



INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF  
RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES

## **Session 9: Update on Secretariat Proposals**

- 9.1 IARU Handbook
- 9.2 Education Initiatives Committee
- 9.3 Early Career Researchers Funding

## 9.1 Group Handbook

*For discussion and decision by the Senior Officers. Submitted by the Secretariat.*

*The draft Group Handbook is provided at the end of this section.*

At SOM 2021 the Senior Officers endorsed the proposal to create guidance to assist new groups and better support continuity within existing groups.

The Secretariat has drafted a Handbook which covers the following subjects: establishing a new group, the types of activities that groups undertake, reporting and administrative expectations, closing a group, and frequently asked questions. The intention of the guidance is to focus and support the activities of groups, rather than impose top-down control, and so the Secretariat is mindful of the concerns of existing groups.

Although in general the Handbook articulates existing practices of the Secretariat and IARU's groups and initiatives, there are some procedures and pieces of guidance that the Secretariat would like to bring to the Senior Officers for discussion.

In particular, the Secretariat would like the guidance of Senior Officers on the following points:

- **What should be the process for setting up a new group?**

The Handbook proposes that the first step should be those interested in starting a new group to informally gather together interested members; a proposal (and funding request if needed) would then be written; this would be presented at the next Senior Officers' Meeting, who may request further detailed work or clarification; and finally, if recommended, it would be submitted for approval at the Presidents' Meeting.

*Details of this section of the proposal are on page 105.*

- **Should new groups have a three-year duration by default?**

It is proposed that new groups would be set up for a period of up to three years initially, rather than being open-ended. At the end of the agreed period, the Senior Officers will review the group's activities and decide whether it has achieved its original aims (and can therefore be wound down), or if its term should be extended if there is further work for it to do. For example, a new project may have been identified by the group or there may be continued value in the networking it provides.

By establishing groups with a task-and-finish model (rather than being open-ended), the intention is to keep the groups relevant and active, and create capacity for funding new groups when needed.

*Details of this section of the proposal are on page 105.*

- **Would a new format for reporting group updates be helpful for the Senior Officers?**

At the Presidents' Meeting, the comment was made that the current format made it difficult to have a clear overview of what the group's objectives were, as information was presented in a cumulative and descriptive fashion, rather than being comparative and analytical. The groups have been asked to provide a one-page summary to outline their purpose and achievements.

The new report format asks groups to review their work in terms of the plans they submitted twelve months before, and to articulate their plans for the coming year. It is hoped that this new format will assist groups in focusing their attention on what they want to achieve, establish realistic timescales for these objectives and help them articulate their key topics and goals to the Senior Officers and Presidents.

The Secretariat believes this will also make it easier for Senior Officers to assess and allocate group funding, as there will be a clearer picture of the activity levels of the group and their funding needs. If it was felt that a group could improve the way it is functioning, then this new report format would allow Senior Officers to have a more focused discussion with group leads about what changes could be made.

*The proposed reporting form is on page 113.*

- **What should be the process for closing groups?**

It is not intended that groups be closed down unilaterally or without consultation, but the Secretariat recognises that there may be situations where a group is no longer viable or has completed the objectives it was set up to achieve.

The Handbook proposes that the ultimate decision for closing a group rests with its members. Senior Officers may consult with the group leads to support them in this, or may raise questions and ask for particular tasks to be carried out if a group appears to be struggling or needs to refocus its work. It is hoped that the new reporting format will help with making these conversations clear, beneficial and productive.

*Details of this section of the proposal are on page 109.*

The Secretariat would be grateful for Senior Officers' views on the points above and will incorporate feedback into the next draft of the Handbook.

## IARU Groups and Initiatives Handbook (Draft)

### Introduction

IARU promotes institutional joint working in various ways among member universities, such as inter-university networking, institutional learning and staff development. The groups and initiatives are a prime example of the ongoing collaborative work of IARU.

This Handbook is designed to distil the knowledge, experience and best practice of our groups and initiatives. We hope it will offer helpful tips on how to set up and run a group or initiative, provide information about how the group interacts with the Secretariat and the rest of IARU, and how to make the group's activities productive and valuable for its members.

For the sake of brevity, references to 'groups' also include 'initiatives', as the practicalities of groups and initiatives are similar.

We would like to keep the Handbook updated in response to any questions that might arise, so please do get in touch with any suggestions and queries.

