

What is an Interest Group?

An Interest Group is group of full members and non-members of the American Statistical Association (ASA) who are interested in a particular statistical theory, methodology, or application that is sufficiently broad to represent active professional interests within the scope of the ASA. A geographic representation is not adequate to substantiate an Interest Group.

How do Interest Groups compare to Sections?

Forming an Interest Group is the first step towards forming a Section. However, Interest Groups do not have to become Sections. One key benefit of Interest Groups is that they may include non-ASA members, and so they are a great forum for collaboration outside of ASA. Interest Groups are less formal than Sections in terms of their operating requirements and support from ASA; Table 1 provides a comparison.

Table 1: A Comparison of Sections and Interest Groups

Sections	Interest Groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership restricted to ASA Members • Dues are collected by ASA • Money is held in ASA accounts • COS Representation via Section Representatives, who may vote • Membership rosters maintained by ASA • Officer elections handled by ASA • Invited Sessions at JSM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Allocated invited sessions ○ May compete for additional sessions • Topic Contributed Sessions at JSM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Allocated TC sessions ○ May compete for additional sessions • Meeting space at JSM • ASA-supported web presence • Submit articles to AmStat News • Other ASA support may be available by contacting Rick Peterson. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership open to non-ASA members (Chair must be ASA member) • Dues are not collected by ASA. • Money is not held in ASA accounts (must arrange for your own bank account) • Interest Groups may access \$1000 per year from ASA (see info below) • COS Representation by the Chair, who may not vote • Membership rosters not maintained by ASA • Officer elections not run by ASA • Invited Sessions at JSM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No allocation ○ May compete for sessions • Topic Contributed Sessions at JSM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Allocated one TC session ○ May compete for additional sessions • Meeting space at JSM • ASA-supported web presence • Submit articles to <i>AmStat News</i> • Other ASA support may be available by contacting Rick Peterson.

What are the current Interest Groups?

You can see the current list of interest groups at the ASA website, under the “Membership > Sections & Interest Groups” menu (<http://www.amstat.org/asa/membership/Sections-and-Interest-Groups.aspx>).

Astrostatistics (est. 2014)
Statistical Auditing (est. 2017)
Business Analytics/Statistics Education (est. 2008)
Forensic Statistics (est. 2022)
History of Statistics (est. 2017)
Partnership for Clinical Research and Statistics (est. 2023)
Statistics and Pharmacometrics (est. 2014)
Privacy and Confidentiality (est. 2023)
Quantum Computing in Statistics and Machine Learning (est. 2018)
Record Linkage (est. 2021)
Transportation Statistics (est. 2003)
Uncertainty Quantification in Complex Systems (est. 2011)

How are Interest Groups managed within ASA?

The requirements for Interest Groups are defined in the Charter of the Council of Sections, and the formation, support, and dissolution of Interest Groups is the responsibility of the Council of Sections Governing Board. Relevant sections from the COS Charter may be found in Appendix 2. Each Interest Group has a COSGB Vice-Chair that is their liaison to the COSGB.

How do I Start an Interest Group?

Step 1: Define the focus and purpose and assess the uniqueness of your idea.

- First, define the area of statistics that will be your focus.
- Second, be clear on your purpose.
 - Do you want a forum to interact with folks outside of ASA?
 - Build collaborations outside of ASA with other scientists or professionals
 - Growing awareness of statistics with other groups/functions/disciplines
 - You do not need to become a section, but: Do you see this as a first step to becoming a section?
- Finally, considering the area and your purpose, make sure your needs are not already being met by an existing Section or interest Group.
 - Visit <http://www.amstat.org/asa/membership/Sections-and-Interest-Groups.aspx> and learn about the current Sections and Interest Groups, etc.
 - Is your idea unique? Or do you already share the same goals as a current group.
 - If there is overlap with a current section, we suggest you engage with them first, to avoid potential conflicts.

Step 2: Ready to move forward? Get feedback on your idea and find other interested persons.

- Draft a charter for the IG so you can convey to others what you want to achieve with the interest group. Start with the charter template in Appendix 2 and look online for other Interest Group charter examples.
- Circulate your draft charter to others, get feedback, and revise.
- Recruit supporters. You will need at least 25 people to sign your petition.

