



# **Arizona TESOL**

*Handbook of Policies and Procedures for  
Interest Sections (ISs)*

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## **I. Introduction to Interest Sections (ISs)**

### **A. Origins**

In 2015, the AZTESOL Board approved the formation of Interest Sections: That special units within the organization be created and called “Interest Sections (ISs).” The purpose of these ISs is to offer members a supportive community of practice where they can share insights or solicit guidance on issues that arise every day within the profession of TESOL.

### **B. Statement of Purpose**

Interest Sections (ISs) enable AZTESOL members to share and advance their areas of interest, and ultimately, the field of English language teaching and learning.

ISs connect researchers, professors, teachers, advocates, and volunteers who share a common interest in this field. Goals include collaboration, discussion, advocacy, and action about current trends in the field of TESOL. ISs are open to all current AZTESOL members.

## II. AZTESOL and Interest Sections (ISs): Governance Structure

### A. AZTESOL Board and Interest Section (IS) Participation

The Board is responsible for ensuring that ISs remain a healthy and vibrant part of the organization. The Board has ultimate authority over the IS component of AZTESOL. For example, the Board approves establishing new ISs or dissolving existing ISs. Additionally, the Board must approve this Handbook and approve any subsequent changes made to it.

There are three levels of participation in Interest Sections (ISs):

**Level I:** Interest Section (IS) Coordinator: An AZTESOL Board member who oversees all Interest Sections. The selection of the IS Coordinator and the length of term shall be as outlined in the AZTESOL Bylaws.

**Level II:** Interest Section (IS) Chair: A non-Board AZTESOL member leads the IS in achieving its stated goals and conducting its business efficiently.

**Level III:** Interest Section (IS) members: AZTESOL members who join an IS based on professional areas of interests. Members must be active in the IS and maintain their AZTESOL membership.

### B. Interest Section (IS) Coordinator

The IS Coordinator has general oversight of all Interest Sections (ISs) and thus makes recommendations on policies and procedures to the Board regarding the operation and formation of ISs as well as establishing and dissolving ISs. Upon approval of these policies and procedures by the Board, the IS Coordinator shall have responsibility for their implementation.

In addition to providing oversight and recommendations on policies and procedures, the IS Coordinator promotes the welfare of ISs within the organization. This is done by (a) representing ISs on the Board, and (b) assisting IS chairs and members.

### **III. Interest Sections (ISs): Formation, Continuation, and Discontinuation**

#### **A. Role of Interest Sections (ISs)**

The primary role of AZTESOL's Interest Sections (ISs) is for members to stay abreast of the issues and concerns of their areas of interest/expertise through discussion and to disseminate that information to the entire membership. AZTESOL's ISs represent the various professional concerns of the membership. Through ISs, members have the opportunity to participate, learn, share, interact, and serve. Although each IS has distinct interests and goals, all seek to fulfill the following objectives:

1. To submit proposals (for presentations, workshops, etc.) to the AZTESOL State Conference on issues related to the IS;
2. To provide opportunities for networking internally among their members and externally among sections;
3. To mentor, advise, and train members on conference proposals, publications, and professional concerns;
4. To stimulate scholarship, research, and professional development for members;
5. To convey, through the IS Coordinator, the needs and interests of their members to the Board;
6. To serve as area-specific resources for AZTESOL and the community at large;
7. To foster the recognition of English language instruction as an academic field of study at all levels of education;
8. To advocate for the professional concerns of their members and for the students their members teach; and
9. To ensure viability and continuity in AZTESOL by training and encouraging aspiring practitioners to become IS leaders.

## **B. Procedures for Establishing Interest Sections (ISs)**

ISs are established by the Board as follows: A petition, signed by at least five current AZTESOL members indicating there is a need and interest for the proposed section, is submitted to the IS Coordinator at least sixty (60) days before the annual AZTESOL State Conference. The IS Coordinator prepares a written and oral summary for discussion at the AZTESOL Board Meeting. The Board approves or rejects the petition. If the petition is rejected, the Board makes recommendations for modifications where applicable. The petition must include:

1. The name of the proposed IS;
2. The purpose, or definition, of the professional interest represented by the proposed IS. No petition should contain an IS purpose or definition with content that overlaps with the purpose or definition of an IS already existing;
3. A recommendation of an AZTESOL member to serve as Chair during the initial year of the proposed IS. If the petition is approved, the President, in consultation with the IS Coordinator, appoints the Chair and Chair-elect for the first year; and
4. Proposed events and activities for the first year.
  - a. ISs are required to organize one event during the AZTESOL State Conference (i.e., meeting, roundtable discussion, presentation); with possible other events held during area mini-conferences, or activities held online that are open to all AZTESOL members.
  - b. ISs are expected to develop a means of communication (and for archiving materials) such as a newsletter (electronic or print), a discussion forum, a website/wiki, a research project, or a materials bank.

