Establishing Special Interest Groups (SIGs) within BAAL

Setting up a SIG

1. Make contact with the BAAL SIG Co-ordinator for advice. The current Co-ordinator is Caroline Tagg (caroline.tagg@open.ac.uk). Ensure that you keep the Co-ordinator informed of developments.

2. Familiarise yourself with the procedures for running a SIG within BAAL.

3. Announce your intention to form a SIG via the BAAL mailing list. Invite potential members to contact you.

4. If not achieved by some other means (such as at a BAAL / CUP seminar or BAAL Annual Meeting colloquium), organise a planning meeting with interested parties to discuss the aims, title, and activities of the SIG.

5. In consultation with interested members, draw up a detailed proposal to be submitted to the BAAL Executive Committee. **See below for a model proposal**. It should contain:

   - a clear outline of the specialist area within Applied Linguistics to be served by the SIG
   - a rationale explaining why the SIG is needed and how its area of interest is distinct from that served by other existing BAAL SIGs
   - a set of goals for the SIG
   - proposals for the SIG's first year of operation, including
   - plans for an event for members
   - arrangements for some kind of formal election procedure
   - the names of 15 members of BAAL who support the formation of the SIG, and the names of four who are prepared to become actively involved
   - an undertaking that the proposer has read and will adhere to the rules for the operation of a SIG within BAAL

   The proposal must reach the SIG Co-ordinator fourteen days before the January meeting of the BAAL Executive Committee to enable the Exec to consider it. It is advisable to submit before the Christmas break.

   If the proposal is accepted, it means that your SIG has been approved for a probationary year. You will have access to a non-refundable start-up float of £200, to be set against expenses incurred. The BAAL Treasurer may require evidence of what those expenses are. If there are a substantial number of new SIG proposals in any one year, the EC may have to limit those officially entering the consultation period.

6. When planning your first event and before announcing it, submit a budget for approval by BAAL using the standard form. When the event is fully planned, you should:

   - tell the SIG Co-ordinator of time, place and speakers
   - publicise the event to all members on your membership list and subsequently to the full BAAL membership via BAALmail
   - submit a report on the event to the SIG Co-ordinator for inclusion in BAAL News

7. At the end of your first year of operation, you will be expected to submit a detailed report to the next meeting BAAL Executive. The report must include:

   - the current number of members (Please ensure that you have some means of checking which of these are BAAL members as, although SIG members do not have to be BAAL members, BAAL needs to know the proportions of non-members to members in SIGs)
   - details of events held in the probationary year
   - details of the business meetings and formal election procedures that have taken place
   - full accounts of the SIG up to date
   - a full list of current members of the SIG – these will be those on your mailing list.

- a statement of aims, organisation and procedures for the new SIG ie a constitution (consistent with BAAL's own constitution).

The BAAL EC can then approve its establishment.

Summary of the rules for the running of SIGs within BAAL (for more detail, see the latest version of the BAAL SIG Handbook available on the BAAL website)

Membership

BAAL members should be entitled to free membership of any/all SIGs. Non-members of BAAL can belong to a SIG via membership of the SIG mailing list. However all SIG events must offer a discount to BAAL members and generally promote membership of BAAL to SIG members.

Organisation

A SIG must have a Convenor as well as, preferably, a small organising committee, **all of whom are members of BAAL** (preferably individual members). There should be elections for the Convenor and committee once every two years.

Each SIG must have a statement of aims, organisation and procedures ie a constitution. This is achieved in the set up procedure (the report at the end of the probationary year) and should not be changed without full membership consultation and approval by the SIG Coordinator and the EC.

There should be a yearly business meeting (AGM) either at a SIG event or during the BAAL Annual Meeting. Time and a venue are allocated to each SIG for this during the BAAL AM unless otherwise requested.

The Convenor is responsible for ensuring the submission of:
- an Annual Report to the BAAL SIG Co-ordinator for transmission to the BAAL Secretary, the BAAL Newsletter Editor, and the BAAL Web Editor by early August every year including a list of SIG members, indicating which of these are BAAL members.
- a detailed financial statement to the BAAL Treasurer by June 15th every year, for onward transmission to the BAAL accountant for auditing.

Finances

SIGs are expected to have their own bank account and to maintain a clear record of all financial transactions.

SIGs should work to the same financial year as BAAL, that is, the calendar year, 1 June to 31 May. SIGs should maintain full, accurate and auditable accounts. These should be submitted to the Treasurer by June 15th every year for submission to the BAAL accountant for auditing alongside - but separate from - the main BAAL accounts.

BAAL will provide a start-up allowance of £200 against receipted expense claims.

Thereafter, the SIG should be self-supporting, and all profits should be used in pursuit of the SIG's stated aims. SIGs may also seek sponsorship, although the BAAL EC must be fully informed of all plans and developments in this regard.

The BAAL EC may (without obligation) consider requests for additional funding for specific anticipated activities. SIGs may also apply for funding within the BAAL/CUP seminar scheme.

The SIG must submit to the SIG Co-ordinator and BAAL Treasurer a detailed budget for any proposed event, following an agreed format. The event should not be publicised until formal approval of the budget has been given by BAAL.

Activities

The purpose of SIGs is to promote/enhance focused discussion within particular fields of applied linguistics. Ways of achieving this lie largely within the SIG's discretion.

Within the BAAL Annual Meeting, SIGs are expected to run a 'Track' of SIG related papers as well as a business meeting (or AGM). The timetabling of the SIG Track will be at the discretion of BAAL Meetings Secretary and the Local Organising Committee. If the SIG holds its AGM at a different event during the year, the SIG Coordinator should be notified of this. Minutes of the meeting and any changes in the constitution or committee should be sent to the SIG Coordinator.

A SIG will normally be expected to hold at least one meeting between BAAL Annual Meetings.

SIGs are expected to publicise their activity through the BAAL Newsletter and on the BAAL Website.

Terminating SIGs

The BAAL EC will close a SIG if there has been no annual report for two years and if there has been a lack of substantive activity for one year.

If a SIG becomes a separate organisation, the initial subsidy and all other financial support should be repaid to BAAL, unless otherwise agreed.

These rules are modelled on those used by the British Sociological Association (BSA) and the International Association for Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL)

Example of a Proposal for a SIG

PROPOSAL FOR A *[insert name]* SIG WITHIN BAAL

Goals

The term *[insert name]* …

should be taken as encompassing those areas which are generally covered in courses in the subject and in journals specific to the field, namely:

[list areas to be covered by the SIG]

Rationale

[Explain why this SIG is needed, what it will do that is not done elsewhere, how it will support the applied linguistics community, how it will advance work in the field]

Aims of a possible SIG

[Set out the objectives of the SIG, the processes by which these objectives will be achieved, and the structures which will support the processes.]

Initial Steps

[Set out the steps by which the SIG will be initiated. Make sure that these steps are reasonable and achievable within the resources available. If particular roles are necessary, try to allocate names to those roles. If finance is needed, try to identify the sources.]

Proposers

The following 15 members of BAAL have indicated their support for the formation of the SIG:
[NAMES – all must be current members of BAAL]

Of these, the following 4 are prepared to be actively engaged.
[NAMES]