourage affiliated and dual-affiliation members to also become ISA regular members.
- ii. **Financial Management:**
  1. Maintain clear accounting records.
  2. Endeavor to raise co-funding for RC/WG/TG scientific activities.
  3. Support participation from underrepresented regions.
- iii. **Governance and Elections:**
  1. Ensure regular elections with turnover.
  2. Maintain continuity between elections.
  3. Distribute responsibilities among board members.
- iv. **Academic Activities:**
  1. Promote collective, high-quality research and publications.

### **c. Measures to ensure RC/WG/TG accountability**

- i. RC/WG/TGs failing to meet any one of the minimum requirements may receive a one-year warning from the ISA Secretariat based on the RCC decision.
- ii. If after one year, there is no improvement, the RCC will determine the conditions of probation status.
- iii. Continued non-compliance may result in reduced World Congress participation, demotion of the RC/WG, or closure of the TG.



- iv. The RCC decision of demotion/closure requires approval by the ISA Executive Committee (ISA Statutes Article 4, paragraph 4).

## **5. The Principle of Autonomy of RC/WG/TGs**

As provided for by Article Four, paragraph 1 of the ISA Statutes - beyond the points listed above - each RC/WG/TG is free to organise itself as it wishes, to administer its own funds, to engage in any activities it considers appropriate to its objectives, to create awards and prizes that are consistent with ISA policy, and to cooperate with other academic and non-academic bodies.