

National Committees for Science

Guidelines 2015

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National Committees for Science

A National Committee for Science is a committee to foster a designated area or theme of (natural) science in Australia, to provide liaison with appropriate international scientific bodies and to advise the Council of the Australian Academy of Science on these matters, in response to Council initiatives or at the initiative of the National Committee.

The National Committees report to the two Vice-Presidents of the Academy:

- Secretary A (Physical Sciences) – Professor Chennupati Jagadish FAA (2012-2016)
- Secretary B (Biological Sciences) – Professor TJ Higgins FAA (2015-2019)

Terms of Reference (ToRs)

The purpose of the National Committees for Science is to:

1. To connect the Academy to science and scientists in Australia;
2. To link the Academy to Australian scientific societies in order to work together to promote the development of the discipline;
3. To link Australian science in the disciplines to world science, in particular through the membership of appropriate international organisations;
4. To ensure that Australia has a voice and a role in the global development of the disciplines;
5. To provide strategic science policy advice, to the Academy, as input to Academy science policy statements, and (with the approval of the Executive Committee of the Academy) to the Australian Government and Australian organisations.

Each newly appointed Chair, in consultation with the Committee and the Executive Committees of Council, should set formal ToRs for the period in which they occupy the Chair. These ToRs should be published on the Committee's website.

Activities of the National Committees could include:

- Undertaking discipline reviews and preparing strategic / decadal plans
- Initiating forums, conferences and workshops
- With Academy approval, providing expert advice from the perspective of their discipline to government reviews and inquires
- Providing advice to the Council of the Academy
- Contributing news items and presentations to Australian scientists, directly and through scientific societies
- With Academy approval, issuing press releases and reports on matters of concern to a particular discipline
- With Academy approval, contributing expert input to science policy submissions and reports

Establishment and termination

All National Committees shall be established and terminated by the Council of the Australian Academy of Science.

Review timetable

The 2013 Review of National Committees found that a ten year review cycle was appropriate on the whole but that individual Committees should be reviewed more frequently. A review of the National Committees as a whole should be undertaken in 2023; individual Committees will be reviewed as per the below timetable:

Committee	First review	Second review
Geography	2016	2020
Data in Science	2016	2020
History and Philosophy of Science	2016	2020
Information and Communication Sciences	2016	2020
Brain and Mind	2016	2020
Crystallography	2016	2020
Cellular and Developmental Biology	2017	2021
Biomedical Sciences	2017	2021
Earth Sciences	2017	2021
Earth Systems Sciences	2017	2021
Antarctic Research	2017	2021
Nutrition	2018	2022
Agriculture, Fisheries and Food	2018	2022
Ecology, Evolution and Conservation	2018	2022
Materials Science	2018	2022
Mechanical and Engineering Sciences	2018	2022
Space and Radio Science	2018	2022
Astronomy	2018	2022
Mathematical Sciences	2019	2023
Chemistry	2019	2023
Physics	2019	2023
Medicine and Public Health	2019	2023

1. Workings of the National Committees for Science

Meetings

Meetings should be held at least once per annum although some members might attend by teleconference. A fixed sum (\$3000 per annum per National Committee in 2015) will be available to support travel, accommodation and teleconference costs, and secretariat services will be provided.

Meetings could be planned to coincide with a relevant professional Society meeting.

If there is an International Science Union Executive Member that is not on the National Committee, the corresponding International Science Union executive should be invited to the National Committee meetings to report on Union activities.

At least five of the eight voting members of the National Committee must be present for the meeting to take place.

Size

The membership of a National committee will not normally exceed eight, but the size of each National Committee can be determined by the Chair of the Committee in consultation with the Secretaries.

Membership

Members of Committees should be scientists active in the field. The requirements for the membership structure of the National Committees are:

1. The membership of a committee shall be appropriate to the pursuit of the best interests of Australian science, both internationally and nationally with membership decided by Council after consideration of nominations from Chairs and from the corresponding Scientific Societies;
2. The membership (including the Chair) of a committee should usually include at least one Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science: for a committee of six or more members it should usually include at least two Fellows;
3. Representatives of corresponding Scientific Societies shall be appointed after consultation between Council, the National Committee, and the Society concerned to ensure effective liaison with such bodies;
4. Whenever possible the next Chair should be designated one year in advance.
5. The term of office of ordinary members is three years.