Cambridge Secretariat  
[iaru@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:iaru@admin.cam.ac.uk)

## **Table of Contents**

- 1. What is IARU and what does it do?**  
Where groups and initiatives sit within the structure of IARU  
The different types of groups and initiatives
- 2. How to set up a new group or initiative**  
Making a proposal  
Process summary  
What does a new group need to do first?
- 3. Group activities over the year**  
Meetings  
Finances  
Administration  
Working with the Secretariat  
Working with the Senior Officers  
Leading a group
- 4. What makes a group or initiative successful?**
- 5. Closing a group**
- 6. FAQs**

**Appendix 1. Blank Status Report Form**

**Appendix 2: Blank Funding Request Form**

**Appendix 3: Reimbursement Guidance**

## 1. What is IARU and what does it do?

The International Alliance of Research Universities (IARU), established in 2006, is a network of eleven international research-intensive universities from nine countries across the globe. IARU member universities work together to address the major challenges of our time, to add value by providing opportunities to students and staff that would not arise otherwise, and to promote institutional joint working. The groups and initiatives are key elements of IARU's collaborative ethos.

### Where groups and initiatives sit within the structure of IARU

Within IARU, each university has a:

- President – the head of their institution. The Presidents meet annually for top-level, strategic discussions on issues relating to IARU and its members.
- Senior Officer – these are the operational decision makers of IARU who meet once a year to discuss IARU business matters.
- Key Contact – someone who acts as a point of contact for the Secretariat and can circulate IARU information within their own institution.

The Secretariat, based at the IARU Chair's university, is the administrative function of IARU.

The IARU groups and initiatives can involve individuals from IARU's eleven universities and facilitate cooperation on areas of joint institutional working. IARU currently has groups for subjects such as campus sustainability, alumni relations and HR. The initiative for Ageing, Longevity and Health is the sole research-focused initiative at the moment. Each university may have one or more representatives taking part in a group, and universities may choose to participate in all or some of the groups.

### The different types of groups and initiatives

Some groups are focused on joint working (producing reports, arranging conferences and working on projects etc.), while others concentrate on networking and sharing good practice. Groups are free to set their own work programme. They have to report their activities to the Senior Officers each year and they can request funding at these meetings, if their activities require it.

The groups allow members to exchange ideas on areas of common interest and obtain a global perspective on shared challenges, while the small membership of IARU means that it is easier to establish valuable and productive working relationships between like-minded institutions.

The current IARU groups and initiatives are:

Ageing, Longevity and Health Initiative  
Alumni Associations Network  
Cybersecurity Forum  
Gender Group

Global Transformations Group  
HR Consultation Group  
Librarians' Contact Group  
Lifelong Learning Working Group  
Real Estate Working Group  
Sustainable Campus Initiative  
Virtual Museum Tours Initiative

## 2. How to set up a new group or initiative

### Making a proposal

Initially, an area of interest would be identified by individuals at a member university (or universities). This could come about through discussion at the Presidents' or Senior Officers' Meetings, or through ongoing networking between IARU members in particular areas; there is no single fixed route for developing a proposal for a new group or initiative.

IARU members interested in setting up a new group are welcome to contact the Secretariat, as it can help identify others that may be interested by circulating information to the IARU Key Contacts.

If there is sufficient interest amongst members, a proposal can be submitted to the Senior Officers' Meeting via the Secretariat. The Senior Officers generally meet annually in the autumn, reviewing the activities of groups and deciding on funding requests.

The proposal should explain how the group would benefit IARU members and the value it would bring to the Alliance.

The proposal should include:

- An outline of the group's topics and aims, establishing whether the emphasis of the group would be on joint working, networking or sharing best practice.
- A brief workplan of the projects or discussion areas that it hopes to concentrate on in its first year.
- The types of meetings or events it might arrange, e.g. whether it would hold regular online meetings, in-person events, workshops etc. Some new groups have started with an initial workshop to gauge interest or to establish the direction of the group.
- Any funding requests. If planning is at an early stage, it may be that no funding request is made until the plans have progressed. A funding request would then be made to the Senior Officers, either at one of their future meetings or by circulation. Such requests should be made in good time so that they can be discussed in the context of the IARU budget.

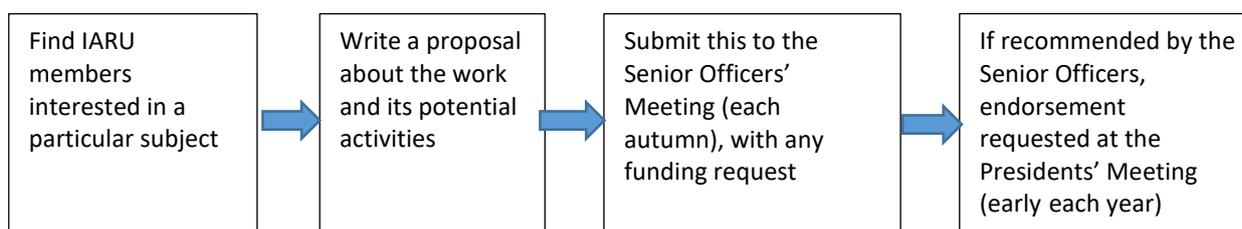
The Senior Officers would discuss the proposal (and make a decision on any funding request) and if they felt that it had merit, would recommend it for endorsement at the Presidents' Meeting (held annually in the few first months of the year).

