

Policy and Procedure:

Terms of Reference for Thematic Groups (TGs)

(Executive Approval: 19 March 2010)

1. Preamble

The TASA Executive introduced TGs in 2005. They are designed to facilitate communication and collaboration between TASA members working in similar areas. They are also intended to provide a vehicle for the organisation of the annual conferences. More information about the Executive's original discussion and design of TGs can be found in Nexus, March 2005.

2. Establishment

The initiative for establishment of TGs lies with the TASA membership. Members usually canvas the establishment of TGs informally among their own networks, and then through a Call for Expressions of Interest in the TASA e-list. Formal proposals are then submitted to the Executive. Proposals for TGs should include the following information:

TG title;

Brief description of aims and objectives (suitable for the website and other publicity);

Names of a Convener and any Co-Conveners;

Names of a minimum of 15 current financial TASA members (including Conveners), who endorse the proposed TG and propose to belong to it.

3. Membership

Rules for membership are as follows:

Membership of TGs is confined to current financial TASA members;

Membership of TGs must be maintained at a minimum of 15 current TASA members per year. TASA members may belong to a maximum of THREE thematic groups;

New and existing TASA members who wish to join thematic groups do so through their TASA membership application/renewal form or through the members' profile page on TASAweb;

The Executive Officer will provide Conveners with membership lists in April each year following the renewal of TASA memberships, and will inform Conveners as members join or leave their groups during the year. Thematic group members who do not renew their TASA membership by 1 April each year will automatically be removed from published membership lists, and Conveners must remove them from their personal mailing lists.

4. Governance

Rules for governance of TGs are intended to strike a balance between autonomy and democracy, as follows:

Conveners are to be determined by the membership of TGs, either through meetings at the TASA Annual Conference or through email communication with all TG members;

The position of Convener will automatically fall vacant at the time of review (see Clause 7), and is subject to review

The role of Convener may change hands at any time, subject to consultation with all TG members.

No person can remain Convener for longer than three consecutive years

5. Obligations

TGs have the following obligations to TASA:

To maintain a presence on the TASA web site. Some groups also establish their own web pages to facilitate faster communication than possible through TASAWeb. Where this is the case, TGs should place the following statement: 'The information provided on this site does not imply any official endorsement by The Australian Sociological Association or the opinions, ideas or information contained therein, nor guarantee the validity, completeness or utility of the information provided. Reference herein to any products, services, processes, hypertext links to third parties or other information does not necessarily constitute or imply endorsement, sponsorship or recommendation.'

The support of TASA should be acknowledged on materials relating to all activities where funds are disbursed

Groups who receive funding from TASA for activities must provide a brief report of the activity that was funded and account for monies received. This report is to be sent to the TASA Executive Officer within one month of the activity.

6. Disestablishment

TGs may be disestablished by the Executive in the following circumstances:

Where the membership falls below 15 persons at 1 April of any year and is not raised to 15 persons by 1 April of the following year.

Where there are serious concerns about the conduct of the TG.

Where the current Convener has served a three-year term and no other person is willing to take on that role.

Groups that are disestablished have the right to appeal through TASA grievance procedures.

7. Review

TGs are established for 3 years only. At the completion of 3 years, TGs are subject to review by the TASA Executive. Renewal is not automatic. It is contingent upon the following:

.Adherence to the terms of reference (including membership), as specified in this document

Application to the Executive for renewal.