

Society for Learning Analytics Research (SoLAR)

Special Interest Group (SIG) Guidelines

Purpose

This document describes the requirements and procedures to establish and operate a Special Interest Group (SIG) as part of the Society for Learning Analytics Research (SoLAR).

Actors

The main actors that participate in the establishment and operation of a SIG are:

- **SIG Members:** These are members of a SIG, that out of their free will decide to group around a common interest topic.
- **SIG Organizing Committee Members:** They are SIG Members in charge of organizing the SIG activities. They could be elected or assigned by other SIG Members
- **SIG Coordinator(s):** He or she is one of the SIG Organizing Committee Members that is elected or assigned to be the contact point between the SIG and the SoLAR Executive.
- **SIG Portfolio Committee:** They are a subset of the SoLAR Executive that evaluate the request for new SIG and review the annual SIG reports. Based on those evaluations and reviews, they recommend actions to the full SoLAR Executive.

SIG Responsibilities and Entitlements

- A SIG should have a clearly defined goal(s) that guides their activities.
- SIG's activities should engage their members toward meaningful outcomes.
- SIG's goals and activities should be relevant for the field of Learning Analytics Research.
- SIG Organizing Committee Members should be current members of SoLAR and will be expected to keep their membership up-to-date whilst participating in the SIG.
- A SIG should have an organizational structure. The SIG Organizing Committee Members and the SIG Coordinator(s) should be part of this structure.

- A SIG should not bring SoLAR into disrepute.
- A SIG should operate in compliance with the SoLAR bylaws.
- Where possible, A SIG should plan activities to promote engagement and disseminate outcomes at the SoLAR events. Such activities can also be undertaken at other events.
- A SIG should maintain its own website or use SoLAR's website to publish details and disseminate information to the public.
- The SIG Coordinator(s) should submit annually a report on SIG activities and results to the SoLAR SIG Portfolio Committee. This report should also contain the planned activities for the next year.
- The SIG Members should reflect the diversity of SoLAR Members.
- A SIG should regularly promote SIG activities through SoLAR Communication Channels. Promotion beyond these channels is also encouraged.
- A SIG should organize at least two interactive SIG events annually, either online or F2F. One of these events should occur during the annual LAK conference in order to maintain a community presence (it could be an informal meetup, a workshop, or something else).
- A SIG should have a procedure to include new members. This procedure should be made available on the SIG website.
- A SIG should actively engage with its members from the broader research community to encourage their entry to SoLAR.
- If SoLAR is unable to provide financial assistance for a SIG, a SIG should finance their activities out of their own funds or through sponsorships of respectable sources. SoLAR will revisit budgets for SIG activities annually. All budget requests should be submitted to the SIG Portfolio Chair.
- A SIG could charge a small fee to its members (eg. 5 - 10 USD) to finance their activities, managed by its organizing committee.
- SIG would have access to the following services inside SoLAR
 - SoLAR Communication Channels
 - Space at SoLAR events (subject to the decision of event organizers)
 - SoLAR organizational support at events organized by the SIG subject to approval

Criteria for Establishment

- It represents an active interest of a group of SoLAR Members.
- The proposed objectives are aligned with the goals and strategic directions of SoLAR.
- The proposed SIG represents a distinct and unique topic/area of interest that is unable to find a place in an already established SIG and proves that a new group is necessary.
- It represents an established and reasonably extensive area of professional interest within Learning Analytics Research.

Process for Establishing a SIG

- Proposals for establishing a SIG can be made to the SoLAR SIG Portfolio Committee at any time using the SIG Establishment form. The form should be submitted by the SIG Coordinator(s).
- The SoLAR SIG Portfolio Committee will consider all proposals. The SIG Portfolio Committee will produce a recommendation within 4 weeks of reception. This recommendation will be sent to the SoLAR Executive.
- The SoLAR Executive will provide a final decision on establishment within 4 weeks.
- The decision will be communicated to the SIG Coordinator(s).

Criteria for Continuation

- The SIG has relevant and sufficient outcomes the last year.
- The SIG has clear goals and planned activities for the next year
- There are at least 15 members in the SIG.
- It is still a relevant topic for Learning Analytics Research.

Process for SIG Continuation

- SIG Coordinator(s) should submit to SoLAR an annual report in November.
- The SoLAR SIG Portfolio Committee will review the report. The SIG Portfolio Committee will produce a recommendation within 4 weeks of reception. This recommendation should be sent to the SoLAR Executive.

- The SoLAR Executive will provide a final decision on the continuation or discontinuation of the SIG within 4 weeks.
- The decision will be communicated to the SIG Coordinator(s).
- SIG Organizing Committee Members can also voluntarily choose to be discontinued in consultation with SIG members and SoLAR Executive.
- The SoLAR Executive has the right to disestablish a SIG at any time if such an action is in the interests of SoLAR or if the SIG is not meeting the requirements as outlined under "SIG Responsibilities and Entitlements".

Financial Support

- SoLAR will commit a fixed budget every year for the support of Special Interest Groups.
- When a SIG applies for SoLAR, it can request financial support.
- Based on the application, a given number of SIGs that requested financial support will receive it, with a maximum of the total fixed budget committed by SoLAR.
- SIGs could only apply for financial support for two consecutive years.
- The funds will be transferred to an account of an academic institution selected by the SIG Coordinator(s). No personal accounts can be used.
- SoLAR financial support should not be critical for the existence of the SIG
- The budget can only be used to promote activities to consolidate a community around the SIG or to promote the participation of new researchers.
- The budget can be used to:
 - Organize events around the main topic of the SIG
 - Subsidize the travel of Ph.D. students to the events
 - Promotional materials / Website
- The budget cannot be used to:
 - Institutional overhead larger than 3%
 - Paid honorarium to any member or external persons.
 - Buy equipment or permanent assets.
- At the end of the year, the Coordinator(s) of a SIG that received the financial support have to report the use and impact of the resources.