Once the proposal had been accepted by the Presidents and the Senior Officers, the group would be established for an initial period of 3 years. During that period, the group would report annually to the Senior Officers' Meeting. These reports would also be presented at the Presidents' Meeting. At the end of the three year period, the Senior Officers would consider whether the group had achieved its aims and could therefore be wound up, or if it should continue for a further defined period.

IARU recognises that there will be differences in the productivity and outputs of groups due to their varying purposes and functions. If group members feel that the group's activities are beneficial, then there is no reason why a group cannot operate with just a few institutions as members. As with other groups, the funding approved by Senior Officers is likely to be proportionate to the type of activities being undertaken.

Occasionally, a new group or initiative could be proposed at the Presidents' Meeting first. When this has happened in the past, it is usually because the area has been discussed previously at a Presidents' Meeting, or because no funding request is being made, or plans are at an early stage of development. The expectation would be that a complete proposal would then go to the Senior Officers' Meeting for further discussion.

### Process summary



### What does a new group need to do first?

A newly established group should ensure that it covers the following points:

- Agree on a group lead or leads to coordinate the activities and decide if and when the positions should rotate around the membership of the group.
- Decide on the focus of the group, i.e. whether it plans to work on projects or concentrate on networking and sharing best practice.
- Agree specific goals and a workplan for the group's initial three year period; this should include proposals for their first year of activity, which will then be reported on at the next Senior Officers' Meeting.
- Decide on the frequency of meetings.
- Plan how to evaluate the progress and success of the group (the markers of success will vary from group to group, depending on its focus).
- Agree a process on how the group accepts new members or replaces departing members. Please note that universities may request to join groups after they are founded. The Secretariat can assist with contacting member institutions about group representatives.

## 3. Group activities over the year

### Meetings

How often a group meets, and in what format, is a decision for the group itself. The group lead(s) will make the arrangements for meeting with the members directly, usually by email circulation. Many groups are now meeting a few times a year online but are also aiming for at least one face-to-face meeting per year. This may depend on the nature of the group, as those focused on networking and sharing best practice may not require as many meetings (especially face-to-face meetings).

### Finances

Groups can submit budget requests for the coming year to the annual Senior Officers' Meeting. These funds are used to cover the costs of in-person meetings and hosting events (e.g. the ALH initiative conference), but may also be requested for wider group activities such as staff exchange, outreach work and cooperative education. Travel costs for individuals attending IARU meetings are to be met by individual institutions, rather than IARU.

The Secretariat provides budget request forms ahead of the meeting and the group lead(s) can set out the expected costs and the reasons for the request. Typically, groups request in the region of USD 10 – 15,000, depending on the nature of their work. The Senior Officers will then approve or reject the request, sometimes asking for amendments or further information if needed.

When making a funding request, the following information will be needed:

- Project name and year
- Total costs (including a breakdown of costs)
- Other financial resources (if applicable)
- List of participants
- Details of the project (background, purpose, expected outcomes, schedule, project's continuity etc.)

Funding should be spent on the activities the approval was given for. If a group wishes to change what it spends its funding on, then the request should be made to the Senior Officers (via the Secretariat) for approval by email circulation.

If the funding request is approved, the group will then report back at the next Senior Officers' Meeting on how the funds were used and the outcomes.

The approved funding is not transferred directly to the group. Groups should submit invoices to the Secretariat for expenses related to the budget request made to the Senior Officers. The Secretariat will then arrange reimbursement of group expenditure, up to the total amount approved by Senior Officers for that year. Please see 'Appendix 3: Reimbursement Guidance' for the information that the invoices should include.

