

# **Special Interest Groups: Chairs Induction Handbook**

Registered Charity No. 1047999

Company Registered in England and Wales No. 3080332

**Eva McClean**  
**Summer 2025**

## Welcome

Congratulations on being appointed Chair to one of our Special Interest Groups (SIG).

The SIGs sit at the heart of our professional activities and are key to delivering advice and projects in areas such as consultations, conferences, webinars, reports and guidance notes. (*See appendix A for a chart of how committees within IPEM work together.*)

Our members and their professional contributions enable committees, groups and working parties to contribute to the advancement of medical physics and clinical engineering. We are very grateful to you, and all of our volunteers, for everything you do.

By volunteering your time to help us grow, influence, and be more professional we hope that you find personal fulfilment through a sense of giving back. Chairing a committee can help you develop your skills and you can use your time with us to progress your Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

## Support from the IPEM National Office

The SIG chairs are supported by a number of National Office staff, so please do reach out. The EDI and Member Networks Manager (Eva McClean) is specifically appointed to support the SIGs and regular communication with her and the national office is an important part of your role that will make your work easier.

[All relevant policies, procedure, expense forms etc are on the SIG resources webpage](#)

- Booking external venues for committee meetings or Teams meetings – [eva@ipem.ac.uk](mailto:eva@ipem.ac.uk)
- Booking meeting rooms in the national office – [jenny@ipem.ac.uk](mailto:jenny@ipem.ac.uk)
- General questions, SIG member recruitment and new member onboarding, problems with Teams or COI, volunteer queries – [eva@ipem.ac.uk](mailto:eva@ipem.ac.uk)
- Handling queries about expenses claims – contact [finance@ipem.ac.uk](mailto:finance@ipem.ac.uk)
- Help with consultations, promotion, marketing or communications – [communications@ipem.ac.uk](mailto:communications@ipem.ac.uk)
- Task and Finish groups and STERIC (Science, Technology, Engineering, Research and Innovation Council) link – [nina@ipem.ac.uk](mailto:nina@ipem.ac.uk)
- Task and Finish groups and PSC (Professional Standards Council) link – [lauren@ipem.ac.uk](mailto:lauren@ipem.ac.uk)
- Publications – tba (contact [eva@ipem.ac.uk](mailto:eva@ipem.ac.uk) for now)
- Workforce query and information – [nina@ipem.ac.uk](mailto:nina@ipem.ac.uk)

## Your role

Being a chair with a leadership role gives you the opportunity to develop managerial and strategic skills. This can be personally fulfilling and can help you plan and achieve next career steps. However this can be challenging if you have not done it before and this document will provide you with valuable advice on how to chair meetings and “manage” your volunteers group members.

## SIG Chair Panel Meeting

Approx every two months a short (1.5 hours) online SIG chair panel meeting is organised by the EDI and Member Networks Manager. This is an important and very valuable meeting as you can connect to the other chairs, discuss confidential issues in a safe space, arrange collaborations and get updates. It is essential that you attend this whenever possible.

## SIG Term of office

The Terms of Office for the SIGs are saved in the SIG Chair Panel Teams channel and it is important you familiarise yourself with it. The TORs describe the purpose and functions of the SIGs and the group should re-visit the TORs at the beginning of each committee year (after the AGM). (To see how the SIGs fit into IPEM's corporate structure see Appendix C)

## Arranging SIG meetings

How and when you have the meetings is up to the group and yourself. In the past, the norm was to have three full day face to face meetings.

Nowadays with people's busy schedules this might not be the best way forward. There is some evidence that you can sustain a much better momentum if you agree on a much shorter monthly online meeting slot. That way, if someone misses a meeting it does not result in a six / eight month delay and it easier to focus on actions. You can also mix and match the meeting format.

If you hold only 3 meetings a year:

- Consider a doodle poll for availability
- The norm is using an online platform but we can arrange a face to face meeting no more than once a year (not compulsory)
- If you decide on a hybrid meetings please plan it carefully – you need appropriate technology and be mindful when chairing the meeting. It can work well if you have a number of observers who might only attend part of the meeting.

If you are planning to hold a short regular monthly meeting (this is probably a better option):

- Try and establish a day / time that works for everyone (e.g. every 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month at lunchtime) and book several meetings in advance so people can slot it into their schedule
- Observers or External members do not need to attend every meeting.

