

## **Proposed Process for Creating New Specialty Groups**

Seth Guikema, Specialty Groups Committee

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SRA Specialty Groups are essential to SRA members adapting the Society for new topics and professional growth. Several new specialty groups have been formed by member initiatives in recent years. This has been an ad hoc process involving different standards applied to different groups at different times. A group consisting of Igor Linkov, Jim Lambert, and Ben Trump drafted suggested guidelines for forming a new specialty prior to me joining the council. David Drupa searched the minutes from previous Council meetings and could find no record of any Council-approved process for creating a new specialty group. At the same time, different groups formed at different times have been required to meet different standards. This document proposes a process through which a new specialty group is to be formed. It starts from the Linkov et al. suggestion but makes a few changes.

### **Proposed Process for forming a specialty group**

A specialty group is to serve the needs of a subset of SRA members. The Council will evaluate new specialty groups on their ability to meet an unmet need and their long-term viability, especially in terms of apparent membership and leadership support. The expectation is that a proposed new group will have a minimum level of support from SRA members, have a leadership plan in place for their start-up period, and have drafted sound by laws for the specialty group. A group proposing a new specialty group will follow the steps below.

- 1) Seek first to integrate with an existing group: A group or individual interested in forming a new specialty group should look first to the existing specialty groups. If there are groups within which their proposed topic would fit, the group or member should seek to join that specialty group. If there is no overlap with existing groups, the group or member may initiate the process for forming a new specialty group.
- 2) Contact the specialty group committee chair: If the group or member wishes to proceed with the process of creating a new specialty group, they should contact the Chair of the Specialty Groups Committee. The member should provide a one-page memo describing a potential scope of the new SG and clearly justify any redundancy or other relationship with the existing SGs.
- 3) Seek SRA Member Support: After initial discussions from the Specialty Group Committee Chair, the group or member seeking to form a new specialty group should provide written (email is acceptable) evidence of support for the proposed group from at least **25** SRA members.
- 4) Form a leadership team and leadership plan: A leadership team and leadership plan should be formed for the proposed specialty group. The leadership plan should specify which individuals will hold the positions of chair, vice-chair, secretary, and treasurer and any other needed officer positions for the proposed specialty group for its first year and specify the plan for ensuring leadership continuity for the following 2 years (years 2 and 3 for the new group).
- 5) Draft by-laws for the proposed group: With basic interest established and the leadership team formed by-laws for the proposed specialty group should be drafted. The Specialty Group

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Committee Chair will be available to help if necessary. These bylaws should codify the scope and structure of the proposed specialty group. They will also codify the terms of the officer positions for the specialty groups.

- 6) Formally petition the SRA Council: The leadership team of the proposed specialty group should then petition to the SRA Specialty Groups Committee. The petition should include a description of the proposed group, bylaws, leadership plan, and written endorsements (e.g., email) by at least twenty-five (25) members of SRA. The SRA Specialty Groups Committee will decide to either: reject the petition, conditionally accept the petition, or approve the petition to be sent to full Council. If the petition is rejected, the proposing group may petition the full Council, although will be required to address why the Specialty Groups Committee's recommendation is incorrect. If the petition is conditionally accepted, the leadership team of the proposed group must make necessary changes requested by the Specialty Groups Committee before further passage to full Council. If approved by the Committee, the petition will be forwarded to the Council for approval at its monthly meetings.

The Council has the same available recommendations as the Specialty Groups Chair: rejection, conditional approval, and approval. If rejected, the petition will not pass and may not be resubmitted for one calendar year. If conditionally approved, the Task Force should make necessary changes and resubmit to the Council. If approved outright, the SG will be incorporated as an SRA V, whence the founding members will work with the SRA Chair of Specialty Groups to gain adequate visibility of the new Specialty Groups to the general membership and future SRA programming.