

Research Group Handbook

This Handbook brings together the various policies, procedures, and documents of the Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers) ('RGS-IBG', or 'the Society') that relate to Research Groups and Limited Life Working Parties/Groups ('Research Groups'). It is intended to assist the officers and committee members of RGS-IBG Research Groups in their work. It is reviewed annually, usually in November and December of each year. This version was updated in September 2017 by the Research and Higher Education Division (RHED) of the RGS-IBG. Please send any questions, comments or suggestions to: [E RHED@rgs.org](mailto:RHED@rgs.org).

Contents

1	Formation and dissolution of Research Groups	2
1.1	Formation, operation and dissolution of Research Groups and Limited Life Working Parties/Groups	2
1.2	Template for Research Group and Limited Life Working Party/Group Constitutions	5
1.3	Suggested Research Group Committee structure and roles	7
1.4	Dissolution of Research Groups	8
2	Requirements of a Research Group	9
2.1	Hold an AGM at the RGS-IBG Annual International Conference	9
2.2	Annual report on activities	9
2.3	Annual financial report	9
2.4	Review of Research Groups by the Society	12
3	Membership of Research Groups	13
3.1	Joining an RGS-IBG Research Group	13
3.2	Research Group membership lists	14
3.3	RGS-IBG Membership & becoming a Fellow	14
4	Activities of Research Groups and RGS-IBG support	15
4.1	Society support of research communities	15
4.2	Activities of Research Groups and Limited Life Working Parties/groups	15
4.3	Communications – mailing lists, websites, social media and other mechanisms	16
4.4	RHED principles for communication to Research Groups and the wider research community	17
4.5	Research Group presence on RGS-IBG website	17
4.6	Rooms at the RGS-IBG	18
4.7	Nominations for Medals and Awards	18
4.8	Use of RGS-IBG logo and/or name on Research Group activities	18
4.9	Research Group archives	19
5	Research Group Finances	20
5.1	Start-up funds	20
5.2	Subventions	20
5.3	Research Group bank accounts	20
5.4	Research Group Grants and Loans	20
5.5	Suggested funding model for onward distribution of Research Group funds and grants	23
6	Committees of the RGS-IBG	26
6.1	Research and Higher Education Committee	26
6.2	Research Groups Sub-Committee	26
6.3	Inclusion and Diversity Advisory Group (IDAG)	27
7	The Annual Conference	29
7.1	Proposing sessions for the Annual Conference	29
7.2	Research Group session quota	30
7.3	Research Group Guests	32
8.	Useful information for Committees	34
8.1	Annual timeline of deadlines and events	34
8.2	Contact information for Research Groups	34
8.3	Royal Geographical Society (with IBG): Research and Higher Education Division (RHED)	35
9	The Society's Policy on advocacy, lobbying, campaigning and activism	36
9.1	Background	36
9.2	Rationale	36
9.3	Guidelines	36

1 Formation and dissolution of Research Groups

1.1 Formation, operation and dissolution of Research Groups and Limited Life Working Parties/Groups

Created by RHED 14 November 1999 and last amended 18 August 2008, approved by the Research and Higher Education Committee

1.1.1 Research Groups

1. Research Groups are collective bodies of researchers within the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG). They undertake some or all of the following activities:
 - collaborative research
 - host and co-host activities within the RGS-IBG Annual International Conference
 - convene workshops, seminars, conferences
 - encourage postgraduate participation in their particular sub-discipline
 - maintain websites
 - publish books, CD-ROMs and journals
 - distribute newsletters and/ or bulletins
 - promote undergraduate and postgraduate activity through dissertation prizes and grants for young researchers and postgraduates to attend relevant meetings.

Research Groups are normally formed by a body of researchers working in a particular sub-discipline/area within Geography. The Society seeks to encourage diversity in the nature of geographical research being conducted within and across Research Groups, and also wishes to positively embrace new developments and initiatives in the discipline. As sub-disciplines change through time, however, then Research Groups are expected to change. It is also anticipated that in some cases Research Groups may dissolve when a particular sub-discipline is no longer appropriate.

2. Limited Life Working Parties/Groups with a more temporally restricted scope of activity may also be formed. (See 1.1.2 below.)
3. All Research Groups receive an annual subvention from the Society based on the number of Fellows of the Society within them. This is normally paid in December. All appropriate members can join Research Groups free of charge with postgraduates in addition automatically belonging to the Postgraduate Forum (PGF). Some Research Groups make additional charges for specific services, such as distribution of newsletters. Members are invited to join Research Groups only once they are elected to membership of the RGS-IBG, but non-members may also join Research Groups. Fellows can belong to more than one Research Group and there is no upper limit on the number of groups Fellows can join.
4. All Research Groups should have written constitutions, should hold an Annual General Meeting (normally at the Society's Annual Conference), and must also present an annual report and statement of accounts to the Society (separate guidelines exist for financial reporting and the annual report). Research Groups are expected to use their funds appropriately, and to specify in their annual report the purpose for which they are holding any funds above £1500 that remain in their bank account at the year end.
5. Research Groups are directly represented on the Research Groups Sub-Committee by the Chair, the Honorary Secretary or Treasurer (or another nominated committee member who is a Fellow or member of the RGS-IBG), and on the Research and Higher Education Committee by three members elected from the Research Groups' Chairs, Honorary Secretaries and Treasurers. These elected representatives on the Research and Higher Education Committee must be Fellows of the RGS-IBG. Elections are normally held each February, with Chairs, Secretaries and Treasurers of each Research Group entitled to one vote. [For more information about the Committees of the Society, refer to Section 6 of this Handbook.]



6. New Research Groups may be established through the submission of the following to the Research and Higher Education Committee:
 - name of proposed new Research Group
 - statement of purpose of the Research Group and reasoning for any overlap with existing Research Groups where this might exist. This should demonstrate clearly the distinctiveness of the new Research Group, in particular why the proposed activities cannot be undertaken within the infrastructure of an existing Research Group, and provide evidence of the distinctive contribution the new group will make to geographical research.
 - proposed two-year plan of proposed activities and their anticipated outcome
 - names and RGS-IBG membership number of 40 members indicating their agreement to belong to the Research Group
 - nomination of Chair, Secretary and Treasurer of the Research Group
 - draft Constitution of Research Group (model provided)

The Research and Higher Education Committee will consider any proposal at its next meeting, providing that such a proposal is received no less than two weeks prior to that meeting, so that papers can be circulated. If the proposal is agreed, the Committee will recommend the creation of the new Research Group

7. Following approval from the Research and Higher Education Committee for a new Research Group, a meeting will take place with the Head of Research and Higher Education. The Research Group will be asked to report on their planned activities at six-monthly intervals to the Research and Higher Education Committee for the first two years from their formation, one of such reports will form the annual report.

If the Committee consider it appropriate, Research Groups may be asked to form as a Limited Life Working Party/ Group for two years in the first instance. During that two year period, the Working Group will be asked to report on their activities at six-monthly intervals.

8. Research Groups may be dissolved by the Research and Higher Education Committee following discussion with the Chair and Secretary of the Research Groups for the following reasons:
 - decision by the AGM of the Research Group to cease its activities
 - Research Group membership of fewer than 40 members of the RGS-IBG
 - failure of the Research Group to present its annual report and statement of accounts after at least three reminders have been sent to the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer at monthly intervals
 - a Research Group not having held an AGM for two years
 - limited activities demonstrated at the five year review (see 3.4)
 - activities by the Research Group which counteract policies of the RGS-IBG, including inappropriate use of Research Group funds.

1.1.2 Limited Life Working Parties/ Groups

1. Limited Life Working Parties and Working Groups exist to undertake specific research activities on themes of contemporary interest. They are created for an initial period of two years, but this may be extended by agreement of the Research and Higher Education Committee for two further years. Once established, the Limited Life Working Party/Group may submit a proposal to develop a Research Group providing they satisfy the above procedures. While some working groups/ limited life working parties may develop into a Research Group, subject to the approval by Research and Higher Education Committee, this is not always considered appropriate and is in no way guaranteed. The Research and Higher Education Committee may recommend that the proposed activities of the Limited Life Working Party/Group are conducted within the scope of an existing Research Group rather than forming a new group.

Limited Life Working Parties/Groups undertake some, or all, of the following:

- collaborative research
- host and co-host activities within the RGS-IBG Annual International Conference
- convene workshops, seminars, conferences

- encourage postgraduate participation in their particular sub-discipline
- maintain websites
- publish books and journals
- distribute newsletters and/ or bulletins
- promote undergraduate and postgraduate activity through dissertation prizes and grants for young researchers and postgraduates to attend relevant meetings.

They are normally formed by a body of researchers working in a particular sub-discipline/area within geography. Limited Life Working Parties/Groups may also form for a two-year period to establish if there is a need and enthusiasm from the community to form a Research Group with similar interests. This might be especially relevant to Working Parties/Groups that cross traditional sub-discipline boundaries or have yet to become an established sub discipline.

2. All Limited Life Working Parties/Groups should have written constitutions, and should present an annual report and statement of accounts to the RGS-IBG as specified above for Research Groups. Limited Life Working Parties/Groups are expected to use their funds appropriately, and to specify the purpose for which they are holding any funds above £500 that remain in their bank account at the year end.
3. Proposals for Limited Life Working Parties/Groups will be considered through the submission of the following to the Research and Higher Education Committee;
 - name of proposed Limited Life Working Party/Group
 - statement of purpose of the Limited Life Working Party/Group and reasoning for any overlap with existing Research Groups or Limited Life Working Parties/Groups where this might exist. This should demonstrate clearly the distinctiveness of the new Limited Life Working Party/Group, in particular why the proposed activities cannot be undertaken within the infrastructure of an existing group, and provide evidence of the distinctive contribution the new group will make to geographical research.
 - two-year plan of proposed activities and their anticipated outcome
 - names and RGS-IBG membership number of 20 members indicating their agreement to belong to the Limited Life Working Party/Group
 - nomination of Chair, Secretary and Treasurer of the Limited Life Working Party/Group
 - draft Constitution of Limited Life Working Party/Group (model provided)

The Research and Higher Education Committee will consider any proposal at its next meeting, providing that such a proposal is received no less than two weeks prior to that meeting, so that papers can be circulated. If the proposal is agreed, the Committee will recommend the creation of the new Limited Life Working Party/Group.