Step 3: Petition the COSGB to charter your interest group. You will need to provide:

- A letter to the COSGB with a summary of your interest group purpose, and why you believe a new Interest Group is needed. Also, please identify the Chair, who must be an ASA Member.
- A Proposed Charter, which at a minimum must include the elements in the template (See Appendix 2).
- A list of 25 names/signatures of the initial members. At least one member (the Chair) needs to be an ASA Member.

Step 4: The COSGB will vote on your application.

- First, your application will be circulated to the entire Council of Sections for comments.
- The COSGB will then review your application, and any submitted comments, before voting.
- A majority vote of the COSGB is required for approval.

Step 5: Once approved...get going!

- You will be assigned Vice-Chair from COSGB to serve as your point of contact for questions and support.
- Plan communications and activities to engage with your members

What are the ongoing requirements for an Interest Group?

Once formed, Interest Groups must comply with the following requirements to remain in good standing:

- Submit an Annual Report to the COSGB in December, that will include a list of current members, and the name of the Chair.
- Have a full ASA member serve as the Chair.
- Maintain at least 25 members.

If these requirements are not met, then the Interest Group may be dissolved. The Interest Group may also be dissolved if the COSGB accepts a request from the Chair to do so, or if a two-thirds majority of the Governing Board determines there are reasons for dissolution and votes to do so.

The Chair of the Interest Group is encouraged to attend the Council of Sections meeting each year at JSM.

Resources for Interest Groups

An overview of resources available to Interest Groups was given in Table 1. Some specifics:

- ASA Web presence: You are given a microsite on www.amstat.org, which is open to the public.
- ASA Community: You may create a community on the ASA Community site. It is possible for non-members of ASA to set up an account in the community, and that allows them to engage with your community. The “join the community” feature is one way that you can manage a list of IG members.
- ASA Funding: A total of \$1000 is made available each year for each Interest Group to spend on allowable activities. See Appendix 3 for more details on this program.
- JSM Topic Contributed Session: You have one session allocated for you to use each year.
- Other JSM Sessions: You may compete for additional Topic Contributed and Invited Sessions at the JSM.

Interest Groups are also supported by their COSGB Vice Chair Liaison, and the ASA Chapters and Section Manager (currently Rick Peterson). You may reach out to them with questions or requests, and they will assist you.

Appendix 1: Excerpts from Council of Sections Charter

NOTE: Below are excerpts from the 2018 revision to the COS Charter.

Article V. INTEREST GROUPS

(This excerpt describes requirements for formation and dissolution of an Interest Group.)

1. Definition. An Interest Group is an informal group of full members and non-members of the Association who are interested in a particular statistical theory, methodology, or application that is sufficiently broad to represent active professional interests within the scope of the Association. A geographic representation is not adequate to substantiate an Interest Group.
2. Formation. An Interest Group may be chartered by a majority vote of the Council of Sections Governing Board based on a petition of at least 25 individuals, including at least one full member to serve as Chair, and a proposed charter. Any full members may belong to different Sections, so an Interest Group need not be a subgroup of any particular Section. An Interest Group is chartered for three years, upon approval of its petition by the Governing Board.
3. Membership. Members of an Interest Group need not be full members of the Association. Only the Chair of the Interest Group must be a full member of the Association to facilitate communications.

The Interest Group may request a topic contributed session and may compete for an invited session with other Sections, chapters and committees for any paper session at any meeting of the Association. Interest groups may receive some administrative support from the Association such as communication vehicles and coordination at the Association's annual meeting. However, Interest Groups will not have budgets that are managed by the Association. Interest Groups may have a single non-voting representative to the Council of Sections.

4. Dissolution. An Interest Group may be dissolved for any of the following reasons:
 - a. Failure to submit an annual report that includes a list of current members and the name of the Chair.
 - b. Failure to maintain at least 25 members.
 - c. Failure to have an ASA full member serve as Chair of the Interest Group.
 - d. Request by the Interest Group Chair to dissolve the Interest Group that is accepted by the Governing Board.
 - e. For reasons determined and agreed to by a two-thirds majority of the Governing Board.

