

TESOL Communities of Practice Procedure Manual

This procedure manual addresses the establishment, renewal, and discontinuation of the two types of communities of practice (COPs) in TESOL International Association: professional learning networks (PLNs) and interest sections (ISs).

1. Application to Form a PLN

To establish a PLN, interested members should contact COP@tesol.org with the following information:

- **A name for the group** that accurately represents the group's purpose.
- **A statement of purpose**, with an explanation of how the proposed PLN advances TESOL's mission and strategic direction.
- The name and email address of one TESOL member who will serve as the **contact person for the PLN**. This person will be responsible for keeping the group's information up to date.
- The name and email address of one TESOL member who will serve as **the discussion facilitator and moderator**. This person can be the same as the contact person.

TESOL Staff will inform applicants whether the PLN has been approved within 30 days of receiving the application.

TESOL will provide approved PLNs:

- **An online discussion platform** with instructions on its use.
- **A TESOL staff contact person** who will help establish the group's presence on the TESOL platform.

1.1 Renewal of PLN

To continue as a PLN, the contact person must notify COP@tesol.org annually in April of the group's desire to continue.

A PLN may choose not to continue at any time. If a PLN does not indicate each April its interest in renewing for the next year, the PLN will dissolve. The TESOL Board of Directors may also dissolve any PLN that (1) does not adhere to [TESOL's mission and core values](#) and (2) does not show any activity for more than 12 months.

1.3 Change from a PLN to an IS

To become an IS, the PLN must follow the application procedure to form an IS outlined below.

2. Application to Form an IS

2.1 Proposing a New IS

Groups that wish to propose a new IS should follow the IS proposal approval process.

2.1.1 Preproposal Review

A group of 20 or more TESOL members may propose a new IS. To start the process, send a letter of interest to COP@tesol.org. This letter should include

- **A rationale** describing the professional need for a new IS, i.e., the proposed IS does not significantly overlap with existing TESOL components (e.g., other ISs, Professional Councils) and relates to relevant and current issues in the field.
- **A list of at least 20 TESOL members** confirming their interest in establishing the new IS.

After the Executive Committee's initial review, TESOL staff will forward the rationale to the IS leadership online community and the TESOL Board of Directors, requesting feedback. The Executive Committee will then decide whether to allow the proposal to move forward.

2.1.2 Formal Proposal

Following initial approval to apply from the Executive Committee, a formal application must be submitted. The formal application will be reviewed and voted on at the October board meeting and should be submitted no later than August prior to the meeting. The application should include the following information:

- **A name of the group** that accurately represents the group's purpose
- **A statement of purpose** with an explanation of
 - how the proposed IS relates to TESOL's mission and strategic direction
 - how it enhances and extends a unique area of expertise within TESOL International Association not already addressed through other entities (e.g., professional councils)
 - how it reflects a key area in the TESOL profession
- **Proposed activities** to undertake during the first year that will promote community development, member engagement, and contribution to TESOL's professional knowledge and expertise
- **Proposed strategies** for membership recruitment and retention, leadership succession, and leadership development
- **A description of leadership** roles and responsibilities, length of service, and order of rotation; and
- **The name and email addresses of the initial IS leadership**, including
 - chair
 - incoming chair
 - At least three additional positions (e.g., newsletter editor, community manager, member-at-large)

New ISs will be informed of the application status by 1 November.

TESOL will provide ISs with

- **An online community platform** with instructions on its use
- **A TESOL staff liaison** to help organize virtual seminars, newsletters, and other activities as needed
- **A board liaison** to facilitate communication with the Board of Directors and the association membership
- **The opportunity to lead one non-adjudicated academic session** in the TESOL convention program
- **The opportunity to lead one non-adjudicated collaborative session** with one or more TESOL entities (e.g., IS, PLN, or professional council) according to procedures determined by the Conferences Professional Council
- **An open meeting** at the convention
- **Template** for annual report
- **Additional staff and/or other resources** may be provided upon request.

2.1.3. First Annual Report

After one year, the new IS will submit its first annual report documenting its achievements and challenges with respect to its initial plan (see 2.1.2) and formulating goals to guide its activities and strategies for the next year. This annual report will be shared and reviewed with the staff liaison and board liaison.

2.2 Renewal of ISs

2.2.1 Annual Report

ISs will be responsible for submitting an annual report to the IS staff liaison in April every year, presenting the leadership team and goals for the next year, and self-assessing the activities of the past year.

2.2.2 Dissolution of an IS

An IS can be dissolved at any time at the request of its own IS leadership. In addition, an IS can be dissolved by the TESOL Board of Directors under one or more of the following conditions:

1. The IS fails to adhere to [TESOL's mission, vision and core values.](#)
2. The IS does not submit its annual report for more than two years in a row.
3. The IS does not fulfill its basic functions of membership engagement, leadership development and succession, and expertise building and sharing, as evidenced in annual reports.

If an IS is struggling to meet its basic functions for three years in a row, the Executive Committee will ask the board liaison to work with the IS on a one-year improvement plan. The improvement plan will outline specific goals and milestones. If the IS does not meet the goals outlined in the improvement plan, the board will take a formal vote on whether to dissolve the IS.

2.3 TESOL Members Joining ISs

Current TESOL members can join any IS.

2.4 Changes to the Procedure Manual

Substantive changes related to COP application requirements or criteria will be considered by the TESOL Board of Directors. Changes related to routine implementation procedures (timelines, submission forms, etc.) will be reviewed and approved by the board liaison, the staff partner, and COP Leaders. It will be the staff partner's responsibility to maintain a current procedure manual in the IS leader library.

Please direct questions about COP policies and procedures to COP@tesol.org.

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