The discipline, geography, gender, age distribution, fellowship status of the Committee should be considered when selecting new members. The International Science Union linkage profile of the National Committee is imperative, and should be available at all times when discussing membership.

Chairs

Nomination

Chairs are to be nominated by the resigning Chair in consultation with the appropriate Secretary. Ideally, the nominated Chair shall have served on the Committee for at least one year prior to nomination.

It is important that Chairs are carefully selected and well mentored. It is important that the Chair have sufficient time to do the job, and the Executive Committee of the Academy should be convinced that this is the case before making the appointment.

It is important that members of a National Committee have an interest in their science as a whole, beyond their particular realm of expertise. This breadth of interest is even more important in the Chair.

Whenever possible the next Chair should be nominated one year in advance. When this practice is followed it should be followed up by active mentorship, by the existing chair and by the appropriate Secretary.

Appointment

Chairs are appointed by the Executive Committee of the Australian Academy of Science.

Deputy Chairs

A National Committee may propose one of its members as a Deputy Chair subject to approval by the Secretaries with the understanding that the Deputy Chair will not automatically be the next Chair.

Term

A Chair shall be appointed for a term of three years, except as provided below. In exceptional circumstances, the Chair may have an extension of one further year to oversee the completion of a particular project or to enable the smooth succession of the future Chair.

Reporting requirements

The Terms of Reference, which are valid for the duration of the Chair's term, shall act as a **business plan** for the Committee. Any change to the ToRs during the Chair's term will need to be approved by the Executive Committee of the Academy.

Where appropriate, Chairs should provide a brief annual report to the corresponding International Union.

The National Committees Annual Report for Council shall be reviewed by the relevant Secretary concerning activities within Australia and by the Foreign Secretary concerning international activities, to ensure that matters of special note are drawn to the attention of Council

Chairs should alert the Secretary (Science Policy) of matters relating to any policy issues.

Full members (excluding Chair)

Nomination

Nomination of new members is to be made by the Chair in consultation with the Committee. The selected nominee will then be put to the Executive Committee of the Academy for endorsement. When nominating a new member, the following should be taken into account in order for the Committee to comply with the Membership rules outlined in these Guidelines:

- Will there be a fellow on the Committee?
- What discipline expertise does/will the Committee have?
- What links to International Science Unions does/will the Committee have?
- What is/will be the gender, geographical and age balance of the Committee?

Appointment

Appointments shall be arranged in designated periods so that approximately a quarter of the members retire each year. In the case of newly formed committees, such retirements shall begin at the end of the second year.

Term

Ordinary Members of National Committees will normally be appointed for three years. In exceptional circumstances a member may be reappointed for one further year.

Past members may be nominated to re-join the Committee after a minimum of three years has elapsed since the end of their previous term.

Observers

Observers can be assigned to Committees at the discretion of the Chair. Examples of relevant observers are representatives of industry bodies and executive members of International Unions or Australian societies or relevant Early-Mid Career researchers (see below).

Observers have no voting rights on the Committee.

Observers' travel and incidental expenses may be taken from the annual meeting budget at the discretion of the Chair.

Early-Mid Career Researchers (EMCRs)

Early-Mid Career Researchers may be additional members of a National Committee on an internship basis at the invitation of the relevant Chair and the relevant Secretary. The EMCR may be provided with funding to attend meetings from the NC support budget and is to be involved in the Committee as any other member. No more than two EMCR interns will serve on a NC at the same time.

The EMCR does not have to be endorsed by the Executive Committee of the Academy, but the Executive Committee needs to be advised as to who the EMCR is, what they are currently researching / working on etc.

The term of the EMCR internship will be 24 months from time of appointment.

The following demographic considerations should be taken into account each year when selecting an EMCR: discipline, geography and gender, to ensure a wide range of EMCRs have experience with the Committees over the years.

Role of corresponding scientific societies

Societies as members of Committees

Societies relevant to National Committees should have seats on the Committee to provide a link between the two. The term of appointment should be agreed upon with the Society at the time of appointment, bearing in mind that it is the link which is important more so than the position the individual holds in the Society.

