

Special Interest Groups: Terms of Reference

Delegated Authority – Scheme of Delegation

	Description	Source(s)	Decisions reserved for Board	Decisions delegated to	Comments
25	Set up, amend, and dissolve local groups, subject groups and special interest groups.	BL44 BL45	a. Yes b. No	b. MEC / LSC	a. The Board approves the establishment / rules for conduct / financial framework / dissolution of a group where a legal entity is required. b. The MEC approves the creation / closure of a new local group. The LSC approves the creation / closure of a subject group or special interest group

Purpose

IChemE Special Interest Groups (SIGs) are accountable to the Learned Society Committee (LSC) for delivering annual programs aligned with IChemE's mission of placing chemical and process engineering at the core of a sustainable future, benefiting members, society, and the environment. They play a crucial role in achieving our vision of engineering a sustainable world.

To fulfil their purpose, SIGs will deliver engaging programmes of activity that stimulate IChemE member engagement within a technical area of interest by:

- Facilitating the sharing of knowledge and best practice
- Encouraging and enabling members to continually develop their knowledge and skills in the art and science of chemical and process engineering, and allied areas
- Driving understanding of the contribution of chemical and process engineering knowledge to society

SIGs will foster vibrant and thriving communities through exciting, inclusive, and engaging activities, supporting IChemE's Strategy28+ goals of sustainable membership growth, increased member engagement, and making our voice heard.

Duties and Responsibilities

SIGs operate globally and have an international membership from across all IChemE geographic territories. They support IChemE members at all grades of membership by providing them with the opportunity to:

- Develop their knowledge and understanding of subjects aligned with the SIG's technical focus
- Connect with each other by providing opportunities to network and share technical ideas
- Support our members to be at the heart of a sustainable future
- Represent the profession by providing thought leadership and promoting chemical engineering on a global scale
- Recognise the contribution of relevant leaders in their sector through the awarding of medals and other forms of recognition.

Communication & Event Promotion

All member to member communication should be facilitated through IChemE Connect.

Communication of events, news and other group activities to the SIG community will be undertaken by IChemE staff through official platforms. Committee members are encouraged to share with their networks to maximise engagement.

In the interest of data security and data protection, SIGs are not permitted to create, administer or promote independent social media accounts, groups or otherwise that imply affiliation with IChemE on platforms, including but not limited to: YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, X (formerly Twitter) and Facebook.

Membership

SIGs must only be established by IChemE staff and in conjunction with the delegated responsibility of the LSC. All committee members must be members of IChemE (with no outstanding membership subscription fee).

Each SIG shall have its own committee which shall normally comprise the following volunteering roles:

- Chair (not open to Student Members)
- Secretary
- Between six and ten other committee members, ensuring equity across all member territories and grades.

All nominations and elections must comply with the process described in the next section. Any variation to the committee roles must be approved by the LSC.

The Chair may assign other committee members clear duties with defined deliverables and timescales as required to support committee activity - they will not be formal committee roles.

The term of office for any committee member shall normally be three years and may be renewed for a further term of three years with the approval of the Nominations Committee. The Nominations Committee may vary the terms of office to ensure an appropriate balance of circulation and continuity of committee membership.

Working with relevant IChemE staff, the Secretary or Chair should review committee membership at least annually.

All committee members are volunteers of IChemE and are expected to adhere to the Volunteer Conduct Principles and must have regard to the policies and procedures set out in the Volunteer Handbook.

If any member fails to attend three committee meetings in a row, the Chair may require the committee member to retire.

SIGs shall not form any sub-committees, e.g. a standing separate committee designed to deliver activity in a particular geographical region. The organisation of all activities shall be led by members of the SIG committee.