## Administration

In addition to the core work of the group, arranging meetings and overseeing financial matters, there will be a few administrative matters that the group lead(s) will need to manage. Most communication will be with the Secretariat, and the Secretariat will periodically request the following:

- A report in advance of the Senior Officers' Meeting (held annually around September/October). This report will cover the group's activities over the past year in terms of the agreed goals and workplan, highlight any decisions to be made and, where appropriate, set out the funding request for the year ahead. Groups can also add any additional papers (reports, publications etc.) if they think that this material would be helpful for the Senior Officers. These updates are also a good way to demonstrate the group's work to a wider audience, as their content will be adapted for inclusion in the twice-yearly IARU newsletter which is sent to all IARU members.
- Any requests for expense reimbursements. This must be received by the Secretariat by the end of the calendar year.
- An updated report in advance of the Presidents' Meeting (held annually in the first months of the year). This is very similar to the report for the Senior Officers' Meeting and will share (any) developments from the intervening months.
- Some groups may be offered the opportunity to deliver a presentation about their work to the Presidents' or Senior Officers' Meetings. The Secretariat also welcomes requests from individual groups to provide extended in-person updates to these meetings, if they think it would be beneficial. This is a great opportunity to engage with IARU's decision makers about aspects of the group's work which may benefit from high-level, cross-IARU discussion or would be of high-level interest to all IARU members.

## Working with the Secretariat

Throughout the year, the Secretariat may be in touch for updates about a group's contact information and information about the group for the IARU website etc. It can also provide help with promoting events and news on the website and social media channels. Groups may like to contribute to the IARU newsletter, as a way of showcasing their work to the IARU community or generate interest among potential new members.

If a group has any questions about how IARU works, the governance of a group or any other administrative matter, the Secretariat would be the first point of contact ([iaru@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:iaru@admin.cam.ac.uk)).

## Working with the Senior Officers

The annual Senior Officers' Meeting is a good opportunity to take stock of how a group is operating, what its future aspirations might be and whether the funding is adequate and being used efficiently. The Senior Officers may pose questions for the group or ask for additional information, especially in terms of how funding is spent, if it is not made clear in the report. If a group is struggling to recruit members, then bringing it to the attention of the Senior Officers is a good way to try to develop interest from other institutions. The Senior Officers may also provide additional feedback and advice on how the group operates, if they felt that it would be helpful.

## Leading a group

The leadership of a group is a decision for the group members, with some groups choosing co-chairs rather than just one leader. How often the leadership of a group changes is also down to the group members, although the model of leadership rotating between IARU institutions is encouraged (as with the IARU Chair).

Some thought should be given to how information is retained and passed on when the membership of a group changes. Minutes or brief notes of meetings are useful to record the discussions and to provide a basis for the reports to Senior Officers and Presidents. This information is also a useful resource for future group leads and members. The Secretariat can also assist with historical records and information from past group activities and membership.

## 4. What makes a group or initiative successful?

In May 2021, the Secretariat launched a survey of IARU members and this was one of the key questions. The groups all have different ways of working and their individual aims, however there are some common themes when it comes to the question of what makes a group run successfully.

The survey feedback highlighted the following as contributing to a productive and valuable group:

- **Clear planning** about the work programme and goals.
- **Committed leadership** in the group/initiative – if groups leads are active in setting up meetings, identifying areas for joint working and facilitating communication between the group members, this makes the group dynamic and effective.
- **Engaged members** – encouraging participating members to attend meetings regularly and make contributions towards the agreed goals and workplans. New groups should also be mindful that the time commitment of members is balanced with the value they derive from participating in the group. Group members typically do not receive additional remuneration for the time they spend working on IARU business and must fund their own travel expenses for IARU meetings.
- **Achieving a balance between virtual and face-to-face meetings** – survey feedback noted the value of meeting in person, although the ease of having more frequent virtual meetings is also an important consideration. We would also encourage groups to think about sustainability when planning the frequency of their in-person meetings.
- **Clear communication** with the Senior Officers.

## 5. Closing a group

From September 2022, it is proposed that new groups be established for an initial period of three years, after which the Senior Officers, in conjunction with the group leads, may decide that the group has achieved its original objectives and the group can close. If it is felt that there is additional work for the group to do, or that there is a value in the networking it provides, then the Senior Officers can approve its continuation for a further fixed period.

For existing groups, it is hoped that the new report form will be helpful for Senior Officers and group leads in discussing a group's objectives and purpose, and to understand when a group may have achieved its specific aims and can therefore be wound up. If approved, this would be the format of the reporting form for the annual Senior Officers' Meeting.

Alternatively, it may be that an existing group has changed its needs or has simply become unviable, for example if it is struggling to recruit enough members to make it worthwhile for others to continue to contribute their time to the group.

If a group falls into one of these categories, group members are encouraged to discuss the continuation of the group at one of their meetings as a first step. If the consensus is that the group should disband, this should be communicated to the Secretariat. The Secretariat will report this to the next Senior Officers' Meeting, along with a proposal of how any unspent funds should be dealt with (in consultation with the group leads).

