

Policies for Establishing and Maintaining Research Sections Within IAMCR

IAMCR Sections are to be treated as major subdisciplines in the field of media and communication research and as permanent within the Association. According to the IAMCR Statutes, Working Groups pursue more specialised research programs while pursuing emerging research topics. They are not expected to be permanent within the organisation

New research Sections may be established within IAMCR as research and member interests evolve, either expanding from Working Groups or as proposals new to the Association. The procedure for applying to establish a Section is documented below. It overlaps in certain respects with the process for Working Groups, but varies in some details, and is documented separately for the sake of clarity and convenience. (Working Group policies and procedures are available in “Policies for Establishing and Maintaining Research Working Groups Within IAMCR,” on the Scholarly Review Committee (SRC) page of the IAMCR website, <http://iamcr.org/SRC>).

1) Authority for Establishing Sections

IAMCR Statutes authorise the presentation of new Sections and Working Groups to the General Assembly for Association approval (Article 5.2). In practice, such presentations take place with the advice and support of the International Council (IC) assisted by the Scholarly Review Committee. It begins with a written proposal providing information indicated in the requirements below.

2) Proposals to Establish Sections

Proposals to establish new Sections must include the following information:

- a. A proposed Head or co-Head(s), whose role shall be subject to confirmation through elections to be held by the prospective Section upon approval by the General Assembly (Article 9.4),
- b. Evidence that the proposed Head or co-Heads are paid-up members,
- c. A mission statement outlining planned work that is “consistent with the association’s aims and not dealt with by the existing Sections,” or Working Groups (Article S9.2),
- d. A 2-year plan of work including activities specified in the list of required Section activities, in 4) below,

- e. Signatures of minimally 20 IAMCR members located in at least 3 continents who support the proposed mission statement and plan of work,
- f. Support signatures of minimally 5 International Council members located in at least 2 continents. The International Council suggests (but does not require) those who wish to establish an entirely new Section to first propose the establishment of a Working Group, and not to immediately apply to establish a Section. After a suitable period of time, during which the new Working Group can establish a track record, it will be in a better position to make a successful proposal for Section status and seek approval to become a Section.

3) Submission of Proposals

Complete proposals must be submitted to the Scholarly Review Committee at least five months before the annual conference. The SRC then works with the applicants to evaluate and provide feedback on the proposal, possibly leading to a revised proposal, before submitting the final version and the SRC's recommendations to the EB for distribution to the International Council at least two months before the annual conference. Following an online discussion, the IC may choose to vote online or to delay the vote until its face-to-face meeting at the annual conference. If a Section is approved in a General Assembly year, it will be ratified by the Assembly. In year without a General Assembly, the applicants will operate as an interim body pending ratification by the next General Assembly.

4) Section Activity - Ongoing Requirements, Monitoring, and Evaluation

Sections are expected to maintain the following requirements and levels of research activity:

- a. An elected Head, with all elected officers paying their IAMCR membership fees,
- b. A mission statement,
- c. Organise minimally three sessions with peer-reviewed papers at each IAMCR main conference,
- d. Organise minimally one publication (e.g. book, special issue, section journal) every four years. For these publications, a variety of formats can be used, including blogs, online newsletters, and other emerging modalities of scholarly interaction. In order to be considered a section publication, it needs to be explicitly and prominently mentioned in the publication that it represents work of the section.
- e. Organise minimally one additional event (not during an IAMCR main conference) every four years. A variety of formats can be used for these additional events, (including online seminars, meetings, discussions, etc.).

5) Annual Survey and Review of Section Activity

Data to be used for monitoring Section activity will be gathered annually in an online survey and evaluated on the basis of a 4-year window of recent past activity. Section compliance in completing the annual survey is required. Based on the survey data, the SRC will inform any Sections that do not fulfil the requirements outlined in 4) above, also informing the Executive Board of this evaluation. The Heads of these Sections will be invited to meet the requirements within a period of two years. During this time the Sections will continue to exist. Only if it is established by the SRC that there is not sufficient progress in remediating the problems after two years, the SRC will recommend to the EB – who will seek the agreement of the IC – that the General Assembly dissolve these Sections or possibly reclassify a Section to a Working Group rather than dissolve it, if that is agreeable to all parties.