

Guidelines for Working Groups (rev. July 2024)

Purpose and Function of Working Groups:

IFTR regards Working Groups (WGs) as major drivers of research and networking within the Federation (and a significant membership benefit) and is keen to encourage and support them. In return, WGs recognise that they exist under the aegis of IFTR and are expected to operate transparently and to co-operate fully with Conference Organisers and the Federation's administration. These guidelines are motivated by a desire to facilitate the formation and effective functioning of the WGs. The longevity of any particular WG varies based on factors such as members' interest, group aims, and disciplinary trends; these guidelines reflect the lifecycle of WGs' creation, activity, and disbanding.

For further operational information, members of WGs are also referred to the document "Advice for Convenors" drafted in 2024, available on [the IFTR WG website](#). For the list of IFTR Officers and Committee Chairs consult the [IFTR website](#).

I. Oversight of Working Groups

- A. The Federation's Executive Committee (ExComm) is the final authority over the operation and functioning of WGs.
- B. The ExComm designates one or more of its members to serve as Chair(s) of the Working Group Sub-Committee. The Chair(s) facilitate coordination between the ExComm, annual conference organizers, and WG Convenors; advise members seeking to form new WGs; frame recommendations to the ExComm about WGs; and fulfil other tasks ad hoc.
- C. **Periodic Review.** WGs are up for renewal every fourth year (henceforth, coinciding with the Congress year) at which time convenor(s) will supply the WG Sub-Committee Chair(s) with a report on activities. Renewal will be at the discretion of the ExComm, which shall consider factors including (but not limited to) the extent of membership, activity at annual conferences, and distinction relative to the entire portfolio of research represented by the WGs.

II. Setting Up a New Group:

- A. **Initial Steps:** Any group comprised of five or more IFTR members may request permission for an initial meeting by applying in writing by the fourth day of an annual IFTR conference to the Secretary General (copied to the Chair(s) of the WG Committee) and designating one or more convenor pro tem. The group will be scheduled to meet for a two-hour pilot session at the next annual conference of the Federation and will be allowed to issue a call for members.
- B. **Formal Recognition:** Following the pilot session, if the group decides that it wants to apply for status as an official WG, it should submit a formal application to the Secretary General of the Executive Committee (copied to the Chair(s) of the WG Committee) consisting of the following:
 - a. Names of ten or more members representing three or more nations.
 - b. A mission statement (to be placed on the website) and a work plan for the first four years which will include plans to meet at upcoming conferences, plans for

- WG outputs during this time (e.g. publications, meetings beyond the official IFTR conferences, web-based dissemination, exhibitions, etc.).
- c. The names of designated convenor(s) pro tem who will take responsibility for the group.
 - d. The group will create a generic email address for correspondence with the group membership, the Chair(s) of the WG Committee and conference organizers, and other general purposes.
- C. **Approval:** The Executive Committee will vote on the application, assign new groups to one of the WG categories, and notify the group's convenor(s) of the decision in writing.
 - D. **Election of Convenors:** Once a new WG starts functioning, convenor(s) must be elected by the members of their group and may serve for up to four years. They may be re-elected for a second term. Each group can choose its own method of election, as long as the process is transparent and open to all WG members (see Section IV on Elections). Convenor(s) may enlist another group member for web support.
 - E. At the new WG's first Periodic Review, the convenor(s) will supply the WG Sub-Committee Chair(s) with a written report on their activities and outputs during the period of operation and, if they wish to continue, a revised mission statement (if appropriate) and a new four-year plan.

III. Official Meetings of WGs

- A. The role of each WG is to develop scholarship in its area of specialty. In addition to annual meetings of the Federation, WGs may operate through various means determined by the group.
- B. Special requirements at the annual IFTR conference must be coordinated with the conference organisers and the Chair(s) of the WG Sub-Committee.
- C. All members of a WG must maintain membership in IFTR. This will entitle them to all IFTR services including the Federation's journal *Theatre Research International*, the ability to respond to the Federation's annual Call for Proposals and WGs' specialized calls, and eligibility to present at the Federation's annual conference and other interim in-person meetings sponsored by the WG.
- D. WG meetings occur in various configurations.
 - a. Organizational and interim online meetings. Many WGs find such meetings important for developing projects, advancing administrative goals, and enhancing members' networking.
 - b. WGs may elect to hold additional in-person or virtual meetings in connection with other conferences or at other times and places that suit their membership. These should be advertised through the official IFTR website and calls for papers posted (if assistance is required, contact IFTR's Secretary for Communication). Anyone presenting at such meetings must be a member of IFTR.
 - c. Annual Conferences. WG sessions at annual conferences are a fully legitimate form of participation, equal to giving a paper in a general session. The Federation recognizes this by publishing the names and abstracts of WG members in the official conference programme. Since the WGs will be involved in on-going development of their topic it is understood that they do not need to adhere to the annual conference theme. Convenors will submit a list

of participants to the conference organizers for inclusion in the programme. For purely practical reasons there is a limit to the provision of space and time that Conference Organisers can provide for WGs.

