

## Section 4 – Operation of Interest Groups

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## 4 Operation of Interest Groups

### 4.1 Model Rules for Interest Groups

The following are the “generic” Rules for RSC Groups as approved by RSC Council.

The Royal Society of Chemistry

Rules for the Governance and Operation of Interest Groups (listed in Appendix A)

#### 1. Preamble

- 1.1 These Rules, made by the Council of the Society on the [ ] day of [ ] of [ ] in accordance with By-law 75 and Standing Orders made thereunder, shall apply to Interest Groups of the Society. They shall be read in conjunction with the Trust Deed by which the relevant Interest Group Trust Fund is established.
- 1.2 For the purposes of these Rules “Interest Groups” shall mean those listed from time to time in the Annex to these Rules.
- 1.3 These Rules supersede all previous rules.

#### 2. Names

- 2.1 The names of Interest Groups shall be as specified from time to time in Standing Orders made under By-Law 75.

#### 3. Purpose

- 3.1 The purpose of an Interest Group shall be to promote the object for which the relevant Trust Fund is established through
  - a fostering and encouraging the relevant branch or aspect of chemical science by the dissemination of chemical knowledge; and
  - b advancing the interests of members of the Society in relation to the practice of their profession insofar as relevant to that branch or aspect of chemical science.

#### 4. Membership of the Interest Group

- 4.1 Eligibility for membership of an Interest Group shall be as defined by the By-laws and Standing Orders. Lists of members shall be maintained by the Society.

**5. Responsibility to Council**

- 5.1 In accordance with the By-laws and Standing Orders, each Interest Group shall be responsible to the Council of the Society or such Board or Committee to which Council may delegate authority.

**6. Management of the Interest Group**

- 6.1 The management of the day-to-day activities of the Interest Group, and the management and administration of the relevant Trust Fund shall be the responsibility of a Committee. The Committee shall normally comprise up to 15 persons elected by and from among the members of the Interest Group [or co-opted by the Committee]. For a valid decision of the Committee a quorum of three shall be required. The Committee may appoint, delegate some of its functions to, and dissolve sub-committees of its own members.

**7. Communication with Members**

- 7.1 Except in the case of a General Meeting of the Group (16 below), the Committee may use any means of communication with members it considers expedient, including placing information on that part of the Society website designated for the purpose. The Committee shall communicate with members at least once a year.

**8. Officers and periods of Committee membership**

- 8.1 The Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer of the Interest Group shall be elected by the Committee from amongst members of the Committee who are also members of the Society. The posts of Secretary and Treasurer may be combined. Such officers shall serve for a maximum of four years and their periods of office shall run from one Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Society to another.
- 8.2 Committee members, other than the Chairman, Secretary or Treasurer, shall serve for a maximum of two consecutive terms of three years. A member elected as Chairman, Secretary or Treasurer may serve for an additional period of up to four years in each capacity. A period of one year shall elapse before members are eligible for re-election to the Committee.
- 8.3 Notwithstanding 8.2 above, in the absence of a nominee or sufficient nominees to fill any vacancies, members may serve additional consecutive term(s).

**9. Election of Committee Members**

- 9.1 Eligibility for election to the Committee shall be as specified from time to time in Standing Orders. Elections and periods of office of members of the Committee shall be arranged so that a proportion of the committee members retire each year.

- 9.2 The Secretary of the Interest Group shall notify members of the Interest Group of the seats on the Committee to be filled by elections with effect from a forthcoming AGM of the Society and shall invite nominations. Notification shall be made at least four weeks before the closing date for receipt of nominations. Nominations shall be made with the agreement of the candidate and supported by at least two other members of the Interest Group and shall be lodged with the Secretary at least 6 weeks before the AGM of the Society.
- 9.3 Where the number of declared vacancies equals or exceeds the number of nominations received, the candidates shall all be deemed elected to the Committee. Their election shall be announced on the day of the AGM of the Society.
- 9.4 Where the number of nominations received exceeds the number of vacancies on the Committee a ballot shall be held. In this instance, at least 28 days before the AGM of the Society, the Secretary shall notify all members of a Group of the candidates and the number of vacancies to be filled. Members shall communicate their votes to the Secretary before the AGM of the Society. The results of the ballot shall be declared on the day of the AGM of the Society.
- 9.5 The Secretary may use and require such means of communication for the ballot as deemed appropriate by the Committee.

