



International  
Mathematical  
Union

## Guidelines for Meetings of the General Assembly of the International Mathematical Union

*Endorsed by the 17<sup>th</sup> IMU General Assembly in 2014,  
with subsequent changes made by the IMU EC on April 1, 2017, and on March 1, 2021*

### About the General Assembly

The General Assembly (GA) is the main body of the International Mathematical Union (IMU). It admits IMU members, elects the IMU Officers and the members of the IMU Executive Committee, establishes commissions, determines the budget, and decides about the IMU Statutes, the rules of conduct and many other issues. The GA consists of Delegates appointed by the Adhering Organizations, together with the members of the Executive Committee, and of the Representatives of Associate and Affiliate Members. Guests and Observers may be invited additionally. Only Delegates have voting rights. The IMU Statutes contain a detailed description of the rights and duties of the GA.

The GA normally meets once in four years, usually at a venue and date close to an International Congress of Mathematicians (ICM). A proposal for the venue and time of the GA meeting is part of the bid for an ICM.

This document provides some guidelines for the organization of a meeting of the GA.

### GA organization

For a GA meeting arranged in close association with an ICM, the ICM organizers are supposed also to take responsibility for the organization of the GA meeting. In the following, we denote the local organizing committee responsible for hosting the GA meeting for the «GA Organization». Ideally, a mathematician based in the vicinity of the location of the GA meeting should be appointed as chair of the GA Organization. He or she is the local contact person and is in charge of coordinating the GA meeting with the ICM organizers and the IMU Secretary General. The number of persons involved in the organization of the GA and the structure of the local GA Organization are up to the ICM organizers. It is required that the GA Organizations acquire an adequate insurance coverage for cases of damage of the GA Participants at and in the vicinity of the venue for the GA for which the GA Organization may be liable.

### GA web server and site

A GA web server and a GA web site must be set up at least one year before the GA meeting. For security reasons, the data collected on the online registration form should only be accessible to the GA Organization and the IMU Secretariat.

Competent staff must run the GA server and make the necessary documents available on the GA web site. Mirroring is advisable to back up in the case of a breakdown of the server. The GA web server should be integrated into the ICM web server and must be maintained until a copy thereof has reached

the IMU archive. The GA Organization must make sure (e.g., by obtaining corresponding copyrights) that all material dedicated to the IMU archive can be made available on the IMU web site without time restrictions and without paying royalties.

## GA Participants

Admitted to the IMU GA meeting are:

Category	app. No.	Description	Voting rights
Delegate	160	is nominated by a full member AO of IMU	YES
Representative	15	represents an Associate Member AO of IMU represents an Affiliate Member of IMU	NO* NO* <small>*apart from voting rights, same rights as Delegates</small>
IMU EC Member	11	all members of the Executive Committee	NO
IMU Representative	5	a person serving some IMU function, invited by the IMU President, e.g., PC chair, Commission President	NO
Observer	8	is invited by the IMU President in order to serve a certain function	NO
IMU Staff	2	persons working for the IMU and supporting the GA by secretarial assistance	NO
GA Organizer	5	members of the GA Organization appointed by the ICM organizers	NO
GA Local Staff	n	persons who help organize and support the GA at the location where the GA meeting takes place.	NO
Media	n	persons from media, at the discretion of the IMU President	NO

The persons belonging to one of the categories listed above are jointly called *GA Participants*. In addition, there may be accompanying persons for whom some service should be provided.

*The name tag (large letters please) for each GA Participant and accompanying person must contain the following information:*

*First line (name line): Name of the person (the name provided by the person via the online registration process, no titles, Latin letters only).*

*Second line (country line): Name of the country (the official name of the country as it appears on the IMU web site) if the person represents a Member country as a Delegate or an Associate Member country as a Representative, in all other cases the name of the country the person has provided in his/her registration form).*

*Third line (function line): One of the following functions applies:*

*DELEGATE, REPRESENTATIVE, IMU EC MEMBER, IMU REPRESENTATIVE, OBSERVER, IMU STAFF, GA ORGANIZER, GA LOCAL STAFF, MEDIA, ACCOMPANYING PERSON.*

## Timetable

ICM	– 1 year	IMU Secretary General forwards invitations to the GA meeting through circular letter to all AOs
IMU GA	–6 months	Online registration starts via the GA web site
IMU GA	–3 months	IMU Secretary General forwards the GA agenda to the AOs
IMU GA	–2 months	IMU Secretary General forwards the GA slates to the AOs
IMU GA	–1 month	IMU Secretary General forwards some practical advice to the AOs
IMU GA	–2 weeks	Last minute information provided by GA Organization
ICM OC	–5 days	IMU EC arrival at the place of the GA
ICM OC	–4 days	IMU EC meeting at the place of the GA
ICM OC	–4 days	GA Participants arrive, registration
ICM OC	–3 days	IMU GA meeting (2 full days)
ICM OC	–1 day	Transfer from GA site to ICM site

The distribution of information material about the GA meeting venue, transport to and from the GA location, hotels, etc. (see below), need to be jointly planned with the IMU Secretariat. It should be provided as soon as the GA web site is ready and at least 6 months prior to the GA meeting.