If during their term on the Committee the member may no longer officially represent a Society, the Committee should liaise with the Society to decide whether:

1. The appointee resigns and a new appointment is made; or
2. The Society approves the continuing appointment and ensures that this person is in a position to report to the Society on a regular basis.

Where the number of such societies is so large that seating them all on the National Committee would not be practical, all societies should have seats in a defined, cyclical way. National Committees are to fill these seats by proposing candidates to the Council of the Academy in consultation with the relevant societies.

Involving societies in National Committee meetings

If appropriate, committees should distribute their meeting agendas to the relevant societies prior to the meeting, with an invitation to provide input on any item, and circulate the minutes to the societies when finalised. Confidential items may be omitted from the publicly distributed meeting agendas, although the existence of such items should be acknowledged.

Engagement with societies

The Committees should liaise with societies to ensure that:

1. Societies provide space for news from the National Committees in their regular electronic and paper news communication;
2. Societies provide a link from their website to that of the National Committees, and accept a link from the Committee website to theirs;
3. Where appropriate, to allow a short presentation about the work of the National Committee at a scientific meeting of the society.
4. Where appropriate, the National Committee can use their email resources to communicate with Australian scientists.

Sub-committees and taskforces

Taskforces and sub-committees are formed when there is a specific need for a group of a specific discipline to undertake a particularly, time-limited task. Taskforces / sub-committees are always constituted by a National Committee and come under the auspices of that National Committee. The Executive Committee endorses the formation of the taskforce / sub-committee, based on a proposal submitted by the relevant National Committee.

Membership

Members are nominated by the National Committee and endorsed by the Executive Committee.

Length of life

Upon completion of the specific task, and a successful report to the Executive Committee, the Council of the Academy shall disband the taskforce / subcommittee.

Developing Science Policy

As one of the general terms of reference, National Committees are to provide strategic science policy advice to the Australian Academy of Science, as input to Academy science policy statements, and (with the approval of the Executive Committee of the Academy) to the Australian Government and Australian organisations. Operating effectively with good national and international links, the National Committee is in an excellent position to do this.

The Science Policy secretariat of the Academy utilises ad-hoc committees to produce science policy documents. It is important to utilise the resources of the National Committees to assist in the development of science policy documents for the Academy.

When the Secretary (Science Policy) of the Academy establishes an ad hoc committee or working group to develop a policy position for the Academy a representative of the appropriate National Committees be included as a member of that Committee, and

When a National Committee develops a science policy paper on its own initiative, the National Committee a) advises the Secretary (Science Policy) that it is working on this paper, at an early stage of the process, and invites the Secretary to send an observer to the National Committee for the discussion of the paper, and b) transmits the paper to its destination in consultation with the Secretary (Science Policy) and after seeking approval from the Executive Committee of the Academy.

Logos and letterhead

The Academy logo is an exclusive and valuable brand that is put on documents, flyers and conference material when the Academy has provided endorsement of the particular event / document.

The logo must never be used without prior permission of the National Committees secretariat. The Secretariat will obtain the endorsement required (from either the relevant Secretary or the entire Executive Committee) and then provide the logo with the publication requirements.

Once the material that the logo is going on has been produced, it must be shown to the National Committees secretariat. The secretariat will check with the Communications department to ensure that it meets Academy requirements in terms of size, shape and colour. The logo should never be manipulated.

National Committees have access to their own letterhead. Letters on letterhead should be signed by the Chair and passed by the National Committees Secretariat to obtain approval before being sent.

National Committee Websites

The Academy maintains websites for all National Committees (www.science.org.au/natcoms). Requests for changes to the website should be sent to the National Committee Officers.

These Committee websites list membership details and relevant documents and links. Links to relevant international scientific organisations and corresponding Australian societies should be kept up-to-date.

2. International Scientific Unions (ISUs)

Introduction

The Academy expects the Chair and the National Committee to play a key role in strengthening Australia's international scientific links by taking an active part in international scientific organisations.

