



International Students' Group volunteer handbook



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what is the ISG?

The International Students' Group (ISG) is a constituency group under the rules and regulations of the Simon Fraser Student Society, born to protect the interests of a significant minority on campus.

The ISG represents and defends international students' interests by taking action against differential fees, and for hassle-free, need-based bursaries, lobbying for consideration of internationals' situation in allocating on-campus housing, and representing international students on the National Students Council and on the SFSS Forum, as well as in front of the university administration and the wider community.

We help out in welcoming and befriending new international students, monitoring the International Student Lounge, working closely with SFU International on International Student Orientation activities every semester and, last but not least, setting up social events: Pub Nights, karaoke nights, potlucks, dinners, etc.

membership

Membership in the ISG is automatic for international students at SFU, that is, visa students who have been in Canada for at most two consecutive years. Membership is also open to anyone who self-identifies as an international student (e.g. long-term international students and landed immigrants).

All members of the SFU community and beyond are welcome to attend our meetings and events, up to the discretion of the executive. There is no membership fee.

how does the ISG work?

The ISG works through meetings and, although we encourage consensus decision-making, we use a form of Robert's Rules of Order to conduct our meetings.

As we seek the support of most meeting attendees for any decisions we take, participating in our general and committee meetings is the best way for you to be represented by the Group, and to bring your problems as an international student to our attention.

history

The International Students' Group was created in March 2003, in response to a significant tuition increase for international students at Simon Fraser University.

In September 2003, Bocar Dia, a Business and Computing Science Major from Senegal, became President of the Group. The ISG focused on registration issues, off-campus work for internationals, and starting lobbying Financial Assistance to work towards a more transparent treatment of bursary applications.

Giovanna Di Sauro, a Molecular Biology and Biochemistry student from Italy, became President of the Group in September 2004. In October, the Group presented the International Lounge Proposal to the SFU administration, and obtained the assignment of funds and a dedicated space for the Lounge. Follow-up work by Di Sauro, Dia, Shadmehr, and other volunteers made the opening of the Lounge possible.

Ramin Shadmehr, an Interactive Arts Iranian student with a strong focus on social events and Orientation, was elected President in September 2005. Di Sauro was re-elected in September 2006 to work on the introduction of new volunteer positions, a volunteer program, and a more decisive advocacy stand.

volunteering

Why volunteer with the ISG?

Being an active member of the ISG will give you the opportunity to have face-to-face meetings with the SFU administration, and to help us address our shared concerns.

You might not know about our achievements. However, they are life-changing for all international students studying at SFU, or even in Canada. They include the Lounge, a stronger attention to international student needs, the chance for internationals to run for the university Board of Governors in BC, and meetings with local MPs. Most importantly, we participated in an extensive Canada-wide effort to advocate in favour of off-campus work permits for international students.

Although it is hard to believe that such a small group of students made such a difference, this is indeed the one you might make once you join our staff, executives and volunteers!

How to volunteer

All the information about the volunteer jobs and what the Group does is on our website. Please, carefully read our Constitution, and navigate our website. This will allow you to have a more precise idea of what you are getting involved with, and it will become an asset especially if you are applying for Executive positions.

If you wish to volunteer, please send us your name, surname, major, student number, phone, e-mail, a cover letter and resume to our e-mail, and include some realistic time availability estimates. After we receive your application documents, we will contact you to arrange an interview.

Be aware that, while general volunteers can be accepted right away by the current Executive after the intake interview, you will have to go through an election if you are applying for an Executive position.

volunteer opportunities

Executive Members

The Executive members of the International Students' Group are the President, the Treasurer, the Secretary and the Forum Representative. All Executive members have to be international students as defined by SFU, or self-identified international students in good standing, and members of the SFSS.

