

SIG Coordinator Handbook

Revised by SRL
Updated March 2022

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Abbreviations used in the Handbook.

AGM Annual General Meeting

AM Associate Member: business or organisation member of JALT

BC Basecamp

BOD Board of Directors (seven elected officers)

EBM Executive Board Meeting

JCO JALT Central Office

JENL JALT Executive Newsletter; (this document!) contains officer reports, agenda items, and financial data for the upcoming Executive Board Meeting

MAS Monthly Accounting Statement

OEC Officer's Expense Claim form; use this to submit expenses for reimbursement

OGM Ordinary General Meeting; twice yearly business meeting of all JALT officers and members who attend; only these meetings are recognized by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Legal Affairs Bureau, which has granted JALT NPO status, as the required meetings that must be held

PanSIG Spring mini-conference organised by many of JALT's SIGs

RPAC Regional Professional Activities Committee

SIG Special Interest Group

SRL SIG Representative Liaison

A) GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF DUTIES

The SIG Coordinator is responsible for coordinating all the activities of the SIG. The coordinator has three main areas of concern.

1. Within the SIG, the coordinator should understand all the activities of the SIG and keep in good contact with the other SIG officers to ensure that the SIG functions smoothly and efficiently. The coordinator should bring other members into the group of officers.
2. The coordinator is the main contact between the SIG and other groups and positions within JALT.
3. The coordinator is also the "face" of the SIG and an ambassador for JALT to people and organisations outside JALT; therefore, the coordinator should be prepared to publicise the SIG and answer questions from people and organisations outside JALT.

B) ON BECOMING A COORDINATOR

- Inform Director of Records <records@jalt.org>, SIG Representatives Liaison <sigrep@jalt.org> and Website Administrator <webadmin@jalt.org> that you are the new coordinator.

- Each SIG has a generic email address as listed in the JALT Information & Directory (for example, <tyl@jalt.org>). E-Mails sent to this address will be automatically forwarded to the current coordinator.
- Join our Basecamp Headquarters Group
<https://3.basecamp.com/4941132/join/i2WAmhAGf12A>

C) BASIC RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Updating Officer Lists

- a. All JALT members have their own login information, so they just access JALT.org. If they forget their log in details, they can click “request new password”. When members are officers, they get permission to access the officer area. This should happen automatically when the coordinator adds that person as an officer through the chapter or SIG’s own page on the site from the menu: “Groups” -> “Chapters & SIGs”; click the relevant group name. On that page, click the “Group” tab (you’ll only see it if you’re an officer of that group), and you see a “Officers” link where you can add officers and officer roles.
- b. A complete list of all officers should appear on your website and be published at least once a year in your SIG’s newsletter.
- c. Note: The main executive officers of a SIG (i.e. Coordinator, Treasurer, Membership, Program, Publicity) must be national JALT members. Occasionally, SIGs have non-JALT members serving as other “optional” officers (e.g. Newsletter Mailer, Member-at-large). That is permissible, but those people should not be included on any list sent to the JALT website or JCO. It is also important that all JALT officers keep their membership current by paying dues on time. Someone who has not paid dues cannot officially be considered an officer. This list may include officers who are not JALT members.

2. Keeping SIG Documents

- a. The coordinator should systematically keep electronic and hard copies of all-important SIG documents such as the SIG’s constitution, past AGM agendas, officer lists, etc. When you step down as Coordinator, these documents should be given to the person who replaces you as Coordinator. Online resources can be kept in a google drive folder to allow sharing.
- b. Constitution: the SIG should follow its constitution and make changes to the constitution where necessary. Constitution changes must be approved by SIG members at a SIG AGM, then ratified at an EBM. The constitution should be sent to the Director of Records <records@jalt.org> and SIG Representatives Liaison <sigrep@jalt.org>.
- c. AGM agendas and minutes
- d. Officer lists including contact details.