4. A Limited Life Working Party/Group may apply to become a Research Group of the RGS-IBG after two calendar years of formation. Any such application must satisfy the conditions for Research Groups above, irrespective of whether the Group has existed as a Limited Life Working Party/Group or not. The application must explain why continued Party activities cannot take place within the infrastructure of an existing research group. As noted above, development into a Research Group is not always considered appropriate and is not guaranteed. More commonly it is expected that a Limited Life Working Party/Group would be subsumed within the most appropriate and closely related Research Group once its term has come to a close. The activities of the Limited Life Working Party/Group will be taken into account during such applications.
5. Following approval from the Research and Higher Education Committee for a new Limited Life Working Party/Group, a meeting will take place with the Head of Research and Higher Education. The Limited Life Working Party/Group will be asked to report on their planned activities at six-monthly intervals to the Research and Higher Education Committee for the first two years from their formation, one such reports forming the annual report.
6. Limited Life Working Parties/Groups may be dissolved prematurely by the Research and Higher Education Committee following discussion with the Chair and Secretary of the Limited Life Working Party/Group or for the following reasons:

- Decision by the members of the Limited Life Working Party/Group to cease its activities
- Limited Life Working Party/Group membership of fewer than 20 members of the RGS-IBG
- Failure of the Limited Life Working Party/Group to present its annual report and statement of accounts after at least three reminders have been sent to the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer at monthly intervals
- A Limited Life Working Party/Group not having held an AGM for two years
- Activities by the Limited Life Working Party/Group which counteract policies of the RGS-IBG, including inappropriate use of Limited Life Working Party/Group funds.

1.2 Template for Research Group and Limited Life Working Party/Group Constitutions

RHED, Created 1st May 2000, last amended October 2015

The constitution of the Research Groups should take the following format. The standard text may not be amended without consultation with RHED. For all reasonable purposes, the Limited Life Working Party/Group constitutions should follow a similar format. Constitutions must clearly state whether it pertains to a Research Group or a Limited Life Working Party/Group. Please note:

- Text in [] should be replaced with information specific to the Group
- Text in *italics* is for guidance and should be deleted from the final version of the constitution.

Constitution of the [Title of Research Group]

1. [Title of the Research Group, with a reasonable abbreviation to be agreed with the Head of Research and Higher Education.]
2. [Brief outline of the aims of the Research Group and how it is intended they will be achieved, including expected outcomes (maximum 150 words).]
3. Organisational status - The [Research Group] is a 'branch' of the Royal Geographical Society (with The Institute of British Geographers) and must satisfy the aims and policies of the Society, including Equal Opportunity policy, and the legal and Charity Commissioner requirements including the guidance issued by the Charities' Commission on campaigning and political activity by charities. The Research Group must deliver an Annual Report and statement of accounts to the Society by the 15 January of each calendar year at the very latest demonstrating that these aims and policies are being adhered to.

Guidance is provided on suggested content of the Annual Report and statement of accounts. All Research Groups will be subject to a five-yearly review of activities, membership and expenditure, while Limited Life Working Parties/Groups will be subject to a two-yearly review. See Section 2.4.

4. Statement of membership - Membership of the [XXRG] shall be open to all members (including Postgraduate members) of the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) who elect to join the Research Group, but shall never be less than 40. Limited Life Working Parties and Working Groups membership shall never be less than 20. Membership of the [XXRG] will be [free of charge].
5. Other interested persons who are not members of the RGS-IBG may join the [XXRG], subject to approval of the Research Group, [for an additional fee collected separately by the [XXRG]]. The [XXRG] will maintain their own records of these members but must also use the RGS-IBG membership lists when undertaking a mailing to members.
6. The business of the [XXRG] shall be conducted by a Committee of no fewer than 3 members. Specified roles within the Committee include the following: Chair, Secretary, Treasurer. Each of these roles shall be undertaken by members of the RGS-IBG elected by the Group. The Committee will have the power to co-opt [up to two] additional members. The majority of the Committee must be members of the RGS-IBG.



Normally Research Groups have additional elected members on their Committees such as newsletter/website editor, membership secretary for a group of over 200 members, meetings and events co-ordinator, postgraduate co-ordinator, and publications co-ordinator.

7. Terms of office - The offices of Chair, Secretary and Treasurer and other committee members shall be for a period of three years. Honorary officers may stand for a second term of three years, but must relinquish their post after the sixth year of office. Retiring honorary officers shall not be eligible for re-election as an Ordinary Member of the Committee if they have served for 6 years, without first having a one-year break from the Committee.

Ordinary Committee members shall be elected for a period of not more than three years. Ordinary Committee members may stand for a second term of three years, but must relinquish their post after the sixth year of office.

Postgraduate members shall be elected for a period of one year and shall not normally be eligible for re-election to the Committee for more than three terms of office.

The Research Group should give consideration to the succession timetable of officers serving on their Committees in order that there is an appropriate level of continuity.

8. Elections to the Committee will be held at the Annual General Meeting. Members will be informed in writing¹ (email is acceptable) 30 days prior to the AGM of all vacancies to be filled. Nominations for Committee membership will be accepted up to the beginning of the AGM. Nominations must be in writing and include the names of the proposer and seconder.
9. The Annual General Meeting shall normally be held at the RGS-IBG Annual International Conference in late August/September. The [XXRG] must present an Annual Report and Statement of Accounts to the RGS-IBG as requested, and normally by 15 January each year. This is to comply with Charity Commissioners guidelines. The Research Group is expected to manage its funds with due care and for the benefit of the membership of the Research Group.

An Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) may be called by either the Chair and four members (or all other members if fewer than four in total) of the Committee or by any 20 ordinary members of the [XXRG]. The Secretary must give notice of at least 30 days of an EGM in writing to all members of the [XXRG].

10. Changes to the Constitution - The constitution can be changed only by two-thirds majority vote of those present at an Annual General Meeting, provided that the membership has been individually notified of the proposed changes in writing or by email at least 30 days in advance. Research Group constitutions that have been altered by the AGM of the Research Group should then be submitted for approval by the Research and Higher Education Committee of the RGS-IBG at their next meeting. If the Research Group alters its constitution without informing the Research and Higher Education Committee by the time of its next meeting, the Research and Higher Education Committee will view this matter seriously and consider whether the group is contravening the aims of the RGS-IBG.
11. The activities of the Research Groups should not contravene the aims of the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG). The [XXRG] may be dissolved only in accordance with the rules of the RGS-IBG.

Other activities of the group may be specified in an Appendix e.g. the preparation of academic publications, the organisation of x meetings or workshops over a 12-month period, the issuing of a newsletter either in hard copy or electronically to members, the creation and maintenance of a website, the creation and maintenance of an email distribution list of non-members of the RGS-IBG, and the organising of joint activities with other research groups and networks.

¹ For all requirements in writing, email is acceptable

1.3 Suggested Research Group Committee structure and roles

The template Constitution of the Research Group in Section 1.2 above defines the minimum Committee size and necessity for the roles of Chair, Secretary and Treasurer to be fulfilled. Research Groups may then recruit as many Ordinary Members for their Committee as are needed to fulfil the Research Group's activities. Ordinary Members support the work of the Research Group and provide feedback and input on the Research Group's activities at Committee meetings.

Specific responsibilities are likely to be as directed by the Chair, in response to Research Group workload. Based on best practice and the Committee structures of existing Research Groups, the table below suggests responsibilities that Ordinary Members of Research Group Committees may wish to adopt. Not every Committee will need all of these roles, and some Groups may need other roles.

Individual Research Groups may mandate Committee make-up or elections in their Constitutions. Research Groups are advised to check carefully before proposing significant changes in case of any constitutional limitations.

Committee role	Example responsibilities
Ordinary Member	Responsible for: supporting the work of the Research Group and providing feedback and input on the Research Group's activities at Committee meetings. Specific activities are likely to be as directed by the Chair, in response to Research Group workload, including those listed below.
Postgraduate Representative	Responsible for: promoting postgraduate interests and needs to the wider Research Group, and maintaining connection with wider postgraduate community through the Postgraduate Forum.
Membership Coordinator	Responsible for: working with RHED to manage changes to the Research Group's membership list. This role may be combined with that of <i>Website/Newsletter/Mailing List Coordinator</i> if that person manages the mailing list. This position is only recommended for groups where membership is greater than 200 and/or there is a high turnover rate, where the Secretary cannot manage the changes.
Website/Newsletter/Mailing List Coordinator Social media coordinator	Responsible for: managing and moderating communications on behalf of the Research Group, across a variety of media (including, but not limited to, the group's website, any manual mailing lists or automated list-servers and newsletters). This task may be undertaken by the Secretary.
Awards and prizes coordinator	Responsible for: coordinating the judging and awarding of prizes for essays and dissertations in line with the Research Group's policy.
Conference/event coordinator	Responsible for: coordinating Research Group sponsored sessions at the Annual International Conference and acting as a central point of contact with the conference organisers; coordinating (with assistance from the rest of the Committee), any Research Group organised conferences and events. Note: depending on the calendar of events that the Committee proposes for a given year, these responsibilities might be shared by two or more people.
Publications coordinator/editor	Responsible for: coordinating and/or editing any publications the Research Group makes (e.g. working papers, journals, monographs, books), and liaising with publishers about the publication of any scholarly journals or books related to the Research Group's activities. Note: depending on the extent of the Research Group's publishing activities, an external representative of the journal/publisher may fulfil this role on behalf of the Research Group.