## Before the meetings

- Liaise with the secretary to ensure that any actions in the last meeting's minutes have been completed and information supplied.
- Reach out to the wider community if you can to ask if there are specific topics they would like the SIG to cover in the meeting
- Ensure the agenda is specific and every item is relevant
- Ensure all papers are available on Teams at least 3 working days before the meeting so people have time to consider them – These can also be emailed but NOT to any observers
- Remind the secretary to obtain external representatives' reports
- When sending the agenda remind everyone that it is assumed they read the papers and reports
- If you are planning to work on a publication familiarise yourself with the IPEM publication landscape (*see appendix B for information on IPEM publications*)

## Chairing the meeting

- Ensure that the meeting starts on time
- Confirm who takes the minutes (generally this falls to the secretary but not always).
- The advantage of online meetings is that they can be recorded for minuting purposes.

- Make sure that everyone is welcomed and introduced if there are new people – try and make everyone feel connected and engaged
- Keep the group to the agenda and timescales
- Open each agenda item, identifying any decisions that need to be made, move on
- Assume all papers have been read and content doesn't need to be reiterated
- Allow discussion of points for debate or decision only until the agenda is completed - information points discussions can come under AOB
- Encourage decision-making within the meeting, rather than deferring to later
- **If there are no volunteers for a task assign it to a person or a group – it does not fall onto the chair to do everything! Everyone has volunteered to be on the committee!**
- If there is any conflict, try and find common ground
- Keep the meeting focused on its objectives and stop any irrelevant discussion
- Sometimes you need to stop speakers who talk too much – or suggest their point is picked up after the agenda is completed
- Ensure that the discussion points are summarised and decisions are clarified and noted
- Summarise the meeting and confirm to the participants the action to be taken
- If it's a face to face meeting: Ensure that the meeting attendance list is completed and returned to the office to facilitate payment of expenses. (*see Appendix D for expenses policy and expenses form*)

#### **To help with planning actions – e.g. for webinars or meetings:**

- Use the wider community for input
- Focus on the Science Leadership strategy themes and sections
- Connect with other SIG chairs and the AI and Environmental group chairs for joint meetings
- Consider shorter webinars if you have a topic that would not fill a whole day
- If you are planning a task and Finish group an application form [can be found here](#)

#### **After the meeting**

- Update the action plan - This document should help the SIG plan activities such as conferences and webinars.
- After the September / October and the May / June meeting send the updated action plan to the national office. (So we can spot some crossover, join up opportunities and flag missing items).
- The May / June update is very important to avoid the "Chair crossover time delay" – ie when the outgoing chair says they can't plan anything because they are leaving and then the incoming chair can't plan anything before they had their first meeting which can be 6 months later ! (Ideally you have the next chair agreed by May anyway to ensure a smooth transition)
- Tell IPEM if people did not attend and did not send apologies so this can be followed up
- Ensure the secretary prepares the minutes and ideally pulls out the action points (*see Appendix F for Guidance for writing and publication of IPEM meeting minutes*).
- Share a summarised version of the minutes and planned actions on the relevant Community of Interest

#### **In-between SIG meetings**

## Recruitment of new SIG members

**March:** The national office will get in touch to check the current SIG membership and confirm whose terms of office are due to come to an end.

**March /April:** Positions get advertised to members who can apply on the website. The SIG needs to advertise their openings on the COI

**May / June:** The office will send you the applications received for the vacancies. There are also supporting documents like a Score sheet you can use. The SIG can set their own requirements too (for example if you want a technologist or early careers SIG member – which we really recommend – then you can add that in the rating system). You need to send out the applications to the SIG member with a deadline of when to get back and complete the score sheet.

**July:** Share the score sheet with Eva. She will advise the successful and unsuccessful applicants of your decision. The chair and secretary will be copied in that email.

Please welcome the new applicant with a personal email and make sure they will be informed of any forthcoming meetings from September onwards. Ideally arrange an online welcome / induction meeting with them.

And be prepared to possibly answer questions from an unsuccessful applicant.

**September:** officially the new committee term starts. The President will write to all volunteers who leave the SIG and thank them. Please make sure you have your first SIG meeting with the new members arranged for October.

## New Chair

If the chair or secretary's term has finished then please make sure a new chair is selected before the summer to ensure continuity. There is no formal process of selecting a chair and a secretary but if you have more than one volunteer and cannot decide you should hold a ballot (see updated Terms of Reference).