## Registration

GA participation is determined as follows:

- The AOs of full Members must nominate their Delegates to the IMU Secretary General/Secretariat according to the IMU Statutes 19.
- The AOs of Associate and Affiliate Members must nominate their Representatives to the IMU Secretary General /Secretariat according to the IMU Statutes 19.
- The IMU President decides in consultation with the EC on the invitation of IMU Representatives and Observers.
- The chair of the GA Organization appoints the members of the team consisting of volunteers supporting the organization and staff hired for particular services.

All GA Participants and the accompanying persons must register. The name provided by the person in the online registration form will appear on the name tag. Before registering, each GA Participant should check his or her category of GA participation.

The IMU Secretariat defines who is a Delegate, Representative, IMU EC Member, IMU Representative, Observer or IMU Staff and provides this information to the GA Organization at least one week prior to the GA meeting. The IMU Secretariat and the GA Organization must cooperate in this respect since, usually, some confusion and last minute changes occur.

All registrations should be made electronically prior to the GA meeting via the GA web server; details are to be coordinated between the IMU Secretariat and the GA Organization. At registration, each Participant should assure and sign that he/she has adequate health and travel insurance for the full duration of the GA meeting. In addition, during the registration process dietary restrictions, disabilities, and child care requirements should be asked for.

There are, in general, some countries with difficult visa relations to the GA host country. It is advisable to get in contact at an early stage with the foreign ministry of the host country and with embassies in countries with complicated diplomatic relations to make sure that all GA Participants (and ICM participants) from these countries can enter the host country. Suitable invitation letters to GA Participants may have to be sent.

In addition, each GA Participant must register on site on the evening before or on the morning of the GA meeting (possibly in the conference hotel or another appropriate place) to check the identity, approve changes and, thus, verify the actual GA participation. The GA Participants will receive name tags/local GA material. The GA documents are not distributed as printouts. They will be stored in USB memory sticks by the IMU Secretariat and will be distributed at the on-site registration desk by the GA Organization.

The complete registration list must be handed over to the Credentials Committee (see below).

### Typical GA schedule

- Day before day 1 of GA, IMU EC meeting starting at 09:00
- On-site registration evening before and on the morning of day 1
- GA, day 1, 09:00 – 17:00/18:00  
Group photo, 2 coffee/tea breaks, 1 lunch break, GA committee meetings in the evening by individual appointment
- GA, day 2, 08:30 – 09:30 GA committee meetings by individual appointment,  
09:30 – 16:30/17:00  
2 coffee/tea breaks, 1 lunch break
- One social activity on the evening of day 1 or day 2 should be planned.

### Expense arrangements

The expense arrangements need discussion between the IMU Secretariat and the GA Organization. Typically, the GA costs are born by the GA host country with some support from the IMU, see item 3.1 of the IMU budget. Among the items to be discussed are:

- Who pays for the local costs of the IMU EC, IMU Staff, IMU Representatives, Observers?
- Is there financial support for Participants from countries without resources, if requested? ▪ Who pays for local social activities?

Other issues at the venue:

- Provision/use of WLAN on the GA premises should be free of charge for all GA Participants.
- Coffee/tea breaks: Provision free of charge of hot/cold drinks and possibly cookies/snacks.
- Lunch breaks: Provision free of charge of hot/cold drinks and refreshments/meals.
- Consider dietary restrictions and make provisions for Participants with disabilities and child care. ▪ Make provisions for emergencies.

## Location

The President of the ICM Organization Committee and the Chair of the GA Organization decide in cooperation with the IMU Secretary General on the location (hotel, congress center, university, ...) of the GA meeting and the hotels to be offered to the GA Participants. Budgetary constraints should be considered.

## Room requirements

- 1 meeting room for the IMU EC meeting (on the day before the GA) accommodating about 15 persons. A projector, sufficiently many electrical outlets for the laptops, and free WLAN access should be provided.
- 1 GA conference room for about 200 persons.
- At least 4 meeting rooms for the 6 GA Committees, each room accommodating up to 10 persons.

