# Special Interest Group Manual

MLA Special Interest Groups (SIGs) provide a forum for members with unique interests to identify and meet with others with similar interests without having to fulfill the governance requirements of Sections. SIGs are generally created as less formal and more flexible organizational units, with the advantages of fewer reporting and no minimum membership requirements.

This manual addresses:

* Guidelines for Formation and Approval
* Checklist for SIG Conveners and Section/SIG Review Committee
* Role of Conveners
* Membership
* Reporting Requirements
* SIG Annual Report Form
* Visibility
* Dues and Fundraising
* Annual Meetings
* Communication Supports
* Disbanding
* Use of the MLA logo
* SIG Issues, Proposals and Motions
* AHIP Points for SIG Coordinators

Communications concerning this Manual and its contents, or questions concerning the formation of and rules governing SIGs, should be addressed to the Section/SIG Review Committee of Section Council.

GUIDELINES FOR FORMATION AND APPROVAL

Any group of MLA members may petition Section Council to become a MLA Special Interest Group (SIG) by composing a Statement of Purpose and selecting a convener who must be an MLA member. The Statement should minimally include the purpose, goals or aims of the proposed SIG, a rationale for formation, and the anticipated membership. Before being granted SIG status, the group must obtain fifteen signatures of MLA members agreeing to the Statement. The Statement of Purpose and the name of the SIG must be approved by Section Council.

1. The group submits the Statement with the name(s) of the convener or co-conveners to the Chair of the Section/SIG Review Committee by November 15th.

2. The Section/SIG Review Committee advises the convener(s) of the approval process, guidelines for formation and other SIG-related policies.

3. The Section Council Chair posts the proposed SIG Statement to the Section Council listserv. Council representatives are to confer with their Section’s officers for comments regarding possible overlap between the proposed SIG and any existing SIG or Section. Comments are forwarded to the Chair of the Section/SIG Review Committee.

4. Based on comments from the Sections, the Committee works with the potential interest group to resolve any concerns. Once an acceptable Statement of Purpose is developed, the group is asked to submit to the Chair of the Section/SIG Review Committee the revised Statement of Purpose along with the signatures of at least 15 current MLA members indicating their agreement with the Statement. The Statement will then be presented to Section Council for a vote. Following the vote, the Chair of the Section/SIG Review Committee will notify the convener(s) of the results.

5. The Section/SIG Review Chair will notify SIG conveners of the SIG Manual and listserv.

6. The Section Council Chair will notify the Section Council Webmaster and MLA Headquarters to add the new SIG on MLANET as appropriate.

## ROLE OF CONVENERS

SIGs are not required to appoint regular officers, but must identify a convener or co-conveners to act as contact point(s) with MLA, organize meetings, and coordinate other activities as needed. Conveners must be members of MLA. The conveners’ names and contact information are listed in the MLA Directory.

## MEMBERSHIP

SIG members must be MLA members. Non-members interested in SIG activities may join MLA or register to attend the annual meeting in order to attend SIG meetings or co-sponsored programs. SIGs may send announcements of their activities or programs to non-members, if they choose to do so.

SIGs may actively recruit MLA members through announcements in listservs, newsletters, web pages, flyers, etc. If a SIG wants to recruit non-members from other associations, the SIG should discuss it with the Section Council Chair and MLA HQ to ensure that the SIG’s efforts are coordinated with other MLA recruiting efforts. Plans to send out notices about the existence of the SIG or announcing programs co-sponsored by the SIGusually require no approval. However, more active recruiting efforts must be coordinated with MLA HQ.

## REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

A list of approved MLA SIGs and their conveners is maintained by the Section/SIG Review Committee. Shortly after the annual meeting, MLA Headquarters asks MLA units to provide updated information for the MLA Directory. Each SIG must provide the name(s) and contact information for the convener or co-conveners. A list of all the SIGs and their conveners is published in a special section of the Directory. The Section/SIG Review Committee Chair will work with MLA Membership to ensure the list is correct and up-to-date.

All SIGs are required to submit an annual report by July 1 with the name of the current convener(s), number of members, meeting history/attendance for the previous year, and convener(s)-elect for the next association year. The Section/SIG Review Committee Chair posts a reminder about the annual report to the SIG Conveners listserv. The Annual Report Form is found below. The report is submitted to the Chair of the Section/SIG Review Committee and the Section Council Chair.

SIGs that do not submit an annual report form for two consecutive years will be reported to the Section Council with a recommendation that they be dropped.

If a SIG decides to disband, the convener(s) will notify the Section/SIG Review Committee Chair in writing. The Committee Chair will notify the appropriate officials.

## ANNUAL REPORT FORM

Download as Word document (to download in IE, right click, Save Target As, rename SIGreport.docx)

Medical Library Association

SIG Annual Report Form

Name of SIG:

Convener(s):

Contact Information:

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Fax:

Email:

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Fax:

Email:

Estimated Number of Current Members:

What is the basis for your estimate (attendance at annual meeting, SIG listserv members, etc.)?

Annual Meeting Information (at most recent MLA Annual Meeting):

Date of SIG Meeting:

Place of SIG Meeting:

Number of Members in Attendance:

## VISIBILITY

SIGs may wish to communicate news and other information about their activities to the Association’s general membership. The Association provides links at no cost from the MLANET website (http://www.mlanet.org) to SIG sponsored websites, where appropriate. Because the Association provides links to SIG websites it is extremely important that all SIG websites are updated on a regular basis.

