

# Working group guidance

## Introduction

This guidance provides convenors of BISA working groups administrative and funding guidance in line with good practice. It includes a comprehensive set of requirements that must be adhered to as a condition of funding.

## What is a BISA working group?

BISA working groups are an integral part of the Association and are regulated by BISA's Research Sub-Committee with special oversight given to the BISA Secretary, and day-to-day management given to the BISA Director.

Working groups are central to BISA's core mission to support, maintain and develop International Studies in the UK and abroad. Their activities, funded by BISA, encompass research, knowledge exchange, learning and teaching, and professional development. They also foster dialogue both within and beyond academia.

Where practicable, working group funded activity should be presented at the annual BISA conference so it is accessible to all BISA members. To facilitate this, BISA reserves a number of panels for each working group to showcase their research. This is to ensure that the research reaches a broad section of the BISA and international studies community.

Working groups must adhere to all BISA's policies and procedures including on advocacy. These can be found on the Association's website - [www.bisa.ac.uk](http://www.bisa.ac.uk) or by contacting the BISA office on [office@bisa.ac.uk](mailto:office@bisa.ac.uk).

## Administrative guidance and requirements

### A. Membership of working groups

1. Membership of working groups is free and is open to any BISA member including postgraduates (excluding undergraduates and schools). BISA members can sign up to join a Working Group via BISA's [online membership portal](#).
2. Working groups may allow non-members to attend their events if such persons have registered to attend on the BISA working group event

registration form and have paid a nominal fee of £15 per event (or more should the running costs of your event dictate). Events should be set up, and money taken, via our events registration system, Indico. Please speak to the BISA Communications Manager Chrissie Duxson:

[Chrissie.Duxson@bisa.ac.uk](mailto:Chrissie.Duxson@bisa.ac.uk) who will guide you through the process of setting up your first event.

3. Fees collected from non-member attendance at events will be administered by BISA and returned to the working group at the end of the financial year to be used for agreed purposes.
4. Invited non-member plenary speakers are not required to pay.

B. Working group structure:

1. Working groups must have at least ten BISA members to be considered viable.
2. Members of working groups are required to either elect or appoint at least two convenors, and it is recommended that these in turn appoint other members to take on specific responsibilities such as communications and finance. A lead convenor should be identified who will act as the main point of communication with BISA.
3. Convenors are appointed or elected for two years. They may stand for a second term of two years, but must relinquish their post after a fourth year of office. Retiring convenors shall not be eligible for re-election if they have served four years, without first having a two-year break.
4. It is recommended that convenors do not start their terms at the same time, but rather stagger terms of office so that there is some institutional memory and continuity.
5. At least one convenor must be a permanent academic member of staff based at a UK Higher Education Institute (HEI).
6. Convenors must carry out their work with the knowledge and support of their academic institution.
7. Working groups must hold an annual business meeting. Rooms at the annual BISA conference can be booked for this purpose by visiting the [BISA conference pages](#).

C. Requirements and responsibilities of convenors:

1. New convenors must notify the BISA Director on [office@bisa.ac.uk](mailto:office@bisa.ac.uk) within two weeks of their appointment.
2. New convenors will be required to read and acknowledge acceptance of BISA's Conflict of Interest policy, Code of Conduct, Equality and Diversity, and [Privacy Standard](#)
3. Convenors must be BISA members for the entire duration of their appointment.
4. Outgoing convenors are required to write a handover report for the incoming convenor(s) and ensure a copy is sent to the BISA office at [office@bisa.ac.uk](mailto:office@bisa.ac.uk)

D. Communication and publication requirements:

Contact: BISA Communications Manager: Chrissie.Duxson@bisa.ac.uk.

1. Convenors must ensure that a nominated person from their group takes responsibility for keeping the BISA Communications Manager informed of its activities, events and any awards. This information is needed for the BISA newsletter and website.
2. Working groups are encouraged to provide information of their activities for the BISA newsletter.
3. Each working group is provided with a dedicated BISA-supported website section with a landing page, about page and options to add news, events and analysis pages. The working group must maintain and populate these pages and ensure that all group events are advertised on it. This is for the benefit of all BISA members and interested parties. BISA's Communication Manager is available to assist working groups in keeping their web pages updated if they do not wish or do not have the time to create pages themselves. Please send all relevant information and images to the Communications Manager.
4. Working groups should only use the dedicated BISA-supported webpages. They should not create or operate parallel sites.
5. Training materials on how to create webpages are available from the Communications Manager.
6. Working groups are welcome to set up and maintain their own social media accounts but must ensure @MYBISA is tagged when possible.
7. BISA branding must be used by working groups at all their events and on any promotional material. Working group logos and social media avatars are available from the BISA Communication Manager.
8. BISA must be acknowledged and its logo used on any materials that arise from the activities of the working group.
9. Working groups are not permitted to create their own journals or annual publications.
10. Working groups are not allowed to enter into publishing contracts in the name of the group or of BISA without prior BISA approval.