- e. Financial Records: Although the treasurer is responsible for preparing, filing and storing all SIG financial records, the Coordinator may wish to receive an email copy of the monthly form that the treasurer submits to JCO in order to monitor the SIG's financial status.
3. Contributing to and supporting SIG Publications
- a. Many SIG newsletters include a "Message from the Coordinator". Confer with the newsletter editor about the length, content and submission deadline for each message.
 - b. Non-members sometimes request inspection copies of your SIG's newsletter. It may be convenient for the Coordinator to receive several copies of each issue of your SIG publications or have the publications chair or newsletter editor perform the job of sending out inspection copies that are requested. Extra copies of publications are also handy for the Coordinator to have around to give to people who might be interested in your SIG.
4. SIGs and The Language Teacher
- a. The Language Teacher occasionally has opportunities for SIGs to contribute articles. These will be announced on Basecamp and emails.
 - b. SIGs and Chapters are entitled to a free half-page ad in the TLT one time only for special events such as book fairs or mini conferences.
 - c. Often during layout TLT ends up with spaces from quarter pages or less, up to full pages. SIGs may use those spaces if they wish.
 - d. SIGs should send ad requests to: TLT web admin <webadmin@jalt-publications.org>. Also notify the JALT Business Manager <business@jalt.org> and the JALT Central Office <jco@jalt.org>.
 - e. Rather than any SIG reserving space, it would be far better for the Layout Editor to have a stockpile of SIG adverts to use on a rotating basis. If you would like to advertise your SIG in one of those spaces, then please supply an advert. Size is 8cm x 11cm (tall) or 16.5 x 6cm (wide). It needs to be in Illustrator or Photoshop format. Word or PDF cannot be accepted. If you wish to have an advert designed, then contact Pukeko Graphics. (Note: the 1,000yen charge is the fee levied for placement and set-up of full or half page adverts. It does not include design or layout. Pukeko does not charge SIGs this fee for filler adverts.)
5. Requests from JALT Central Office (JCO)
- a. JCO occasionally sends other requests to the coordinator. These should be completed as soon as possible or delegated to another SIG officer or member.

6. Executive Board Meetings (EBM) and Ordinary General Meetings (OGM)

- a. A representative of the SIG is required to attend JALT EBMs and is encouraged to attend OGMs. Coordinators who cannot attend EBMs have two options:
 1. Find a substitute, who can be any SIG officer or member. In this case you will have to fill out and send in a "power of attorney" form prior to the meeting.
 2. If neither you nor a substitute can attend, you should submit a "proxy" form before the meeting.
- b. The power of attorney form and the proxy form are available in officer resources <<https://jalt.org/main/resources>>, from JCO <jco@jalt.org> or from JALT's Vice President <vp@jalt.org>.
- c. Before the non-conference meetings, you will receive an announcement about the time and the place of the meeting on EBM-net. The JCO books a block of rooms so you will also be asked to provide attendance information by a certain deadline. If you are flying, you need to reserve your tickets at least 45 days in advance to obtain discount fare. Please note that these seats are limited, so you may want to book even further in advance. When you attend the January or June/July meetings, your travel expenses and hotel expenses are paid by JALT, but you must save your receipts and fill out an officer expense form (OEC: available from the JALT National Treasurer at the meeting, or from <<https://jalt.org/main/resources>>).
- d. Transportation and hotel are not paid for the meetings that are held during the JALT International Conference, although a rebate is available to SIG officers who attend business meetings. (Ref. Standing Rule 4.3)
- e. There are five meetings in the year:
 1. First EBM: January/February
 2. Second EBM: June/July
 3. OGM: June/July
 4. Third, Conference EBM: October/November
 - Note: Meetings 2 and 3 are usually held on the same weekend, and meetings 4 and 5 are held on the same weekend.

7. JALT International Conference. The JALT International Conference is a busy time, and the coordinator has many duties before and during the conference. Please don't be afraid to delegate these tasks, but make sure that they are completed.

- a. Prepare for your Annual General Meeting (AGM).

- b. Reserve a table for your SIG at the Conference. The national SIG Liaison will inform you about how to do this on Basecamp. Within your SIG, you should ask for volunteers to help staff the table during the conference. The SIG information table is one of the best ways to advertise your SIG to JALT members, so your SIG should strive to have an attractive, informative and well-staffed table during the conference.
- c. Two-three weeks before the conference, coordinate with the other SIG officers about bringing all the necessary items to the conference for the information table and any presentations the SIG is organising. This includes finding out the conference mailing address in order to send boxes by takkyubin.
- d. If your SIG holds a party at the conference, you need to organise it (find and reserve a restaurant) or ask another SIG officer to do so. This is best done two or three months before the conference. A good way to find a suitable restaurant is to ask a member of your SIG who lives near the conference site for recommendations.
- e. Chair the SIG AGM at the JALT Conference.
- f. Attend the SIG Coordinators' Meeting that is held during the JALT International Conference.

- Advice: The annual conference is the busiest time of the year for most SIGs. Make and keep a list of all the things you need to do for the conference (see drive). This list will be a useful reference for you each year you need to prepare for the conference, and it will be a useful reference to give to the person who takes over for you as coordinator.

8. Preparing for the AGM: Most SIGs hold AGMs at the international conference, although SIG constitutions may allow the meeting to be held elsewhere.

- a. JANUARY/FEBRUARY – Submit an unvetted presentation proposal for your SIG's AGM on the JALT conference website <<https://jalt.org/conference/submit/unvetted>>. This will ensure that your AGM is listed in the conference handbook and on the conference website, as these are automatically generated from the online database. The deadline for such unvetted proposals is usually a few weeks after the regular vetted proposal deadline. Also, SIG AGMs are automatically scheduled by the Conference Program Chair. They are currently either scheduled in a 45-minute session on Saturday or Sunday dedicated to SIG AGMs, or during a 90-minute combined SIG forum and AGM. Previously SIG AGMs have been scheduled in the last hour of the Saturday program, so that the meeting may be extended and/or carry over into a SIG party.