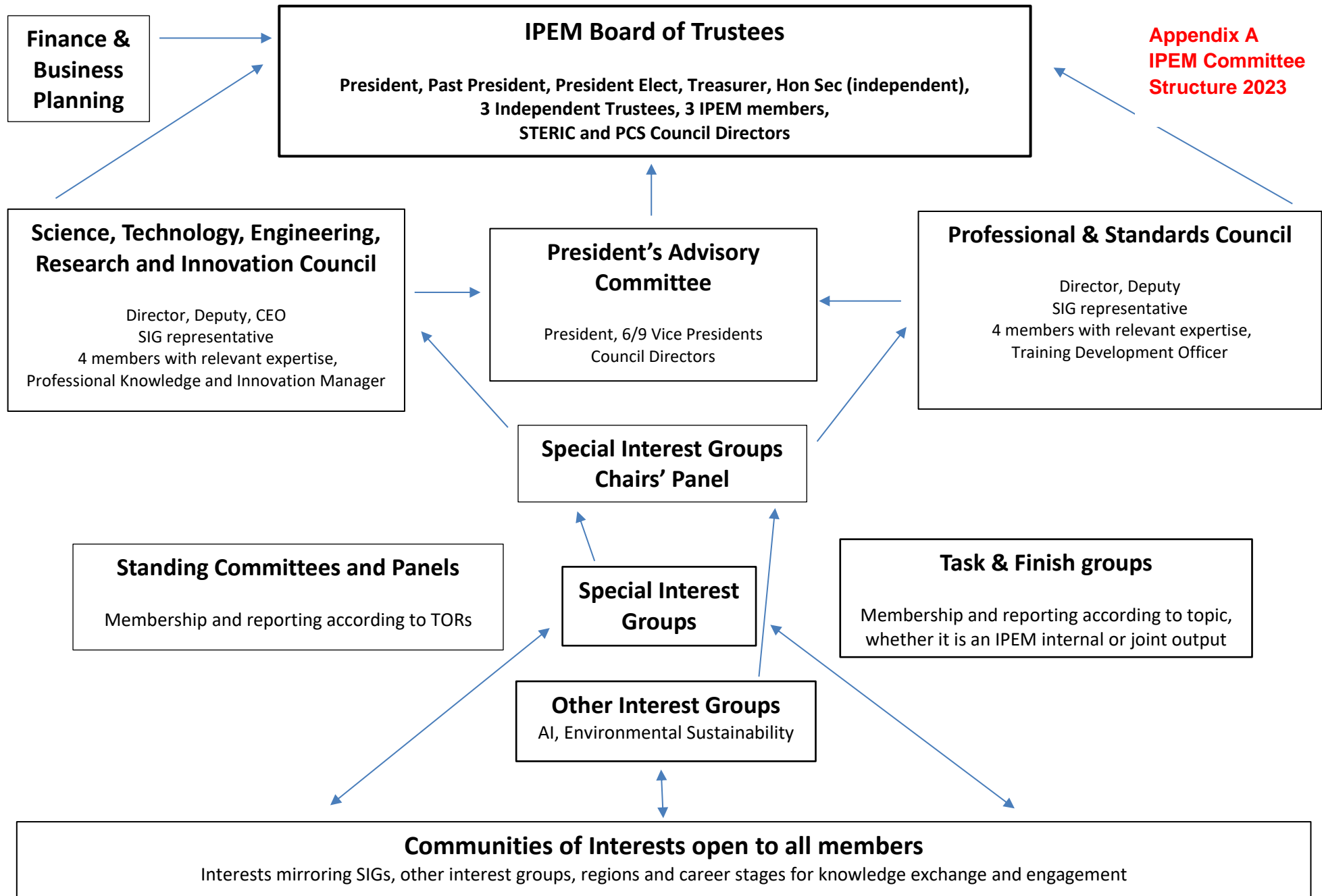
You have the opportunity to appoint a vice chair but it is not essential if you prefer not to. If you do have a vice chair then please decide between you how you want to work together and assign duties. It needs to be more than just the occasional cover.

A new policy on co-chairing is available.

## Top tips from other chairs

- Work closely with the secretary to make sure that they take on some of the administrative tasks. This could be an early careers or STP trainee SIG member.
- Consider having a vice chair to share responsibility and work
- Having a diverse SIG group really does help – across ages, NHS trusts, regions, specialisms and other characteristics.
- It's important to be prepared to address potential problems such as disagreements on difficult issues, digressions, interruptions, or domination of the discussion by a particular member.
- You can absolutely expect members of your team to contribute and if no one volunteers you need to allocate work. Everyone on the group has volunteered to do this role, so they should be expected to do some of the work.

- If you have members who routinely do not show up to meetings and do not engage at all you can get in touch with the Member Networks Manager.
- Share the work: Ask the community if you have been asked to do a book review or a specific task. You can also ask for volunteers for a Task & Finish group. Getting involved means people can develop their competencies and CPD (which you can point out).
- **The TORs can help set out the basic agenda as it lists recommended actions throughout the year**





### Meetings of main committees

Month	Trustees	Science Research & Inn Council	Professional & Standards Council	SIG Chairs panel	SIGs
September	Official start of the committee year after AGM				
October	Trustees 1				Between
November		STERIC	PSC		
December				Generally	three
January	Trustees 2				
February		STERIC	PSC	every	and
March					
April	Trustees 3			two	12
May					
June		STERIC	PSC	months	meetings
July	Trustees 4				
August					per year

