

BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT

BCS Membership Board

Rules and Processes for Member Groups

Responsible Body	BCS Membership Board
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Summary Of Revisions Made	Version	Date
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1. Introduction

These rules are developed and maintained by the Policy Committee of the BCS Membership Board, and issued under the authority of the board.

The Policy Committee's aim is to make it as easy and risk free as possible to be a member group committee member. Our approach is to try to understand where committees are having problems and draft what we think are going to be helpful rules. We then ask for feedback from you by various methods (such as at conventions, by surveys, and/or by publishing them on the volunteer portal) to see what you think.

This feedback is then taken into account in the final rules.

We are continually trying to improve the rules, so if you can suggest improvements to the rules please email the chair at chair.mbpolicy@bcs.org. We will do our best to give a speedy response.

A Member Group may adopt additional rules although they must not weaken these overarching rules. Such rules, or amendments to such rules, must be adopted at an AGM or an EGM.

2. Relationship of these rules to others

BCS governance is based on a hierarchy of regulations, In respect of Member Groups this is as follows:

- Charter & Bylaws approved by Privy Council (available at www.bcs.org/category/6038)
- Member Regulations approved at BCS AGM (available in the Members Secure area at www.bcs.org/member-regulations)
- BCS Code of Conduct (available in the Members Secure area at www.bcs.org/code-conduct)
- Trustee Board regulations (available in the Members Secure Area at www.bcs.org/tb-regulations)
- Member Group Rules approved by Membership Board (these rules)
- Constitutions approved at the Member Group's AGM. Note these are now optional for all Member Groups. Member Groups may choose not to have a constitution as the Member Group rules approved by Membership Board now fulfill all the requirements of a Member Group constitution.

Each level must be compatible with the level above it. In the event of conflict between two documents the higher one takes precedence.

3. Sanctions

The Policy Committee agreed from its inception to impose the minimum number of rules on Member Groups. However, the corollary of that is that these are important and must be complied with.

Resolution of problems is best achieved by amicable exchanges but it is essential that Member Group committees understand that rules can and will be enforced.

Because of their collective role as the first point of contact, most transgressions are likely to be initially identified by members of the Member Groups Team (MGT). Where a problem is identified the following steps will be taken:

- 1) A member of the MGT will approach the Member Group and explain the issue to committee member, normally the Chair or the Treasurer (posts held by BCS professional members). The objective is to resolve the issue by explaining clearly which rule (or rules) is (are) not being complied with and requesting the Member Group to make changes.
- 2) If the group does not agree to comply the matter will be referred to the Membership Board Policy Committee (MBPC). If the Chair of the MBPC is unable to make progress by personal contact, the Chair of MBPC will seek agreement from MBPC members to write formally to the Member Group on behalf of the MBPC. The letter will explain that the Member Group is in breach of the rules and ask them to confirm their compliance in writing by a specified date. The letter will explain the result of continued non-compliance.

Sanctions available to the MBPC include use of the BCS code of conduct where an individual is at fault and where the Member Group is at fault:

- Suspending funding (if funding is suspended any expenditure incurred by the MG would be unauthorised and any officers authorising the expenditure could be jointly liable for the money spent.)
- Suspending or closing the Member Group

4. Process for maintaining these rules

The Policy Committee will consider any dispute or misunderstanding of the Member Group Rules. If the Policy Committee cannot resolve the problem, the matter will be referred to the Membership Board of the Institute whose decision is final.

Please send suggested amendments to these Rules to the Policy Committee (email address chair.mbpolicy@bcs.org). Amendments are subject to the approval of the Membership Board of the Institute following consultation with the Member Groups.

If consultation shows there to be widespread concern about any of the rules, the Policy Committee will poll Member Groups to guide the Policy Committee on how it should proceed.

5. What is a Member Group?

A Member Group enables members of the Institute (and others) to share and advance their common interests in Information Technology. Member Groups are integral to BCS and are bound by the Institute's Royal Charter and rules.

The responsibility of every Member Group is 'to promote the study and practice of Computing and to advance knowledge and education therein for the benefit of the public' within its chosen area.

