

Information for IUPAP commission chairs

December 2024

This is a compendium of the main aspects that rule the workings of IUPAP Commissions. Please refer to the Articles and Internal Regulations of the Union (reachable from: <https://iupap.org/documents/statutes-bylaws/>) for more details on the rules that apply to Commissions and to IUPAP in general.

Generalities

Commissions are the main structures through which IUPAP connects with physicists. Right now, there are 18 Commissions (C2-C6, C8-C20, <https://iupap.org/who-we-are/internal-organization/commissions/>). Each commission has 11 regular members and 3 officers (chair, vice chair and secretary). There are rules for their terms of service to guarantee the renewal of their composition providing, at the same, a framework for the continuity of their work (the articles and internal regulations are accessible from: <https://iupap.org/documents/statutes-bylaws/>). The composition of commissions is renewed at the in person General Assemblies (GA) which are held once every three years (the last one took place in Haikou, China, in October 2024, <https://iupap.org/who-we-are/internal-organization/general-assembly/33rd-general-assembly/>). The new members start their terms on January 1st of the year immediately after the in-person GA (currently, January 1st, 2025). We have recently introduced a minor modification regarding Commission Chairs as explained later in this document. We also briefly explain later how commissions participate, through their chairs, in the process to renew their composition.

Besides their regular members and officers, commissions can have associated members who can participate in the commission meetings without voting rights. Associated members can be members of other IUPAP commissions, affiliated commissions or working groups. They can also be scientists with affiliation in IUPAP's associate territorial members. They can also be members of other unions or organizations with which the commission wishes to liaise. As of 2024 we decided that we will appoint them on an interim basis in January 2025 (at the first Executive Council and Commission Chairs meeting in which the newly elected authorities will participate), to be ratified at the GA to be held in October 2025.

Commissions are usually defined in terms of physics subfields, the exceptions being mainly the Commissions on Symbols, Units, Nomenclature, Atomic Masses and Fundamental Constants (C2) and on Physics for Development (C13). Although there is some overlap of the themes covered by some commissions, they serve to create a sense of community among the physicists working in the corresponding subfield. This is done through two main tools: conferences (<https://iupap.org/conferences/>) and awards (<https://iupap.org/awards/>). We describe later the role of commissions in these two very important activities of IUPAP.

Commission Chairs (CCs) are ex-officio Personal Members of IUPAP (see Art. 5 (A) ii of the Articles here: <https://iupap.org/documents/statutes-bylaws/articles/>) who are exempted from paying membership due and have the right to one vote at the GA.

CCs together with the Chairs of Affiliated Commissions (<https://iupap.org/who-we-are/internal-organization/affiliated-commissions/>) and the officers (Past and current Presidents and President Designate, Secretaries General and Deputy Secretaries General for Financial and Legal Affairs and for Administrative Affairs, Associate Secretary General and Treasurer) participate in the EC&CC meetings that are typically held twice per year, most frequently in virtual form. In-person meetings are held immediately before the in-person GAs, thus, triennially. This is the common use, but it can be changed if necessary. The expenses for the participation of CCs in the in-person GAs and EC&CC meetings are covered by IUPAP central (with some restrictions on the transportation costs that are informed in due time).

Five CCs are elected to be part of the Executive Council as Vice Presidents from Commissions. The five CCs who will hold these positions starting in January 2025 have already been asked and have accepted. These five CCs participate in the EC meetings that are held immediately after the EC&CC meetings (usually lasting for half a day).

IUPAP is currently discussing how to rejuvenate its structures and actions. Thus, some of its common practices might change in the near future.

Conferences

Almost all commissions have at least one flagship conference held bi or triennially. Each commission has its own tradition on how to make the decision on the location and organizing committee for each edition of their flagship conferences. Please refer to the previous CC to learn how this is handled in your Commission. It is important to note *that the organizers of flagship conferences have to apply for sponsorship, as the organizers of any other conferences seeking the support of IUPAP do*, as explained in what follows. *Please alert them to do so in due time.*

Every year IUPAP issues a call for applications for the sponsorship of conferences to be held the following calendar year. The time to apply goes from January 1st through June 1st (we are about to open the call for conferences to be held in 2026). The application is done through the IUPAP's website (<https://iupap.org/conferences/applications/application-for-conference-sponsorship/>). At the submission time, applicants are asked to choose a Commission that will analyze the application. Conferences can be of 4 types (A-D), depending on their size and location. Type D conferences (which can be workshops or schools) are relatively small events to be held in the Global South and are only analyzed by C13. The rest of the Commissions analyze the applications for sponsorship of Type A-C conferences and produce a recommendation that is sent to the Associate General Secretary, Rudzani Nemutudi (rudzi@tlabs.ac.za). Rudzani will inform you the deadline to submit your recommendation. Rudzani then analyzes the recommendations submitted by all Commission and, taking into consideration the budget, produces a recommendation of funding for the approval of the Executive Council (EC). The

discussion of Rudzani's recommendation and the approval is done at the EC&CC meetings that are held during the second half of the calendar year (usually, October).

Conference organizers can also seek the endorsement of IUPAP. This possibility is, in principle, open all year long.

Conferences are required to fulfill several conditions to receive the sponsorship or endorsement of IUPAP. Please refer to the policies and guidelines accessible from here: <https://iupap.org/conferences/>.