The Academy provides support for this role when the international scientific organisation (ISO) is one in which Australia is a National Member, the subscription fee of the ISO is paid by the Academy or an Australian Scientific Society, and the relationship between the National Committee and the ISO has been approved by the Academy's Executive Committee. For each approved ISO, which may be related to more than one National Committee, the Academy will provide up to a fixed sum, currently \$2500, to be used to support Australian voting delegates to the General Assembly, or equivalent governing body.

For some of these ISOs the Academy pays the subscription, and the thus the Australian Member and the National Committee has additional responsibilities, which are detailed below.

The ISOs for which the Academy pays the subscription are listed in Appendix 1. Many, but not all, of these ISOs are International Scientific Unions of the International Council of Science. There are some International Scientific Unions of the International Council of Science of which Australia is a member through an Australian Scientific Society.

Voting Delegates to the Governing Body of the ISO

1. The voting delegates shall be determined by consultation of the relevant National Committees and Australian Scientific Societies, and advised to the Council of the Academy and, in the case that the Australian Member of the ISO is not the Academy, to that Member.
2. The Australian National Member of the ISO will appoint the Australian voting delegates to the Governing Body of the ISO, and advise the ISO of its appointments.
3. The Australian voting delegates shall meet with the Chairs of the relevant National Committees, and Presidents of relevant Australian Scientific Societies to discuss the agenda of the ISO meeting. At the discretion of the Chairs of the National Committees, this meeting, which may be electronic, may be supported by the operating budget of the National Committee. This discussion may lead to a decision on how votes will be cast on some of the items on the agenda.
4. The Australian voting delegates supported by the Academy must attend the meeting of the governing body and vote on relevant items on the agenda.
5. Individually or collectively, the Australian voting delegates supported by the Academy will provide, within one month of the meeting, a written report to the Council of the Academy through the National Committees. This report will also be provided to the Australian National Member, if that is not the Academy.
6. The National Committees will make every effort to receive a verbal report from the Australian voting delegates at its next meeting

International Scientific Organisations of which the Australian Academy of Science is the Australian National Member

The National Committee will make vigorous efforts to ensure that appropriate numbers of Australian scientists are nominated to the **committees, commissions and associations of the ISO**. In general the conventions of the ISO will determine the approximate number of Australians who can be expected to be members of these, and the National Committee should ensure that more than or as many as possible of that number are nominated.

The National Committee shall also make nominations of Australian scientists to positions on the **executive of the ISO** as appropriate.

All of these nominations will be made to the ISO by the Academy on the advice of the National Committee.

If requested, the National Committee will assist the Academy in obtaining partial support for the subscription of the ISO from other organisations.

International Science Organisation General Assemblies and Congresses in Australia

When it is the adhering body to the ISOs, the Academy's endorsement is required for an ISO to hold its meeting in Australia. The Academy is able to issue letters of invitation to host ISO General Assemblies/Congresses in Australia, in accordance with the guidelines at Appendix 2.

Chairs may be involved in consultation with other institutes or societies to hold ISO events in Australia only if there is sufficient level of interest and support in Australia and endorsement by the Academy to host such meetings.

The Academy is unable to provide any financial undertaking to underwrite any ISO event.

Note that the Academy need not issue letters of invitation for other conferences endorsed by the ISO, but should be informed of successful bids for these conferences.

3. Meetings of the Chairs of National Committees

The Academy will host a meeting of the Chairs of national Committees annually or biennially to review the work undertaken, hear what is planned for the next few years and to work on what the Academy and National Committees can do to make the Committees more effective.

It is expected that the Chairs attend the meetings. If the Chair is not able to attend, a representative may attend in their place.

