



Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia Inc

# Handbook for Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

## Contents

Purpose of the handbook .....	4
About HERDSA .....	4
What is the role of a Special Interest Group (SIG)?.....	4
Establishing a SIG.....	5
Membership of a SIG .....	5
Funds .....	6
Communication .....	6
HERDSA Executive .....	6
A SIG Facebook page .....	7
HERDSA Notices.....	7
SIG web presence .....	7
HERDSA Connect.....	7
Brochures and publicity material .....	7
HERDSA Conference .....	8
Connecting with other scholarly networks and organisations.....	8
Useful contacts .....	8
APPENDIX A .....	9
HERDSA [include name] Special Interest Group.....	9
Terms of Reference .....	9
1. Purpose.....	9
2. Term.....	9
3. Membership .....	9
4. Roles and Responsibilities .....	10
5. Establishing a SIG.....	11
APPENDIX B .....	12
Proposal to establish a HERDSA Special Interest Group (SIG).....	12
SIG Leader* .....	12
SIG co-leader .....	12
SIG co-leader (if applicable).....	13
Policy & Procedures.....	13
SIG Aims (include alignment with HERDSA Strategic Plan) .....	13
Proposed SIG activities & potential funding requirements.....	13

SIG Leader/co-leader signatures (electronic signatures acceptable).....	14
Appendix: SIG Membership - List the names of individuals who have expressed an interest in joining the SIG .....	0
APPENDIX C.....	2
PORTFOLIO ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.....	2
HERDSA BRANCHES .....	2
HERDSA SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGs).....	2
APPENDIX D	
SIG Annual reporting form	

Handbook March 2023

## Purpose of the handbook

This handbook provides new and existing Special Interest Group (SIG) Chairs and Committees with guidelines and information for organising and running a SIG, promoting the aims of HERDSA and adding value to HERDSA membership.

## About HERDSA

The Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia ([HERDSA](#)) is a scholarly society committed to the advancement of higher and tertiary education. It was established in 1972 to promote the development of higher education policy, practice and the study of teaching and learning. HERDSA encourages and disseminates research on teaching and learning and higher education development. It also works to build strong academic communities. The current [constitution](#) was adopted in 2017.

HERDSA works to:

- advance educational policy and practice in the higher education and tertiary sector
- facilitate and promote the enhancement of teaching and learning
- encourage and disseminate research on higher education and tertiary teaching, learning, development, research, leadership and policy matters
- recognise and reward outstanding contributions to higher and tertiary education
- encourage collaboration and the development of professional communities in higher and tertiary education
- assist its members in their ongoing professional development.

## What is the role of a Special Interest Group (SIG)?

A SIG is a group of HERDSA and non-HERDSA individuals who act as a network to pursue scholarly work on furthering the research and development of teaching and learning in higher education. A SIG will focus on a topic of collective interest and create opportunities for dialogue, promote scholarly research on the topic, and provide support to members interested in and engaged in the selected scholarly focus.

## Establishing a SIG

Financial members of HERDSA may establish a SIG if they have capacity to do so. There is a formal procedure for establishing a SIG which involves referring to the SIG Terms of Reference (Appendix A) and submitting a completed SIG Establishment expression of Interest form (Appendix B).

## Membership of a SIG

The HERDSA SIG will comprise the following membership:

- Chair elected by the SIG and endorsed by the HERDSA Executive for a period of two years with the possibility of re-election
- Committee members (comprised of Chair and a representative sample of the membership who will support the Chair in running the SIG): minimum of two people. The Chair and Committee members must be current HERDSA members
- HERDSA members and other individuals interested in the HERDSA SIG
- HERDSA members and other individuals can belong to more than one SIG
- HERDSA members must register for membership of a SIG via their HERDSA Member online Dashboard.
- A HERDSA member can choose to renew their SIG membership annually
- Elections for SIG Chair and other committee roles will take place biennially at the HERDSA conference during the relevant SIG meeting.
- Members, including the Chair, will have voting rights for matters contained within this Terms of Reference Roles and Responsibilities. Decisions will be made by consensus; in the event of any unresolved decisions the decision of the Chair will be final. Members of the SIG who are not financial members of HERDSA will not have voting rights on matters related to HERDSA, as determined by the Chair
- The Chair, by agreement with other members of the HERDSA SIG, may co-opt individuals for specific tasks as required.

The SIG Committee will be accountable for:

- Shaping the strategic direction of the group

- Maintaining communication between SIG members
- Identifying budgetary requirements to run the group, if any, and planning self-sustaining approaches for meeting these needs. The SIG will account for any financial handling to the HERDSA Executive
- Liaising with conference conveners to schedule meeting(s) at the annual HERDSA Conference
- Preparing an annual SIG report for the HERDSA Executive's annual March meeting (see Appendix D).
- Preparing one, 200-word SIG activity report per annum for HERDSA Connect

## Funds

There are no direct funds allocated to SIGs but a SIG Chair can apply to the HERDSA Executive for funds that are related to SIG event costs, catering, speaker costs or similar. Each proposal for funding will be considered individually.