The 6 GA Committees meet at least once during the 2 days of the GA meeting.

In general,

- The Credentials Committee meets early in the morning of the first day of the GA meeting.
- The Tellers Committee meets in a room equipped with a projector, early in the morning of the first day of the GA meeting.
- The Resolutions Committee meets in a room equipped with a projector, early in the morning of the first day of the GA meeting.

On the day before the GA meeting, the details concerning room assignments/requests/availability should be communicated between the GA Organization and the chair of each GA Committee.

2 rooms preferably equipped with a projector, thus enabling checking of, e.g., Delegates' registration, ballot sheets, finances, resolutions, simultaneously on a laptop and a screen, if requested. WLAN is necessary.

- 1 separate room for handling financial disbursements in case the GA organizing committee intends to grant financial support for GA Participants (this is solely the business of the local GA Organization).

### *The GA conference room*

Seating plan: Alphabetical order of countries (full and Associate Members) according to the country names as they appear on the IMU web site. After the countries follow the Affiliate Member. Country nameplates have to be arranged in front of each GA Delegate/Representative. The other categories not representing an IMU AO should have a nameplate with their category. Every person should have a table for papers and a laptop, and the conference room should have ample space for the participants to be able to move easily around.

Presidium table accommodating the members of the EC (11 persons) and, at least, 2 supporting people (writing the minutes, overseeing the elections).

The availability of ample space is favored. It is customary that, in breaks or discussion time, small adhoc groups form to debate issues and reach consensus. This requires the possibility to move within the conference room without obstruction by tightly packed seating.

## Technical equipment

*The GA conference room should be equipped with:*

- A sufficient number of microphones on the presidium table enabling each EC Member to speak over the loudspeakers without standing up.
- A speaker's desk with a microphone and a PC/laptop for presentations.
- A number of floor microphones (fixed and/or moved by GA Staff) for clearly audible contributions of the GA Participants.
- Screen and data projector (for presentations) reproducing sufficiently large pictures/letters, screen to be viewed from all seats in the room.
- WLAN with sufficient band width and speed must be available for all conference Participants.
- A sufficient number of electrical outlets for the laptops of the GA Participants.
- Ideally, provision of audio (and video if possible) taping of the whole GA meeting to facilitate exact minutes of the meeting.

*Other*

- Provide printing and photocopying capacities (for ballot sheets and other materials, as need may be) close to the GA conference room.
- Ballot boxes, one for each teller.
- PC/laptop in reserve for secretarial work.

## Responsibilities

*Organizational matters*

- Slates of the GA to be made up by the IMU Nominating/Election Committee.
- Organizing the GA schedule is the duty of the IMU Secretary General together with the Chair of the GA Organization.
- Agenda of the GA meeting to be drawn up by the IMU Secretary General.
- Presiding over the GA meeting is the duty of the IMU President.
- Ballots that are required for secret voting to be designed by the IMU Secretariat, which most likely will take place at the GA venue itself when the various committees (especially the Election Committee) have finalized their slates (shortly before the election of members for IMU bodies). Ballot sheets will be printed by the GA Local Staff on the instructions of the IMU Staff and handed over to the Tellers Committee by the IMU Staff.

## GA Committees

The IMU EC is responsible for the appointment of five committees that must be active at the GA meeting. The EC should make sure that candidates for the committees are available. To this end, the complete list of GA Participants should be available as soon as possible in order to enable a preselection of candidates. The committee appointment is a privilege of the GA and is one of the first activities of the meeting. On the day before the GA meeting, the details concerning room assignments for committee meetings should be communicated between the GA Organization and the chair of each GA committee.

- **Credentials Committee (1 chair + 2 members)**

Remit: Review the list of Delegates that have registered at the GA and verify that each delegation is correctly constituted, present the list to the President of IMU, and ensure that voting procedures are understood.

The GA Organization provide to the Credentials Committee, at the start of registration on the first morning of the GA, both three hard copies and an electronic copy (spreadsheet) of the list of registrants up to the end of registration of the preceding evening. The Credentials Committee will be given a further updated copy at the beginning of the GA. The spreadsheet will provide a list of countries with at least one Delegate registered, together with the Group (1-5, or 0 for Associate Members) to which the country adheres. The Credentials Committee will inform the IMU President and IMU Secretary General at the beginning of the GA about the total number of votes corresponding to countries with at least one registered voting Delegate. After having checked the physical/actual presence of the Delegates, the Chair of the Credentials Committee will provide the Chair of the Tellers Committee with the following:

- a) the total numbers of votes corresponding to the Delegates registered and present;
- b) details of delegations present which do not have voting rights for the GA (if any);
- c) a list of names and group numbers of those countries which have registered but are not (yet) present;
- d) a list of names and group numbers of those countries which have not registered and are not present, but can vote, in case they have voted by mail.