In all cases, it is hoped that engagement and discussion will allow for a productive relationship between Senior Officers and the groups. If Senior Officers have concerns about the level of engagement of a group or the way in which it is operating, it would be expected that they could ask questions of the group and make suggestions for a way forward. Persistent concerns about the value being provided by a group may affect the willingness of Senior Officers to approve its funding requests. The decision about whether a group should continue, however, would ultimately rest with the group itself. IARU members are free to maintain informal, unfunded groups or networks if they wish.

## 6. FAQs

- **What does the Secretariat do?**

The Secretariat is the administration centre of IARU, organising the Presidents' and Senior Officers' meetings, handling IARU's financial matters, managing communication on decisions, news and requests across IARU. There may be additional project work taken on by the Secretariat to improve IARU's processes or establish new practices (e.g. launching the IARU newsletter). The institution of the President currently chairing IARU runs the Secretariat. Upon the election of a new IARU Chair (every 2 years), the role of the Secretariat also passes to the new Chair's institution.

- **How do I find new group members?**

Some groups will have representatives from all IARU institutions, whilst others have involvement only from some of the member universities. If you would like to find new members from across IARU for your group, please contact the Secretariat in the first instance. They will be able to put you in touch with the Key Contacts who can then circulate information about how colleagues at their institutions could become involved with the group.

- **When do I need to submit reports or funding requests?**

The Secretariat will contact you two to three months before the Senior Officers' Meeting (which is usually held in September/October) and send you a report template

and a budget request form. It will also contact you one to two months before the Presidents' Meeting (usually held in the first few months of the year) for any updates to the previously submitted report for the Senior Officers' Meeting. To assist with planning, it should be noted that every second year, the Presidents' Meeting will be held directly before the World Economic Forum at Davos (usually scheduled in mid-January).

- **Can a group lead or group member also be a Senior Office of IARU?**

Yes, a group lead or member can also hold the role of Senior Officer. However, as the Senior Officers decide on the budget requests from groups, the member in question would be required to declare their interest at the beginning of the Senior Officers' meeting and recuse themselves from the discussion of that group's budget.

- **Can a group change what it spends its IARU funding on?**

Any changes to what a group spends its approved funding on should be communicated to the Senior Officers via the Secretariat. Approval will then be sought from the Senior Officers by email circulation.

- **Our group hasn't spent all its allocated funding for the year – what do I do?**

Unspent funds may be carried over to the next year, with agreement from the Senior Officers. The request to carry over funds would be made to the Senior Officers Meeting, in the same way that the usual budget requests are made.

- **Where can I find more information about how IARU works?**

More information on the Presidents, Senior Officers, Key Contacts and other parts of IARU can be found [on the website](#).

- **How can I find out what other IARU groups there are?**

The IARU website has [a section on each of the groups and initiatives](#). The [newsletter](#) also contains updates from each group about their work over the last year.

## Appendix 1. Blank Status Report Form

### Name of Group or Initiative

<b>Lead</b>	<i>Name of group lead(s)</i>
<b>Reporting</b>	<i>Name of group lead or member reporting to the meeting</i>
<b>Items for decision</b>	<i>Please fill in if applicable</i>
<p><b>To assist the Senior Officers in understanding your group's work patterns and the goals you are hoping to achieve this year, we would be grateful if you could answer the following questions:</b></p>	
Summary of previous year's activities	<p><i>Please describe and assess the topics that your group has considered over the last year and/or projects that were worked on or completed.</i></p> <p><i>This summary should refer to the planned work outlined in your previous report to the Senior Officers' Meeting.</i></p>
What specific topics does your group hope to address in the coming year?	
Do you have projects that you hope to begin or continue? <i>(Please give details – the financial details of any planned projects can be set out separately in the budget request form)</i>	
How often do you plan to meet (approximately)?	
Funding to date	<i>Summary of previous funding allocations – this content can be provided by the Secretariat</i>

	<p><i>E.g.</i></p> <p><i>USD 13,500 (2020)</i></p> <p><i>USD 10,000 (2018)</i></p> <p><i>USD 10,000 (2017)</i></p> <p><i>USD 5,000 (2016)</i></p> <p><i>USD 3,300 (2015)</i></p>
Participants List	<p><i>So that the Secretariat can keep its records updated, please list the group members, their institution and their email address.</i></p>

## Appendix 2: Blank Funding Request Form

*Please fill in the following form to make a funding request.*

### Project Name/Year:

### Total Requested Amount & Breakdowns:

Item	Amount
Item 1	USD
Item 2	USD
Item 3	USD
<b>Total Requested Amount</b>	USD

\*Groups will be asked to report on how funds were used in next year's report for the Senior Officers' Meeting.