1.4 Dissolution of Research Groups

If the decision is taken by either a Group Committee or the Research and Higher Education Committee to dissolve a Research Group, the following activities should be undertaken by the officers of the Group at the time of closure:

- Formally notify the Research and Higher Education Committee of the intention to close the Group. This action can then be formally recorded in the minutes of the Committee;
- Close any remaining Research Group communications and website;
- Close the Research Group bank account and return any remaining funds to the Society;
- Return a closing-balance financial report and annual report documenting any activities of the Research Group since the date of the last report delivered to the Society.
- Arrange for any Research Group archives held by Committee members or others to be transferred to the Society for long-term retention.

In addition, RHED will:

- Communicate the closure of the Research Group to members and update membership records; and
- Update its website and other records to show the dissolved Group as a “former” Research Group.

2 Requirements of a Research Group

In addition to being active (as evidenced by activities and a minimum threshold of 40 Fellows/members belonging to the Group), essentially there are three requirements of Research Groups: to (1) hold an AGM; (2) submit an annual report (by 15 January); and (3) submit an annual financial report (by 15 January). In addition, all Research Groups (but not Limited Life Working Parties/Groups) are subject to a five year review.

2.1 Hold an AGM at the RGS-IBG Annual International Conference

Each Research Group will be allocated a time and room, during the RGS-IBG Annual International Conference, to hold their Annual AGM. Following the meeting, minutes of the AGM should be submitted to RHED, E rhed@rgs.org. Each Research Group should notify its members at least 30 days prior to the AGM of the location, date, and time of the AGM, along with details of any committee vacancies (see the constitution of the particular Research Group and/or the example constitution given in section 1.2).

Although a Research Group should normally hold its AGM during the RGS-IBG Annual International Conference, from time to time they can choose to hold the AGM at another event where a greater number of Research Group members are expected to be in attendance. Research Groups should notify RHED of their intention to do this, E rhed@rgs.org, and communicate the changed location, date, and time to their members well in advance.

2.2 Annual report on activities

Each Research Group must submit an Annual report to RHED by 15 January each year, E rhed@rgs.org. The report should include details of committee members, activities during the year, and future plans. Reports are usually short; of the order of one or two pages.

2.3 Annual financial report

1. It is a statutory regulation that all Research Groups submit their Annual Accounts to the Society no later than 15 January of any calendar year. This allows the Society to fulfil its financial reporting requirements. The Society's accounts are considered by the auditors, normally in the first week of February.
2. The format shown in Section 3.3.1 is recommended for reporting Annual Accounts (also available as an Excel spreadsheet for download from: **W** www.rgs.org/ResearchGroups). This information is the minimum that is required. The opening and closing balances at Bank/Building Society must be shown clearly. Those Research Groups who want to report on an income and expenditure basis including monies due but not yet received, and commitments made but not yet received and commitments made but not yet paid, are encouraged to do so. Please contact RHED if you require any help or have any questions on annual reporting
3. Research Group must provide the RGS-IBG with account details, including the sort-code.
4. Some Groups have changed their reporting periods to 1 September to 31 August annually. This has the following advantages:
 - a. Reports can be given at the AGM in early September. To have accounts that close on 31 August enables the Treasurer to prepare up-to-date files for their successor.
 - b. There will be less pressure to submit your accounts to the RHED office by 15 January deadline.
5. In the financial report it is important to explain why funds are being held in the account (if appropriate); for example, to be used for a forthcoming meeting or conference. If significant funds have been spent from the account in a year, an explanation should be provided. The charity commissioners, or auditors, may well ask us to explain why money is being held in accounts and the clearer the information that you can give to the RGS-IBG, the easier this is.
6. Research Groups must also supply a list of current signatories and an up to date bank mandate for their account, as part of their annual financial report.



7. Additional guidance for Research Group Treasurers is available from RHED upon request, E rhed@rgs.org

2.3.1 Research Group Financial Reporting Form

Research Group financial reporting form

Research Group Name

Period

Receipt and payments account

INCOME

RGS-IBG subvention

RGS-IBG grant(s)

Other grants

Subscriptions

Conference income

Meetings income

Royalties

Interest

Other income (please give details)

Total income

0

EXPENDITURE

Committee expenses

Conference costs

Meetings costs

Newsletter costs

Grants and awards

Other costs (please give details)

Total expenditure

0

Net surplus/deficit

Opening balance(s) - 1st January
(or alternative date)

Closing balances - 31st December
(or alternative date)

Closing balances comprised of:
treasurer account
deposit account

It would help if you gave the additional information for BACS payments
Address of branch where accounts are held
Account number(s)
Sort code

Name of treasurer
Email address of Treasurer
Phone number of Treasurer

Name of additional signatories (duplicate as needed)
Email address of additional signatories (duplicate as needed)

2.4 Review of Research Groups by the Society

The membership, activities and expenditure of all Research Groups will be reviewed once in every five years by RHED and the Hon Secretary for Research, on behalf of the Research Groups Sub-Committee and the Research and Higher Education Committee.

These reviews are undertaken in a fair and transparent manner, and are conducted in dialogue with the Research Groups, allowing Research Groups the opportunity to provide input to the final report.

If there is evidence for inactivity, dwindling membership, or if any of the Society's conditions and policies have been contravened by the Research Group, following consultation with the Chair of the Research Group, RHED and the Hon Secretary for Research may make a recommendation to the Research and Higher Education Committee that the Research Group is dissolved (see Section 1.4)

Limited Life Working Parties/Groups will be reviewed at the completion of their initial two-year term.

3 Membership of Research Groups

3.1 Joining an RGS-IBG Research Group

There are two ways to join a RGS-IBG Research Group:

1. RGS-IBG members should inform the Society of the Research Group(s) that they wish to join. There is no limit on the number of Research Groups they may belong to, and no additional charge is levied through the Fellowship/Membership annual subscription. Some Research Groups may make additional charges for specific services, such as distribution of newsletters/publications. Postgraduate Fellows are automatically added to the Postgraduate Forum when they join the Society.
2. Non-RGS-IBG members should contact the Chair or Membership Officer of the Group that they wish to join and request to become a member and/or be added to the mailing list. Research Groups may choose to make an additional charge to non-members for any services provided.

Email contacts and website details for all Research Groups can be found on the RGS-IBG website

W www.rgs.org/ResearchGroups.

3.2 Research Group membership lists

RHED works with the Membership team at the Society to maintain a list of all members of each Research Group, who are current Society Members/Fellows. Updates are sent out on the 1st of each month to the current Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Membership Secretary of each Research Group. These include a full list of current members, a list of any new joiners since the last update, and a list of any leavers since the last update (including any Fellows or members whose membership has lapsed or otherwise ended).

Research Groups are encouraged to maintain their own membership lists and to keep these regularly updated. These should include both the current RGS-IBG members, and any other members of the Research Group.

3.3 RGS-IBG Membership & becoming a Fellow

Fellowship offers the opportunity to network and to support the spread of geographical knowledge. To find out more about becoming a Fellow see the guidelines found with the application form:

W <http://www.rgs.org/JoinUs>.

Fellows enjoy the following benefits:

- participation in Society governance and vote in elections for representatives to Council
- attendance at a wide range of conferences, seminars and events at reduced cost
- participation in Research Groups; Fellows can be members of more than one group
- opting to receive the RGS-IBG's journals – *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, *Area* and *The Geographical Journal*
- applying for RGS-IBG research grants
- using the title FRGS
- nominating colleagues for Society medals and awards
- access to the Foyle Reading Room and Collections

4 Activities of Research Groups and RGS-IBG support

4.1 Society support of research communities

The Society's support of research communities is not limited to its own Research Groups. The Society offers support through multiple routes and at multiple levels, summarised as follows:

Research community	Level of support offered by RHED/Society
Individuals – Fellows and members External research networks, e.g. Research Council funded networks; Departmental or cross-institutional research groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discounted (Educational) rates for meeting room space • Opportunity to propose conference sessions/papers • Occasional use of communications channels (e.g. Geobyte; Twitter) for appropriate announcements • RHED facilitates introductions of mutual benefit
External organisations with a close working relationship to the Society. The relationship may be informal or formalised via a Memorandum of Understanding, e.g. BSG, QRA.	<p>All of the above, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint events • Additional opportunities to communicate to Society membership through variety of channels for relevant announcements
Research Groups and Limited Life Working Parties/Groups	<p>All of the above, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive financial support through subvention payment • Eligible to apply for Research Group grants to support activities • Reserved quota of sessions for Annual Conference, and allocation of conference guest passes • Opportunity to advertise events through members' e-Update and Bulletin, and permanent presence on the RGS-IBG website • Occasional administrative and other support from RHED for group-related activities (as negotiated with Head of RHED).

The activities of Groups are entirely for their elected officers and Committees to manage; RHED staff can help with advice and guidance.

4.2 Activities of Research Groups and Limited Life Working Parties/Groups

The Society's Research and Limited Life Working Parties/Groups bring together active researchers at all career stages with a professional interest in a particular aspect of geography and related disciplines. Research Groups meet at the Annual International Conference when they also hold their AGMs. Throughout the year there is a varying level of activity for each Research Group. They undertake a combination of the following:

- collaborative research
- host and co-host activities within the RGS-IBG Annual International Conference
- convene workshops, seminars, conferences
- encourage postgraduate participation in their particular sub-discipline
- maintain and update websites
- publish books, CD-ROMs and journals
- distribute newsletters and/ or bulletins
- promote undergraduate and postgraduate activity through dissertation prizes and grants for young researchers and postgraduates to attend relevant meetings
- nominate colleagues for awards.

4.3 Communications – mailing lists, websites, social media and other mechanisms

4.3.1 Mailing lists

Each Research Group is advised to set up a JISC mail account (or similar mailing list function) to communicate with their members:

W www.jiscmail.ac.uk. A useful manual is provided at: W <http://www.lsoft.com/manuals/1.8e/owner/owner.pdf>

We have been advised by JISCmail that lists should have at least one fairly permanent owner, in addition to co-owners who may come and go more frequently. Given committee turnover, RHED is able to serve as a 'quiet' permanent co-owner if required. This would mean that Research Group committee member co-owners would run the day to day management of the lists, with RHED responsible in name only, ensuring the list isn't taken over by JISCmail. For more information, please contact RHED directly, E rhed@rgs.org.