- **Tellers Committee (1 chair + 5 members)**

Remit: Distribute ballots; collect ballots; verify ballots and discard invalid ballots; count the votes; report the outcome to the IMU President.

The Chair of the Tellers Committee should check the appropriateness of the ballot boxes on the first day of the GA meeting and should decide how to use them (e.g., one ballot box for each member of the Tellers Committee). Unless requested in advance by the Chair of the Tellers Committee, GA Organization and GA Local Staff cannot be engaged in any part of the activities of the Tellers Committee.

- **Finance and Dues Committee (1 chair + 5 members)**

Remit: Review the proposed budget; make recommendations to the GA concerning dues; make recommendations to the GA concerning action to be taken regarding dues in arrears.

- **Resolutions Committee (1 chair + 5 members)**

Remit: Review the resolutions received from the delegations prior to the GA meeting; If necessary edit and formulate these resolutions; Present these resolutions to the GA with recommendations. Accept resolutions put forth by delegations prior to the close of the first day's sessions of the GA; If necessary edit them and present the formulation of these resolutions to the GA.

- Election Committee (1 chair + 4 members)

Remit: Settle all issues coming up during the election process, in particular, to oversee the form of the ballot papers and to clarify any matters arising when suggestions from the floor are made.

In addition, one has the following committee, appointed about two years in advance of the GA meeting:

- IMU Nominating Committee

Remit: To compose slates for IMU commissions and committees to be elected at the GA. The slates are based on proposals from the AOs. The IMU Nominating Committee is not required to attend the GA meeting. It is expected, though, that its Chair presents the slates at the GA meeting. If members of the Nominating Committee are present at the meeting, they may be asked to join the Election Committee.

## Local GA Secretariat

It is expected that the GA Organization provides a (small) local GA Secretariat where the on-site registration is managed and where GA Participants can ask for support, advice, and help of any kind (e.g., with flights, hotel bookings, phone calls, fax). The GA Secretariat should be staffed with experienced local people with good English language skills. Due to other responsibilities, the IMU Staff will not be able to support the GA Secretariat.

### *GA and ICM*

- The GA Organization must provide information about the timing of the GA meeting, the recommended hotels, the venue of the GA meeting, the city in which the meeting takes place, arrival and departure possibilities, local transport, as well as the details of the transfer from the GA to the ICM venue, well in advance so that travel arrangements can be made in due course.
- One day to be scheduled for the transfer from the GA venue to the ICM venue.
- It may be necessary to organize a special transfer for some GA Participants, such as the IMU President and Secretary General, who may need to be at the ICM venue soon after the GA meeting ends.
- The GA Participants are supposed to pay themselves for their travel to the GA meeting and, when they also participate in the subsequent ICM (most of them do so), for their travel home. Normally, the GA Organization or the ICM Local Organizing Committee has arranged and paid for the transfer from the GA venue to the ICM venue depending on the local conditions (1998, 2006, and 2014 transfers by bus, 2002 and 2010 transfers by plane). A printed copy of the group photo taken on the first day of the GA meeting should be distributed to each GA Participant during the GA meeting or during the transfer from the GA venue to the ICM venue. Traditionally, any social event, e.g., the opening dinner and the farewell dinner, has been sponsored by local authorities or organizations.

## **Media coverage**

It is important for the ICM media communication team to cover the GA meeting as well. This can be done by putting together a press dossier with information about the GA, ICM and IMU and information about mathematics in the host country. Press releases should be issued announcing the celebration of the GA and describing its importance. A final GA press release can report the most important resolutions adopted at the GA meeting. Press material should be available in the local language and English (language check by a native English speaker is advisable).

Obtain photographs and, if possible, videos to issue/distribute with the releases. These should be subsequently included in the IMU records.

Conduct interviews with outstanding personalities at the GA, whether from the IMU, Delegates or local organizers.

In all cases, attention should be paid to international and local significance to meet the right target groups.

## **Local politicians**

It has been the case that local authorities have significantly sponsored or even fully financed a GA meeting. These contributions need to be appropriately acknowledged, for instance, by a short appearance of a local politician at the GA meeting (e.g., opening), but most importantly by press activities that meet the interests of all parties involved.

## **Final statements**

The organizers of a GA meeting are requested to share important conclusions with the IMU Secretariat in order to improve future GA meetings.

The IMU Executive Committee is entitled to amend the GA Guidelines when necessary.