President

The ISG President is able to commit a minimum of 10 hours/week. S/he is an active member of the ISG Executive and of all Committees and Subcommittees of the ISG. The President conducts all Executive and Staff (Committee) meetings and is the main person responsible for promoting the ISG to the campus community, as well as for ensuring that all ISG activities run smoothly. The President needs a comprehensive knowledge of the ISG Constitution and policies to better liaise with the SFSS and with other groups on campus, as well as to be the main spokesperson for the ISG. The President's most important responsibility is to give direction to the ISG, accommodating and encouraging positive change.

Secretary

The Secretary is able to commit a minimum of 5 hours/week and is an active member of the ISG Executive. The main secretarial tasks include, but are not limited to, recording all meeting minutes, sending the minutes out to the membership through the ISG's main mailing list, and the SFSS Student Union Organizer to secure continued funding. The Secretary needs a comprehensive knowledge of the ISG Constitution and of all ISG policies.

Treasurer

The Treasurer must have some applied knowledge of accounting, and needs to commit a minimum of 5 hours/week to volunteering for the ISG. The Treasurer keeps a record of allocation of ISG funds, periodically checks and updates the ISG's asset list, and gives an account of the ISG's financial standing and record book. The Treasurer is also in charge of refunds and grant applications. As all the other Executive members, the Treasurer has to be policy-aware.

Forum Representative

The Forum representative has to be willing to gain a sufficient knowledge of meeting rules of conduct used in the SFSS Forum, and be able to commit a minimum of 5 hours/week.

The Forum Representative has an important role in the ISG, acting as a liaison between the ISG and the SFSS, and voting in the interest of the ISG on Forum. The Representative has to have a comprehensive knowledge of the ISG Constitution and of all ISG policies. S/he is required to report to the ISG Executive every two weeks, through meeting attendance and/or e-mails.

Staff Members

Staff Members are responsible for very important tasks, and they can be either appointed by the Executive or elected. Staff positions are subjected to change according to the organization's needs. The Staff need to be international students as defined by SFU, or self-identified international students in good standing and members of the SFSS.

The current Staff positions are: Webmaster and Mail List Manager, Office Administrator, Volunteer Trainer, Volunteer Coordinator, Advocacy and PR Coordinator, International Lounge Manager and Events Coordinator.

Webmaster and Mail List Manager

The Webmaster needs a working knowledge of HTML programming, CSS, Dreamweaver™, and must commit a minimum of 5 hours/week to managing and promptly updating the ISG's website, while also managing the ISG's mailing lists.

Office Administrator

The Office Administrator must commit a minimum of 5 hours/week, and volunteer at least one hour a week in the ISG Office. The Office Administrator is responsible for organizing an outreach campaign and recruit office volunteers, as well as for setting up the office schedule. The Office Administrator is in charge of the Office and Lounge Committee and must attend all scheduled meetings.

Volunteer Trainer

The Volunteer Trainer must have some experience with training and dealing with volunteers, and commit a minimum of 5 hours/week. S/he is required to attend relevant workshops, and work closely with the Volunteer Coordinator to organize ISG Volunteer Training workshops and materials. The Trainer also works on a long-term volunteer management system, and attend meetings of the Volunteer Training, Recruitment and Appreciation Committee.

Volunteer Coordinator

The Volunteer Coordinator must have some experience in training and dealing with volunteers, and commit a minimum of 5 hours/week. His/her tasks include, but are not limited to, the ones of the Volunteer Trainer. In fact, s/he is also in charge of ISG volunteer appreciation. S/he will set up Volunteer Archives and direct the Volunteer Training, Recruitment and Appreciation Committee.

Advocacy, Media and PR (AMPR) Coordinator

The Advocacy and PR Coordinator must also commit a minimum of 5 hours/week. This Coordinator is responsible for carrying out the ISG PR campaign and advocacy agenda, as well as preparing and printing ISG communication materials and liaising with SFU International. The AMPR Coordinator also documents the history of the Group. S/he is in charge of, and must attend, the Advocacy, Media and PR Committee meetings.