A Member Group can be a Branch, a Specialist Group, International Section or any other properly constituted (see Creating a Member Group) grouping approved by the Membership Board on behalf of the Institute. Members of the Institute are encouraged to join and become active in Member Groups.

Branches and International Sections are geographic clusters of members; upon joining the Institute each member will be given the option of joining one or more Branches, the default is the Branch or International Section nearest to their home

address. Specialist Groups are formed by a number of people with a common interest in some aspect of Information Technology, its application, or impact.

The Institute supports Member Groups, both financially and with other resources (details of which follow later). The Membership Board provides a link into the Institute's decision-making process and the Membership Group team of staff based at BCS Swindon is there to give practical assistance.

Every Member Group has an administrator in BCS Swindon who is there to support the Member Group <https://www.bcs.org/upload/pdf/mg-administrators.pdf>

5.1 What does a Member Group do?

Each group has aims and objectives and, to achieve them, it arranges events such as presentations, conferences, seminars, workshops and social gatherings and facilitates networking. Each Member Group will typically hold four or more events a year, open to all members of the group.

Member Groups may also establish partnerships with other bodies in order to pursue joint initiatives, see the section on "Links with other organisations" <https://www.bcs.org/content/ConWebDoc/37600> for more information.

5.2 Who can join a Member Group?

Anyone can participate in a Member Group, although as explained in more detail elsewhere, only Institute members can vote at meetings. The mechanisms for joining a Member Group include using the web site www.bcs.org or contacting Customer Services.

A Member Group can apply conditions of entry to the group, e.g. a group for young professionals might have an age limit. In general, conditions should be seen as reasonable and necessary for the group to be credible (e.g. BCS Women or ELITE) without discouraging those who wish to learn from those with more knowledge and experience.

5.3 Who can come to Member Group events?

Everyone is welcome to attend Member Group events unless the Member Group chooses to restrict attendance.

Where a meeting fee is charged, this should normally be lower for Institute members. The same applies, where practicable, to conferences and publications.

5.4 International Sections

Each year the Section Committee shall appoint a member of the Section Committee to serve as Liaison officer. This person must be prepared to work with the appropriate national computer society (or societies) of the country (or countries) in which the Section is located.

A Section should be established as a separate legal entity and be covered by combined liability insurance or as required locally. It should comply with local requirements in relation to any registration requirements. At no time will the Institute accept financial responsibility for the Section's activities other than by resolution of Trustee Board. The registered address of the Section (where needed under local Law) will be decided by the Section committee.

6. Life of a Member Group:

6.1. Setting up a Member Group

Institute members are encouraged to form new Member Groups where there is proof of unmet demand and no conflict with existing Member Groups, e.g. geographic or subject matter overlap.

Proposals for new member groups are dealt with by the Policy Committee, with the administration of the process being undertaken by the Member Groups Team in BCSHQ. The process consists of four stages: stage one requires an initial proposal that outlines the case for the formation of the new group; stage two consists of a meeting of all interested parties to discuss the proposal and test the interest in the proposed group; stage three requires an expansion of the initial proposal to include operational details and stage four is approval by finance committee. The full process is available on the volunteer portal at https://volunteer.bcs.org/Proposing_a_new_member_group. This process for starting a new member group is owned by MBPC and all enquiries regarding this process should be routed to the Chair of MBPC (chair.mbpolicy@bcs.org).

A Member Group can set up a subgroup which also is subject to Member Group rules. A subgroup can be set up and is managed by the parent group. It is often helpful to establish a subgroup and then, if it is successful, to float it off as an independent group. Subgroups share the budget of the parent group.

6.2. Changing a Member Group

Changes to name, scope, geographic boundaries (where applicable), aims and objectives need to be approved by the Policy Committee. The process is at https://volunteer.bcs.org/Proposing_a_new_member_group: the extent of the change will determine how rigorously the process will be followed.

Member Groups that overlap in scope or geographic boundaries should consider merging. If members of a Member Group feel that the overlap is causing confusion they can ask the Policy Committee to investigate and facilitate a resolution.

