

SIG LEADERS' GUIDE

AUTM MISSION STATEMENT

To support and advance technology transfer worldwide

AUTM VISION

Advancing Discoveries for a Better World

AUTM VALUES STATEMENT

- The creative output of AUTM members' work benefits the public.
- Ongoing professional development is critical to maintaining leadership in the field.
- AUTM is a connected community where members share knowledge and support

OVERVIEW OF SIG CONCEPT

Technology transfer is a discipline that has both a holistic/integrative purpose and distinct areas of focus. In order to facilitate specialization, AUTM created special interest groups (SIGs) to nurture growing diversity by providing "micro" communities where members can communicate on the AUTM eGroup platform.

SIGs provide opportunities for members to learn, discover emerging trends, share expertise, facilitate best practices, network, and provide other professional interchange with a like-minded online community that spans countries and continents. Two overriding objectives of SIGs are (1) to provide high quality member services through member involvement and (2) to increase the sense of belonging for those who join AUTM.

SIGs operate year-round and under the aegis of AUTM making them a vital component of your AUTM membership experience.

NATURE OF SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

Characteristics that describe SIGs include the following:

- *Special Interest Topic*
A SIG is organized around a specific interest topic or topics in tech transfer.
- *Not Defined by Geography*
SIGs serve the needs of any AUTM member regardless of geographic location. The Higher Logic eGroup technology is used to link SIG members together.
- *Flexible*
SIGs are encouraged to develop and implement flexible approaches to their activities inasmuch as they operate without the advantage of geographical proximity of members.
- *New Leadership Opportunities*
SIGs offer new leadership opportunities for members, increasing avenues for growth and leadership as volunteers.
- *Inclusive*
Any AUTM member can join SIGs. SIG moderators are responsible for communicating regularly and developing value-adding benefits for members of the SIG.
- *Goal-driven*
SIGs submit an annual plan to the AUTM Cabinet.

MEMBERSHIP IN SIGs

Membership in SIGs is open only to current AUTM members. Cancellation or forfeiture of membership in AUTM will automatically terminate an individual's SIG access. The AUTM membership year is based on a calendar year. Any individuals whose membership lapses on December 31st of each calendar year is automatically removed from SIGs. AUTM encourages and supports initiative and creativity among the SIGs. The SIGs are a vital feature of the benefits afforded members. Attention to the guidelines in this document ensures all SIGs are best serving their constituents. SIGs are expected to maintain a minimum of 35 members. AUTM members can petition for a new SIG when a minimum of 20 current members indicate an interest in joining the SIG. New SIGs will have one year to achieve a level of 35 members. Existing SIGs that fall below this number will have one year to bring the number back up.

SIG LEADERSHIP

SIG leadership consists of a minimum one moderator with up to two additional moderators per SIG. Moderators are expected to be subject-matter experts (SMEs) on that particular topic. Moderators will work with a staff liaison to ensure the integrity of the SIG. There is a five year term limit to SIG moderation. Moderators should help identify subject-matter experts for possible replacement.

SIG moderators are expected to:

- Work with AUTM staff to write and maintain an up-to-date SIG description and written mission statement consistent with AUTM's current mission statement.
- Monitor the online SIG eGroup for the duration of his/her tenure in an effort to generate and build interest on a relevant topic.
- Facilitate continuous networking and information sharing among SIG members, including maintaining a list of prompts to be used whenever SIG activity is dormant for one – two weeks. Moderator(s) are responsible for posting new prompts when necessary.
- Identify a replacement moderator at the end of one's tenure.
- Encourage, support and acknowledge the benefits of AUTM membership and the value of the SIG.
- Act as liaison between SIG members and AUTM staff.

To support SIGs throughout the year, an AUTM staff liaison is assigned to assist SIG moderators by:

- Maintaining SIG membership records and manage roster of current members.
- Facilitate information sharing between AUTM and SIG moderators throughout the year.
- Provide other support as necessary.

GUIDELINES

All SIGs must prepare and submit to the AUTM Cabinet an annual plan with the following required content:

- Names of all SIG moderators
- Recap of key activities for the current year. Emphasize how members of the SIG were served.
- Goals for next year. Through their goals, each SIG should demonstrate its commitment to furthering thought leadership and professional development in its interest area as well as in the discipline of technology transfer as a whole.

The staff liaison is available to work with SIGs as necessary in preparing these plans.

SIG INVOLVEMENT AT THE AUTM ANNUAL MEETING AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

SIGs are strongly encouraged to have a presence at the AUTM Annual Meeting. Conference rooms are available on a first-come, first-serve basis at the Annual Meeting. SIGs may host meetings in any of these rooms based on availability. Each SIG is required to submit their requests at least one month prior to the meeting via the proper form. Note that SIG meetings may conflict with general sessions, receptions or other meeting activities.

SIGs may also contribute to the Annual Meeting program. SIGs are encouraged to submit session proposals using the AUTM abstract submission system, open February through April each year. Abstracts may be submitted as an educational session or as a roundtable open discussion session. The Annual Meeting Planning Committee reviews all abstracts and is the final authority on accepted submissions. Only a small portion of abstracts are accepted each year.

Similarly, SIGs are encouraged to suggest webinar topics. The Online Professional Development committee will review all submissions and determine feasibility.