Appendix 1

International Union	National Committee	Category of membership	Voting delegates	Votes
Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR)	Antarctic Research	B	2	1 **
International Astronomical Union (IAU)	Astronomy	iv	3	5 (budget) 1 (other)
International Union of Physiological Sciences (IUPS)	Biomedical Sciences	3	TBC	3
International Union for Pure and Applied Biophysics (IUPAB)	Biomedical Sciences	2	2	2
International Union of Microbiological Societies (IUMS)	Biomedical Sciences	N/A	2 (TBC)	TBC
International Union of Basic and Clinical Pharmacology (IUPHAR)	Biomedical Sciences	TBC	TBC	3
International Union of Toxicology (IUTOX)	Biomedical Sciences	N/A	3	3
International Union of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (IUBMB)	Biomedical Sciences	2	2	2
International Union of Immunological Societies (IUIS)	Biomedical Sciences	N/A	4	3 (4)
International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC)	Chemistry		4 + 1 observer	4
International Union of Crystallography (IUC)	Crystallography	3	3	3
Committee on Data for Science and Technology (CODATA)	Data in Science		1	1
International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics (IUGG)	Earth Sciences	5	7	See notes
International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS)	Earth Sciences	6	1	1 (6)
Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research (SCOR)	Earth System Science		3	1
International Geosphere-Biosphere Project (IGBP)	Earth System Science		1	
World Climate Research Program (WCRP)	Earth System Science		1	
International Geographical Union (IGU)	Geography	D	1	1
International Union of History and Philosophy of Science (IUHPS)	History and Philosophy of Science	C	1	1 (3)
International Mathematical Union (IMU)	Mathematical Sciences	3	3	3
International Commission on Mathematical Instruction (ICMI)	Mathematical Sciences		1	
International Federation for the Promotion of Mechanism and Machine Science (IFPMMS)	Mechanical and Engineering Sciences	2	1	
International Union of Theoretical and Applied Mechanics (IUTAM)	Mechanical and Engineering Sciences		2	2
International Union of Nutritional Sciences (IUNS)	Nutrition		1	1
International Union of Pure and Applied Physics (IUPAP)	Physics	Four shares	3	3

International Union of Biological Sciences (IUBS)	Agriculture, Fisheries and Food	TBC	1 (TBC)	2
International Union for Quaternary Research (IUQR)	Earth Sciences	3	1 or 2	1
International Union of Radio Sciences (URSI)	Space and Radio Science	4	2 (TBC)	8
Scientific Committee on Solar-Terrestrial Physics (SCOSTEP)	Space and Radio Science	TBC	1	1
Committee on Space Research (COSPAR)	Space and Radio Science	2	1	1
International Commission for Optics (ICO)	Physics		2 (TBC)	

Appendix 2

International Scientific Meetings Held in Australia at the Invitation of the Australian Academy of Science

<http://www.science.org.au/natcoms/icsu-guidelines.html>

Introduction

International science meetings are an important means of communication among the scientific community. Major scientific international meetings, organised within individual disciplines, are convened on a regular, cyclical basis with the meeting locations rotating among interested countries. It is important for Australia to take its turn as a site for such meetings; particularly those sponsored by international organisations in which Australian researchers are active participants.

On behalf of the Australian research community, the Australian Academy of Science, serves as the adhering body of the major international, nongovernmental, disciplinary unions, which have as one of their prime tasks the sponsorship of scientific meetings. Most of these disciplinary unions are affiliated with the International Council for Science (ICSU), to which the Academy also adheres. As the adhering body, the Academy has responsibilities in relation to international meetings held in Australia under the auspices of these bodies.

In Australia, the organisation of international meetings requires the assistance and cooperation of a number of domestic institutions both private and public. These include the Academy, scientific societies, universities, research institutes and industries, as well as governmental bodies at both the federal and state levels.

For all types of meetings it can be anticipated that the appropriate National Committee and the Academy, will be involved to some extent. The measure of involvement will vary, depending on the circumstances of each meeting and the responsibilities that will have been agreed upon with respect to the designation of an organising body to handle the necessary fiscal and administrative arrangements, issuance of the invitation, and sponsorship.

This document sets out the Academy's policy on holding international meetings in Australia. The objective of this policy is to allow the Academy to invite International Unions and other scientific members of the ICSU family to hold international congresses, general assemblies and similar meetings, while at the same time, help the meeting organisers financially and in other ways without exposing the Academy to unknown or unlimited liability. The policy also applies to meetings of international bodies outside the umbrella of ICSU, for which the Academy has been asked to issue an invitation.

Organising body

It is central to this policy that there is only one organising body which will have responsibility for the logistical and financial aspects of the meeting. Responsibility for selecting or establishing the organising body rests with the sector of the Australian research community that requests the Academy to issue the invitation. The organising body (designated corporate agent) may choose to subcontract aspects of the meeting (eg the scientific programme or the day-to-day administration) and enter into agreements (such as leases) with other parties but the Academy as adhering body and issuer of the invitation will have a relation only with the organising body not with any subcontractors.