6.3. Closing a Member Group

Where the Member Group is not operating, has come to the end of its planned life or is in conflict with the Institute's aims and objectives it may be suspended or closed down by decision of the Membership Board. Any action will be preceded by consultation with members of the Member Group.

7. Member Group governance meetings

Annual General Meetings (AGM)

Member Groups must organise an Annual General Meeting (AGM) once a year, where the committee reports to the membership on the previous year's activities and committee members are elected. The AGM should be called as soon as practicable after the close of the Institute's financial year (31 August).

At least fourteen days written notice (it may be via email) of the date, time and place of the AGM shall be given to Member Group members and to the

Member Groups Team (groups@hq.bcs.org.uk). The calling notice should include, where appropriate, an agenda, a call for nominations to committee and explain where the minutes to be discussed can be found. The committee can choose to use virtual technologies in addition to, or instead of, holding a physical meeting.

The agenda should include:

- Welcome and Introductions
- Apologies for absence
- Minutes of the previous AGM (and if appropriate EGM)
- Matters arising from the minutes
- A report from the Chair on the year's activities
- A report from the Treasurer, including a review of income and expenditure against the budget agreed with BCS HQ for the past year and an explanation of next year's budget request.
- Election of Chair, Treasurer and committee members
- Any other business

Notification of items wishing to be raised at the AGM under "Any other business" should be sent to the Chair not less than three days in advance. Admission of items not so notified at the AGM will be at the discretion of the Chair.

Following the AGM, an electronic copy of the minutes and the Chair's report must be sent to the Member Groups Team (groups@hq.bcs.org.uk) within one month after the AGM.

Extraordinary General Meetings (EGM)

An Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) shall be convened, if requested, by ten or more Institute members of the Member Group or by resolution of the Committee. The notice calling the meeting shall state the purpose of the meeting, which shall be convened on a date within five weeks of receipt of the request or the Committee resolution.

8. Member Group Committees

Member Groups are managed by a committee elected by the members of the group at an Annual General Meeting (AGM). The committee has the power to set up subcommittees.

- ***Responsibilities***

Member Group Committees are responsible for welcoming new members to their group, both by email when they join and in person when they first come to an event, guidance is available at

https://www.volunteer.bcs.org/sites/default/files/Sending_welcome_emails_to_new_Member_Group_members.doc.

- ***Members of Committee***

The committee must have at least three professional BCS members, with two of them filling the roles of Chair and Treasurer. In addition, committee members may take on a range of other roles, for more details about the roles please follow the hyperlink

<https://www.bcs.org/upload/pdf/roles-committee->

[members.pdf](#). Non Institute members must abide by the [BCS code of conduct](#) and rules, the penalty for serious breaches is removal from the committee.

- *Election of Committee Members*

Committee Members are elected by members of the Institute either at the Member Group Annual General Meeting (AGM) or in an election using remote voting. The committee may appoint replacements for committee members (including the Chair and Treasurer) that resign mid-year. As the Chair and Treasurer are essential for the effective running of a group they are specifically elected to their roles. A majority of the committee must be Institute members.

Where the Committee wishes to use remote voting they need to:

- Talk to their contact on the BCS Member Group Team to check that resources will be available to run the vote and to obtain templates for use in the following steps.
- Ask Member Group members for nominations, which can include additional information to assist Member Group members to vote.
- When asking for nominations the Committee must give at least two weeks before the deadline for nominations to be submitted.
- Use the group's website to make information about all candidates available to all those qualified to vote at least two weeks before the deadline for voting ends
- BCS HQ will then operate an electronic vote on the Member Group's behalf.
- The Chair and Treasurer will get the result of the vote, and can ask for a list of those who have voted if they wish to accept additional votes on the night.

- *Co-opting Members to Committee*

The committee can co-opt members to the committee as long as a majority of the committee (including co-opted members) are Institute members and the number of co-opted members does not exceed elected members.

- *Term of Office*

This is determined for each post by the committee, subject to a maximum of three years before re-election. One year is the norm, with all members of committee standing down and, where they wish, putting themselves up for re-election.

- *Removing Committee Members*

Committee members can be removed by a majority vote of the committee. There is a right of appeal to the Membership Board Policy Committee.