## **10. Casual vacancies on the Committee, and co-options**

- 10.1 The Committee may make appointments to fill vacancies arising otherwise than through the completion of a designated term of office. Members appointed to fill such 'casual' vacancies shall serve until the next AGM of the Society, at which time they should be eligible for election or re-appointment. A member who fills a casual vacancy shall in addition be eligible to serve two full terms of office consecutively.
- 10.2 The Committee may from time to time co-opt additional members of the Committee to fulfil special roles, for a defined period not exceeding three years. A former co-opted member shall be eligible for election to the Committee.

## **11. Finance**

- 11.1 The Committee may set up one or more bank accounts in the name of the Trust Fund as defined in clause 1 of the relevant Deed, and may draw cheques on such accounts. Any cheques so drawn must be signed by two designated members of the Committee except in the case where the value of the cheque is less than £500 when one designated member of the Committee may sign.
- 11.2 On behalf of the Trust Fund, the Committee may collect and receive donations, subscriptions, government grants and other payments, as they see fit and also to receive gifts of property of whatever kind.

However, the prior consent of the Council is required before issuing appeals for donations, subscriptions and gifts.

- 11.3 The Committee may apply the Trust Fund in accordance with the relevant Deed but shall report to the trustees on a regular basis and on any occasion where it is in doubt as to whether the proposed application falls within the terms of the Deed.

## **12. Accounts and reports**

- 12.1 The Committee shall ensure that proper books of account are kept in accordance with guidelines set by the Finance Department of the Society. In addition, an annual financial statement shall be prepared in accordance with guidance from the Finance Department of the Society and shall be made available to all members of the Interest Group within three months of the end of the financial year.
- 12.2 At the end of each financial year the Committee shall prepare a report of its activities for the year. This shall be submitted to the Council of the Society or whichever body the Council has nominated to oversee the activities of the Interest Group and be made available to all members of the Interest Group within three months of the end of the financial year.

## **13. Activities and Scientific Meetings**

- 13.1 The Committee is expected to undertake a programme of activities that will further the objectives of the Interest Group.
- 13.2 Where the proposed activity takes the form of a scientific meeting, advanced notification of the meeting should be sent to that part of the Society responsible for overall scientific meeting activities. In addition, the Secretary of the Local Section, in whose area the activity will take place, shall also be notified.
- 13.3 In planning activities, the Committee should consider whether there are other Interest Groups with whom collaborations could be established in order to widen participation.

## **14. Lectures and Scientific Communications**

- 14.1 An activity organised by the Committee in pursuit of the objectives of the Interest Group may involve the presentation of a scientific communication or the delivery of a lecture at a meeting of Group members on any subject coming within the scope and objectives of the Interest Group. In such cases, if it is intended that the communication or lecture shall be published, it must be submitted in the first instance to the Publishing Board of the Society, or whatever body succeeds it. The Publishing Board may publish the communication or lecture in such a form as it may decide. The provisions of By-law 91 shall apply to every such lecture or communication.

15. **Publicity**

- 15.1 Unless the subject relates solely to the day-to-day activities of the Interest Group, neither the Group nor the Committee shall authorise or countenance, or cause to be published or communicated any statement or other communication, either in the name of the Society or the Interest Group, without the prior knowledge and express permission of the Council or whichever body the Council has nominated to oversee the activities of the Interest Group.

16. **General Meetings of the Group**

- 16.1 There is no requirement for the Committee to convene an Annual General Meeting of the Group.
- 16.2 Notwithstanding above, a General Meeting of the Interest Group may be called by the Secretary who shall give at least three months notice of the meeting. A General Meeting may be requested, by at least ten members of the Interest Group, by writing, specifying the purposes of the proposed meeting, to the Secretary, and if the Secretary fails to call the necessary meeting within three months of the date of receipt of the letter of requested then the members of the Group concerned may themselves call the meeting.
- 16.3 The quorum for a General Meeting of the Interest Group shall be ten members of the Group other than members of the Committee.
- 16.4 The procedures at a General Meeting called by the Secretary shall be determined by the Secretary. The procedures at a General Meeting held by members following the failure of the Secretary to call a meeting in response to a valid requisition shall be determined by the members present.
- 16.5 The business to be transacted at any General Meeting called by the Secretary shall be notified to every member by post, fax or e-mail not less than 14 days before the date of the meeting but any failure to give or receive such notice shall not invalidate the meeting in question.