E. Working group archives:

Working group materials form an important part of the institutional memory of the Association. BISA is interested in ensuring that the activities and business of working groups are documented and archived such that future generations of scholars will see the impact the groups have had on the landscape of International Studies research and activity.

Working group end of year reports will be kept by BISA as a record of the activities and the events that have taken place during a particular year. Convenors can also send minutes of the working group annual business meeting or any other materials to the BISA office for archiving.

F. New working groups:

There are separate additional administrative and [funding guidelines for new working groups](#) on our website.

G. Dissolution of working groups:

A working group may be dissolved by the BISA Executive Committee upon the recommendation of the BISA Research Sub-Committee. Any such action will only occur after discussion with the relevant convenors and under the following circumstances:

1. A decision has been taken at the annual business meeting of the working group to cease its activities.
2. Working group membership has fallen to below 10 full BISA members.
3. The working group has not followed the conditions of BISA funding, by failing, for instance, to present an end of year report and/or statement of expenditure.

A decision on dissolution will be communicated to the working group's membership by the BISA Chair or nominee.

Funding guidance, requirements and conditions:

G. Working group activities and expectations:

BISA working groups may apply for annual funding each year. From 2020, the funding round will coincide with the financial year – with allocated funding to be spent in the period April to March. The application process will typically be announced in January. Attempts to secure financial and other forms of support from alternative sources are encouraged, but details must be included in the annual funding application.

Funding is allocated to support a wide range of working group activities. The most common include conferences, seminars and symposia as well as pump-priming support to stimulate or co-ordinate existing research activities. Working groups may also seek funding for events which support the development of learning and teaching in higher education, and for activities that assist career development.

1. It is a requirement that all BISA working groups participate in building the conference programme by both soliciting papers/panels/roundtables and managing their working group section on the programme.
2. Working groups are encouraged to apply for guaranteed panel slots at other similar conferences such as the International Studies Association, the European International Studies Association and any others that are offered to BISA. These slots with details of how to submit proposals will be advertised on our website.

3. Working groups must regularly contribute and publish the results of their funded activity on BISA's website or newsletter.

H. Applying and receiving working group funds:

1. Working group convenors will be notified in January of each year of the amount they can apply for to cover activities in the upcoming financial year.
2. The maximum amount to be applied for is determined by the size of working group membership as of 1 January in the relevant year. Current funding bands are as follows:
  - Groups with up to and including 49 members can apply for £3,000 per annum
  - Groups with between 50 and 59 members inclusive can apply for up to £4,000 per annum
  - Groups with 60 members or more can apply for up to £4,500 per annum
3. Working groups must complete a BISA [online grant application form](#) ensuring they have read the funding guidelines and conditions carefully.
4. Completed forms must reach the BISA office before the deadline, usually the end of February in any given year.
5. BISA's Research Sub-Committee will review all grant applications and make recommendations to the BISA Executive Committee.
6. Convenors will be notified of funding before the start of the financial year.
7. Convenors will be required to accept funding on behalf of the working group after agreeing to all grant conditions
8. Working group funds are held by BISA and expenses will only be reimbursed on receipt of a claim form and accompanying tax invoices.
9. Allocated funding unspent in a given year will not be rolled over to the next financial year unless specific approval has been obtained from the Research Committee.

I. Conditions of funding:

Funding is given on the understanding that the following conditions will be adhered to by working groups over the course of the financial year:

1. Administration – See conditions in C1-4 above
2. Communications: – See conditions in D1-8 above
3. Reporting: – An end of year report including a statement of expenditure must be submitted to the BISA office by the deadline, usually the end of February in any given year. These reports must be submitted on the [correct BISA form](#).

J. What makes a good application?

1. Before applying, convenors are encouraged to read the funding guidelines outlined in section K below. It is important to have all relevant and required information to hand before you complete the online application form.
2. Plans for funding should be well articulated with supporting information including detailed budget requirements. In the decision making process, the Research Sub-Committee is looking for:
  - evidence of outputs connected to funding events
  - inclusivity of working group members
  - impact beyond the academic community

The Research Sub-Committee will prioritise applications that align with BISA's charitable mission to promote innovative and timely research and knowledge exchange in the field of International Studies.