### Other Financial Resources (if applicable):

### Project Participants List (Please specify the lead by adding "Lead" next to the name):

University	Title/Position	Name
ANU		
ETH Zürich		
NUS		
PKU		
Berkeley		
Cambridge		
UCT		
Copenhagen		
Oxford		
UTokyo		
Yale		

\*The list does not need to be complete in case not all participants are confirmed yet.

### Details of the Project (background, purpose, expected outcomes, schedule, project's continuity, etc.):

## Appendix 3: Reimbursement Guidance

### Guidance on Submitting Invoices to the Secretariat (2022)

We hope that this guidance will be helpful when it comes time to submit invoices for reimbursement. Funds will be paid in US dollars and the Secretariat will cover the transfer fee. If you have any questions, please feel free to email us at [iaru@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:iaru@admin.cam.ac.uk)

#### When to Submit Your Invoice

- Please remember that it is only possible for us to provide reimbursements against approved expenditure for 2022 (i.e. unused funds cannot be rolled over to 2023 unless approval is received from the Senior Officers).
- **All invoices must be submitted before 31 December 2022.** Invoices will take at least 2 weeks to process. Invoices received in December 2022 may not be paid until late January 2023, due to Cambridge's Christmas-New Year closure. Therefore, if payment is required before the end of the calendar year, please let us know and submit the invoice by **14 November 2022**.
- Invoices should be emailed to the Secretariat: [iaru@admin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:iaru@admin.cam.ac.uk). Please do not post invoices.

#### Preparing Your Invoice

- If staff at your university have undertaken expenditures for more than one IARU group/initiative, you can submit either a single itemised invoice for all IARU-related expenditures or separate invoices.
- Please ensure that your invoice is addressed to the University of Cambridge (i.e. *not* the IARU Secretariat), using the following details:

Dr Karen Kennedy  
Strategic Partnerships Office  
The Old Schools  
University of Cambridge  
Trinity Lane  
Cambridge, United Kingdom CB2 1TN

- Please ensure that your invoice contains the following information:
  - ✓ An itemised list of expenditures, where applicable. The list can be submitted as a separate document if that is easier.
  - ✓ The amount in both your local currency and in US dollars
  - ✓ Beneficiary account name, account number, address and country
  - ✓ Bank name, bank branch, address and country
  - ✓ ABA Routing Number (US only), Sort Code (UK only), BSB (Australia only)

- Finally, please note that the account needs to be held in the name of your university. Reimbursements to non-university accounts will need the owner of the account to be set up as an approved supplier in Cambridge's financial system, and that will take additional time.

## 9.2 Education Initiatives Committee

*The Secretariat will report on this proposal and the paper below is included for background information.*

### Proposed IARU Education Committee

#### Introduction

IARU currently has several concurrent educational initiatives:

- IARU Courses
- Joint Online Courses (JOC)
- Joint Education Programme (JEC)
- Global Transformations Summer Field Course
- Global Internship Programme

It is the task of the Secretariat to keep track of these initiatives, ensure communication between their leads, the Senior Officers, and member universities, and to provide advice and support where appropriate.

There has never been a single, permanent individual or group tasked with thinking about IARU's educational initiatives as a whole. The Secretariat's many other administrative responsibilities and its two-year duration can complicate this task, especially for an incoming Secretariat.

Moreover, global student exchange has recently become more difficult. Student exchange numbers dropped by around 30% after Santander's funding for the Global Summer Programme ended in 2018–19. The costs of in-person exchange discourage many students from participating, and some countries are impacted more than others. Since then, each university has been able to promote up to four courses within the programme and these are listed as IARU Courses on the IARU website, but these courses typically lack characteristics that make them specific to IARU. Then, in 2020–21, the pandemic made in-person exchange impossible for many students.

In light of recent experience, and the increasing focus on sustainability and new online/blended formats, the time feels right to step back and consider IARU's educational offering as a whole and how it could be strengthened.

#### The Committee

To help ensure that IARU's educational initiatives are effective and appropriate, the Secretariat proposed to the Senior Officers in 2021 that an education committee be formed. The proposal was

supported. The need for a central group focused on education had also been endorsed at the 2019 Senior Officers' Meeting (*Outcomes*, p.6).