In applying for funding the SIG Committee needs to consider:

- How the event or activity promotes the aims of HERDSA and the SIG
- Value for money

All approved expenditure must be minuted and a record kept.

## Communication

### HERDSA Executive

The HERDSA Executive recognises that the SIGs can connect members and the wider tertiary education community and is keen to foster communication and interaction between SIGs and the Executive. The Networks Portfolio has an Executive member responsible for liaising with the SIG Chairs. For more information on the Network Portfolio Roles and Responsibilities see Appendix C.

The SIGs, through the SIG Chairs, are encouraged to bring issues to the attention of the Executive. This should be done through the SIG Liaison Executive member of the [Networks Portfolio](#).

### **A SIG Facebook page**

A SIG can set up and maintain its own social media presence in alignment with HERDSA's Communication Strategy

### **HERDSA Notices**

The SIG can also use the weekly [HERDSA Notices](#) to promote events. To submit an announcement for this list, complete the online form at <http://www.herdsa.org.au/herdsa-notices> .

### **SIG web presence**

The SIGs have an online presence on the [HERDSA website](#). Here the SIGs can:

- Provide a short overview of the SIG and its purpose

The SIG Chair is responsible for ensuring that the information on the HERDSA website is accurate and up to date. Contact the HERDSA Office to update information ([office@herdsa.org.au](mailto:office@herdsa.org.au) ).

### **HERDSA Connect**

HERDSA Connect (formerly HERDSA News) is a magazine-style publication of HERDSA that provides topical articles on educational research and development programs and activities and keeps members in touch with the HERDSA network. It is published three times a year with a printed version distributed to all HERDSA members and a [digital version](#) available on the HERDSA website. HERDSA Connect will have a dedicated regular space for SIGs. Every December each SIG Chair provides approximately 200 words to the Editor of HERDSA Connect via the SIG Liaison member of the HERDSA Executive. This should include:

- A summary of the year's SIG activities
- News of upcoming activities (having regard for the time delay in publication)
- Significant achievements or accolades of any SIG members
- Any other relevant information
- Name and current contact details of the SIG Chair

### **Brochures and publicity material**

The HERDSA office can provide SIGs with promotional material about HERDSA, HERDSA publications and initiatives including the HERDSA Fellowship Scheme and the HERDSA SoTL modules for display at local events. SIGs may use the HERDSA logo on SIG communications.

## **HEDSA Conference**

The HERDSA conference is the ideal place for SIG Chairs to meet face-to-face with one another and to engage with new and existing members of their own SIG. A session at the conference is allocated to each SIG and its members. This session should be organised through the Networks Portfolio SIG liaison executive member who will liaise with the conference planning committee. Voting for SIG Committee positions takes place at the conference SIG meeting.

## **Connecting with other scholarly networks and organisations**

SIGs can engage with, collaborate with, promote and support the work of other scholarly organisations.

### **Useful contacts**

HERDSA Office – [office@herdsa.org](mailto:office@herdsa.org)

HERDSA Executive - <http://www.herdsa.org.au/about-herdsa/herdsa-executive>

HERDSA Portfolios - <http://www.herdsa.org.au/about-herdsa/committee-chairs>

HERDSA Connect, <https://www.herdsa.org.au/herdsa-news>



## APPENDIX A

### TERMS OF REFERENCE

#### HERDSA [include name] Special Interest Group

#### Terms of Reference

The HERDSA [include name] Special Interest Group has been established by the HERDSA Executive in accordance with the HERDSA Constitution Article 5, Clause c, (iv).

#### 1. Purpose

The HERDSA [include name] Special Interest Group will act as a network for HERDSA members and other interested individuals who are committed to pursuing scholarly work on furthering the research and development of teaching and learning in higher education. Its mission is to create opportunities for dialogue, to promote scholarly research on the topic, and to provide support to HERDSA members interested in and engaged in [name the special interest].

#### 2. Term

These Terms of Reference are effective from 14 March 2023. Review of these Terms is outlined in section 8.