- b. AT LEAST 1 MONTH BEFORE THE CONFERENCE – Prepare the agenda for your SIG's AGM and send it to your officers. This includes asking present officers if they will continue serving in their positions for another year and asking for nominations for open positions. The agenda should also include reports from the other main officers and time for discussion of future SIG projects and events.
9. PanSIG Conference: The annual PanSIG conference is usually held mid-May and can be a great venue for SIG members and potential members to discuss their interests both formally and informally. The conditions for participation may change year to year, but SIGs should usually provide a liaison, a working member of the PanSIG team, reviewers for presentation proposals and a forum or featured speaker. In return SIGs usually receive a programme grant from the revenue of the event. This is a shared amount and awarded a few months after the conference.
10. Coordinator's Report: By Dec. 31, submit the annual "Coordinator's Report" to the National SIG Liaison. The *Google form link should be sent early in December and listed on BC*. This should be written by the coordinator who served during the year covered by the report. If the coordinator has just changed, the previous coordinator should complete the report. The form varies slightly from year to year but reading the report from the previous year will give you a good idea of how to complete the form.
11. Fill in for Other Officers: If other officers cannot fulfil their duties, the coordinator should assume these duties until a new officer can be found.

D) STEPPING DOWN

SIG coordinators are often anxious about stepping down, usually because of the difficulty in finding someone to take their place. Finding a replacement is NOT the responsibility of the SIG coordinator, although it is a good idea if you can find someone. Often coordinators feel there is nobody to take over. This may be because JALT is a volunteer organisation, and most JALT members have busy working and private lives. It may also be that you are doing a good job as a coordinator, and nobody wants to suggest otherwise.

In order to facilitate a smooth transition to a new Coordinator it helps to:

- (1) announce far in advance (at least several months) that you want to step down, set a timetable for stepping down, and stick to it.
- (2) actively ask other officers and members to consider becoming the coordinator.

(3) pass on clear and complete records to the new Coordinator (this includes contributing updates to this manual via the SIG Representative Liaison <sigrep@jalt.org>).

(4) be available to answer any questions after the new Coordinator takes your place.

E) ELECTION OF SIG COORDINATOR

The SIG Coordinator is generally elected at the SIG's Annual General Meeting (AGM), which is usually held during the JALT Conference, for a term of one year beginning immediately after the election and ending at the next AGM. The constitution of each SIG may give further or alternate directions. There is no limit to the number of years that a person may serve as Coordinator, although, in accordance with the JALT philosophy that regular turnover is a good thing, four years is somewhat of a standard term for a person to serve in the same position. SIG Coordinators volunteer for the position and there is often no contested election.

F) BASIC DUTIES OF OTHER SIG OFFICERS (FOR YOUR REFERENCE)

As Coordinator, it is also part of your job to see that other officers can do their job and that they are fulfilling their duties. The basic duties of the other main SIG officers are below.

1) Treasurer

- Maintains a bank account for the SIG.
- Keeps up-to-date financial records.
- Reimburses other officers for expenses.
- Pays honoraria and other bills.
- Receives membership dues (Since we've moved away from paper, and now do pretty much everything online, except for postal furikae, this is no longer standard practice.)
- Submits all treasurer's reports to JALT Central Office (JCO) and to SIG Coordinator.
- Arranges for an annual audit of SIG financial records.

2) Program Chair

- Plans the JALT Conference SIG Forum.
- May plan other special programs, such as mini-conferences.

3) Membership Chair

- Forwards all membership applications to JCO.
- Receives and corrects JCO computer lists of SIG members.
- Encourages JALT members to join the SIG. (Actually, this is a task for ALL officers!)
- Liaises with SIG members.

4) Publications Chair

- Coordinates newsletters and other publications, either in print or online.

5) Publicity

-Publicises SIG activities.

6) Webmaster

-Maintains the SIG's website.

The SIG may also have other officers depending on the size and activities of the SIG.

G) VIRTUAL CONFERENCES

Since early in 2020 and due to COVID-19, JALT has been developing online meetings and conferences across the organisation. This makes officer meetings easy but difficult to coordinate events unless you have good communication with the SIG officers.

Here are some general guidelines:

- A) Have regular Zoom officer meetings
- B) Zoom socials are also a good idea
- C) Work with programs on events held all over Japan
- D) Keep a list of all events so that you can put in a proposal for the Michelle Steele Best of JALT.

H) DOI's FOR PUBLICATIONS

If your SIG wants a doi for your publications, please look here: in the Publications Chairs section of the Officer Resource area

<https://jalt.org/main/publications-chairs-resources>