As the Australian adhering organisation of the international body, the Academy should receive periodic reports from the organising body. Therefore, National Committees are responsible for keeping abreast of plans for the meeting.

An organising body or corporate agent must be identified before an invitation is issued. This body must be technically competent to run the meeting, and must be likely to be in existence when the meeting occurs and the extent of any liability becomes apparent (which may be 10 or more years after the invitation is issued). If no suitable organising body can be identified, no invitation can be issued.

Issuance of invitations

For meetings held under the sponsorship of the ICSU unions or committees, the letter of invitation is normally issued by the President of the Academy, following discussion and approval by the Council of the Academy. The request to the President for such a letter is based on the recommendation of the appropriate National Committee and the agreement of the Academy's Foreign Secretary.

Early communication and continuous consultation by the meeting organisers with the Academy and the National Committee is strongly recommended – preferably twelve months before the meeting at which it is intended to submit the invitation and well before any signals are sent to the ICSU body as to the likelihood of an invitation from Australia – so that initiators have a clear understanding of the Academy's policy and responsibilities that will fall to them. The formal approach to the Academy should be not less than six months before the meeting, so that the Council of the Academy can give full consideration.

The Academy will issue an invitation only if it is satisfied that it has the broad support of the scientific community and that it will not incur any unacceptable liability by issuing such an invitation.

The organising body must accept, in writing, full responsibility for ensuring that the meeting takes place. It must, in effect, have a contract with the ICSU body to deliver the meeting, so that if for any reason the meeting does not materialise, that is a matter for the organising body and the ICSU body, and neither the ICSU body or the organising body will have a claim on the Academy.

The organising body and the ICSU body must agree between them to accept full responsibility for the finance of the meeting and for any costs or liabilities that may arise in connection with the meeting.

The ICSU body must confirm that, in respect to the meeting, any explicit or implicit responsibility falling on the Academy as adhering body has been negated, and either absorbed by the ICSU body or reassigned to the organising body.

The above conditions must be met before the Academy can issue an invitation.

Sponsorship

Meetings held under the auspices of an international organisation are normally considered to be sponsored by those bodies. It will be a matter of negotiation whether the Academy and/or other appropriate national groups or institutions also wish to be listed as official sponsors. Multiple sponsorships may depend on possible financial and other material assistance offered.

Other organisational responsibilities

There are other organisational matters on which all responsible partners must collaborate to assure that the necessary action is taken to achieve a successful meeting. These include, but may not be limited to:

Organisation of the scientific program

In some cases, this will be the responsibility of the sponsoring international organisations with little or no involvement by the local organising committee. In other instances, it will devolve completely on the host organisation(s) to determine the program design; topics, speakers, and publication plans. In both cases, however, some consultation between the international and local bodies is required.

Formation of a local organising committee

It is the responsibility of the designated corporate agent to establish a local organising committee. This committee, which is responsible for assuring that the necessary logistical and hospitality matters are attended to through organised volunteers or through a contract by the corporate agent with a professional congress organiser.

Budget

It is the expectation of the Academy that international scientific meetings held in Australia at the invitation of the Academy will be self-supporting. This means that appropriate registration fees must be set by the

responsible group(s) and realistic expectations developed with respect to anticipated income and expenditures. Other aspects, which must be considered, include start-up funding, identification of potential funders (governmental and nongovernmental), proposal preparation, etc. Appropriate offices of the Academy could be consulted for advice and assistance in these matters.

International scientific meetings held in Australia are of value to Australian researchers and provide a welcome opportunity to demonstrate the Australian commitment to international scientific cooperation. They offer young Australian researchers the prospect of establishing valuable professional contacts with colleagues from abroad and frequently have important economic and political benefits for the country as a whole. The Australian Academy of Sciences recognises its role as the Australian member of ICSU and its constituent unions to facilitate the hosting of successful international scientific meetings in Australia. It is prepared to pursue actively the responsibilities that have been outlined in this document, thereby demonstrating its strong commitment to the Australian research community and to international scientific cooperation.