

## Guidelines for Establishing a New Special Interest Group (SIG)

Special Interest Groups (SIGs) originated out of the expressed need of the membership to have small, informal groups in which to meet with others of the same discipline or members with similar interests. Nursing and Rehabilitation SIGs first met in 1981. As the American Burn Association grew, so did the number of SIGs. Currently, there are 20 SIGs, each with attendance ranging from 10 to 300 individuals.

In response to this growth, the Board of Trustees has provided time and space for the SIGs to meet prior to the ABA Annual Meeting. The concept of SIGs is strongly supported and their significance, in terms of increasing peer communication and interest in the ABA, is clearly recognized. It is felt that these groups should be informal, provide a forum for launching member interactions, and facilitate peer communication and networking.

The Membership Advisory Committee (MAC) has been asked by the ABA Board of Trustees to oversee the SIGs. As such, the MAC has developed procedures by which SIGs are established, report their activities, and request financial support for external speakers. Permission to establish a new SIG must be sought from the MAC by submitting the Request to Establish a New Special Interest Group form that includes the following details:

- **The perceived need for such a group.** Some of the SIGs have just a few attendees, while others host several hundred, so size is not the issue. However, you should be able to provide some justification as to why a new SIG is necessary.
- **The target audience and projected number of participants.** This may be done by identifying potential participants through review of the Membership Directory (e.g., by degree or discipline), or by endorsing or signing a “petition” or SIG proposal.
- **Your method for developing a three-year leadership plan.** This involves developing your SIG’s method of electing/selecting your Chair. Your SIG may choose to elect a Chair who serves for a three-year term, select a Chair and a Vice-Chair (who automatically advances to chair at the completion of his/her term or would assume leadership if the Chair becomes unable to fulfill the position), a Chair and Co-chair who equally share the responsibilities, or elect different people to serve each year. It is important that your Chair and/or Vice- or Co-chair names and contact information be communicated to the MAC/SIG Coordinator any time there is a change so that your SIG does not miss out on important communications and updates. **All SIG Chairs, vice- and co-chairs must be ABA members in good standing.**
- **A draft purpose statement for your SIG.** This brief statement should summarize the overall purpose and goals of your SIG. Examples from other SIGs can be found at [www.ameriburn...](http://www.ameriburn...) (link)

### Timeline

- The deadline to submit your request to the MAC Chair is July 1.
- Your request will be reviewed by the MAC at the Interim Meeting in the fall and the recommendation forwarded to the ABA Board of Trustees.
- The ABA Board of Trustees will review the application and MAC recommendation during their fall interim meeting.
- The MAC Chair will notify the applying SIG contact person of the decision by November 1.

- If the new SIG is approved, there is not enough time for the Chair to submit the Annual Program Planning Worksheet necessary to formally schedule your SIG for the following annual meeting. Your SIG may meet informally for the first year.
- After you have received approval for your SIG, the MAC will supply you with the materials necessary to conduct successful SIGs.

Please review the SIG Chair Responsibilities, General Guidelines and Helpful Hints found at [www.ameribun.org... link](http://www.ameribun.org...)) to determine if you are able to fulfill the requirements involved in managing a SIG. Then, forward your SIG application letter to the designated MAC/SIG Chair.