In situations where owner email addresses are not confirmed, JISCmail will take over full management of the list and remove unconfirmed email addresses. This means those list owners who didn't confirm will no longer have any access to the list, and JISCmail will begin the process of finding a new list owner by posting to the groups and asking anyone who is interested to come forward. Having RHED as a 'quiet' co-owner can help avoid this happening.

One of the real challenges for Research Groups and the RGS-IBG is keeping email and postal distribution lists current. We strongly recommend that Research Group membership officers maintain close contact with the Research and Higher Education Division at the RGS-IBG, E rhed@rgs.org.

The master lists of Research Group members who are Society Members/Fellows are maintained by RHED and shared with Research Group Committees via a monthly email update (see 3.2). Any changes to this list are automatically reported to the Chair, Secretary, Treasurer (and also Membership Coordinator, where requested). Research Groups should incorporate RHED's list into their own membership list, which will contain non-Fellows and Members.

4.3.2 Data protection and data confidentiality

Research Groups are provided access to confidential personal records of any Society Fellows and members who have requested to join their group. These records are strictly for the purpose of the Research Group communicating with its membership and should not be shared outside of a few designated Committee members. Membership lists should be kept securely.

In particular, Research Groups are asked to take care when sending bulk emails or communicating in other formats that might inadvertently share personal details of a few or many members with the wider list. Mail-serv services such as jiscmail.ac.uk or email BCC fields should be used to mask the email addresses of individuals.

4.3.3 Websites

Research Groups are encouraged to set up an independent websites. These websites must acknowledge the support of the RGS-IBG on their site and use the appropriate logos and descriptions of the Society. Contact RHED for advice and a set of web-ready logos in a variety of formats, E RHED@rgs.org.

Research Groups may request to have their website hosted at the RGS-IBG, in order to reduce technical costs and pre-empt challenges with handover responsibilities when Committees change. Hosting may include one or two basic html pages embedded within the Society's own website, or a standalone Wordpress site. Please contact E RHED@rgs.org for more information. RHED can also provide advice and help in setting up a Wordpress site.

4.3.4 Social media

If Research Groups choose to use social media, e.g. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, blogging, etc, to communicate with their members, they are asked to advise RHED when they establish a social media channel and ensure that the support of the RGS-IBG is appropriately acknowledged, including the use of the RGS-IBG logo if appropriate.

- Communications on behalf of or about the Research Group should be managed by elected Committee members with discretion and integrity, with appropriate security applied to electronic accounts. Data protection/data confidentiality principles (with respect to members' information) and 'netiquette' should be used.
- Although Research Groups are a 'branch' of the Society, communications should not purport to represent the views of the Society. While Research Groups are encouraged to contribute to debates in an engaged manner, communications should not: cause offence; be provocative; or undertake advocacy, lobbying, campaigning or activism activity in the name of the Society (see Section 9).
- Communications from Research Groups should support the work of the Research Group through dissemination and discussion, build networks between interested individuals and groups, and represent a sub-disciplinary presence within wider geographical debates.

4.4 RHED principles for communication to Research Groups and the wider research community

- General RHED and Society news will be sent via Geobyte and the @RGS_IBGhe Twitter feed, unless time-critical (see below)
- Research Group Committee Members are asked to subscribe to Geobyte (published monthly by RHED), and to forward individual news items to their own mailing lists as appropriate (each Committee should nominate someone to do this). To sign up, contact RHED, E RHED@rgs.org
- Research Groups are also encouraged to follow @RGS_IBGhe and to retweet content as appropriate.
- Research Groups Sub-Committee meetings will usually be followed by a digest of news, updates and information for Research Groups. Some of this information will only be relevant to Committees, but information suitable for wider community will be marked in a section "Please forward".
- Time-critical postings for the community will go straight to relevant Committees (Chairs, Secretaries and Treasurers only), clearly marked "Please forward"
- Research Groups should add RHED@rgs.org to their mailing lists so that RHED is kept up to date with events, plans, information and discussions.
- RHED will not post to a Research Group mailing list directly.
- Research Groups are encouraged to send news and announcements to RHED@rgs.org for publicity.

4.5 Research Group presence on RGS-IBG website

4.5.1 List of Research Groups on RGS-IBG Website

There is a full list of all Research Groups and Limited Life Working Parties/Groups on the RGS-IBG website:

W www.rgs.org/ResearchGroups

This page links directly out to the Research Group's own website where possible. For groups without an active web presence, a brief overview of the Group's aim and activities is provided. Research Groups are encouraged to regularly check their page and inform RHED, rhed@rgs.org, if the information is not accurate.

4.5.2 Events listing on RGS-IBG website

The Society is pleased to highlight and promote forthcoming geographical events, including listings of major national and international conferences and other meetings of interest to academic and professional geographers.

RHED encourages Research Groups to send the RGS-IBG details of relevant events that they would like listed in Geobyte, tweeted by @RGS_IBGhe, or included in the members' e-update or Bulletin, E RHED@rgs.org

4.6 Rooms at the RGS-IBG

Research Groups are entitled to book the Sunley Room, Drayson Room or Lowther Room free of charge for half-day bookings (morning or afternoon) at the RGS-IBG on Monday & Friday three times each year (subject to availability) for Research Group related activities. Tea and coffee are complimentary if requested, but other catering must be paid for.

Larger rooms may be booked for special events, and rooms for other days of the week may also be booked, but hire rates (discounted for Research Groups) will normally apply in both cases. Rooms at the RGS-IBG are in high demand and it is strongly advised that bookings are made well in advance.

To arrange a room booking and/or to discuss discounted room access please contact RHED, E RHED@rgs.org.

4.7 Nominations for Medals and Awards

Many Research Groups actively nominate members and colleagues for RGS-IBG Medals and Awards. This is strongly encouraged. Details of all the Medals and Awards and examples of recent recipients can be found at: [W www.rgs.org/MedalsandAwards](http://www.rgs.org/MedalsandAwards).

Any Fellow or member of the Society may make a nomination by filling in the Medals and Awards nomination form available from: [W www.rgs.org/MedalsandAwards](http://www.rgs.org/MedalsandAwards).

The form should be signed and returned to the Director's Office together with a copy of the candidate's CV and an outline detailing why the candidate should receive an award. Nominations must be supported by two other Fellows

The deadline for all nominations is 28 February every year.

4.8 Use of RGS-IBG logo and/or name on Research Group activities

4.8.1 Use of Society logo on Research Group websites

As mentioned in Section 4.3.3, Research Groups are encouraged to place the Society logo prominently on their website and make reference to their status as a Research Group of the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG). For example:

Participatory Geographies Research Group
A research group of the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)

About us News Events Contact us Selected key readings The Communifesto

Welcome to the website of the Participatory Geographies Research Group.

PyGyRG is a collective whose members aim to raise the profile and perceived value, and further the understanding and use of participatory approaches, methods, tools and principles within academic geography and beyond.

The specific aims of the group are to:

- Explore the meaning and implications of geographies which are 'participatory' in nature
- Enhance understanding and the deployment of participatory principles
- Stimulate and sustain critical debate about participatory approaches to research

Search

Royal Geographical Society with IBG
Advancing geography and geographical learning

Recent Posts

- Royal Geographical Society grant success
- Welcome to the new PyGyRG website

4.8.2 Use of the Society logo for other purposes

If Research Groups are planning publications or other (commercial) activities that will bear the name of the Society above and beyond the name of the Research Group itself, they must contact the Head of RHED (RHED@rgs.org)

early in planning stages for advice and guidance about the Society's policy on such publications or activities and the ways in which the Society might support them, including the use of the Society name or logo.

Use of the Society's logo is restricted to projects which have the official approval or endorsement of the Society. The process for obtaining such approval may take some time and Research Groups are encouraged to get in touch with RHED as soon as a project is being considered.

4.9 Research Group archives

Research Group archives form an important part of the institutional memory of the Society. Research Groups already provide the bulk of essential records by submitting their constitution (and any subsequent changes to it), and AGM minutes, annual activity reports and financial reports in January each year.

Individual Research Groups may also choose to maintain their own archives of records, extending to publications, websites, newsletters, conference reports, correspondence, committee lists, and other files. The Society should be considered the central archive for Research Group records, regardless of whether Research Groups also have their own archives. RHED encourages Research Groups to help us fill out their archives by providing us with copies of reports, minutes, constitutional changes, or other essential records germane to the formation and operation of the group.

5 Research Group Finances

The funds of the Research Group should be managed by elected Committee members with discretion and integrity. Research Group funds should not be used to support attendance by committee members at conferences, meetings and other events, including the Annual Conference. The exception to this is reimbursing committee members for expenses incurred for attendance at ordinary Research Group committee meetings; Research Groups are encouraged to hold such meetings virtually (e.g. using Skype) where possible in order to mitigate such expenses. Given that Research Group AGMs normally take place at the Annual Conference, Research Group committee members should not use Research Group funds to cover their travel expenses for attending their AGM. As per section 2.1, Research Groups can consider holding their AGM at events other than the Annual Conference if it is expected that insufficient committee members will be in attendance, and are encouraged to contact RHED to discuss this in advance.

5.1 Start-up funds

Research Groups and Limited Life Working Parties/Groups are entitled to a start-up payment of approximately £200 to cover their first year of operations. This payment will be made once a bank account has been opened by the Group.

These funds must be accounted for in the same way as grants, subvention payments and any other income for the Research Group, in the annual accounts submitted to RHED by 15 January each year.

5.2 Subventions

On 1 November each year RHED calculates subvention payments to Research Groups. Payments are calculated on the basis of a small per-capita payment for each Fellow/member who is also a member of the Research Group. Research Group Chairs, Secretaries and Treasurers are advised of the amount of their subvention amount during November each year.