An Interest Group that qualifies for dissolution under any of these criteria will be notified immediately. Notification of the impending dissolution and the reasons will be sent by mail to the Interest Group Chair and any Interest Group Representative to the Council of Sections. Within 60 days of the communication, the Interest Group may petition the Council of Sections for a probationary continuance, the length of which may not exceed two years. If the Interest Group does not petition for continuance within 60 days, it will be considered dissolved.

Article IV. SECTIONS

(This excerpt describes the process for an Interest Group becoming a Section.)

Members of the Association with an interest in a specific area of statistics may form a Section to develop and pursue the study of that area.

1. Definition. A Section shall cover a field of statistical theory, methodology, or application that is sufficiently broad to represent active professional interests within the scope of the Association. Sections are defined by these fields of study, and not by geographic representation of members or operational concerns of the Association.
2. Formation. A Section may be chartered by a majority vote of the Council of Sections based upon three years of experience as an Interest Group with a sustained membership of at least 50 full members each year, a summary of accomplishments during the Interest Group period, a petition of at least 200 full members and their ASA member IDs, a proposed Section Charter, and a list of officers. By signing the petition, these full members agree to pay annual dues to the Section. Each Section shall have a Charter that is derived from the Council of Sections Charter template and is consistent with the Council of Sections Charter, the Constitution and the By-Laws of the Association. The Committee on Section Status shall advise the Section proposers on the language of the Charter and the scope of the field of interest. The approval process for the creation of a new Section will consist of the following steps:
 - a. The evidence of three years of experience as an Interest Group with a membership of at least 50 full members each year, required petition, proposed charter, summary of accomplishments during three interest group years, and list of officers will be submitted to the Council of Sections Governing Board at least 90 days before the annual Council of Sections meeting. Sections will be notified of a proposed new section at least 60 days prior to the annual Council of Sections meeting.
 - b. Upon certification of the petition and Interest Group requirements, and after review of the summary of accomplishments as an Interest Group and approval of the charter by the Council of Sections Governing Board, a motion for chartering the new Section will be presented by the Chair of the Council of Sections at the next annual meeting of the Council of Sections.
 - c. A ballot of the Council of Sections will be taken on the issue by October 1 of the same year.
 - d. If approved by a majority vote of the Council of Sections, the new Section will be officially chartered as of January 1st of the year following the Council of Sections vote.

APPENDIX 2: Interest Group Charter Template

CHARTER FOR THE [NAME] INTEREST GROUP

ARTICLE I. NAME

The name of this organization is the [NAME] Interest Group of the American Statistical Association, herein after referred to as the Interest Group.

ARTICLE II. SCOPE

The objective of the Interest Group is to:

- 1.
- 2.

ARTICLE III. MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Interest Group is open to anyone interested in [INSERT TOPIC]. There are no dues.

ARTICLE IV. MEETINGS

The annual business meeting of the Interest Group shall be held in connection with the annual Joint Statistical Meetings and shall be announced in advance, preferably in the program for that meeting. Business may also be conducted with the Interest Group members by mail and/or email.

ARTICLE V. OFFICERS

The officers of this Interest Group shall consist of the Chair, Chair-elect, Program Chair, Program Chair-elect, and the Secretary. Terms of all the officers shall be one year except for the Secretary which shall be two years.

The Chair is responsible for the Interest Group Annual Business meeting at JSM. The Program Chair is responsible for the Interest Group program at the JSM meeting. The Secretary is responsible for taking minutes at the Interest Group Annual Business meeting and maintaining a roster of the Interest Group's members.

No officer shall be eligible for immediate re-election to the same office except the Secretary. The Chair-elect and the Program Chair-elect shall automatically succeed the Chair and Program Chair, respectively, at the annual change of officers, which shall occur on January 1.

ARTICLE VI. VACANCIES IN OFFICE

If the office of Chair or Program Chair becomes vacant, the Chair-elect and Program Chair-elect shall become the Chair and Program Chair respectively, the terms extending through the following year.