17. **Amendments to the Rules and Dissolution of the Group**

- 17.1 In accordance with the By-laws and Standing Orders, the Council may at any time amend these Rules or dissolve the Interest Group, and under the relevant Deed the Council may appoint additional trustees or discontinue the Trust Fund and transfer its contents.

## 4.2 Membership of Interest Group Committees

The following three sub-sections outline the responsibilities of the Honorary Officers of the RSC Interest Groups. Many committees also designate members to maintain the Group's MyRSC online community area and to coordinate a newsletter. The main aim is to form a committee which covers the full breadth of the subject area including a variety of age groups and expertise. International representatives on committees are encouraged and we will do everything we can to facilitate committee communication via electronic media. All new officers are invited to participate in training and the RSC Finance Department is happy to help new Treasurers with the accounting procedures.

There are six Interest Groups (as of October 2010) that are jointly run with other Societies. These are:

- Astrophysical Chemistry Group (joint with the Royal Astronomical Society)
- British Carbon Group (joint with the Institute of Physics and the Society of Chemical Industry)
- Joint Pharmaceutical Analysis Group (joint with the Royal Pharmaceutical Society)
- Neutron Scattering Group (joint with the Institute of Physics)
- Polymer Physics Group (joint with the Institute of Physics)
- Macro Group UK (joint with the Society of Chemical Industry)

Membership of **all** other committees is subject to the following rules and regulations:

- Unless agreed by the RSC Membership and Qualifications Manager, all members of committees **must** be members of the RSC.
- In the situation where it is deemed appropriate for a non-RSC member to sit on an Interest Group committee the following apply:
  - Non-RSC members on RSC committees will be reviewed on an annual basis
  - Non-RSC members are not eligible to vote on committee matters
  - Non-RSC members cannot hold the positions of Chair, Treasurer or Secretary

As per the Rules for Interest Groups set down by RSC Council, the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer of an Interest Group should be elected by the Committee from amongst members of the Committee who are also members of the Society. The posts of Secretary and Treasurer may be combined. Officers should serve for a maximum of four years and their periods of office should run from one Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Society to another (normally held in July).

Committee members, other than the Chairman, Secretary or Treasurer, should serve for a maximum of two consecutive terms of three years. A member elected as Chairman, Secretary or Treasurer may serve for an additional period of up to four years in each capacity.

In the absence of a nominee or sufficient nominees to fill any vacancies, members may serve additional consecutive term(s).

### 4.3 The Role and Responsibilities of an Interest Group Chair

- **Must be a member of the RSC.**
- To take final responsibility for all committee business and scientific meetings of the Group.
- To report to the Group AGM (if appropriate) and the relevant RSC committee (e.g. Analytical Division Council) and staff member on activities of the past year.
- To act as Trustee (along with RSC Council) of the Group Trust and to take responsibility for any Trustee related matter (RSC carries liability insurance for Trustees).
- To approve and sign the audited annual accounts.
- To represent the Group at the RSC General Assembly.