Awards

Some commissions give career achievement awards or medals. These are handled separately from IUPAP central, although the information on the awardees should be shared in due time with secretariat@iupap.org and communication@iupap.org to post it on IUPAP's social networks, website and newsletter, and to include it in the Union's records.

All commissions give Early Career Scientist Prizes (ESCPs). Commissions are responsible for organizing the call and selection process of the prizes. ESCPs are intended for researchers who have obtained their PhDs within 8 years of the year of the call. Career interruptions must be taken into consideration extending this lapse as necessary. The nomination package must contain a statement signed by the nominator saying that, to the best of their knowledge, there are no concerns that IUPAP should be aware of regarding the nominee not satisfying the expectation that he/she meets the commonly held standards of professional ethics and scientific integrity. We are currently discussing the best way to avoid having duplicate nominations for more than one ESCP. CCs must guarantee the diversity of the pool of candidates, particularly in terms of gender. The call should include some statement encouraging nominators to consider diversity when submitting a nomination. CCs should monitor the submissions and send reminders stressing the need for diversity. In case that, at the time of the closing, the pool of candidates is far from being diverse, the deadline can (and should) be extended.

ESCPs are awarded at a (mean) frequency of one per year. Some commissions do this yearly; others give three prizes once every three years. ESCPs consist of a monetary prize, a medal and a certificate. IUPAP "central" takes care of the monetary prize and the medal, for which a special budgetary allocation is approved at the in-person GAs. CCs are in charge of printing out, signing and giving the certificates. We only provide the template for this. CCs inform IUPAP when they issue the call for nominations for awards. They do this by sending an email with the announcement to secretariat@iupap.org and communication@iupap.org so that it can be advertised on the IUPAP website and disseminate through social media. Commissions can (and should) use other means of dissemination of the call. CCs contact IUPAP again once the decision on the awardees is made. In order to proceed, IUPAP needs the citation, a good photo and short bio of the awardees, their information contact, the postal address where the medal and certificate should be sent to and the bank details where the monetary award should be transferred to. Some Commissions invite the awardees to

their flagship conferences where they present them with the medal and certificate. It would be desirable that the awardees contribute with a brief written piece on their research to be included in the IUPAP newsletter.

Please contact the previous chair of your commission to learn about the prizes they give and the details of how they handle them.

More recently the Interdisciplinary Early Career Scientist Prize was established. The first awards (for 2022 and 2023) to recognize research that combined the subfields addressed by more than one IUPAP Commission, Affiliated Commission or Working Group, were decided in 2023. We will issue a new call soon. As done for 2022-2023, we will ask nominators to choose at least two Commissions, or a Commission and a WG or Affiliated Commission, at the time of the nomination. The Chairs of the Commissions that were selected by the nominators form part of the Prize evaluation committee. We will then need the help of many of you to decide on the award. We will discuss all these details at the first EC&CC meeting in January 2025.

Self-nominations are not allowed for any of the awards.

Budget

There is a small budgetary allocation for each commission. In the past, this was used for in-person meetings. Right now, each commission uses it as needed. Please ask the previous chair for details on this. CCs contact IUPAP via secretariat@iupap.org when they incur in an expense that is eligible to be covered by IUPAP. They are then required to fill out an expense claim form to proceed with the reimbursement. Advanced payments can be requested if necessary as well.

Communications and outreach

As you might all know by now, IUPAP has a website, <https://iupap.org/>, where there are dedicated pages for each Commission. Please check that you agree with the information that is posted there and let us know of any changes that you would like to introduce. So far, most changes are introduced by Francesca who can be reached by sending email to communication@iupap.org. The website also has pages for the announcement of prizes and any other news that you think are relevant to be shared with our readership.

IUPAP produces a regular newsletter (ideally, 4 per year). We are always looking for interesting material to be published there. Please think of how you or someone in your commission or subfield could contribute with a piece.

Finally, 2024 marked the beginning of the International Decade of Sciences for Sustainable Development (IDSSD) and 2025 is the International Year of Quantum Science and Technology (IYQ2025). We expect that you will help IUPAP contribute to these two very important endeavors.

Reports

All Commissions, Affiliated Commissions, Working Groups and Liaisons Committees with other organizations shall make a written report to the General Assembly. The Executive Council shall provide opportunities for participants at the General Assembly to ask question on these reports and shall designate any that are to make an oral presentation.

Election of CCs and renewal of Commission compositions

The composition of the Commissions is voted at the in-person GAs (which are held triennially). The new members and officers of the Commissions begin their terms on January 1st of the year immediately following that GA. Please check the articles and regulations of the Union for the terms of reference of their members. At the 33rd GA held in October 2024 we decided that the new CCs will be approved at the GA immediately preceding the in-person one as “chairs designate”. Chair designates will be invited to the in-person GA where the new commission composition will be voted.

The process for electing the new members of Commissions is a little complicated with participation of the Liaison Committees of IUPAP’s Territorial members, representatives of IUPAP’s Corporate Associate members and CCs at different stages along the process. The names are finally voted by the IUPAP members at the in-person GA. We will describe the procedure in a separate document when we are closer to the time to start proposing new names. We mention it here so that you know that we will need your active participation to advance in this regard.

The future

IUPAP has started a major revision of its structures and actions. A Rejuvenation Task force will start to work in 2025 to bring proposals of changes to be approved at the 2025 GA. We expect that CCs will be actively involved in the discussion and alignment of the proposals.