ARTICLE VII. NOMINATION AND ELECTION

The Interest Group's immediate past Chair shall serve as Chair of the Nominating Committee. The Interest Group's immediate past Program Chair will also serve on this committee. The Chair will also nominate one person to serve on the Nominating Committee.

Each year the Nominating Committee shall submit no later than September 1st to the Secretary and the Chair of Interest Group nominations for each position to be filled. In addition, any Interest Group member nominated by petition of 5 or more members of Interest Group shall also appear on the annual ballot, provided that the petition is presented to the Secretary and Chair of the Interest Group by September 1st announcing the names of the candidates submitted by the Nominating Committee. Balloting shall be carried out by the Past Chair for electing Interest Group officers and completed by November 1st. Ballots shall be sent to all those who express an interest in the Interest Group; this includes all who so indicate as well as those attending business meetings or participating in JSM sessions.

ARTICLE VIII. AMENDMENTS

Amendments to this charter may be proposed by the six officers of the Interest Group or by petition signed by at least 15 members of the Interest Group and submitted to the Interest Group officers. The proposed amendment shall be submitted to the Interest Group members for vote at the time of the annual election of officers. If approved by a majority of the Interest Group members voting, the amendment is approved. An approved amendment shall be effective immediately, unless otherwise specified in the amendment itself.

APPENDIX 3: Interest Group Funding Guidelines

With the approval of the ASA Board of Directors, the Council on Sections Governing Board (COSGB) is pleased to allocate \$1000 per year to each Interest Group. The ASA and the COSGB hope this funding program will help Interest Groups further their mission and serve their members. The program will be reviewed each year to measure its effectiveness, and we welcome your suggestions for improvements.

These funds can be obtained by placing a request with the COSGB **in advance** and may be used for any approved purpose that benefits the members of the Interest Group. A summary of how these funds were spent should be part of your annual activity report.

The details of the program:

1. Each January 1st, all currently chartered Interest Groups become eligible to receive a maximum of \$1,000 from the ASA for spending in that calendar year. The money does not roll over into the next year.
2. The money may be used for any purpose approved by the COSGB. An illustrative list of acceptable activities is attached as a guideline.
3. To ensure reimbursement, Interest Groups should describe the spending to their COSGB Vice-Chair prior to the activity and confirm it is acceptable under the program.
4. Payment can be processed in two ways:
 - a. Interest Groups will first pay for the activity, and then be reimbursed for the approved costs. Reimbursement will be sent by check.
 - b. Interest Groups can have the receipts sent directly to ASA and ASA will pay them. The exception would be for an activity that occurs at an ASA sponsored event; in that case the payment may be handled internally at ASA.
 - c. Once approved, the Vice Chair will notify Donna LaLonde at ASA headquarters that the Interest Group's proposed activity has been approved. Donna LaLonde will contact the Interest Group Chair about how to submit receipts and receive reimbursement checks for each activity. Again, other arrangements may be made for an activity at an ASA event.
 - d. Interest Groups are obliged to report on the activities that these funds were used for in their annual reports. Interest Groups become eligible for use of the ASA funds after they have filed their annual reports for the previous year.

Below is an illustrative list of activities and expenses that would be eligible for reimbursement. Again, you should always check with your Vice-Chair before you incur an expense to ensure the activity is acceptable.

- Continuing Education (mini-conferences, short-courses, workshops, seminars etc.)
 - Speaker honorarium and expenses associated with IG-sponsored classes.
 - CE event expenses (e.g. food, printing, space rental, etc.)
 - Webinar costs

- Outreach
 - Conference co-sponsorships
 - Activities that support ASA initiatives (e.g. sponsorship for K-12 activities).
- Student Support
 - Prizes for service to the interest group, or poster/data competitions
 - Sponsorship for poster and data competitions (incl. reimbursement expenses for invited judges, etc.)
- Networking
 - Annual meeting expenses (incl. food, refreshments etc.).
 - Expenses associated with a mentoring program.
 - Reception after Interest Group associated events
- Interest Group Management
 - IT expenses for virtual meeting (e.g. Zoom, WebEx, etc.)
 - Certain aspects of website development
 - Newsletter costs