

OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGs)

1. Purpose of Special Interest Groups

- 1.1 To provide opportunities for the members of ARATA to address discrete areas of concern within the scope of assistive devices, rehabilitation, rehabilitation technology, and service provision.
- 1.2 To increase opportunities for participation and leadership in ARATA.
- 1.3 To promote and advance the purposes and activities of ARATA.

2. Relationship of SIGs to ARATA

- 2.1. SIGs are elements of the ARATA structure and will act in a manner that is consistent with the Bylaws and policies of ARATA. Individual SIGs may undertake activities that are compatible with ARATA as stated above. The manner in which these activities are determined and approved will be at the discretion of the individual SIG.
- 2.2 Communication between SIGs and the ARATA Board will be the responsibility of the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on SIGs.
- 2.3 If a SIG conducts a function* as an entity of ARATA or invokes the **name** or uses the **logo** of ARATA, the SIG must obtain permission from the Secretary of ARATA. This is not meant to be restrictive, as permission will be freely given in all cases for legitimate activities; however, it is necessary for ARATA to be aware of activities in which it may have exposure.

* A function is defined as a meeting, instruction course, exhibit, publication, advocacy participation or any other activity in which information exchange or other public interaction occurs.
- 2.4 If a SIG undertakes a function that is described or otherwise falls within the domain of activity of an ARATA Standing Committee the SIG must provide information and (if appropriate) co-ordinate the activity with the Chairperson of the Standing Committee involved. In some cases it will be necessary to plan well in advance with the appropriate Standing Committee (eg if the development of a document for distribution is anticipated).

3. The SIG Standing Committee

The Special Interest Group Standing Committee will consist of the respective chairpersons of the active SIGs and a Chairperson appointed by the President.

Responsibilities of the SIG Standing Committee include:

- a. Conduct meetings at the ARATA national conference.
- b. Disseminate pertinent information from the ARATA Board.
- c. Share activity of each SIG that may be of interest to other SIGs.
- d. Provide educational opportunities for combined SIG topics.
- e. Promote SIG involvement in education, research, and public policy with dissemination to individual SIGs.
- f. Recommend the formation of new SIGs.
- g. Compile an annual and semi-annual report on SIGs for submission to the Board.

4. Standing Committee Chairperson

The President of ARATA appoints the chairperson of the SIG Standing Committee. Responsibilities of the Chairperson include:

- a. Serve as spokesperson on SIGs to the Board.
- b. Present an annual and semi-annual report on SIGs to the Board.
- c. Preside over meetings of the Standing Committee.
- d. Assist in organising the SIG sessions in the national conference.

5. SIG Officers

5.1 A Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson will be elected to specified terms (not more than two years) at the ARATA National Conference by members of the SIG in attendance. Only ARATA members in good standing are eligible for office. Any other officers, committees, and committee chairperson will be appointed by the SIG Chairperson as necessary.

5.2 Responsibilities of the SIG Chairperson:

- a. Attend the ARATA Annual Conference and conduct meetings and other business.
- b. Assume responsibility for an annual report and reports of any meetings or other significant SIG activities to the Standing Committee.
- c. Coordinate SIG affiliated activities for the annual conference.
- d. Disseminate information pertaining to the SIG via the ARATA newsletter in accordance with pre-determined deadlines.
- e. Conduct or be responsible for activities assigned to the SIG by ARATA
- f. Appoint committees or individuals for SIG activities as appropriate.

5.3 Duties of the Vice-Chairperson:

Assume the duties of the Chairperson in his/her absence; perform such duties as are assigned or delegated by the Chairperson.

6. Elections

The elections will be determined by a vote of SIG members present at the first business session of the SIG at the ARATA National Conference. (Nominations may be mailed to the SIG Chairperson.)

7. Formations and Dissolution of SIGs:

It is presumed that it will be in the interest of ARATA and its membership to form new SIGs and also to terminate, combine and/or split SIGs from time to time as a result of emerging technology, problems, and new areas of interest. The formal recommendation of these actions will reside with the SIG Standing Committee, with final approval by the Board. The initiation of such action may come from any member of ARATA, who will be obliged to petition for the action.

7.1 Criteria for the formation of a new SIG:

- a. The proposed SIG will have a unique role or focus (ie it will not overlap in any significant way with an existing SIG).
- b. The proposed SIG will be compatible with the purposes and interests of ARATA.
- c. There must be a demonstrated interest. This will be documented by signatures of at least 15 ARATA members who agree to join the SIG.

7.2 A SIG may be declared **inactive** or **dissolved** whenever the Standing Committee determines that there is insufficient interest to continue. If the condition is deemed temporary the Committee may choose to declare it inactive for a specified term. A change from inactive status to active status will require a petition as in the case of the formation of a new SIG. If the latter does not occur within the specified term the SIG will automatically be dissolved.

8. Newsletter

ARATA maintains a newsletter (*ARATA News*) that is published quarterly.

Space is available for SIGs in each issue. SIGs are encouraged to use this medium rather than developing individual newsletters. This does not obviate the prerogative of SIGs to issue occasional bulletins of special or timely interest to their individual memberships. The regular use of *ARATA News* is appropriate for communications in the interest of economy and the dissemination of SIG activities to the wider audience of the ARATA membership.