- *Member Group Committee meetings*

The Committee should meet regularly (either physically or electronically). Notice of committee meetings must be given to all members of the committee. The chair is expected to approve the minutes and an electronic copy of the minutes must be sent to the Member Groups Team <mailto:groups@hq.bcs.org.uk>

The following documents:

- Conduct of business in BCS Boards and Committees <https://www.bcs.org/upload/pdf/conduct-of-business.pdf>,
- Conduct of electronic meetings www.bcs.org/conduct/emeetings, and
- Responsibilities of BCS officers www.bcs.org/responsibilities/officers provide further information on how best to conduct committee meetings.
- *Quorum*
33% of the membership of the committee, with a minimum of the Chair or Treasurer plus two other members of the committee constitute a quorum. If there are fewer members present (in person, by phone or electronically) the meeting cannot make binding decisions.
- *Voting*
A simple majority of elected committee members present is sufficient to decide a disputed decision. If there is a tied vote, the chair will have an additional deciding vote.
- *Public statements*
What Member Group committee members say and publish (including on social media) should be appropriate for a representative of a professional body. Communicating on behalf of any part of the Institute (including a Member Group) should only be done with appropriate authority. Criticism of the Institute should be kept out of public forums.
- *Behaviour*
BCS staff and Member Group Committee members are expected to respect each other and behave in a positive, cooperative and professional manner. If a BCS member has a concern about the behaviour of another member or member of staff they should discuss it with the Chair of the Membership Board. Ultimately the [Code of Conduct](#) is applicable. There is guidance on what is meant by acceptable behaviour at http://volunteer.bcs.org/Rules_acceptable_behaviour.
- *Training*
Each Member Group Committee will be responsible for ensuring that all its members receive appropriate training as prescribed by Trustee Board from time to time. The Membership Board may cancel or suspend an individual's membership of a Member Group Committee where a member's actions have, in the opinion of the Membership Board, been detrimental to the work of the Committee.

8.1 Support for Member Groups

Support (including administration) is available from BCS Swindon. It is not charged for but needs to be requested and reserved. View the Events organisation document <https://www.bcs.org/upload/pdf/event-organisation.pdf> to see the full range of help available. A template for making applications is available at https://volunteer.bcs.org/sites/default/files/Application_Template_for_additional_resources_staff.doc

Support services should be used responsibly. Where support services (e.g. booking room) are reserved, but repeatedly not used, the Member Group may be prevented from reserving that resource for a period of time (likely to be six months).

To avoid legal liabilities as an employer, personnel must not be directly employed by a Member Group. Instead of employing people, BCS Swindon should be requested to contract for local support on a Member Group's behalf. A template for doing so will soon be made available. Funds to pay for any local support must be included in the group's budget.

8.2 Use of data about members

Member Groups' membership details are kept on BCS's central database and Member Groups can arrange for mailings to their members.

All member data must be handled in strict accordance with the BCS Information Security Policy Statement <https://www.bcs.org/upload/pdf/information-security-policy-statement.pdf>. Committee members who are professional members (MBCS/FBCS) of BCS may have access to BCS membership data, subject to:

- An explanation of why access is necessary that is acceptable to the MemberGroup committee (i.e. no one has vetoed it)
- Confirmation that the person requesting access understands the Data Protection Act.
- Requests to use membership details should be sent to the Member GroupsTeam <mailto:groups@hq.bcs.org.uk>

Where personal data about attendees is collected at, or for, an event it should not be passed on without the attendee's approval. For example, if the speaker wishes to follow up with those attending they should get permission from those attending for them to do so.

Additional guidance on the treatment of Personal Data from members and attendees at events.

When collecting, using and securing items of personal data from members and/or event attendees/enquirers, two overriding principles must be applied:

- the data must be used only for the purpose(s) that were declared prior to its collection/elicitation;
- it is BCS policy that all data collected through an event booking/registration system (manual or electronic, central or local) shall be regarded as protected personal data unless otherwise declared to attendees/enquirers in advance (and effective opt-outs provided if necessary).