5.3 Research Group bank accounts

Research Group bank accounts should be opened by the officers of the Research Group (usually Treasurer and Chair/Secretary). Please inform RHED of the bank address, sort code, account number, account name and signatories as soon as the bank account has been opened so that the Society can update its records.

Groups should discuss the requirements for opening and managing a bank account with their selected provider in detail to ensure suitability. Some groups have encountered problems in the past with transferring account responsibility at the time of Treasurer elections, and/or difficulties in changing mailing details for bank statements and other correspondence. In addition, where forms need to be signed in person at a branch, it is worth considering selecting a provider that has branches across the country for future officers of the Group.

If payments can only be made via cheque and your bank account demands co-signatories, consider instituting a process for multiple signatories within the Research Group and for changing these as/when committee members change.

5.3.1 Society signatory on bank accounts

The Society does not expect to be made a signatory on Research Group bank accounts. However, it is possible to arrange for the Head of Finance or Head of RHED to be made a signatory if this would be helpful to a Research Group in terms of continuity and security. Please contact RHED@rgs.org for more information.

5.4 Research Group Grants

The submission deadline for grant applications is 31 October each year. Please note the updated guidance in Section 5.4.1.

1. Grants can be made for conferences, seminars and symposia, travel to international meetings, preparation of publications or similar academic activities. Pump-priming support which stimulates or co-ordinates existing research activities (e.g. assistance with the costs of materials, research assistance, travel costs) is

encouraged. Given the limited funds available, normally it will only be possible to fund part of the proposed activity. Research Groups should attempt to secure financial and other forms of support from other sources.

2. For an event where Research Groups are inviting guests from outside the UK they should state in their application the name of the intended speaker, otherwise the application will be returned for further details, and this may delay the award. Joint applications from Research Groups are encouraged, but normally one group will take the lead and agree to be the point of contact.
3. Grants are not awarded for attendance at the RGS-IBG Annual International Conference, or for any other activity normally associated with the Annual Conference or at the AAG annual meeting. Grants may be awarded for events that are held immediately before or after the Annual Conference.
4. If a Research Group applies for funding for support of members' attendance at other conferences/meetings/seminars etc., they are encouraged to use as open and fair a method as possible for competitive onward distribution of funds...The method that the Group intends to apply should be specified with the application. Some suggested models are outlined in Section 5.5 below.
5. All things being equal, priority will be given to activities likely to benefit a large proportion of the membership of the Research Group. Priority will also be given to travel and registration costs that benefit those early in their career and the unwaged, who normally have much greater difficulties in obtaining funds for seminars, travel, etc.
6. Groups may not apply retrospectively for funding for activities that have already taken place.
7. Groups may apply for more than one grant or loan, but should indicate their priority.
8. Please note that it is very unlikely that large sums will be allocated to the same Group in successive years.
9. Before making their application, Research Groups are encouraged to look at the balance of funding in their Research Group account. These funds should be used to support the activity where possible and at the very least match the funding being sought from the Society.
10. The amount of funding in the research group account on 31 December each year will be taken into account by the assessors when making the award. If Research Groups are unable to provide the balance of the account on 31 December, this will be estimated from the Research Group annual reports and accounts. If substantial funds have been taken from the research group account since December it should be stated on the form.
11. Research Groups are encouraged to publish the results of the funded activity in one of the Society's publications. If the resulting publication is a book, the RGS-IBG Book Series should be offered the work first, subject to any existing contractual agreements the Group may have with other publishers.
12. RHED supports the Postgraduate Forum Annual Mid-Term Conference each year, and a grant application is not required for this activity.
13. A report on the use of the grant must be submitted to RHED by 31 July of the year following the award. No additional awards will be made to that Research Group until the report is received.
14. The application form should be used. The application form may be found on the Research Groups website, [W www.rgs.org/ResearchGroups](http://www.rgs.org/ResearchGroups) and is normally updated in August each year in advance of the 31 October deadline for applications.
15. The deadline for submission of applications for grants or loans is 31 October each year, and they should be made to: Dr Sarah Evans, Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) 1 Kensington Gore, London. Tel: 020 7591 3027; E rhed@rgs.org
16. Late applications for grants will not normally be considered.



17. A sub-group of Research and Higher Education Committee members will assess the awards (normally at least 4 members) and results will be known approximately 2-3 weeks after the closing date, subject to the volume of applications received.

5.4.1 Additional information for Groups making applications

Research Group committees may find the following additional information helpful in writing their grant application:

- Grants tend to be awarded for sums in the range of £250 to £500 each year. Occasionally, higher amounts are awarded for significant projects of demonstrable benefit to the Research Group and members.
- Applications should include a full budget for the project/event, not just a budget for the portion to which grant funds will be applied if successful.
- The Society cannot offer free rooms except in exceptional circumstances (where it is a jointly branded and funded event, negotiated with the Head of RHED). Similarly, catering costs must always be covered. Research Groups must include the (discounted) price for these in their event budget. Please contact RHED@rgs.org for more information. Meeting rooms will continue to be available to Research Groups, e.g. for committee/project meetings, on a half-day basis on Mondays and Fridays (including AV where required) subject to availability, up to three times per year. Fellows and members may also choose to use the Members' Room for small meetings.
- It is expected that a per capita charge will be made for most events, covering at least the direct catering costs, unless free access can be fully justified (e.g. an event specifically for postgraduates/early-career or low-income communities). In addition to helping cover event costs, a per capita registration fee can help to build commitment to attend the event.
- Research Group grants should not be used directly to fund: committee expenses or travel associated with the event; drinks receptions. Where these costs are included in the event budget, the Research Group should indicate how the grant money will be ring-fenced to be applied to other costs.
- Research Group grants should not normally be used to fund the attendance of more than one key-note speaker per event, though the Research Group can choose to invite more and cover their costs in other ways.
- RHED would be very pleased to write letters of support for matching funds applications to other organisations throughout the year, and encourages Research Groups to consider this method of funding well ahead of the annual deadline for Research Group grants.
- RHED welcomes opportunities to discuss partnership opportunities for dissemination activities and any other follow-on activities relating to Research Group events.

Examples of past successful applications

The following table summarises some of the recent applications made by Research Groups that were very highly rated by reviewers, in terms of value for money and breadth of reach to the Research Group membership and wider research community.

Application	Award made, and application of funds	What was especially successful about the application (strong reviewer feedback)
Practising historical geography conference for undergraduates and postgraduates (awarded multiple years – annual event has been running for 15+ years) Historical Geography Research Group	£300-400 awarded per event Funds applied to: Invited speaker travel costs; catering. Delegates pay a small fee to attend, and HGRG contributes some of own funds.	Long-running successful event with proven model and format. Strong support from HGRG community, including offers of in-kind assistance (e.g. free rooms) from departments hosting the workshop. Relationship of event to other HGRG activities, e.g. undergraduate dissertation award prize winners speak at the event.

Application	Award made, and application of funds	What was especially successful about the application (strong reviewer feedback)
Postgraduate workshop on development topics, e.g. fieldwork, careers... (multiple years – annual event) Developing Areas Research Group	£300-500 awarded per event Funds applied to: catering, room hire and cost of speaker travel (where necessary). Delegates pay a small fee to help cover costs etc.	Innovative session formats and structure. Involvement of development practitioners as well as academic contacts. Use of PG representatives on committee to help organise the event & select themes. Dissemination of event discussions and contribution to DARG publications post-event (especially to those who could not attend).
Annual away weekend Participatory Geographies Research Group	£200-£400 awarded per event Funds applied to: bursaries for attendance by low-income participants, awarded on a competitive basis.	Encouragement of low income and non-academic participants in RG activities. Innovative format for combining academic work with other participatory methods and theories.
One-day symposium (awarded 2015 for 2016 event) Space, Sexualities and Queer Research Group	£450 awarded Funds applied to: Bursaries for attendance by postgraduates; SSQRG also provided own funds; in-kind support from hosting institution (room hire, admin support). Delegates pay a fee to cover catering and remaining costs.	Clear focus as an impact event (links with practitioner networks beyond academia; geographers/academics beyond the UK. Good early career focus and support.

5.5 Suggested funding model for onward distribution of Research Group funds and grants

In addition to funding their own activities, Research Groups are encouraged to support the activities of their members in the wider discipline. One way of undertaking this is to provide onward funding for events and/or postgraduate travel bursaries. The examples below are drawn from the Historical Geography Research Group, Social and Cultural Geography Research Group and Participatory Geographies Research Group:

HGRG funding policy for conferences and seminar programmes

As based upon the aims of the group as stated in the HGRG Strategic Plan (1993-1996).

1. to initiate and foster research in the field of historical geography; to promote discussion by means of meetings and conferences; to further co-operation between cognate disciplines and organisations: and to effect publication of monographs, collected papers and discussion materials.

2.3.5 The HGRG will provide contributions to financial support for conference organisation and for attendance by its members at such gatherings. It will do so through a mix of direct grant-in-aid paid directly to conference organisers and for postgraduates to attend conferences, and loans for organisational or other conference-related purposes.

2.4.2 HGRG will seek to provide opportunities for postgraduate students through support for conference attendance and through organising conferences and other gatherings in which postgraduate students will be the principal participants and beneficiaries.

Agreed funding priorities have been identified in accordance with this plan. These are:

- i. prioritising funds to aid postgraduates
- ii. prioritising meetings which are open to all members of HGRG
- iii to offer support to members without access to financial support
- iv. to promote work of high academic standard across all parts of the sub-discipline.

It is unlikely that HGRG funds will be made available for supporting commercially published works, or closed seminar programmes. In addition it is the intention of the group to contribute to, rather than solely meet, conference costs.