### Aims:

1. **Board of Trustees** meets 4 times/year, focusing on charitable business of Institute e.g. strategy, risk, finance, HR, staffing, appointments; and receive summary reports from the two Councils about progress against their agreed action plans
2. **Two Councils** are main driver of scientific and professional work of Institute to implement strategy, delivering an annual action plan of activity; they meet 3 times/year and provide summary report to Trustee meetings.
3. **SIGs** meets at different intervals to feed into STERIC and PSC in terms of proposed actions
4. **SIG Chair panel** meets every 2 months. One of the chairs sits on PSC, and one on STERIC

### Trustee standing business:

Jan – approve business plan and budget; review risk register  
 Apr (late) – approve annual report & accounts (on advice from F&BP); identify pending officer/Trustee vacancies  
 Jul – approve AGM agenda; review risk register; review progress on business plan and budgetary implications for next year; agree officer & Trustee appointments to go to AGM  
 Oct – review outcomes of AGM; review strategy progress; approve draft budget for next year

## Expenses Policy [\(see the volunteer page for the up to date version\)](#)

## Appendix D IPEM Expenses Policy and form

Key points for guidance are:

- IPEM will only normally make reimbursement for actual reasonable expenses necessarily incurred and if supported by a VAT receipt (except mileage).
- All expense claims must be submitted on the approved claim form. Claim forms not completed properly or legibly will not be paid and will be returned to the claimant for corrective action.
- All claim forms must be signed by the claimant confirming that the expenditure has been wholly, necessarily and exclusively incurred in performing authorised duties for IPEM and must provide a clear explanation of IPEM's business being claimed for.
- Expenses claims will be checked against attendance registers before payment.
- Expenses claims will be made directly to the claimant's bank account.
- Receipts must support all claims and if VAT has been charged the receipt must contain the VAT Registration Number.
- Claims should be submitted by the end of the month, or more frequently, in which the claim was incurred, and at the very latest by the 31<sup>st</sup> December for the preceding year.
- The Finance Department will issue payment within fourteen (14) working days via BACS on the receipt of a correct and legible claim form.

[The IPEM expenses claim form and full policy is on the Volunteer Resources website](#)

If you have any questions about your claim form or expenses, contact Finance Department, (email [finance@ipem.ac.uk](mailto:finance@ipem.ac.uk) or 'phone 01904 550599).

**Expenses which are not supported by invoices or receipts may not be reimbursed.**

## Guidance for Writing and Publication of IPEM Meeting Minutes

### Appendix E Guidance for Minute writing

#### General points on minute-taking:

- The attendance list should include names and positions of individuals present, to indicate their reason for attendance
- Ensure that all decisions and actions are noted
- Record the person responsible for each action
- Abbreviations and acronyms should be expanded at first use
- A separate action list at the end of the minutes should summarise all the actions agreed and who is responsible for each of them.
- So that the minutes can be understood by people who weren't present at the meeting, a brief background to each item should be included where applicable: this may be just a sentence, or may refer to a separate report to prevent repetition of detailed information
- Discussions should be summarised to reflect the substantive points of debate
- Ideally focus on points made for / against a proposal / idea and reasons to support these points

#### To ensure confidentiality:

- Unless it is specifically requested that the minutes contain the opinion of a particular person, the source of individual opinions should not be recorded
- Confidential information (i.e. information that should not be seen by anyone not on the committee) should not be recorded in the minutes, but may be recorded in a separate report that is circulated only to members of the committee
- We have an "External members and Observers on Committees Policy" which defines person can see minutes and other meeting details (on the [SIG resources page](#))

#### Confirmation and publication of minutes:

- Draft minutes should be produced **within 2 weeks** of the meeting date.
- Observers and external members do not routinely receive minutes (see separate document)
- Draft minutes should be checked for accuracy by the Chair of the meeting. The Chair should also consider confidentiality and remove any confidential information, anonymising where possible, or creating a separate short confidential report if required.
- The draft minutes should then be circulated to committee members in order to aid completion of actions, and made available to the office for archiving and back-up. This is best done by placing a copy on Teams which is accessible only by committee members.

#### What needs to included

<b>Name of Committee</b>			
<b>Location:</b>		<b>Date and time</b>	
<b>Chair:</b>		<b>Secretary / Minutes</b>	
<b>SIG Attendees:</b>	Include: name and position		
<b>Observers / External:</b>	Include: name, position, reason for attendance		
<b>Apologies:</b>			
<b>Agenda Items:</b>	Including: Action plan review, discussions, actions agreed, AOB		
<b>Action Summary:</b>	All actions summarised at the end with assignation		
<b>Date of next meeting:</b>			