Particular care needs to be taken in circumstances when any of the attendees' data may need to be shared with third parties, including: joint meetings; sponsored events (especially if hosted on the sponsor's premises); if it is intended to publish a delegates list; if it is intended to use the data to advertise other events or promotions; or for a speaker/sponsor to supply supplementary information.

8.3 Pictures of children

The Information Commissioners Office has a helpful Good Practice Guidance Note at http://www.ico.gov.uk/upload/documents/library/data_protection/practical_application/taking_photos.pdf (version 4, June 2010). The Note distinguishes photographs taken

- for personal use (e.g. by relatives and friends) to which the Data Protection Act does not apply

- for institutional use by the school (or by extension BCS) where the advice is that this will be personal data but will not breach the Act as long as the children and/or their guardians are aware this is happening and the context in which the photo will be used.
- by the media in which case as long as the school (or BCS) has agreed to this, and the children and/or their guardians are aware that photographs of those attending may appear in the media, this will not breach the Act.

The Note repeatedly uses the term “the children and/or their guardians are aware” without any implication that written permission is required or even advisable. Advance notices of the event should advise attendees that photos may be taken by BCS and/or media (as appropriate).

8.4 Conflicts of interest

All Member Group committee members must declare any conflict of interest that may arise and inform all other committee members who will consider whether any action needs to be taken. The BCS Code of Conduct, which is available at <https://www.bcs.org/category/6030> will be used if a potential conflict of interest comes to light. Non-members of the Institute are liable to sanctions including having their committee membership terminated.

9 Member Group Finances

Except for International Sections, Member Group funds are held centrally in BCS administered bank accounts. UK-based Groups must not operate their own Bank account.

Member Groups cannot accumulate financial reserves from one financial year to the next. All reserves are held and administered centrally for the Institute as a whole. Where a Member Group has a major project running across financial years the Finance Committee will consider ring-fencing expenditure.

A member of a Member Group must not receive any remuneration from the Group for work undertaken on behalf of the Group. Members may be contracted to do work by BCS Swindon.

Annual Budgets

The BCS account year ends on 31 August. Member Groups that require any kind of financial support from the Institute need to submit an annual budget bid in March for the following financial year. This will be considered by the Membership Board Finance Committee in the light of the overall funding available and a budget will be allocated.

Suggestions on how to construct a budget are available at
<https://www.bcs.org/upload/xls/budgets-proforma.xls>
<https://www.bcs.org/upload/pdf/example-budget-bid-application.pdf>

The budget timetable is available at
<https://www.bcs.org/upload/pdf/budget-process-and-timescale.pdf>

The financial guidelines can be found here:
<https://www.bcs.org/upload/pdf/financial-guidelines.pdf>

The Finance Committee will take account of the Member Group's financial record, in attracting income and managing to a budget, when considering bids for funding.

Claiming expenses

Expenses Claim Form:

NB Personal details, including bank account details, only need to be notified once. Guidance on what expenses can be claimed is at http://www.volunteer.bcs.org/sites/default/files/Expenses_Notes_for_Volunteers.pdf Note that non BCS members are not be able to claim expenses as committee members unless there are exceptional circumstances and they have got prior approval. The Expenses Claim Form is at: <https://www.bcs.org/upload/xls/expense-claim-form.xls>

The process for submitting claims is as follows:

- *Completing the form in full (which must include name and full postal address) soft copy.*
- *Add bank details for BACS payments if NEW or AMENDED. If the same since the last payment, do not fill in.*
- *Email to Helen Axam (Helen.axam@hq.bcs.org.uk) included digitally captured images of receipts to support all of the expenditure claimed (except mileage).*
- *Wording of email – “please accept my attached expenses for processing, in the sum of £xxx relating to yyyy”.*
- *Helen will then arrange the review and approval of the claim.*

Alternative 1 (to the process above):

- *Complete hard copy, sign the form (bottom left) and post to Helen Axam in Swindon (BCS, First Floor, Block D, North Star House, North Star Avenue, Swindon, SN2 1FA) together with receipts to support all of the expenditure claimed (except mileage).*
- *Helen will then arrange the review and approval of the claim.*

Alternative 2 (to the process above):

- *Complete hard copy, sign the form (bottom left) and hand to the Treasurer at a committee meeting together with receipts to support all of the expenditure claimed (except mileage).*
- *The Treasurer can then review and approve the claim, sign it and post to Helen Axam in Swindon. If the Treasurer is not available, then hand to the Chair or Secretary, who can review, sign and post to Helen Axam.”*

10 Member Group Events

Member Group events form an important part of what Member Groups do. They raise the profile of the institute, spread understanding about Information Technology and its uses and provide networking opportunities.