### 4.4 The Role and Responsibilities of an Interest Group Secretary

- **Must be a member of the RSC.**
- To be the main contact between the Group and RSC staff.
- To communicate to relevant committee members information received from RSC staff.
- To keep copies of all Group committee minutes, AGM minutes etc as a record and pass these on to the incoming Secretary; the records can be electronic.
- To ensure that Committee membership information and Group activities are communicated to RSC staff.
- To ensure that the Local Section/other Interest Groups/other RSC Networks are informed of a proposed scientific meeting or activity in order to assist with collaboration and promotion.
- Usually the main scribe for committee minutes and event organiser for the Group, although duties may be allocated to other members of the committee
- To send out all invitations and agenda for Group committee meetings and Annual General Meetings (where held).
- **To ensure an appropriate Risk Assessment for all meetings is carried out** – failure to complete a suitable risk assessment can render the RSC liability insurance void; risk assessment forms and instructions for their completion are available at [www.rsc.org/RiskAssessment](http://www.rsc.org/RiskAssessment).
- To prepare an annual report for the Group on activities of the Group during the past year, which is then sent to the RSC and placed on the Group's web page.
- Usually involved in signing cheques; two signatures are required, that of Chair and either Secretary or Treasurer.
- To ensure that the Group is compliant with the Data Protection Act (see Appendices F and G).
- To ensure that the Group's web pages are up to date in consultation with RSC staff.

#### 4.5 The Role and Responsibilities of an Interest Group Treasurer

- **Must be a member of the RSC.**
- To maintain up to date accounts of the Group's activities.
- To consult and make use of the resources provided to Treasurers by the RSC Finance department (Bank reconciliation form, Prepayments and accruals form etc); the resources are also available on the RSC Treasurers group on MyRSC.
- To prepare a set of Annual Accounts and supporting documentation for inspection by the Group auditor(s).
- To prepare audited Group accounts for the RSC Finance Department and for ratification by the Group AGM (if held).
- To send a copy of the Group's audited accounts to RSC Finance Department before **14<sup>th</sup> February deadline** – a prerequisite before the grant will be released; ratification by the group AGM can take place later.
- To include a meaningful breakdown of Group activity costs in the annual report.
- To pay all bills as soon as possible and to ensure that officers' expenses are paid promptly where applicable.
- To ensure that reasons for large balances in the accounts at the end of the year are justified.

#### 4.6 Annual Reports

Each Interest Group must produce an annual report of their activities **in addition** to the annual financial report. The activity report will be considered by whichever body RSC Council has nominated to oversee the activities of the group. The reports should be sent to all members of the Group within three months of the end of the financial year or they can be put on the Group's own homepage at [www.rsc.org](http://www.rsc.org) for their members to read.

#### 4.7 Membership of Interest Groups

The following are eligible to be a member of a Group:

- 1) Any person who was a member of the Group on 31 July 2001; or
- 2) Any member or affiliate of the RSC; or
- 3) A member of another organisation jointly sponsoring the Interest Group; or
- 4) A member of a chartered professional body from outside the chemical sciences; or
- 5) A member of another chemical society with whom the RSC has entered into an international partnership agreement as agreed by RSC Council. These are typically available only to RSC members currently resident in the country where RSC has an international co-operation agreement. Please refer to <http://www.rsc.org/InternationalActivities>

If you have any queries on the eligibility of someone wishing to join your Group then please contact the RSC Membership Department (Membership@rsc.org).

All applications for membership of Interest Groups **must** be made through the RSC. It is not permitted for either RSC members or non-RSC members to join an Interest Group directly. All applications and payments **must** be made via the RSC Membership Department.

#### **How to join:**

As of 1<sup>st</sup> January 2011, membership of three Interest Groups is included in the cost of RSC membership. Membership of additional Interest Groups will be charged at a cost of £10 each. **Any fees paid for membership of an Interest Group are legally required to be processed by the RSC. Membership fees may not be paid directly into an Interest Group bank account or to the Interest Group Treasurer.**

- New members of the RSC are sent details of the Groups electronically along with information on how to join.
- Existing RSC members can join a Group(s) at any time by contacting the Membership Department  
(Tel: +44 (0) 1223 432141; Email: Membership@rsc.org).

#### **Non-RSC members**

In addition, By-Law 78 of the RSC Charter allows for a certain degree of flexibility on membership of Groups as follows:

“The Council may approve the admission of persons who are not members or affiliates into such interest groups ...”

However, please note that **non-RSC members cannot vote on Group committees.** Admission of non-members to RSC Interest Groups must be approved by the Membership & Qualifications Manager (see Appendix A for contact details)

For groups that are jointly run with other Societies, the RSC does not collect monies or hold lists of the non-RSC members.

NB: Any person with an interest in chemical sciences may join the RSC as an affiliate regardless of qualification or experience.