



**Preamble:**

The Study Group Governance Guidelines were created to provide a clear reference for both new and existing Study Group Chairs on the daily operations and responsibilities of a Study Group. Until now, there was no formal resource available, and key information was expected to be passed down informally from Chair to Chair. This document is designed to fill that gap by outlining suggested practices, processes, and expectations in a clear and accessible way.

## **Study Group Governance Guidelines**

### **1. What is a Study Group?**

Study Groups provide a forum for CAG members to focus on their particular sub-discipline or related specialization in geography and may also organize different activities throughout the year depending on their needs (for example: student contest, special paper sessions at the CAG annual meetings).

### **2. Mission/purpose of the Study Group?**

Each Study Group has a mission/purpose; it's important to have an updated mission and be sure that it reflects the actual situation of the Study Group.

Here are some examples: [On the CAG website](#), (*please see: the Health and Health Care Study Group and GIS Study Group*).

### **3. Who can be a member of a Study Group?**

Only members of the CAG in good standing may join a CAG Study Group. Members may join these groups by simply indicating the group(s) of their choice on their CAG membership form and adding the additional fee to their total. Should you join the CAG through the AAG-CAG joint membership option, you will automatically be provided with a form that will allow you to join Study Groups related to the CAG and then you will be invoiced for the cost of your Study Group membership.

If you are a member of CAG and want to join a Study Group in the middle of the year you may participate in their activities and pay the additional fees when you renew your membership. However, you will not be a voting member of that Study Group until fees are paid. For more information, contact the Study Group Chair.

You may be a member of several Study Groups; there is no limit.

### **4. How to create and sustain a Study Group?**

Below are the guidelines for creating a new Study Group:

- Provide a list of at least 5 CAG members in good standing who are committed to becoming members of the Study Group and the mission statement of the group;
- Decide on the membership fee;
- Submit the name of the proposed Chair and Treasurer and their coordinates and the official name of the group with a short mission statement to the CAG Executive for review. Should the Study Group be approved, the mission statement and related information will be translated and posted on the website <https://www.cag-acg.ca/study-groups>.

Your Study Group must be approved by the Executive before it can be listed on the next CAG membership application form. The decision will be based on levels of interest in the Study Group as well as the objects of the organization including adherence to EDI principles. Furthermore, there must be at least two executive members (Chair, Secretary/Treasurer).

If you wish to participate at an upcoming AGM (see our website at <https://www.cag-acg.ca/annual-meeting>) before you are approved you may do so as an Ad-Hoc Study Group. In so doing you may use the AGM as an opportunity to vote on your mission statement, elect an executive, vote on a membership fee and collect additional names.

#### **5. How is the executive of the Study Group formed?**

Usually between 2 and 5 members depending on the size of the Study Group. Depending on the type of the Study Group you may have the following role:

- Chair\*
- Co-chair
- Past-chair
- Treasurer\*
- Secretary
- Student representative
- Communication/media representative

*\*mandatory*

Should you desire, the CAG centralized Drive contains templates you may use to guide your activities.

#### **6. What type of activities does a Study Group do?**

Normally, a Study Group should hold an annual meeting, either in person or virtually. For example, these are other activities that Study Groups have held in the past:

- a. Holding student paper contests
- b. Organizing special session(s) at the CAG annual meeting
- c. Hosting social activities
- d. Inviting a guest speaker
- e. Organizing a workshop
- f. Collaborating with other Study Groups with respect to events

Study Groups are expected to undertake due diligence with their membership through regular communication including emails and at least annual meetings. An updated list of members' email addresses is available from the CAG office upon request.

**7. How does the Study Group connect with its members?**

Regularly through the year CAG administration updates the Study Group members list. Usually in early March, CAG administration will send the Study Group Chair an email with the updated link to the Study Group membership list. It's the responsibility of the Study Group executive to contact new members and to connect regularly with them, using some combination of:

- a. Welcome emails
- b. Newsletters
- c. Facebook/LinkedIn pages
- d. Having a web presence on the CAG webpage
- e. Co-sponsoring sessions at other affiliated associations (e.g. AAG, IGU, etc.)
- f. etc.

