

Stream and Current Topic Convenor Policy

The policy below was approved by the SLSA Board on 24th February 2023. It is in seven sections:

1. **The role of the Stream Secretary:** An overview of the new proposed role on the SLSA Board.
2. **Appointment of Stream Convenors:** The triggers and process for appointing new convenors for streams.
3. **“Current topics” and the annual conference:** How current topics are advertised and chosen.
4. **Applications for new streams:** How applications for new streams are sought and decided.
5. **Retiring streams:** The circumstances in which streams will be retired.
6. **The role of Stream Convenors:** Expectations of those running streams.
7. **The role of “Current Topic” Convenors:** Expectations of those running “current topics”

1. The role of the Stream Secretary

1. The SLSA Board is responsible for appointing a Stream Secretary.
2. The Stream Secretary will ordinarily serve for a term of three years, but this period can be extended at the discretion of the SLSA Board. The expectation is that stream convenors will serve a maximum of two three-year terms.
3. The role of the SLSA stream convenor is to:
 - a. Maintain a record of current (and where possible, past) SLSA streams and current topics.
 - b. Maintain a record of current stream and “current topic” convenors, including their contact details and length of service.
 - c. Liaise with Stream Convenors ahead of the annual conference each year (as covered in (iii) below).
 - d. In co-ordination with the Conference Organisers, invite applications for “current topics” ahead of the annual conference each year (as covered in (iv) below).
 - e. In co-ordination with the Conference Organisers, manage the process for replacement Stream Convenors (covered at ii below) and applications for new streams (covered at vi below).
 - f. Ensure that the stream and stream convenor information on the SLSA website is up-to-date.
 - g. To provide guidance to stream and current topic convenors on their role and to encourage best practice.

- h. To conduct an annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion review of the operation and convenorship of streams and current topics, with a view to advancing the SLSA's EDI strategy, highlighting best practice, and identifying areas for improvement. This will be the subject of a summary report to the SLSA Board.

2. Appointment of Stream Convenors

1. The appointment of stream convenors is at the discretion of the SLSA Board.
2. Decisions to appoint convenors should be consistent with the SLSA's EDI policies and values, and with a view to encouraging the participation of Early Career researchers in stream convenorship.
3. A standard term of a convenor of a stream is three years. This term can be extended at the discretion of the SLSA Board. The expectation is that stream convenors will serve a maximum of two three-year terms.
4. In July of each year, the Stream Secretary will contact stream convenors who are approaching the end of their term to ask if they intend to continue as stream convenor for the conference of the following year. Convenors who are not nearing the end of their term, and who are unwilling or unable to continue, should make contact with the Stream Secretary.
4. A new stream convenor(s) should be appointed when:
 - a. Stream convenor(s) step down, either:
 - Leaving a stream with fewer than two convenors, or;
 - Where the current stream convenors wish to appoint a replacement stream convenor.
 - b. Stream Secretary and/or the conference organisers do not receive any response from all convenors of a particular stream over a sustained period of time, despite their best efforts to make contact. Where this leads the Stream Secretary to conclude that the stream may not be able to run at the conference, the appointment process can be triggered.
5. There will be an annual appointment process for new Stream Convenors as follows:
 - a. Vacant Stream Convenor posts will be advertised via the SLSA e-bulletin.
 - b. Candidates apply via a cover letter and CV to the Stream Secretary.
 - c. Candidates must be members of the SLSA.
 - d. The decision on the appointment is taken by a sub-committee of:
 - The Stream Secretary.
 - The outgoing SLSA convenor(s) of the stream and any current convenor(s) (where they exist and are available).

The organisers of the preceding SLSA annual conference can be consulted to inform decision-making where necessary.

6. Where an appointment needs to happen urgently and outside of the annual convenor recruitment process (if, for example, a convenor steps down suddenly shortly before the conference), the remaining stream convenor(s) can informally nominate a

‘shadow’ convenor to assist for that year’s conference. Shadow convenors should formally apply at the next opportunity.

3. Current topics and the annual conference

1. In September each year, the Stream Secretary will issue a “call for current topic proposals” for the next Annual Conference.
2. Current topics should:
 - a. Reflect a current topic of debate or an issue of emerging importance in socio-legal studies.
 - b. Be expected to attract at least six papers (i.e. two conference panels).
3. Ordinarily, there would be up to seven Current Topics proposals accepted for a conference.
4. Decisions about the Current Topics proposals will be taken by:
 - a. The Stream Secretary.
 - b. The Conference Organisers.

4. Applications for new streams

1. SLSA members may propose the introduction of new streams at any time by contacting the Stream Secretary (i.e. there is no annual call for new streams and no timetable or application window).
2. New streams must only be introduced where:
 - a. There is an articulated rationale as to why it is likely to be of ongoing interest to conference attendees.
 - b. There is no clear overlap with another existing stream.
 - c. The stream proposal identifies at least two stream convenors for the new stream.
3. Applications for new streams will be considered by a sub-committee of:
 - a. The Stream Secretary.
 - b. The organisers of the next SLSA annual conference.

5. Retiring streams

1. Streams may be “retired” (i.e. removed from the call for papers indefinitely) where:
 - a. All of the convenors step down (or are uncontactable) and the SLSA Board is unable to appoint any suitable replacement convenors.
 - b. Where a stream receives fewer than 3 submissions following the call for papers for two annual conferences in a row. In such circumstances, this should not lead to the automatic retiring of the stream, but instead a discussion

between the Stream Secretary and the current stream convenors to allow review of the future viability and relevance of the stream.

- c. Where a stream seeks to “merge” with another stream. Applications for this would be dealt with under the same process as applications for new streams under (iv) above.

6. The Role of Stream Convenors

1. SLSA stream convenors should be SLSA members in good standing. The role of a stream convenor is to:
 - a. Advertise the call for papers for the annual conference to their networks.
 - b. Review, take decisions, and communicate with corresponding paper submitters to their stream for the annual conference within the timescale required by the Conference Organisers.
 - c. Organise papers for their stream into sessions/panels for the Annual Conference within the timescale required by the Conference Organisers.
 - d. Organise and facilitate chairing of sessions/panels in their stream for the annual conference.
 - e. Respond to queries from the Conference Organisers and the Subject Secretary in a reasonable period of time.
 - f. To be available for the three days of the annual conference, or – if they are unable to attend – to facilitate the chairing and organisation of sessions in their absence so that streams can run across multiple days.
 - g. Advance the SLSA’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy.

7. The Role of Current Topic Convenors

1. Current Topic convenors should be SLSA members in good standing. The role of a Current Topic convenor is to:
 - a. Advertise the call for papers for the annual conference to their networks.
 - b. Review, take decisions, and communicate with corresponding paper submitters to their current topic for the annual conference within the timescale required by the Conference Organisers.
 - c. Organise papers for their current topic into sessions/panels for the Annual Conference within the timescale required by the Conference Organisers.
 - d. Organise and facilitate chairing of sessions/panels in their current topic for the annual conference.
 - e. Respond to queries from the Conference Organisers and the Subject Secretary in a reasonable period of time.
 - f. To be available for the three days of the annual conference and to facilitate the chairing and organisation of sessions in their absence so that current topics can run across multiple days.

Change Record

| Date of Change: | Changed By: | Comments: |
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