The Secretariat suggested that the committee could perform the following valuable functions:

- Look to the future and make suggestions for new educational initiatives as appropriate. For example, the 'virtual classrooms' initiative as set out in the Senior Officers' Meeting 2021 Tome (p.16).
- Provide a single, ongoing point of communication and coordination for IARU on educational matters. In particular, the committee would help ensure that individual initiatives are aware of what else is happening in terms of education within IARU, thereby identifying opportunities for cooperation that could save time and effort.
- Maintain up-to-date knowledge of IARU's educational offering as a whole – how it is working, where it is providing value and suggesting, as appropriate, whether specific initiatives require additional support or would benefit from potential changes.
- Create a forum for those involved to identify, and work on, common problems and opportunities.
- Provide the IARU community with a place where institutional memory (past problems, solutions and strategies) can be held for sharing with new colleagues and future Secretariats.
- Reduce the vulnerability of individual educational initiatives, when managed entirely by a single institution, to disruption or cessation due to internal changes.

The committee could also be asked to spend time on subjects of general relevance to IARU's educational work, including identifying a potential new source of funding for student exchange (cf. the support of Santander prior to 2018).

In summary, the aim of the committee is to facilitate existing work and formulate proposals for new educational initiatives. As such, the committee would cooperate with existing educational initiatives – it would not exercise oversight, or seek to control or instruct them. Indeed, it is hoped that individuals directly involved in running these existing initiatives will be part of the committee. The committee would look to deliver genuine value for those involved, not to create an additional layer of bureaucracy.

## **Membership**

Membership would be open to anyone (academic or professional) who has been or is involved in IARU educational initiatives, or educational exchange and related fields more generally.

The priority would be to recruit members from universities currently most interested/active in student exchange and educational initiatives within the Alliance, ideally to have as wide a representation as

possible. Those who were previously involved in the Global Summer Programme could also be asked, as this could build upon pre-existing relationships. Senior Officers and Key Contacts will also be consulted. In order for the committee to be an effective working size, in line with other IARU groups, we anticipate that there would ordinarily be no more than one representative from each IARU university, though this may change if some universities do not end up being represented on the committee.

The University of Copenhagen has kindly agreed to spearhead the organisation of the committee.

### **Expectations**

- In cooperation with the Chair/Secretariat, and relevant individual members, the committee would establish a work plan (objectives, priorities, timelines) for the next 1–2 years based on the responsibilities outlined in this document.
- Meet as appropriate.
- Produce a report on IARU education initiatives for the Senior Officers' Meeting. This report would chart plans and progress on the priorities.

The time commitment would vary depending on the committee's workload and how it decides to work. As an initial estimate, it would be sufficient for members to commit about half a day a month, but this could increase with time or vary between members.

### **Funding**

- The committee could apply for funding if it wishes to meet in person once a year.

## 9.3 Early-Career Collaboration Grants Scheme (Revised)

*For discussion and decision by the Senior Officers. Submitted by the Secretariat.*

### Background

At last year's online Senior Officers' Meeting, the Secretariat proposed a funding scheme to foster new research collaborations amongst IARU members. Under this scheme, financial support would have been provided to researchers at different IARU universities to meet and work together to develop a formal research programme and then apply for external funding. Senior Officers were generally not supportive of this proposal because:

- It was felt that the amount of funding IARU could offer (up to US\$5,000) per application would be too little to be effective
- Researchers do not have difficulty in identifying potential research collaborators, and there was some worry that the initiative could be perceived as an attempt to seed collaborations in a top-down fashion
- There was a significant risk that the funding would not eventually lead to a fruitful collaboration

Senior Officers stressed that a vast amount of research is already taking place between members. They were of the opinion that the most effective use of IARU's resources would be to support existing research collaborations in new ways.

More than one attendee suggested focusing on early-career researchers. The proposal was therefore redeveloped into a proposal to fund research stays at other IARU universities for postdoctoral researchers. This revised proposal was then shared at the Presidents' Meeting in May at Cambridge. The Presidents supported it and suggested two further changes:

- to focus on junior academics, rather than postdoctoral researchers. It was felt that, among early-career researchers, postdoctoral researchers are more mobile than junior academics and therefore less able to engage in, and encourage, longer-term collaborations between IARU institutions. Exact details would, however, be left to Senior Officers to decide.
- to double the funding earmarked for the scheme in its first year from USD 20,000 to 40,000.

The Secretariat would now like to get the input of Senior Officers on all aspects of the proposal as it has been revised since the Presidents' Meeting, specifically on the following questions, with a view to running the grant scheme for the first time in 2023.

For ease of reference, each question has also been repeated at the relevant part of the proposal text.

### Items for Decision

1. **Do SOs want to have the scheme open to all 'early career researchers' (that is, including postdoctoral researchers), or to limit it to junior academics?**
2. **Depending on the answer to Question 1:**

- a. **Do SOs agree that ‘early career researcher’ can be defined as someone who has submitted their PhD within 10 years of the time of application?**
- b. **How do SOs want to define ‘junior academic’?**
3. **Are there any concerns about allocating USD 40,000 to the scheme in its first year of operation (2023–24)?**
4. **How do SOs think that applications should be selected?**

### **Early-Career Collaboration Grants Scheme Overview (Revised)**

The COVID-19 pandemic has made it very difficult for researchers to travel and engage in in-person research. While the last two years have demonstrated the possibilities and value of virtual collaboration, in many cases there is no substitute for in-person presence. Spending time at other institutions can provide invaluable access to expertise, equipment and facilities, as well as providing new perspectives and approaches.