The Sub-Committee reserves the right to support activities at a lower level of funding than that applied for or not to award at all.

#### K. Funding guidelines

1. BISA welcomes funding applications for working group conferences, seminars and symposia, as well as activities that support learning and teaching, and professional development.
2. In deciding upon funding, BISA will give priority to activities which are likely to benefit a large proportion of the Working Group's membership.
3. Funding applications which benefit PhD, ECRs and the unwaged are particularly welcome.
4. BISA welcomes joint working group activities.
5. Working groups may apply for travel and accommodation expenses for up to two invited speakers but the name and title of the speaker must be included in the grant application. Subsistence costs are not permitted (although for some Global South visiting scholars exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Research Sub-Committee). Speaker 'fees' will not be considered.
6. If funds are given to support members' attendance at other conferences, meetings or seminars, working groups are required to use a fair and open method for the competitive onward distribution of funds preferably through a BISA working group webpage.
7. As a norm (although there will be exceptions) all activities should take place in the UK to ensure maximum participation from BISA members.
8. Funding will not be given to pay BISA membership fees, attend the BISA annual conference or BISA PGN events or any other non-working group event.
9. Funding will not be given to support the personal research of members of the group
10. Convenors must seek approval from BISA if there are any changes over the course of the year to the agreed funding allocation. This includes moving funds between budget lines, replacing agreed activities with new

ones and delays to spending caused by the postponement or rescheduling of events. It is especially important that BISA is consulted if any delay results in an event moving from one financial year to the next.

11. Approval must be obtained before any activities take place by contacting BISA on [office@bisa.ac.uk](mailto:office@bisa.ac.uk)

#### L. Eligible and non-eligible costs

BISA will consider the following eligible costs:

- Meeting and event catering such as refreshments (tea, coffee, biscuits) and sandwich/buffet lunches
- Hiring of meeting/event facilities although every effort should be made to negotiate free rooms at universities
- Copying and printing of materials such as handouts/badges although every effort should be made to reduce paper waste
- Travel and accommodation bursaries for BISA members for attendance at working group events. Flight and train tickets must be economy or standard class.
- Funding of travel, accommodation and subsistence expenses for up to two invited speakers. The name and title of the speaker must be included in the grant application.
- Prizes and awards for members, although working groups should recognise that BISA cannot guarantee that such funds will be repeated year after year which may impact on the reputational effect of such awards. Awards must be open to all working group members and advertised on the BISA working group webpages.

Non-eligible costs include:

- Post-event meeting activities such as wine receptions and dinners. Working groups are free to charge a nominal fee to cover the cost of such activities.
- Speaker fees
- Cash prizes
- Funding for BISA membership fees, attendance at the BISA annual conference, and attendance at the BISA Postgraduate Network (PGN) conference
- Funding to support personal research
- Personal research trips
- Web hosting costs, software and computer requests, phone bills, postage
- Editorial expenses related to working group materials.

#### M. Reimbursement:

Contact: [office@bisa.ac.uk](mailto:office@bisa.ac.uk)

Working group monies are held by BISA rather than allocated to host universities or to working group accounts. Convenors are responsible for

collecting, collating and submitting reimbursement claims for approved expenditure of events, speakers and award holders to the BISA office on [office@bisa.ac.uk](mailto:office@bisa.ac.uk). Individual expenditure claims must be submitted on the BISA working group [expenses claim form](#) which you can download. Individual members must not claim directly and will be referred back to the convenor should they do so. All funding claims must be in line with the approved funding award unless prior permission has been obtained to amend these details – see L9 above.

1. Events: Convenors must ensure that any invoices are made out to the British International Studies Association (BISA), University of Birmingham, Room 650, Muirhead Tower, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TT.
2. Expenses: Please ensure VAT receipts are obtained where applicable.
3. Travel and accommodation awards: If the working group has awarded travel and accommodation bursaries to members, a convenor will need to email the BISA Office with a full list of the recipient names and the maximum award agreed for each attaching the recipient's signed claim form and scanned receipts. Reimbursement cannot take place before these have been received.

All reimbursement claims must be made within the award period, and ideally within three months of the event taking place. BISA undertakes to make prompt payment.

Insurance: Convenors should seek assurances from host institutions that appropriate insurances and levels of support are in place to cover working group events.