Healthy and vital ISs are those with Annual Meeting sessions that are research-based, content-driven, well attended, and inclusive of the entire AZTESOL membership. ISs engage in membership recruitment, offer mentoring to future teachers, and engage members in advancing and disseminating knowledge in their field.

### **C. Maintenance of Interest Sections (ISs)**

Each IS maintains its status by meeting the following requirements:

1. It shall retain at least five members who are current AZTESOL members.
2. It shall hold a business or planning meeting at the annual AZTESOL State Conference.
3. It shall elect a Chair and Chair-Elect in accordance with its bylaws. Voting must be completed at least one month prior to the annual AZTESOL State Conference.
4. It shall report on annual IS activities to the Board through the IS Coordinator.
5. It shall present workshops, papers, academic sessions, discussion groups, etc. at the AZTESOL State Conference and offer other services to its members.
6. Each IS shall communicate with its members through an electronic mailing list and document meeting minutes via the AZTESOL shared Google drive. Other means, such as a Website or mailings, may be used as appropriate.
7. AZTESOL will provide each IS with access to the official AZTESOL Interest Sections marks and logos for its use. These marks and logos cannot be altered in any way. AZTESOL does not grant permission to any IS to use any other official AZTESOL marks and logos. Any electronic or postal communication requiring the use of the AZTESOL letterhead or logo must be organized with the assistance of the IS Coordinator.

### **D. Dissolution of Interest Sections (ISs)**

The Board is empowered to dissolve an IS for one or more of these reasons:

1. The IS Chair, supported by half of IS membership, recommends that it be dissolved.
2. The IS membership falls below five and remains so for a whole year.

3. The IS lacks organization or proper operation, its practices are inconsistent with AZTESOL's Mission, or its conduct is in conflict with the interests of AZTESOL.

If it is a case outlined in No. 3 above, a recommendation is submitted to the Board by the IS Coordinator, who advises the Board of the situation and of any extenuating circumstances and recommends to the Board appropriate action, including possible probation or dissolution. If dissolution is proposed, the IS Coordinator must provide evidence that the IS failed to remedy or resolve the situation.



## IV. Interest Sections (ISs): Operations

### A. Officers and Communication Tools

Each IS must have a Chair who is a current AZTESOL member. In addition, some ISs may have additional officers (e.g. Historian, Awards Chair, Webmaster) who provide leadership for that particular IS. Each IS Chair must be a member of that IS and must be elected by that IS's members. The IS's other officers may be appointed or elected, as determined by the IS members. No IS officer can serve more than three years in succession in the same office.

To facilitate the work of IS officers, AZTESOL provides online access to the IS Google Drive folder.

1. Go to this [link](#).
2. Create a New Folder for your IS. (Tutorial: [How to Use Google Drive](#))
3. Create and share documents and forms using the Google Drive folder.

ISs are encouraged to use the website provided by AZTESOL to post officer rosters, newsletters, announcements and such communication with the membership. IS officers should coordinate with the webmaster to add information to the website. AZTESOL provides two types of listserv for ISs: an announcement listserv and a discussion listserv. The listserv allows members to communicate with one another, discuss ideas, make announcements and generally keep in touch. Subscription to a discussion list is voluntary and the IS Coordinator is authorized to monitor who is accepted to the listserv.

### B. Repository of IS Information

The Board strives to have a permanent repository of all ISs, including formation, operations, history, and other pertinent information of each IS. To that end, the IS Coordinator is strongly encouraged to forward copies of IS documents to the Board Historian.

### C. Membership Dues

The AZTESOL membership dues apply to individuals who join or renew participation in an IS.

## **D. Activities Involving Legal and Financial Commitments**

Interest Sections (ISs) may not enter into legally binding relationships or make commitments to other groups, or in other ways affect the constituent relationship between ISs and AZTESOL without approval of the Board. Such approval is necessary for activities that require a legal commitment or a financial obligation beyond the IS's resources. ISs are encouraged to consult the IS Coordinator if such approval is sought or where there may be ambiguity or uncertainty.

## **E. Public Policy Positions**

Only the AZTESOL Board can take public policy positions on behalf of AZTESOL as an organization. Interest Sections (ISs) are encouraged to make recommendations to the Board or to bring to the attention of the organization issues for consideration, especially in areas relating to expertise, competence, or advocacy.