The loss of this connectivity has been particularly acute for early-career researchers as they work to develop new research projects, acquire experience, and build their professional networks. Connections made at the start of a researcher’s career can have a formative effect on their professional development and have the potential to generate long-term collaborations.

The Early-Career Collaboration Grant Scheme aims to help early-career academics meet the costs of a short-term placement at another IARU university during which they would work with other researchers, and benefit from expertise and/or facilities and equipment not available at their home institutions.

### **Eligibility**

Current early-career researchers – defined as those within 10 years of submitting their PhD – at any IARU university can apply. All placements must be at another IARU university. The host university does not need to already be involved in the applicant’s research project.

**Question 1:** *Do SOs want to have the scheme open to all ‘early career researchers’ (that is, including postdoctoral researchers), or to limit it to junior academics?*

**Question 2:** *Depending on the answer to Question 1:*

- a. *Do SOs agree that ‘early career researcher’ can be defined as someone who has submitted their PhD within 10 years of the time of application?*
- b. *How do SOs want to define ‘junior academic’?*

### **Funding and Eligible Expenses**

Individuals could apply for a total of US\$5,000. IARU would earmark US\$40,000 for the scheme each year.

Subject to the presentation of receipts to the Secretariat, applicants would be reimbursed for the costs of travel, accommodation, maintenance and other expenses related to their placement.

**Question 3:** *Are there any concerns about allocating USD 40,000 to the scheme in its first year of operation (2023–24)?*

### Application Requirements

Note: Applicants must confirm that they have secured the necessary approvals from both their home and host institution, before applying to the scheme.

Applicants should submit the following to the IARU Secretariat:

- 1) A covering letter (absolute max 1,000 words) setting out, in plain English:
  - The area of their research and their specific research project
  - Why they are seeking the placement (i.e. additional/different expertise, equipment, facilities etc.)
  - An outline of their plans to share information about their research and their placement at their host institution (for example, at departmental seminars or other relevant research meetings).
  - How they expect their research placement will facilitate further collaborative links between their home institution and host institution (e.g. reciprocal exchanges, joint funding applications)
- 2) A CV (strictly no more than two pages long)

At the end of their placement, researchers will be asked to write a short statement explaining their research, what they accomplished (including any joint publications, for example), how they collaborated with colleagues, and how their placement has or is expected to further additional collaboration.

### Selection Criteria and Process

There are a variety of possible factors that could be taken into account when deciding which applicants to select.

One key question is whether academic merit should be considered when assessing applications. Senior Officers are asked to consider if they, or a panel comprising academics from different disciplines and different universities, would have sufficient time and collective expertise to assess the relative academic merit of applications with sufficient rigor to justify it being a key selection factor.

If Senior Officers conclude that the selection process cannot realistically include a meaningful assessment of relative academic value, there remains the question of what other criteria should be used. The aim of the scheme is to help early-career researchers forge links between IARU institutions, both directly and through the encouragement of future links. As such, it is suggested that two key selection criteria could be:

- The importance of the placement for the completion of the applicant's wider research project
- The applicant's explanation of how the placement will encourage new collaborative links or strengthen existing ones

However, other selection criteria might include some or all of the following, as determined by the Senior Officers:

- Whether the project involves work that was in some way impacted or delayed by the pandemic
- Whether it is connected to the work of IARU groups with existing or potential research links (the Ageing, Longevity & Health Group and the Sustainable Campus Initiative for example).
- Whether it would take place between universities that are not in the same country/geographic region, in recognition of the greater financial obstacles to in-person collaboration between these institutions (e.g. between the University of Copenhagen and the National University of Singapore, or between the Australian National University and Yale University).

As a final alternative suggestion, Senior Officers may simply choose to award grants randomly among all those applicants who, in the view of the Secretariat, meet the basic criteria for the scheme.

***Question 4. How do SOs think that applications should be selected?***

### **Decision Process & Timeline**

If Senior Officers approve this proposal, and after any further changes have been made to its details, applications will open in early Spring 2023 and close at the end of Summer 2023.

The Secretariat will vet the applications for basic eligibility before successful applicants are chosen through the process determined by the Senior Officers.

Successful applications will be announced at SOM 2023.