Guidance on how to run a successful event, including the help that is available, is at [link](#). Please note that for chargeable events the events booking system MUST be used.

Where an event is held jointly with another organisation not within the BCS please see [link](#).

Where an event is shared between two Member Groups they should agree on who pays for what, for example the branch may agree to pay for accommodation and catering and the Specialist Group might pay travelling expenses.

It is important to register attendance at events for several reasons, including:

- The number of attendees is an indication of relevance and informs future planning.
- Details about non-members enables follow-up, e.g. to encourage new membership.
- Members need to be able to track their attendance for their Continuing Professional Development (CPD).
- Satisfaction of personal requirements for events, such as dietary requirements or other special needs

10.1 Communicating with group members

Email is the preferred method of communicating with members, supported by use of the Member Group's web site (see next section). Emails should be sent out by the Committee to publicise events and to keep members up to date.

Email distribution lists (also called List Server lists) are produced by the BCS for all BCS members that have registered to be members of a Member Group. We are investigating having non BCS members added to the lists so that a Member Group should have three potential lists, BCS members, non BCS members and all members. Until the changes have been made to create the non BCS member lists Member Groups need to maintain a list of non BCS members who have joined the group.

10.2 Member Group web site

A web site is the primary means for BCS members and non-members to learn more about the role of the group, its committee members, constitution (if the group has one), minutes of meetings held by the committee and events planned and delivered by the group.

The web site should contain:

- The group's aims and objectives
- The group's name, scope, geographic boundaries (where applicable), aims and objectives
- Instructions on how to join the group
- A reference to these rules, and any variations the Member Group is using (or a copy of the group's constitution)
- A full list of office-bearers and committee members and methods for contacting them
- Details of future events with agenda, abstracts, location and joining instructions etc. A template for a suitable event flyer is available at [\(link to be added\)](#).
- Reports of past events with event flyer, minutes, slides, summaries or full texts of presentations etc.
- A link to any relevant BCS Member Network or Social Networking site
- Links to other BCS groups associated by geographical or technical proximity

- A link to the main BCS site

Support to create and maintain a Member Group web site is available at (link to be added).

A Member Group website that contains all the above will avoid the need to maintain a paper constitution.

The web site should conform to the BCS Brand Guidelines

http://www.volunteer.bcs.org/sites/default/files/BCS_Brand_guidelines.pdf. Where a Member Group has been established as a joint venture with another body branding implications, including the website, need to be agreed. The group may include url links to the websites of those third party bodies on their group's web site.

10.3 Broadcasting events

Members that are unable to attend meetings and events should be able to view recordings of them. Member Groups are strongly recommended to record and broadcast their events, either live or in a form which enables access later. Broadcasting should be seen as a form of not-for-profit publishing.

There are many formats in which information may be recorded or broadcast, and many technologies which may be used, but no single optimum solution which meets all needs. Detailed guidance on recording scenarios, technical approaches, choice of equipment and broadcast medium is given at <http://volunteer.bcs.org/broadcasting>. A central pool of equipment is held at the BCS Southampton Street location which may be reserved for use in meetings held there.

Member Groups should develop a strategy defining what type of events will be recorded and broadcast, what approaches and technologies will be used, and what level of investment in equipment is justified. The guidance document includes recording scenarios, including costs, to help decide. The committee may wish to appoint a Recording/Broadcasting officer and Treasurers may include requests for funds to purchase equipment in their annual budget submissions.