#### 3. Membership

The HERDSA [include name] Special Interest Group will comprise the following membership:

- 3.1 Chair elected by the SIG and endorsed by the HERDSA Executive for a period of two years with the possibility of re-election.
- 3.2 Committee members (comprised of Chair and a representative sample of the membership who will support the Chair in running the SIG): minimum of two people. The Chair and committee members must be current HERDSA members.
- 3.3 HERDSA members and other individuals interested in the HERDSA [include name] Special Interest Group.
- 3.4 HERDSA members and other individuals can belong to more than one SIG.
- 3.5 Each individual HERDSA member can choose to renew their SIG membership annually.
- 3.6 Members, including the Chair, will have voting rights for matters contained within this Terms of Reference Roles and Responsibilities. Decisions will be made by consensus; in the event of any unresolved decisions the decision of the Chair



*A scholarly society for people committed to the advancement of higher and tertiary education*

will be final. Members of the SIG who are not members of HERDSA will not have voting rights on matters related to HERDSA, as determined by the Chair.

- 3.7 The Chair, by agreement with other members of the HERDSA [include name] Special Interest Group, may co-opt individuals for specific tasks as required.

## 4. Roles and Responsibilities

The mission of the HERDSA [include name] Interest Group is compatible with the goals of HERDSA, particularly in terms of promoting cross-disciplinary conversations to create synergies, to facilitate the collaboration of scholars and to support the flow of new findings and applications.

The membership guidelines in section 3 above support the functioning of the SIG. The SIG will be responsible for its own internal organisation.

The HERDSA [include name] Special Interest Group will:

Operate in compliance with the HERDSA Constitution.

- 4.1 Identify national and international [name the special interest] issues, aspects or topics for exploration and the development of new knowledge.
- 4.2 Provide advice and guidance to the HERDSA community on how to pursue [name the special interest] issues, aspects or topics.
- 4.3 Support the development of initiatives and practices, such as smaller projects within the SIG and/or research/collaborative writing groups, to stimulate the advancement of [name the special interest] in higher and tertiary education.
- 4.4 Foster collaboration nationally and internationally to enhance partnerships in the pursuit of advancing higher and tertiary education.

The HERDSA [include name] Special Interest Group committee will be accountable for:

- 4.6 Identifying budgetary requirements to run the group, if any, and planning self-sustaining approaches for meeting these needs. The SIG will account for any financial handling to the HERDSA Executive.
- 4.7 Shaping the strategic direction of the group.
- 4.8 Maintaining internal and external SIG communication.
- 4.9 Liaising with conference conveners to schedule meeting(s) at the annual HERDSA Conference.
- 4.10 Ensuring that the SIG and its activities align with (and do not undermine) the HERDSA Strategic Plan and/or the HERDSA Values.

The role of the Chair of the HERDSA [include name] Special Interest Group is:

To lead the [include name] Special Interest Group, register the SIG with the Executive, organise meetings, liaise with HERDSA Office and Executive, organise fair and transparent elections for committee positions within the SIG and facilitate

induction of new members, report to the HERDSA Executive as required. HERDSA will hold the list of members.

To encourage SIG participants to join HERDSA.

The role of the committee of the HERDSA [include name] Special Interest Group is:

4.12 To support the Chair and committee members of the [include name] Special Interest Group, contribute to decision making and leadership within the SIG.

## **5. Establishing a SIG**

- 5.1 Proposals for establishing a new SIG may be submitted to the HERDSA Executive (via [office@herdsa.org.au](mailto:office@herdsa.org.au)) at any time using the SIG Establishment form (Appendix B).
- 5.2 The Establishment form must include the names, contact information and HERDSA membership status of at least 15 individuals who wish to join the SIG.
- 5.3 The HERDSA executive will evaluate and approve or reject the Establishment proposal.

## **6. Meetings**

- 6.1 Meetings will be held annually at HERDSA Conferences and subsequently convened electronically bi-monthly or as determined by the Chair.
- 6.2 Minutes will be required as evidence of meetings.
- 6.3 Any recommendations for approval which fall outside of this Terms of Reference shall be referred to the HERDSA Executive for consideration.

## **7. Reporting**

The HERDSA [include name] Special Interest Group shall provide a brief report or minutes to the HERDSA Executive annually for its March meeting or as required by the Executive (see Appendix D).

## **8. Amendment, Variation or Review**

- 8.1 These Terms of Reference may be amended, varied or modified after approval by the HERDSA Executive.
- 8.2 These Terms of Reference will be reviewed six months after approval of the Terms of Reference by the HERDSA Executive and subsequently reviewed biannually thereafter.

## APPENDIX B

### SIG ESTABLISHMENT EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FORM

#### Proposal to establish a HERDSA Special Interest Group (SIG)

Please email your completed form to [office@herdsa.org.au](mailto:office@herdsa.org.au).

Note that SIG Leaders and co-leaders must be current financial members of HERDSA. If you are unsure of your membership renewal date, please check with [office@herdsa.org.au](mailto:office@herdsa.org.au).