HGRG Guidelines for Conference and Seminar Programme Funding

Organisers may apply for grants or loans up to a maximum of £250.

a. Funding Regulations

- i. the applicant should be a HGRG member;
- ii. all publicity materials and resultant publications acknowledge HGRG support;
- iii. the organising committee give an assurance that any money not used will be returned;
- iv. the grant is used to fund the travel costs and conference attendance;
- v. a minimum of £50 is used to fund postgraduate attendance;
- vi. all funded postgraduates join the HGRG;
- vii. conference organisers provide a financial statement regarding use of the money;
- viii. conference organisers provide a short conference report of 300 words for the HGRG newsletter.

b. Grant application procedures

Application forms are available from the Secretary and on the HGRG website (follow the link above). Please complete the application in typescript throughout.

c. Grant application deadline

The deadline for receipt of grant applications is 1 December each year.

d. Notification of response

All applications for support will be discussed at the annual autumn committee meeting which takes place on or near 20 October. Applicants should normally expect to hear the outcome of their bid within two weeks of the autumn committee meeting.

e. Award procedure

Once the Honorary Secretary has received confirmation that the applicant can comply with the regulations, the grant will be sent to the applicant by the Hon. Treasurer.

f. Deadline for reports

A financial statement regarding use of awarded funds should be sent to the Honorary Treasurer by 1 September.

A conference report of 300 words for the HGRG newsletter should be sent to the Honorary Publicity Officer by 1 June, 1 October, or 1 February depending on which falls first after the conference has taken place.

In addition the committee encourages all those who receive conference funding from HGRG to consider the HGRG Research Series as a possible publication outlet for conference material. The Honorary Editor of the research series welcomes enquiries in this respect.

HGRG Guidelines for Postgraduate Support Scheme

Postgraduates may apply to HGRG for support for travel to research sources or conferences up to a maximum of £100. Priority may be given to those whose grants do not include provision for conference fees or travel.

a. Funding regulations

- i. those applying for financial support are HGRG members;
- ii. that alternative sources of funding should be investigated;
- iii. those who have received HGRG support are not eligible to make further applications

b. Application procedures

Application forms are available from the Secretary and on the HGRG website. Please complete the application in typescript throughout. Applicants may, if they wish, paste word-processed text on to the printed application form or they may reproduce the entire form in a convenient word-processing package, provided that the layout and content of the printed version are followed exactly.

c. Application deadline

The deadline for receipt of grant applications is 1 April each year..

d. Notification of response

All applications for postgraduate support are discussed at the annual spring committee meeting which takes place in April/May. Applicants should normally expect to hear the outcome of their bid within two weeks of the spring meeting.

e. Award procedure

Once the Secretary has received confirmation that the applicant can comply with the regulations, the grant will be sent to the applicant by the Treasurer.

f. **Deadline for reports**

A financial statement regarding use of awarded funds should be sent to the Honorary Treasurer by 1 September.

A report of 300 words should be sent to the Honorary Publicity Officer by 1 June, 1 October, or 1 February depending on which falls first after the conference has taken place or research been completed.

PyGyRG model for awarding conference attendance support

This funding is awarded to a limited number of delegates (pre-defined according to budget) attending events organised by PyGyRG.

Applicants are asked to provide a page-long summary of their research interests and what they feel they will gain from the weekend. Applications will be selected which most closely reflect the goals and orientation of the Working Group, and these will be ranked as follows:

- i. Postgraduate or unwaged
- ii. Holds junior academic temporary post with no source of funding
- iii. Holds junior permanent post with no source of funding
- iv. Holds senior academic post with no source of funding

SCGRG model for awarding conference travel & accommodation support bursaries

Bursaries cover advance train tickets and local hostel accommodation.

Participants are asked to apply for bursaries at the same time as submitting paper abstracts.

Priority will be given to participants selected to present papers, those without conference funding available from research councils and departments, those who are unfunded or currently unwaged, and those who are members of the SCGRG (though potential participants can register for membership at no cost).

Rather than allocate fixed bursaries, we plan to distribute the amount requested to all those eligible. If this does not cover full costs for all eligible individuals, the bursaries will be allocated as a proportion of the total claim.

6 Committees of the RGS-IBG

6.1 Research and Higher Education Committee

The Research and Higher Education Committee is a standing committee of the Society's Council and is responsible for the Society's research and higher education relationships and activities. The Committee is chaired by the Vice President for Research & Higher Education, assisted by the Honorary Secretary for Research & Higher Education.

6.2 Research Groups Sub-Committee

The Research Groups sub-committee (a sub-committee of the RGS-IBG Research and Higher Education Committee) meets twice a year in October and March. From 2017, the meeting in the autumn is usually set on the same day as the Research and Higher Education Committee and ordinarily starts at 14:30. The meeting in the spring will be on the same day as the Research Groups' Forum (see section 6.2.3). The Chair of the Research Groups Sub-Committee is the Honorary Secretary for Research & Higher Education. The Secretary of the Research Groups Sub-Committee is the RHED Professional Officer. Additional members include the Head of RHED; the elected postgraduate representative member of Council (usually the Chair of the Postgraduate Forum); and the Chairs, Secretaries or Treasurers of each of the Research Groups or their nominee. Ex officio members are: the Vice President for Research & Higher Education; and the Chair of the Annual Conference.

6.2.1 Role of the Research Groups Sub-Committee

The Research Groups Sub-Committee reports to the Research and Higher Education Committee. It is responsible for: liaison with Research Groups and, when appropriate, providing recommendations for the approval of Limited Life Working Parties/Groups and new Research Groups. It serves to encourage and support Research Groups in their activities and is therefore also responsible for liaison with Research Groups with respect to the planning of the Annual Conference and the development of research seminars, conferences and meetings. The Research Groups Sub-Committee is intended to be both reactive and proactive with Research Groups and Limited Life Working Parties/Groups in order to enhance the role of both groups in the Society.

The RGS-IBG will allow claims for travel expenses from one representative of each Research Group to attend the meetings of the Research Groups Sub-Committee. Forms for reimbursement are distributed at the meeting. Only advance-booked economy fares (or their cost equivalent) will be reimbursed (please investigate two single fares as they may be cheaper). Day travel fares on the tube will not be reimbursed – rather single tube fares. For use of your own car, the Society pays a standard rate. Taxi fares are admissible only in specific circumstances with prior approval, e.g. where public transport facilities are unavailable or impractical. All costs must be documented with receipts. If you are unsure, contact RHED for advice, E RHED@rgs.org.

Travel costs are significant. All Committee representatives attending meetings are strongly encouraged to find the cheapest options for travel to the extent possible.

6.2.2 Research Group Representation on the Research and Higher Education Committee

The Research Group committee members of the Research Groups Sub-Committee elect from among themselves three representatives to become members of the Research and Higher Education Committee. These individuals must be members or Fellows of the RGS-IBG. Each representative serves for three years with appointments offset so that one new representative is elected each year.

The representatives must attend all the meetings of the Research and Higher Education Committee of which there are two per year (usually October and March).

Any individual who is at the time of the election a Treasurer, Secretary or Chair of a Research Group can be nominated for election. Each nomination must be accompanied by a statement from the person being nominated of no more than 75 words stating why the candidate is interested in being nominated.

The representatives are expected to engage fully with all issues considered by the Research and Higher Education Committee, and will be particularly called upon for input on issues relating to Research Groups.



Representatives are also called upon by the Head of RHED to assist with Group related activities throughout the year, including reviewing Research Group grant applications.

The deadline for nominations is 28 February each year. Elections are held if there is more than one candidate. Currently serving Chairs, Secretaries and Treasurers of Research Groups have one vote each in the election; nominees may vote for themselves. The election is organised by the Chair and Secretary of the Research Groups Sub-Committee, and votes are received in confidence.

6.2.3 Research Groups' Forum

The Society hosts an annual forum meeting, usually in March each year, for representatives of the Research Groups to meet and network with each other. The purpose of the forum is to share best practice, gather Research Group input to Society initiatives, and to encourage greater networking and cross-working opportunities between the Groups. This Forum has replaced one of the three annual Committee meetings since 2013.

6.3 Inclusion and Diversity Advisory Group (IDAG)

The Inclusion and Diversity Advisory Group (IDAG) is a standing Committee of the RGS-IBG Council. In 2002 it took over the role of the former Equal Opportunities Working Group which had acted as a forum for advising on and monitoring the Society's initiatives for equal opportunities. The terms of reference and planned activities for IDAG were approved by Council in April 2003.

6.3.1 Social Inclusion, Diversity and Equal Opportunity Statement

The Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers) is committed to the promotion of social inclusion, diversity and equal opportunities throughout the geographical professions and is opposed to direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of social class, race, ethnic origin, sex, age, religion, sexual preference, and disability. Equality of opportunity is a matter which concerns the full range of activities and membership of the Society. The Society seeks to implement a policy to meet its commitment through the development of best practice in the field. To achieve this, the Society has established an Inclusion and Diversity Advisory Group (formerly Equal Opportunities Working Group). This is responsible to Council through an Inclusion and Diversity Officer (a member of Council) for the reviewing of social inclusion, diversity and equal opportunity policies and issues, and for the making of recommendations, in line with its "Terms of Reference".

6.3.2 Inclusion and Diversity Advisory Group – Terms of Reference

Role

The Inclusion and Diversity Advisory Group (IDAG) is responsible to Council through an Inclusion and Diversity Officer (a member of Council) for reviewing policies of social inclusion, diversity and equal opportunity, and the identification and dissemination of best practice in the field, across the range of activities of the Society.

Functions

1. To assist in the development and implementation of a social inclusion, diversity and equal opportunities policy within the Society and so to assist in the promotion of social inclusion, diversity and equal opportunities across the geographical professions.
2. To conduct regular review exercises concerning the composition of membership of the Society and of its Committees, in order to provide information with which to evaluate the implementation of social inclusion, diversity and equal opportunity policies.
3. To review issues of recruitment, training and promotion within the geographical professions with respect to social inclusion, diversity and equal opportunities, and to bring forward recommendations for the consideration of the Council.
4. To review developments in the geographical curriculum with respect to issues of social inclusion, diversity and equal opportunity, and to bring forward recommendations for consideration by Council.