In advance, or at the event, the organiser must:

- Get the speaker's agreement to their slides being distributed and their address being recorded explaining how the recording will be subsequently used.
- Remind speakers that they should own the copyright of their material, or obtain permission to use any material covered by a third party's copyright.
- Tell audience members that the proceedings (including any discussion) will be recorded and how to protect their privacy, should they wish to do so.
- Ensure that the recording does not contain any confidential, proprietary, personal, or defamatory material

A model invitation letter to speakers covering these points is given in the guidance documentation referenced above. Member Groups should also keep a simple audit trail of their invitations to speakers, and each speaker's response.

10.4 Sponsorship

Sponsorship is useful for funding Member Group expenses and for strengthening relations between other organisations and the BCS. In general obtaining sponsorship is encouraged, subject to:

- It being consistent with the aims of the BCS

- It does not conflict with or damage the BCS brand

Support from any organisation, whether financial or 'in kind' (such as free meeting venues) should not be allowed to create an impression of undue influence on the conduct of the Member Group. Care should also be taken to avoid appearing to be promoting the interests of individual sponsors.

Any commitments beyond publicising the sponsoring organisation must be agreed with the Member Groups Team (<mailto:groups@hq.bcs.org.uk>) on behalf of the Policy Committee.

10.5 PR and advertising

Member Groups should publicise their events and generally raise awareness about BCS. BCS Swindon have a PR team that can help with guidance for local campaigns, please refer to the PR guidance document <https://www.bcs.org/upload/pdf/pr-guidelines.pdf>

However, Member Groups should always confine their publicity output to news-related content (eg events, local awards, collaborations, etc), and be careful to avoid statements that include (or might reasonably be interpreted as implying) any policy or position-taking announcement by BCS - without first consulting the HQ PR Team.

10.6 Links with other organisations

The Institute supports links to other professional organisations. Member Groups may seek to exchange access to each other's events as if a member of that organisation.

To avoid misunderstandings where there is a commitment beyond publicising each others events, the member Group must agree a Memorandum of Association. A template is provided at [link](#). The template includes guidance on areas that need to be agreed, for example branding and budget apportionment.

10.7 Inclusion policy

All activities of the Group should be accessible to people with disabilities. This should include event locations and material created by the group, documents, presentations, videos etc.

11 Member Group Conventions

Member Group Conventions are organised by the Membership Board Best Practice Committee.

Purpose

To enable the Officers and Directors of the Institute to consult on and seek support on changes that will affect the Institute and its Member Groups.

To facilitate the sharing of best practice and to give groups a forum for debating issues with representatives of the wider BCS.

To enable representatives of Member Groups to raise issues formally with the Officers and Directors of the Institute.

Representation

Two committee members from each Member Group are invited. One of the representatives (to be determined by the Member Group) is entitled to vote if there is a ballot.

Updating the rules

When the rules are revised to include significant changes there will be an open consultation process and they will also be presented for debate at Member Group Conventions.

12 Member Group Representation

BCS Member Regulations

http://www.volunteer.bcs.org/sites/default/files/Member_Regulations_March_2011.pdf specify that BCS Member Groups are represented on the BCS Council by:

- 5 members elected by the Regional constituency
- 2 members elected by the International constituency
- 5 members elected by the Specialist Group constituency
- 3 members elected by the Young Professionals Group

Members can be nominated to represent only one constituency at any one election.

Nominations will be called for in early spring, with a period of voting when the Chair of each Member Group (after consultation with their Committee) should indicate their choice of candidate via on line voting. The result will be announced at the Convention.

13 Publishing

Dissemination of high quality information enhances the visibility and reputation of the Institute and its Member Groups. Consequently, Member Groups are encouraged to publish books, journals, conference proceedings, newsletters, and articles using a range of media including paper, web content, video, and audio.

The guidance below applies to all publications by Member Groups except press releases, text communications (including emails) and reports for restricted circulation (e.g. consultation documents and papers for internal BCS use).

Initiating a new Publishing Activity

Proposals by Member Groups to publish academic journals should be submitted to the Academy of Computing Board, which is responsible for learned society publishing policy, via the Head of Publishing (publishing@hq.bcs.org.uk). Any new initiative of this type is the responsibility of the Academy Board and not Membership Board or its committees.