Nominations & Elections

Elections to Committee roles follow an open process whereby:

- All roles are advertised as volunteer vacancies on the IChemE website and communicated to members
- Any eligible members are invited to apply
- Where roles are contested, a ballot will take place amongst the membership of that SIG
- All confirmed roles will be announced on IChemE Connect and at the SIG Annual Meeting

Vacancies will typically be advertised ahead of the Annual Meeting but where a vacancy arises at any point mid-year, the open process should be followed accordingly.

SIG Committee Meetings

SIG committee meetings shall usually be held quarterly in each annual cycle. One of these will be an Annual Meeting where Committee roles are confirmed, highlights from the past year are celebrated, and planning for the year ahead is initiated.

Committee meetings shall be called by the Chair and organised in alignment to the [Member Communities Handbook](#)

For the meeting to be quorate, the following must attend:

- I. the Chair (or in their absence, the Chair should nominate another member of the committee to chair the meeting);
- II. the Secretary (or in their absence the Chair should confirm nomination of another member of the committee) to record the minutes and actions / decisions; and
- III. at least two other committee members.

In regular attendance will be the following IChemE staff members:

- I. Learned Society Manager or Officer; and
- II. Member Engagement Officer

Any non-Committee members attending will be approved in advance by the Chair and will not have voting rights on any committee decisions.

The Committee will agree on the appropriate format for all committee meetings i.e. in-person, virtual or hybrid as appropriate to support international engagement.

IChemE actively supports good practice and respects equality and diversity. It is open to involving staff and volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities and will seek to commit the necessary resources to make meetings accessible and create an inclusive environment so that everyone can take part in the way that best suits them.

Decisions

When unanimous agreement on an issue cannot be achieved, the Chair can put the matter to a vote. A decision can be taken with the support of a simple majority of those present and voting. If the votes are evenly cast, the Chair may have in addition to their own vote, a further casting vote. If any member of the committee disagrees with the majority on any proceeding or decision, they have the right to have this recorded.

Record of meetings

The Secretary will record minutes of the proceedings, and any actions or decisions taken will be recorded to include the names of those present, any apologies received, any conflicts of interest declared, matters arising, and the appointment or removal of any committee members.

Committee information such as meeting proceedings and papers are considered to be 'Open' in accordance with IChemE's Privacy Designations policy and may be made available in the members' area of IChemE's website and/or on IChemE Connect unless designated as 'Private and Confidential' or 'Reserved'.

Reporting

The SIG Chair will provide an annual report to the LSC on their activities, including but not limited to: the impact of activity on increasing SIG member engagement, the SIG's role in supporting our mission of *putting chemical and process engineering at the heart of a sustainable future – benefitting members, society and the environment*.

In the report, SIGs are encouraged to make recommendations to the LSC on any area within its remit where action or improvement is needed.

SIGs will also collaboratively prepare an annual plan of their activities, which will be submitted to the designated IChemE staff member by a defined date.

Intellectual Property

Unless agreed otherwise in writing, IChemE will own all Intellectual Property and Inventions produced by members in their capacity as volunteers for IChemE.

For the purposes of this section, "Intellectual Property and Inventions" means papers, presentations, recordings, patents, trademarks, service marks, registered designs (including application for and right to apply for any of them) unregistered design rights, trademarks or service marks, trade or business names, copyright, or know how and any similar rights in any jurisdiction.

Rights and obligations under this section in respect of Intellectual Property made during a member's role as a volunteer shall continue in force after a member stops their volunteer role.

Other matters

SIGs shall:

- have access to appropriate resources to carry out its duties;
- be provided with, and expected to engage actively with, appropriate training in the form of an induction programme for new members and on an ongoing basis for all members;
- give due consideration to laws, regulations and any published guidelines or recommendations of the Charity Commission or other applicable rules and regulations as appropriate ;
- arrange for periodic reviews of its own performance;
- report major concerns and outputs of audit activity to the Learned Society Committee who may then choose to escalate to the Audit & Risk Committee.

Approved by:	Governance Committee / Learned Society Committee
Approval date:	April 2025
Date of next review:	April 2026
Version control:	V 1.0