5. To assist in reviewing the publications of the Society with respect to issues of social inclusion, diversity and equal opportunity, and to assist in the development of the means of achieving the implementation of inclusion, diversity and equal opportunities in publication policies and practices.
6. To liaise with conference organisers over social inclusion, diversity and equal opportunities issues including the adequate provision of child care facilities and access for people with disabilities.

6.3.3 Functions of the Inclusion and Diversity Advisory Group

In keeping with its terms of reference, the IDAG has three functions:

- To review the Society's current activities in terms of inclusion, diversity and equal opportunities;
- To advise Council on inclusion, diversity and equal opportunities in respect of the Society's current activities;
- To advise Council on new initiatives that enhance equality of opportunity in the Society's operations.

The first of these roles is intended to be relatively 'light touch' and solely focuses upon issues of inclusion, diversity and equal opportunities as they relate to the activities of the RGS-IBG. Greatest emphasis is placed on the group's advisory capacity, for example in alerting Council to new government policies and examples of good practice in terms of social inclusion, accessibility and equal opportunities. The IDAG remit does not include equal opportunity issues relating to the terms and conditions of RGS-IBG employees and their sub-contractors. These matters are dealt with through the personnel procedures of the Society.

IDAG is chaired by a member of Council and reports to Council. IDAG is an advisory committee and its minutes are reported to Council accompanied by recommendations for endorsement or action by Council. IDAG also responds to guidance from Council. IDAG fulfils an advisory function and the members are strongly aware that the group does not have a remit to involve itself in the management of the Society. The Officers and Divisions of the Society will implement initiatives concerned with inclusion and diversity, and will monitor their outputs. The IDAG will fulfil an advisory function and thus the members of the group work in partnership with the Society's Divisions and Officers.

7 The RGS-IBG Annual International Conference

7.1 Proposing sessions for the Annual Conference

Procedures and deadlines for submission of sessions and abstracts for the Annual International Conference are announced on the conference web site: www.rgs.org/AC20** (corresponding year). Research Groups are usually advised of the process in the Committee meeting held in October each year.

The timeline of activities for Research Groups to propose sessions for conference is ordinarily as follows:

- *16 months before the conference:* the Conference Chair is elected by the Fellowship at the Society's AGM (first Monday in June)
- *12 months before the conference:* the Conference Chair outlines their ideas about the conference theme for input and discussion by Research Groups
- *10 months before the conference:* RHED issues a Call for Sessions and Papers to the wider geographical and related communities. All Research Groups are included in this call. Research Groups announce a call for sponsored sessions. Session convenors apply to relevant Research Groups for sole or joint sponsorship of their session at the next conference, or choose to propose a session independently. Research Groups liaise among themselves to agree sole and joint sponsorship. Once sponsorship is agreed, Research Groups are asked to submit a copy of the Call for Papers (CfP) for the sessions to RHED, to allow advertising of the CfP on the conference website, and to provide an early view of sessions for planning purposes.
- *8-9 months before the conference:* A listing of known Calls for Papers is advertised on the conference website for prospective delegates. Session convenors receive proposals for papers directly from prospective delegates.
- *7 months before the conference:* The deadline for session proposals to be submitted to the conference organisers by session convenors, following the process announced on the conference website. The Call for Papers remains open for contributions to open sessions (convened by the conference organisers). The Call for Papers closes, and 'open' papers sessions convened on a range of themes are added to the conference timetable.
- *5-6 months before the conference:* The conference organisers confirm acceptance of sessions and papers and commence the conference timetabling process.
- *4-5 months before the conference:* A provisional programme is made available to Research Group Chairs/Secretaries, inviting feedback about potential clashes or other timetabling issues. Wherever possible, the conference organisers will accommodate these requests. The updated provisional programme is then published to the conference website ahead of the 'early-bird' registration deadline for participants to view.

7.1.1 Guidelines for participation at the Annual Conference

Research Groups are encouraged to take note of the following guidelines for participation at the Annual Conference, which are designed to encourage wide participation and reduce programme clashes for delegates with multiple commitments.

Contributions by individuals

An individual may not normally make more than two substantive contributions to the conference programme. A substantive contribution includes:

- paper or poster presentation (of any length)
- panel member
- discussant or any session contribution of another kind.

Contributions to sessions which are not included in this limit are:

- session organiser, chair or facilitator
- non-presenting co-author.

For timetabling purposes, a substantive contribution is defined as one where the individual concerned needs to be present in the session room, and so can include session organiser if necessary. For individuals proposing multiple

co-authored papers, an alternative presenter must be clearly nominated at the time of submitting the session/paper. No official limit is placed on the number of times an individual can be chair of a session, but the conference organisers may not always be able to schedule sessions to prevent timetable conflicts.

The conference organisers will do their best, but may not always be able to schedule sessions to prevent clashes in these 'other' cases. Additional contributions to conference by a single individual will be considered on a case by case basis.

Sessions

A conference session may not normally occupy more than two timeslots in the conference programme. Any session organiser who thinks they will need more than two timeslots is encouraged to contact the conference organisers early on to discuss this. A "timeslot" is defined as a period of time (see timings below) during which a room or other location is allocated to a particular activity (e.g. a session or other conference activity).

Innovative session formats are strongly encouraged in order to maximise the time and space available, e.g. interactive short papers, panel presentations, roundtable discussions, walking tours, gallery visits etc. Examples of these session formats and how to organise them are described on the conference website.

Session organisers are encouraged to consider more varied formats to allow for more discussion, but should ensure that they have sufficient confirmed contributors to allow the session to go ahead if one or two withdraw. For paper sessions, the conference organisers will consider those with four papers provided there are contingencies for replacing papers should any of the papers be withdrawn. For sessions with fewer than five papers, all presenters must register by the early-bird registration deadline so that the session can be confirmed as going ahead for the programme.

There are twelve unique timetable slots across the three days of conference, with three lunchtime/plenary timeslots in addition:

Session one	9am to 10:40am
Session two	11:10am to 12:50pm
Lunch/plenary	1:10pm to 2:25pm
Session three	2:40 to 4:20pm
Session four	4.50pm to 6:30pm
Evening	Usually 6:45 to 8.30pm

7.2 Research Group session quota

The creation of the annual conference programme requires conference organisers to schedule plenary lectures and sessions, Research Group sponsored sessions, independently proposed sessions, and open sessions of papers that are convened by conference organisers, alongside Research Group AGMs, Journal-sponsored lectures, receptions and other activities.

Research Groups are limited to a quota of timeslots in the programme. In doing so, the conference organisers are attempting to:

- create a balanced programme representing the breadth of Research Group interests and the conference theme for that year
- reduce the likelihood of timetable clashes and difficulties created by multiple Research Group commitments in simultaneous timeslots
- maintain, within reason, a practical limit to the number of concurrent sessions scheduled, in order to keep costs (room & AV hire etc.) within budget for the conference.

Each Research Group is allocated a quota of timeslots within the conference programme. Research Groups may sponsor sessions solely or jointly with other Research Groups, but in either case sponsorship of a session timeslot counts towards their total quota as one session timeslot (i.e., there are no 'half' session timeslots). The number of timeslots allocated to each Research Group is announced at the October committee meeting each year, before the



conference's Call for Sessions is announced. The allocation of timeslots is currently 12 per Research Group, with a timeslot for an AGM meeting in addition.

If Research Groups exceed their quota of sponsored timeslots, for example because the sessions proposed elicit more paper submissions than can be fitted into one or two timetable slots, they are asked to contact the conference organisers to request additional space in the programme. Where additional sessions can be allowed in the conference programme, the conference organisers cannot always guarantee that the timetabling process will be able to prevent clashes between Research Group sponsored sessions. In a limited number of cases, there may also be timetable clashes for individual people if they are involved in more than one session. However, every effort will be made to reduce the likelihood of significant clashes (e.g. where people might appear in two places at once, or a clash of sessions on similar topics).

Research Groups are asked to take responsibility for encouraging session organisers to advertise their CfPs widely, to continue encouraging participation from early-career researchers and international delegates, and to consider alternative formats for sessions and presentations to enable an environment in which greater interaction and discussion is possible (this remains a key piece of feedback from delegates). In particular Research Groups are encouraged to make the process for requesting sponsorship of sessions open – advertise it clearly on your website and via your mailing lists at the earliest opportunity to give session organisers enough time to announce their CfPs.

7.2.1 Distance presentations

A small number of sessions containing Skype or other distance presentations can usually be supported, but must be agreed with the conference organisers in advance so they can be scheduled for appropriate technical support. (The special technical support includes improved network access, two screens/projectors to allow the speaker to be shown alongside their presentation, and dedicated technical assistance during the session.)

7.2.2 Announcement of Calls for Papers for Research Group sponsored sessions

Session organisers are encouraged to send their Calls for Papers to the conference organisers to be added to the conference website.

RHED also tries to monitor relevant mailing lists and gather Calls for Papers that have not been sent directly, to add them to the conference website on behalf of the session organisers. Information about session sponsorship by Research Groups is generally not added unless that information has been verified by a member of the Research Group Committee – Research Groups are encouraged to let the conference organisers know their list of supported sessions as soon as possible.

Research Group Committees are encouraged to monitor the conference website closely to see what other sessions may be proposed for the conference in similar themes.

7.3 Research Group Guests

To encourage participation in the RGS-IBG Annual International Conference from non-geographers based in the UK, and from both geographers and non-geographers from overseas who may have difficulties in paying their registration fee, each Research Group is entitled to request complimentary guest registration totalling six days.

The six days may be applied as the Research Group sees fit, for example, two guests attending for three days, or six guests each attending for one day). No part days are allowed. Guests who are nominated for 1 or 2-day registrations have the option of upgrading their registration at a concessionary rate.

The conference will pay for registration fees only. Guest(s), or their sponsoring Research Group, should pay for their own travel, accommodation and other costs of attending the conference. If the nominated guest has already paid for their own registration at the time of being awarded a guest pass, RGS-IBG will refund the fee paid in full.