For all other printed publications please submit proposals using the template available at (link to be added) to the Membership Board Policy Committee. The projected cost and income from these publications should be included in the Member Group's annual plans and budget. Applications for start-up funding can be made if needed during a financial year.

Choosing a publisher

When a publisher is required the BCS publishing department (publishing@hq.bcs.org.uk) can help choose the most appropriate publisher.

BCS has a solely owned trading company – British Informatics Society Limited (BISL) to handle publishing and in most cases, BISL will be the most appropriate publisher. For some specialised publishing activities BISL may not be appropriate and the Head of Publishing can advise.

If a Member Group chooses to not follow the BCS Publishing Department recommendation they will need to get authorisation from the Membership Board Policy Committee or Academy Board (as appropriate).

Contracting for publishing

Contracts for publishing must be negotiated in conjunction with, and signed by, the Head of Publishing on behalf of BCS. Member Groups cannot sign contracts, except as specified in Member Group Financial Guidelines.

Branding and style guide

Anything published by the Institute must follow the BCS publishing house style, available at <https://www.bcs.org/category/5928> and the brand guidelines https://www.volunteer.bcs.org/sites/default/files/BCS_Brand_guidelines.pdf. Where the house style and branding guidelines cannot be followed a Member Group must agree any alternative with the BCS Publishing Department (publishing@hq.bcs.org.uk).

Where commercial publishers are used, their house style should be followed if required although the placement of the BCS logo must follow the branding guidelines.

Content of the publication

Plagiarism, i.e. taking the work or an idea from someone else and passing it off as one's own and Libel i.e. publishing anything that damages a person's reputation are unacceptable. If either is suspected in submitted or published material please refer to BCS Head of Publishing for guidance.

Permission to use material

Where information is to be posted on a website, for example slides used by a speaker, permission must be sought and received. If there is a complaint that the material is inappropriate due to copyright infringement, libel, plagiarism or discrimination, the material must immediately be removed from the website.

Where information is to be published, Member Groups must obtain written permission from the author to publish the material. A standard 'licence to publish' form is available at [\(link to be added\)](#). If an author has used third party material he /she must have permission from the copyright owner; a standard third party permission form is available at [\(link to be added\)](#).

If the Institute is paying for the work, copyright assignment to the Institute is normally required. If in doubt, consult the Head of Publishing.

Editor

Each academic research journal will have an editor. The relevant Member Group can recommend an editor. The Academy of Computing Board or thirdparty publisher will need to ratify the appointment.

For editors receiving an honorarium the Publisher (BCS Publishing Department or third party publisher as appropriate) will provide a contract outlining their responsibilities and terms of office.

For volunteer editors a guidance document is available at ([link to be added](#)).

Peer Review

All BCS publications should have an appropriate level of peer review to control the quality of the material. Guidance on peer review processes is available at ([link to be added](#)). For all BCS publications the editor's decision is final.

Sales and distribution

BCS has a global distribution and sales network for its publications through British Informatics Society Limited (BISL), including the allocation of Industry Standard Book Numbers (ISBN).

To simplify conformance to legal and business requirements linked to selling publications (for example, distance selling regulations) Member Groups wishing to sell publications must use BISL unless there is a third party publisher.

14 Student awards

A Member Group can provide one student prize to a University with an existing student prize relationship. No new universities will be considered.

(**NB** awards do not apply to further education colleges or schools).

The student prize for each university consists of:

- Free BCS Membership (either Student (one year or full course), Associate or Professional Membership level) (for one person).

And

- £150.00 cash prize. (Which can be split into smaller runner-up prizes, if required.)

The group must include their student prize(s) in their budget submission each financial year against the month the award will be given to the student. Prizes are not honoured outside of their budgeted financial year.

Please note these type of prizes are paid from the central allocation, though they are attributed to the group. All other type of prizes/bursaries are paid from the group's allocation.

If the Finance Committee approves the budget request for a prize, the Member Group will be responsible for agreeing on the criteria with the university for presenting the award.

The group must ensure the university understands that the Institute cannot commit indefinitely to providing the same award in future years.