- i. Members may not offer papers/presentations in more than one WG at a given annual conference, nor may they offer papers/presentations in a general panel if they are also presenting in a WG.
- ii. WGs' meetings (both scholarly sessions and business meetings) are open to other conference attendees at the discretion of the group and can be listed as such.
- iii. Conference Organisers will attempt to provide appropriate space and support for WGs with explicit requirements. However, the normative modality at annual conferences is in-person: hybrid or on-line options are not guaranteed.
- iv. Each year WGs are invited to present a curated panel of papers showcasing the group's research to the main conference; in such cases, groups submitting a Curated General Panel are encouraged to address the conference theme whenever possible. WGs may also ask to present such a panel in years when their work is particularly suited to such presentation. The conference organisers will communicate with WG Convenors and WG Sub-Committee regarding how many and which of these panels can be accommodated.
- v. The maximum time that can be set aside by conference organizers for WG meetings is ten hours. Time slots may be distributed according to the size of the group, e.g. in scenarios where there are high numbers in some groups and relatively small numbers in others. Convenors may ask for assistance from the conference organizers in securing additional meeting time outside the official conference programme.

IV. Membership and Voting Rights for Election of Convenors

- A. **WG membership.** Membership in a WG is synonymous with voting rights for that WG's convenor(s). Membership is defined as follows: IFTR members with fully paid up IFTR dues, attendance at the WG during an annual conference at least one year in the previous three-year period, and presentation of research in the WG at least once during the previous three annual conferences. Upon meeting these conditions, WG members are eligible to vote in convenor elections, run for a convenor position, and vote on any actions regarding their WG's governance and projects (e.g. changes to the mission statement, approval of the four-year plan, or any rules for membership or for convenors' election that are more restrictive than the general rules of IFTR stipulated in IV.B.).
- B. **Elections.** The process and timing for elections of convenors must be transparent and conveyed to all current members of the WG.
 - a. Current convenors issue a call for new convenors.
 - b. Prior to elections, current convenors must ensure through the [Secretary General \(Administration\)](#) that all candidates and voters are WG members with voting rights.
 - c. If an election is held during the annual conference, WG members not attending the meeting where the election takes place may vote by absentee ballot, with the closing date announced in advance of the annual conference.

- d. Vote-counting should be delegated to a WG member who is not running for election.
 - e. Immediately after an election, names, affiliations, and emails of all convenors are to be communicated to the Chair(s) of the WG Sub-Committee.
 - f. Once elected, convenors must maintain WG membership and IFTR membership for the duration of their tenure.
 - g. The settings for the WG's generic email address and any social media accounts should be immediately adjusted to include all current convenors.
- C. In the event that a convenor cannot fulfil their term or neglects their duties as convenor, the WG may decide to hold an off-cycle election or co-opt another WG member to fulfil the vacant position until the next annual election. If the WG determines they would like the mediation of the WG Sub-Committee, they should raise the issue with the Chair(s), who will consult with the persons concerned and advise on next steps.
- D. If one or more WG members or convenors is concerned about the behaviour of any member, they should raise the issue with the Chair(s) of the WG Sub-Committee, who will consult with the persons concerned and advise on next steps.

V. Communications between WGs, the Federation, and Conference Organisers.

- A. On behalf of their group, WG convenors are responsible for maintaining ongoing communication with the WG Sub-Committee Chair(s) and annual conference organizers.
- B. It is the responsibility of each WG to keep the text of its IFTR website up to date. The Secretary General for Communication is the WGs' contact for web-based information posting and correction.
- C. The annual conference organizers will provide a timeline for the convenors to provide information about the WGs' intentions to meet, confirm names of WG members attending the annual conference, collect titles and abstracts for the programme, and ensure that all presenters are properly registered.
- D. Convenors may be requested to provide letters of invitation to members' home institutions in support of their attendance at conferences.
- E. Not fulfilling these obligations of communication may result in the WG experiencing off-cycle review.

VI. Dissolution of WGs

WGs have lifecycles that reflect factors such as member interest, operational viability, and disciplinary evolution. Dissolution may come internally through mutual agreement of members or externally through a decision of the ExComm which, on a cyclical basis, weighs the viability and longevity of each WG in the interests of the federation as a whole.

- A. At any point, a WG may notify the Secretary General (Administration) and Chair(s) of the WG Sub-Committee in writing of their timeline to dissolve.
- B. Any WG that fails to submit a satisfactory four-year renewal report for periodic review (see I.C) by the designated deadline shall be considered defunct.
- C. The Executive Committee may also disband a WG for stated cause in between review periods, after consultation with the WGs' leadership.
- D. A dissolved WG will be removed from the IFTR website, and henceforth former members may not use the moniker of the WG in relation to any further activities.