SIGs may also submit session proposals for region meetings, generate ideas for articles in the AUTM newsletter, or create any number of deliverables for AUTM. Deliverables could include FAQ sheets, templated documents, a list of best practices or anything else deemed useful for that particular interest area or for the discipline of technology transfer as a whole.

IMPORTANT OPERATING ISSUES

- SIGs are encouraged to function synergistically within the AUTM structure. It is important that they support the AUTM Mission and Vision. In addition, SIGs must operate in conformance with the policies and legal and financial boundaries of AUTM and the AUTM Bylaws.
- The AUTM logo must be used on any published or electronically posted SIG materials with Board approval and permission. Camera-ready and electronic logotypes are available.
- SIG activities that involve non-AUTM groups or publications must have prior approval from the AUTM Board. In the case of publication of materials, AUTM retains the right of first refusal for any publication. AUTM logos must be used on any published SIG materials and must adhere to branding guidelines.
- SIGs may communicate with other organizations in matters that relate to their areas of special interest. If the SIG speaks with the official backing of AUTM, the extent and limitations of that communication must be delineated and must receive prior approval by the AUTM Board.
- A SIG, SIG moderator, or SIG member does not have the authority to act as an AUTM spokesperson. Per the AUTM Bylaws: *The Chair has the duty to serve as the official spokesperson for the Board of Directors. The Chair may also serve as the official spokesperson for AUTM, unless such role is delegated by the Board of Directors to another Officer or to the Chief Executive Officer.*
- All SIGs exist under the guidelines of the AUTM eGroup Policy.
- No AUTM volunteer has the authority to sign contracts or other legal documents on behalf of AUTM. Only such documents signed by an authorized member of AUTM are valid.
- All materials created by the SIG (a toolkit, lists, etc.) is AUTM property and is used at the full discretion of AUTM.
- Special Interest Groups have zero allocated budget dollars.

ESTABLISHING A NEW SIG

The decision to create a SIG can be initiated by any current member of AUTM who meets the SIG requirements. Final approval for SIG formation rests with the AUTM Cabinet, upon review of appropriate documentation.

SIGs must have sufficient member interest and support in order to be viable and sustainable. To propose the creation of a new SIG, a formal proposal must be submitted to the AUTM Cabinet and must contain the following information:

Topic of the SIG Interest Area: Submit a definition of the topic and its relevance to the profession. Propose a name for the SIG (see section below – “SIG Identity”). Indicate how the proposed SIG will be topically differentiated from other existing SIGs.

Moderator(s): Names and complete contact information of 1-3 leaders who will be responsible for forming the group; setting its mission, vision, and plans; initiating conversations; and communicating with members.

Members: List of 20 or more verified current AUTM members who will serve as members of the SIG.

SIG Planning – Propose how the SIG will remain sustainable by addressing the following areas:

- **Purpose** - Describe a clear reason for being that differentiates the SIG from other SIGs, answering the question, “What special interest unites us?” Provide a mission statement which answers the question, “Why are we organized together?”
- **Sustainability** - Create a minimum of 15 “back pocket” prompts which will facilitate conversation and used when activity on the e-Group is dormant for a 1-2 week period.
- **Other** – Give a plan for recruiting additional members to meet the 35 member mark in one year’s time.

The AUTM Cabinet will review all proposals for new SIGs. Upon approval, the SIG will proceed into probationary status for one (1) year. Within this year, the SIG needs to:

- Reach thirty-five (35) members.
- Have at least one and no more than three dedicated member moderators.
- Provide evidence of year-long activity.

DISSOLUTION OF SIGS

A SIG may be dissolved when (a) it can no longer find sufficient members to sustain its activities, (b) it’s e-Group is completely dormant for more than 6 consecutive months, (c) the interest area evolves differently or merges into another interest area, (d) the SIG consistently fails to submit an annual plan, or (e) other appropriate determination is made by the AUTM Cabinet or Board. Should any of the factors above become a concern, the AUTM Cabinet or a representative thereof will notify the SIG of its review of SIG operations (with the possibility of dissolution). If it is determined that a SIG should be dissolved, either through assessment or merger with another SIG, the AUTM Cabinet will:

- Send a notification to all SIG members with the official operation end-date of the SIG, as well as information on how to become a member of another SIG,
- Deactivate social media sites,
- Remove the SIG from the AUTM website and membership materials, and
- Other actions, as needed.

SIG IDENTITY

Each SIG will work with the AUTM Cabinet to select its official name. The chosen name should be descriptive and succinct and should be worded to avoid confusion with any other existing SIG or organizational component of AUTM. The SIG name may not include the word “Association.”

A SIG may change its name in order to best reflect its mission. Name change proposals must include why the name change best reflects the mission of the SIG. The name change proposal should have the backing of at least 70% of current SIG members. Written name change proposals are submitted to the AUTM Cabinet for final approval.

A SIG may merge with another existing SIG in order to best reflect the mission of both SIGs. Merger (with name change) proposals must include why the merger best reflects the mission of both SIGs. The merger proposal should have the backing of at least 70% of current SIG members in both groups. Written merger (with name change) proposals are submitted to the AUTM Cabinet for final approval.