The Association also offers technical and web hosting service support free of charge. SIGs interested in these services may contact MLA Headquarters staff or the Chair of the Technology Advisory Committee for more information.

A list of all SIGs and their conveners is published on the Section Council website. The MLA Directory links to this information.

DUES AND FUNDRAISING

Due to the informal structure of SIGs, they do not receive funding from MLA or engage in fundraising by themselves. SIGs may not collect dues. SIGs are encouraged to collaborate with Sections for fundraising to support co-sponsored programs at annual meetings.

## ANNUAL MEETINGS

A. Business Meetings

SIGs may hold business meetings at the MLA annual meeting. The National Program Committee (NPC) sends appropriate information regarding the annual meeting to each identified SIG convener. Conveners must request a meeting space by the specified NPC deadline, which is usually in the Fall. Section Council NPC liaisons set up the business meeting schedules and, whenever possible, try to avoid scheduling in the same time slot sections and SIGs which have overlapping memberships.

SIGs may have speakers or panels at their business meetings, but these will not be listed in detail in the formal program.

SIGs may announce their business meeting programs by publishing an article in the conference (on-site) newsletter, posting flyers on the message board, placing handouts in the registration area, and sending out notices on listservs, etc.

B. CE Course/Workshop

If a SIG wishes to sponsor a CE course, symposia, or other event receiving MLA CE credit, its members must follow the established procedures for submitting a CE or symposia proposal. Such proposals must be submitted 18 to 24 months before the annual meeting. SIGs should contact MLA HQ staff as soon as they develop an idea for an educational program.

C. Meeting Programs

A SIG may work with a section or sections to co-sponsor a program. SIGs may not, however, plan a program on their own, due to the number of existing programs and the MLA resources needed to support programs at the annual meeting. A SIG interested in co-sponsoring programming should identify a member to serve as a program planner. That person should contact the Section/SIG Review Committee and request the name and contact information for the Section Council Liaison to the NPC. This individual will advise the SIG program planner of the necessary procedures for participation.

SIGs may have speakers or panels at their meeting programs, but these will not be listed in detail in the formal program.

## COMMUNICATION SUPPORTS

A special listserv, mla-sigcon@mlahq.org, has been created for SIG conveners, the Section Council Chair, Section Council Chair-Elect or Vice Chair, and the Section/SIG Review Committee Chair. This listserv is used to distribute information from MLA Headquarters and Section Council such as updates on pertinent MLA activities, requests for information, deadline notices, and other pertinent information. The listserv may also be used by the SIG conveners as a forum for discussing issues, asking for advice, or sharing information on SIG activities.

Subscribe to the SIG Convener listserv

Please note that this listserv is restricted to SIG Conveners and MLA Headquarters staff.

Change your SIG Conveners listserv subscription

Changes you can make include:

\* Unsubscribing

\* Setting delivery of messages to Digest Mode

\* Modifying e-mail Delivery options

\* Getting a Password reminder

DISBANDING

If a SIG decides to disband, the convener(s) will notify the Section/SIG Review Committee Chair in writing. The Committee Chair will notify the appropriate officials.

SIGs that do not submit an annual report form for two consecutive years will be reported to the Section Council with a recommendation that they be dropped.

## USE OF MLA LOGO

MLA has guidelines for the use of the MLA logo. All units of MLA, including SIGs, must adhere to these. SIGs should contact MLA HQ when they wish to use the logo for promotional items such as T-shirts, mugs, etc.

The Guidelines Are:

\* The logo may not be used for commercial purposes

\* The logo must be used intact; it may not be altered as it represents “the look” of the Association.

\* MLA HQ needs to sign off on use of a design.

SIG ISSUES, PROPOSALS, AND MOTIONS

SIGs may bring concerns and questions to the Chair of the Section/SIG Review Committee for consideration and action by Section Council. The Council Chair will provide an opportunity at the annual council meetings for presentation by the SIG and discussions with the Council. Concerns and questions needing attention by the MLA Board of Directors will be referred to the Board by the Chair of Section Council. SIGs will be notified of actions taken by the Section Council and/or Board of Directors by the Chair of the Section/SIG Review Committee.

The process for Board motions is:

\* Presentation of motion to Council;

\* Discussion of issue at the first annual Council meeting, or on the Council listserv (2 weeks);

\* Presentation of the final motion to the Council for vote at second Council meeting, or by fax (2 weeks); and

\* Forwarding of the motion to the Board for consideration at their fall (September), mid-year (February/March) or pre-conference (May) meeting.

Whenever possible, the Council tries to expedite actions or issues by using e-mail. Sometimes, however, the issues must be held until the annual Council meeting, due to the importance or controversial nature of the issues.

AHIP Points for SIG Coordinators

Special interest group coordinator (see below for clarification): 15 Activity Points

Documentation required: Copy of letter of appointment, directory listing, committee roster, or letter or certificate acknowledging past service.

Clarification: Serving MLA in any of the positions in the table above count toward the 5-point MLA activity requirement at the Distinguished Member level.

Clarification: SIG coordinators must demonstrate that the SIG was active at the MLA Annual Meeting for the year being claimed for credit. A copy of the page listing the SIG’s programming/activities from the annual meeting program is sufficient documentation.