Names of the guests may be printed in the conference programme book or listed on the conference website. If circumstances for a guest change after the application is submitted and approved, Research Groups must inform the RGS-IBG promptly.

Where a Research Group does not use its full allocation of guest passes, they may be offered to other Research Groups which may be over-subscribed for guest passes, on a competitive basis. Final approval of the distribution of unallocated guest passes lies with the Head of Research and Higher Education.

Final approval lies with the Head of Research and Higher Education (RHED).

For more information or advice, contact **E** RHED@rgs.org.

Criteria for applications

- 1) Nominated guests must be making a substantive contribution to the conference programme, e.g. presenting a conference paper, acting as session panellist or discussant, or convening a conference session.
- 2) If the nominated guest is from the UK, they must not be a geographer or a member of a university geography department.
- 3) If the nominated guest is based overseas:
 - a) For EU transition states, the global South and other economically less-developed countries, nominations may be made for either geographers or non-geographers
 - b) For developed countries (including but not limited to, North America, Canada, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand and members of the EU) nominations may only be made for those who are not geographers or members of university geography departments.
- 4) Research Groups must inform the nominated guest of the financial arrangements and scope of the guest pass prior to submitting their application to avoid any misunderstandings.
- 5) Current or recent Research Group committee members are not eligible for Research Group guest passes.
- 6) Applications cannot be accepted for those who do not fulfil all the above criteria.

Submitting applications

Applications should be sent by the Chair of the Research Group or another Committee representative using the Research Group Guest Application Form to: RHED, Royal Geographical Society (with IBG), 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AR; **E** RHED@rgs.org.

Applications submitted directly by conference session organisers or delegates will not be considered.

Copies of the form are available from RHED@rgs.org and are posted on the Research Groups website at <http://www.rgs.org/ResearchGroups> when Annual Conference online registration opens.

Consideration process

- RHED/conference organiser will consider applications as soon as possible after submission, aiming to provide a response to the Research Group within two weeks of receipt of the application.
- If a Research Group is over-subscribed and is submitting additional guests for consideration, applications should be submitted in priority order.
- In the event of there being a problem with the application, the Head of Research and Higher Education will contact the Research Group representative who submitted the application.
- Where an application for guest passes is successful, RHED/conference organiser will notify the Research Group representative who made the application, and then contact the guest directly to arrange for the registration paperwork to be completed. If the Research Group does not want RHED/conference organiser to contact the guest directly, please make this clear in the application form.
- Where an application for a guest pass is unsuccessful, RHED/conference organiser will advise the Research Group representative who submitted the form, and the Research Group will be responsible for communicating this to the prospective guest.

8. Useful information for Committees

8.1 Annual timeline of deadlines and events

RHED provides Research Groups with an annual timeline of key deadlines and events, which is updated regularly. For the latest version, please visit www.rgs.org/ResearchGroups.

8.2 Contact information for Research Groups

A full list of the active Research Groups (*Correct as at 18 September 2017*) is as follows:

Research Group		Current website or page on RGS-IBG website
BRG	Biogeography Research Group	www.rgs.org/BRG
CGWG	Carceral Geography Working Group	https://carceralgeography.com/
CCRG	Climate Change Research Group	http://www.rgs-ccrg.org.uk/
CMWG	Coastal & Marine Working Group	https://coastalmarineresearchgroup.wordpress.com/
DARG	Developing Areas Research Group	http://www.darg.rgs.org/
DGWG	Digital Geographies Working Group	http://www.digitalrgs.org/
EGRG	Economic Geography Research Group	http://www.egrgrgs.org/
EnGRG	Energy Geographies Research Group	http://www.energygeographies.org/
FGWG	Food Geographies Working Group	https://foodgeographies.wordpress.com/
GFGRG	Gender and Feminist Geographies Research Group	http://www.gfgrg.org/
GIScRG	Geographical Information Science Research Group	https://quantile.info/giscrg/
GCYFRG	Geographies of Children, Youth & Families Research Group	https://gcyfrg.wordpress.com/
GJRG	Geographies of Justice Research Group	http://research.ncl.ac.uk/geographiesofjustice/
GHRG	Geography of Health and Wellbeing Research Group	https://ghwrg.wordpress.com/
GLTRG	Geography of Leisure & Tourism Research Group	http://qltrg.org.uk/
HERG	Higher Education Research Group	http://www.herg.rgs.org/
HGRG	Historical Geography Research Group	https://hgrg.org.uk/
HPGRG	History & Philosophy of Geography Research Group	https://hpgrg.org.uk/
PYGYWG	Participatory Geographies Research Group	http://www.pygyrg.co.uk/
PERG	Planning & Environment Research Group	https://planningenvironment.org/
PolGRG	Political Geography Research Group	https://polgrg.wordpress.com/
PopGRG	Population Geography Research Group	http://popgeog.org/
PGF	Postgraduate Forum	http://www.pgf.rgs.org/
QMRG	Quantitative Methods Research Group	https://quantile.info/2014/09/30/quantitative-methods-research-group/
RACE	Race, Culture and Equality Working Group	https://raceingeography.org/

RGRG	Rural Geography Research Group	https://www.dur.ac.uk/geography/rgrg/
SCGRG	Social & Cultural Geography Research Group	http://www.scgrg.rgs.org/
SSQRG	Space, Sexualities & Queer Research Group	http://www.ssqrg.rgs.org/
TGRG	Transport Geography Research Group	https://tgrg.wordpress.com/
UGRG	Urban Geography Research Group	http://urban-geography.org.uk/

8.3 Royal Geographical Society (with IBG): Research and Higher Education Division (RHED)

All correspondence relating to the management of Research Groups should ordinarily be sent to RHED@rgs.org.
Phone: +44 (0) 207 591 3027.

9 The Society's Policy on advocacy, lobbying, campaigning and activism

Society's Council, December 2008

9.1 Background

The Society's Council considered the Society's position on advocacy, lobbying, campaigning and activism at the Council meetings in June 2008 and December 2008. These activities are clearly differentiated from the Society providing access to information that might better inform research or policy, or better educate the public and teachers, as an impartial, balanced, independent and authoritative source.

The discussion took note of the guidance issued by the Charities' Commission on campaigning and political activity by charities, and of the ethos, purpose and governance of the Society. The Society is not a campaigning organisation; the manner in which it has built its standing over 175 years as a learned society is by informing people through promoting, discussing and disseminating knowledge.

Under Charity Commission guidelines¹ the Society cannot exist for a political purpose, the Society cannot give support or funding to a political party, and the Society must remain independent and ensure that any involvement it has with political parties is balanced and non-partisan. Trustees must not allow the charity to be used as a vehicle for the expression of the political (personal or party political) views of any individual trustee or staff member or, by extension, any individual member or groups of members. The Charity Commission does allow political campaigning or political activity by charities but only in the context of such activity supporting the delivery of the charitable purposes of the organisation. It is a matter for Trustees of the charity to decide whether and how to engage in such activities and the processes by which to manage that engagement.

The following guidelines, formally approved by the Society's Council in December 2008, apply to the Society; to all staff; and to volunteers, Committee members, Fellows or members who are acting in the name of the Society and/or any of its branches, research groups or any other collective group within the Society.

The guidelines do not apply to individuals who have an association with the Society when they are acting in a personal and individual capacity when, for example, undertaking research, publishing, or presenting at conferences or giving a lecture.

¹ *Speaking out; guidance on campaigning and political activity by charities.* Charity Commission

9.2 Rationale

The Society is establishing these guidelines in the knowledge that advocacy, lobbying, campaigning and activism can present difficulties in a complex organisation with a wide variety of stakeholders. These activities can lead to confusion, lack of a unified voice and can run the risk of misrepresenting and potentially damaging the Society's reputation, brand and standing.

The Society's Trustees have taken the decision therefore of the need to be explicit in managing carefully and/or limiting all such activities that are undertaken in the name of the Society or any one of its many subgroups, branches and networks across the breadth of its membership.

9.3 Guidelines

1. The Society's purpose is to advance geography. It achieves this through supporting research, education and outdoor learning, public engagement and in highlighting evidence for policy. It is on this basis that the Society has charitable status.
2. The Society in its name, and through delegated responsibility to its staff and Trustees, may act as advocate for the position and status of geography in school education and in higher education, including the funding of geography teaching, fieldwork and geographical research, and geography in the curriculum. The Trustees

maintain an overview of such activities within the annual operating plan of the Society and as reported at Council meetings. Delegated responsibility is devolved to the Director in managing such activities.

3. In acting as advocates for the above activities, the Society's delegated responsible staff and Trustees may choose to respond to consultations; lobby ministers, MPs and others responsible for formulating policy; commission and disseminate targeted research (resources permitting); and hold conferences, seminars and other meetings to raise awareness of the issue(s).
4. For issues of deep concern in terms of the position and status of geography this may amount to a 'political campaign' that is planned in advance, fully approved by the Society's Trustees, and monitored in its execution. The Trustees limit such campaigning to support the status, position and funding of geographical education, fieldwork and research. The Trustees do not allow the Society's work, or that of its associated subgroups, to extend to either campaigning or activism on geographical and other issues or in relation to third parties.
5. The Society's Trustees may, from time to time, consider whether the Society wishes to lend its name and weight to the promotion of particular, substantive geographical research findings that are viewed as being of wide public benefit, such as for example, research on climate change. In these instances the Society may publish a position statement that has been approved by the Society's Trustees. The purpose of such a position statement is solely to inform, making use of the Society's authoritative and independent brand. Such statements are not to be used in campaigning or activist activities.
6. The Society does not empower any branch, committee, network, research group, or other group within the Society, or any individual Fellow or member or staff member, to speak in the name of the Society or on behalf of the Society, or to represent the Society's position (or that of any Society sub-group), unless agreed in advance or requested to do so on an agreed topic by the Trustees, the Director, or any person delegated to do so by the Director. This includes speaking to the media on behalf of/in the name of the Society.