**8. What are the expectations of the Study Group?**

- a. Annual report - every year, before January 31st, each Study Group must send its annual report to the CAG administration and share it with its members in order to be considered an active Study Group. This is a short and easy report format that helps to document Group activities. The CAG will share a template and examples, to assist Groups.
- b. Organize at least one annual meeting per year (in person or virtual) and produce and share meeting minutes with members and the CAG administration.
- c. Organize election for the executive at least every two years.
- d. Study Groups are expected to organize and document their own meetings and activities.
- e. Study Groups are expected to set the membership fees for their own groups and are strongly encouraged to ensure they are both reasonable and equitable, particularly for student members (note - Study Group funds are held centrally in the CAG finance system, but accessible to Study Groups to fund member activities).

**9. What is the support of CAG administration for the Study Group?**

- a. Provision of a centralized Drive where Study Groups can deposit and find resources accessible to all the chairs/co-chairs.
- b. Updated CAG Website.
- c. Time and space for Study Groups to gather at the Annual Meeting as per the Conference Guidelines.
- d. Organization of a virtual annual meeting of the chairs/co-chairs in the Fall of each year to keep the ball rolling.
- e. Administration of Study Group financial activity.

- f. Tracking and updating Study Group membership, and provision of membership lists upon request.
- g. Ongoing timely information sharing.
- h. When funds are available based on the CAG annual budget, an annual process for application for funds will be announced in the Fall, directly after the Fall Board meeting.

## 10. Finances

The CAG collects membership dues on the behalf of the Study Group and holds these funds centrally to support Study Group activities.

### Accessing Funds:

- Study Groups may access their funds at any time by contacting the CAG office at [info@cag-acq.ca](mailto:info@cag-acq.ca)
- Transaction requests must be made by the **Study Group Chair** and/or **Treasurer**.
- Account balance updates are available upon request.
- While funds are held by the CAG, each Study Group is responsible for managing its own finances and activities.

### Annual Report and Membership Dues:

- Membership dues collected for each Study Group are issued upon the receipt of an annual report.
- The CAG administration will contact the Study Group Chairs in December to request the submission of their annual report by January 31st.
- To be eligible for the membership dues collected from the previous calendar year, Study Groups must submit their annual report by the stated deadline (**January 31**).
- Reports should be sent to [info@cag-acq.ca](mailto:info@cag-acq.ca)

### Forfeiture of Dues:

- If the annual report is not submitted **by January 31st**, the Study Group Executive will receive ONE final reminder to submit the Annual Report by **July 31st** (six months from the deadline) of the same year.
- If the report is **not received by July 31st**, the Study Group will **forfeit the membership dues** collected for the reporting period.

## 11. How to merge two Study Groups?

The merger of two Study Groups shall be considered the creation of a new Study Group. See section 4.

## 12. How do we define an active and inactive Study Group?

To be considered active, a Study Group must:

1. Produce an annual report and share it with the CAG executive assistant and its members.

2. Produce an annual financial report and share it with the CAG administration and its members. Once the report is received and reviewed by the CAG Executive, the transfer of membership funds will be made to the Study Group account.
3. Hold at least one business meeting during the year (between January and December) and share the minutes with CAG administration and its members.

A Study Group is considered inactive when:

No activity has been organized for two consecutive years:

1. No annual report has been produced two years in a row or the annual report is showing that no activity has been organized for two years.
2. No financial reports have been produced two years in a row or the financial report is showing that except for the rebate from CAG, there was no financial activity.
3. No business meetings were held for the group two years in a row.

### **13. How to suppress an inactive Study Group?**

When a Study Group has been deemed inactive, the suppression process will start.

1. The CAG administration will contact the last person known as the chair/co-chair to inform him/her/them that they need to take actions if they want to keep the Study Group active. A clear timeline will be shared. If no full response is received within 4 weeks with a clear plan and timeline, the CAG administration will move to step 2, below.
2. The CAG administration will write an email to all the members of the Study Group to inform them that unless some actions are undertaken to bring back activity in the group, the group will be suppressed. Members have 1 month to react, and reminders will be sent 2 weeks before the deadline.
3. If no action is taken or the chair/co-chair are not responding to the CAG administration emails then the group will be officially suppressed and the money of the Study Group will be transferred into the CAG general operating account.

Approved by the CAG Board October 29, 2025

This document will be reviewed before the end of the 2028 calendar year by the governance committee.