Proposed Name of SIG: \_\_\_\_\_

Submitted on (date): \_\_\_\_\_

#### **SIG Leader\***

*\*principal liaison between the SIG and the HERDSA Executive*

Title & Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

HERDSA membership current until: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **SIG co-leader**

Title & Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

HERDSA membership current until: \_\_\_\_\_

**SIG co-leader (if applicable)**

Title & Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

HERDSA membership current until: \_\_\_\_\_

**Policy & Procedures**

I/ We have read the HERDSA Special Interest Group Handbook and agree to the procedures and terms of reference described within:

Yes/No \_\_\_\_\_

**SIG Aims (include alignment with HERSDA Strategic Plan)**

**Proposed SIG activities & potential funding requirements**

Details of activity	Frequency	Proposed Dates (if applicable)	Costs

**SIG Leader/co-leader signatures (electronic signatures acceptable)**

Name	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Please complete the appendix below before submitting your proposal.

**Appendix: SIG Membership - List the names of individuals who have expressed an interest in joining the SIG**

#	Name	Email	Affiliation/Institution	HERDSA Member Y/N
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				
17				
18				
19				
20				





## **APPENDIX C**

### **HERDSA NETWORKS PORTFOLIO**

#### **PORTFOLIO ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The primary role of the Networks Portfolio is to grow and enhance interactions and collaborations within the HERDSA community. Branch and regional networks are strongly encouraged within HERDSA and Portfolio responsibilities involve liaising regularly with the branches to support opportunities for shared research, visiting scholar presentations and communicating with other groups and branches. Networking between HERDSA members and with other professional groups occurs through the Special Interest Groups.

#### **HERDSA BRANCHES**

Branches are an important part of the HERDSA community. HERDSA Executive members, within the Network portfolio, have a central role supporting Branch Chairs and developing community between the branches. They are the conduit between the branches and the National Executive, advocating their needs back to the Executive.

This role comprises the following responsibilities:

- Supporting Branch Chairs through the provision of a Branch Chair handbook
- Coordinating roadshows by academic fellows and scholars
- Providing a session at the annual conference for Branch Chairs to meet with the HERDSA executive, particularly the Executive members responsible for the Network Portfolio
- Providing a session at the annual conference for Branch Chairs to meet with their branch members (if requested)
- Liaising with Branch Chairs to:
  - Identify areas of support and presenting these to the National Executive
  - Encourage communication between branches and sharing of ideas/practice
- Compiling a written Branch Report (as part of the Networks Report) for the 3 Executive meetings
- Providing relevant feedback from National Executive meetings

#### **HERDSA SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGs)**

HERDSA encourages the development of Special Interest Groups (SIGs) by facilitating opportunities to meet like-minded colleagues at each HERDSA conference. Members of the Networks portfolio who oversee this activity ensure that HERDSA heightens the potential for collaborative research activities.

Members of the Networks portfolio support the initiation and development of a SIG and actively monitor their progress and research activities. The Networks portfolio is delegated the following responsibilities:

- Running a session at the annual conference on SIGs in which new members are encouraged and new leaders are supported.
- Put out a call for Expressions of Interest prior to the conference to identify potential new SIGs and members.
- Development and maintenance of an online membership form on the SIGs page of the HERDSA website
- Conduct online elections for each SIG's leadership biennially as per election practices in HERDSA Constitution
- Supporting SIG promotion through:
  - HERDSA Notices and HERDSA Connect
  - HERDSA website
  - Facebook page
  - Conference website
  - Conference Guidebook
  - Registration form for interested delegates (to be held at HERDSA stand)
  - Emails/information sheet to conference presenters who wish to lead a SIG for use at conference to invite members
- Liaising with SIG leaders to:
  - Advise on methods of developing a SIG
  - Provide guidance on the Terms of Reference and the criteria for membership
  - Assist with advertising and promotion
  - Inform on conference SIG meeting date and venue
- Submitting and presenting a SIG proposal to the Executive for ratification of the proposed SIG
- Compiling a written SIGs Report (as part of the Networks Report) for the 1 p/a Executive meeting
- Maintaining a HERDSA Special Interest Groups Handbook.

## APPENDIX D

### SIG ACTIVITY REPORT TEMPLATE

(soft copy available on HERDSA SIG website)



**HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH  
AND DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY OF AUSTRALASIA INC**

**PO Box 27, Milperra, NSW 2214 Australia**

**Phone: +61 2 9771 3911 Fax: +61 2 9771 4299**

#### Annual Progress Report by Special Interest Group to HERDSA Executive

<b>Special Interest Group name</b>				
<b>Activities / meetings held</b>	<b>Title of Activity/Presenters</b>	<b>Venue/Location</b>	<b>Number of Attendees</b>	
<b>Activity Outcomes / Impact</b>				
<b>Forthcoming activities</b>				
<b>Cost incurred/managed</b>				
<b>Date of report</b>				