Events Coordinator

The Events' Coordinator must commit a minimum of 5 hours/week. S/he organizes events to promote the use of our lounge space; manages co-sponsored events. The long term goal of the Coordinator is to build a history of large events' organization, efficient and effective budget management. S/he is in charge of the Events Committee and participates to all their meetings

International Lounge Manager

The Manager must commit a minimum of 5 hours/week, and volunteer for at least 1 hour/week in the International Lounge on week days. The Manager must make sure that Lounge users abide by Lounge rules, monitor Lounge activities and Lounge volunteers. The Manager is in charge of recruiting volunteers for the International Lounge and setting up the volunteer schedule, and s/he is the main ISG contact with SFU International for all International Lounge issues. The Manager is a member of the Office and Lounge Committee and must attend all scheduled meetings.



General Volunteers

The General Volunteers are supervised and coordinated by their respective Coordinators/Administrators. The General Volunteer positions are designed to give international students the chance to improve their soft skills, and receive the training needed to occupy leadership positions in a confident and knowledgeable manner.

Office Volunteer

The Office Volunteer must commit a minimum of 2 hours/week. S/he volunteers in the ISG Office during regular office hours, welcoming visitors and knowledgeably answering questions about the Group and its activities. The Office Volunteer is a member of the Office Committee.

Events Volunteer

The Events' Volunteer must commit a minimum of 2 hours/week and is a member of the Events Committee. S/he works closely with the Events Coordinator to help with the organization of ISG events.

Advocacy and PR Volunteer

The Advocacy and PR Volunteer must commit a minimum of 2 hours/week. S/he works closely with the Advocacy and PR Coordinator on ISG communication materials, advocacy, and PR matters. S/he is a member of the Advocacy, Media and PR Committee and must attend all meetings.

International Lounge Volunteer

S/he must commit a minimum of 2 hours/week for volunteering in the International Lounge on week days. Volunteering in the Lounge will include, but will not be limited to making sure that Lounge users abide by Lounge rules, monitoring Lounge activities, reporting problems to the Lounge Manager, and answering questions on the ISG's role pertaining to the International Lounge. S/he is a member of the Office and Lounge Committee and must attend all scheduled meetings.

committees

Office and Lounge Committee

The Office and Lounge Committee must include the President, the Office Administrator, the Lounge Manager, the Office Volunteers and the Lounge Volunteers. This Committee is responsible for office and Lounge volunteering, recruitment, schedule set-up, office and Lounge maintenance.

Volunteer Recruitment, Training and Appreciation (VRTA) Committee

The VRTA Committee is constituted by a minimum 4 members, and must include the President and the Volunteer Coordinator. The Committee has a variety of responsibilities, such as attending SFSS workshops, building alliances with groups which have/provide training programs, and running volunteer training sessions in the beginning of the each semester. The Committee also works on volunteer socials, appreciation, research on volunteer management and Volunteer Archives.

Events Committee

The Events Committee consists of a minimum 4 members, including the President, the Events Coordinator and the Treasurer. The Committee works on organizing events, promoting the use of the International Lounge, co-sponsoring events with other groups on campus, events announcement, running small- or large-scale fundraising events. The Committee also organizes and runs the ISG Club Days table.

Advocacy, Media and Public Relations (AMPR) Committee

The AMPR Committee consist of a minimum 5 members, including the Forum Representative, Webmaster, AMPR Coordinator, and President. The Committee is responsible for updating and maintaining all ISG communication materials, re-designing the website, doing advocacy work, documenting the history of the Group and carrying out PR campaigns.

SFSS Annual General Meeting (AGM) Committee

The AGM Committee consists of a minimum of 4 members, including the President, and at least a member from the Events and the Advocacy Committees. Its aim is to work on organizing successful AGMs.

Orientation Committee

The Orientation Committee consists of a minimum of 6 members and is responsible for planning, preparing and carrying out the ISG's part of the International Student Orientation activities.

notes



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