

Guidelines: SRA Specialty Group Responsibilities

The SRA Specialty Groups (SG) fill important roles for SRA in terms of

- Providing networking opportunities for new members to meet leaders in the field
- Providing leadership by encouraging members to submit symposia and abstracts for the annual meeting
- Providing peer review of abstracts submitted for Annual Meeting
- Organizing sessions by topic area from abstracts submitted for the Annual Meeting
- Providing special programming including seminars and workshops in their topic area
- Keeping all of SRA updated on recent developments in their field
- Attracting new members to SRA
- Helping members to “find a home” within our large and diverse society
- Encouraging journal submissions
- Providing mentoring opportunities for students

In order to fulfill these roles, there are several responsibilities that each SG is asked to accomplish each year:

1. **Provide scientific and technical leadership for your specialty area.** Actively promote sharing of information about basic foundations and new research findings in your field by hosting seminars, organizing workshops at the annual meetings, scheduling conference calls to discuss emerging topics and reaching out to other professional societies in your area for joint undertakings. In the past, SGs have planned seminars (for example, joint with Regions), SG-related workshops at the Annual Meeting (provides travel funding for instructors and can generate funds for SG), and stand-alone workshops and meetings. SG funds, either from dues or the amount allocated from the Council, if any, can be used to pay for travel for speakers to seminars or to the annual meeting. Also, SGs are asked to provide a summary of what is happening in their field on an annual basis for the SRA newsletter.
2. **Host a specialty group meeting during the Monday lunch session at the Annual Meeting.** SGs should use this opportunity to introduce new officers, announce the student merit travel award winner and conduct any other needed business.
3. **Participate in Specialty Groups SRA committee.** Attend or send delegate to SG Committee meeting at SRA annual meeting – this is usually held at 7am before the technical sessions begin and important information is shared there. Sometimes conference calls are held throughout the year – participation in those is expected as well.
4. **Provide leadership and support to the SRA Annual Meeting.** There are three roles that the SGs play in the Annual meeting planning, as noted below.
 - a. **Encourage submission of abstracts and symposia.** Each SG Chair (note that the word “Chair” is intended in this document to refer to the leader of the SG, even though different SGs may in fact use different names for officers/leaders and these leaders may have delegated some of these roles to other members) is expected to contact specialty group members about submitting abstracts and symposia after the abstract submission

Guidelines: SRA Specialty Group Responsibilities

process opens to encourage SG members to participate in the Annual Meeting and to bolster quality and quantity of submissions. If the SG recognizes an emerging area of work in their SG's domain that has not been presented at SRA, the SG may want to try to develop a symposium, and reach out to experts and invite them to participate in the Annual Meeting by submitting an abstract. In these cases, the SG should be clear that an invitation does not imply that funding is available to pay for the meeting registration or travel costs.

b. Review abstract and symposia submissions and attend Annual Meeting

Committee. Each SG Chair is invited by the President-Elect, who Chairs the Annual Meeting Committee (AMC), to attend or to appoint a representative to attend the program planning meeting that is typically held in early June in the Washington, DC metro area. Costs for travel to attend the AMC meeting are paid by the SRA, subject to the SRA travel policies. The SG representative is expected to review individual abstracts & symposia submitted for presentation at the annual meeting designated for the SG, decide if any should be rejected or given to another SG, and group abstracts into sessions and determine which should be oral and which should be posters. The members of the AMC receive the abstracts approximately 2 weeks before the meeting, which allows for the broader input from other members of the SG, as well.

c. Select a student merit award. The SRA Council currently provides each SG with \$500 plus one waived meeting registration to give to the best student abstract submitted and presented at the SRA Annual Meeting (one award per SG). Thus, the SG Chair (or SG representative to the Annual Meeting Committee) is responsible for choosing the student merit awardee from the students who submitted abstracts and indicated that they would like to be considered for this award. Students must attend the meeting and present their work to win this award. Students are required to indicate which specialty group award(s) they would like to be considered for as part of the submission. The SG must select its student merit awardee and inform both the Annual Meeting Committee Chair and Lori Strong (lstrong@burkinc.com) of the winning abstract by Sept 1 of each year. The SG should also notify the winner, and provide them with a form to use to register for the meeting at no charge. A template for the notification of the winner is available on the SRA website under "Specialty Group committee." Since SGs receive information about the applicants and the abstracts approximately 2 weeks before the AMC meeting in June, it is possible for members of the SG to make a decision based on the abstracts even prior to the Annual Meeting Committee meeting. Note that although the SRA Council has allocated funds for these awards for the past several years, this has to be approved every year. For FY09, this approval was made, so there will be \$500 available to each SG for this award (except for Risk Communication, which has external funding of \$500 for this award.) Note that the SG Student Merit Awards are completely independent from the need-based SRA travel awards given to students and international applicants to attend the Annual Meeting. Any SG student merit award winner may also apply for and receive need-based student and international travel funding.

Guidelines: SRA Specialty Group Responsibilities

5. **Communicate with specialty group members** – via email, website, conference calls. The use of the webmaster is available to SGs – you must have available funds to cover the costs. Talk with the SG Committee Chair if you have questions about how to do this.
6. **Manage SG funds.** All SG have some money in their accounts, and most collect dues annually. The SG Chair and other officers are expected to review income dues and make sure that dues paying members are the ones who receive information about the SG. The SG should review dues income to make sure it matches the list of members. The collection of dues should be justified by planning how to use those funds to promote the field and strengthen the specialty group. The Secretariat provides quarterly financial statements for each SG. In FY09, the SRA Council also approved a budget of \$500 for each SG to support other activities. That funding cannot be banked (it is “use-or-lose”). It can be used for any activities that the SG would like to undertake, including potentially supporting a guest speaker to attend a meeting, supporting SG website development or updating a website, supporting conference calls, etc.
7. **Elect officers for the SG for next year.** The SG can do this at the business meeting at the annual meeting. However, to engage the broadest participation from members, the SRA council recommends that SGs solicit nominations and hold an election via email or by other means before the Annual Meeting.

Additional possible activities for SGs:

8. Have a representative or liaison who is involved with the Conferences and Workshops committee of SRA, to ensure appropriate review of your topic area and to know how the system works so you can encourage members of your SG to propose workshops and conferences.

Some specialty groups have developed policies and procedures for accomplishing some of these tasks, for example, for reviewing and sorting abstracts and for selecting a student merit awardee. Some specialty groups delegate responsibilities to different officers, for example, some have a treasurer to manage the funds. For ease of transition, SRA strongly recommends development of appropriate documentation and requests that any available documents be posted on the SG website, for easy access to the whole SG, and that a copy also be sent to the SG Committee Chair so that the document may be shared with the Council.

Once final, this document will be posted on the SRA website for easy reference.