

Association of Gastrointestinal Physiologists [AGIP]



AGIP Members Handbook

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1. Constitution

The Association of Gastrointestinal Physiologists (AGIP) is an Associate group within the British Society of Gastroenterology (BSG), inaugurated in 1991.

The constitution of AGIP is governed by BSG guidelines, and states that a council be formed from members of the association to work together to enhance the role and standing of their association within the medical field.

1.1 Council Structure

The AGIP Council should ideally comprise a maximum of twelve members, including at least one medically qualified member nominated by the Council.

The position of Honorary President is also held by an international expert in the field at the invitation of the AGIP Council (see 1.6).

The Council will have officers with specific roles and terms of office (which may be extended with the full agreement of the AGIP Council):

Chairperson	Three Years
Research Secretary	Three Years
Honorary Treasurer	Three Years
Membership Secretary	Three Years
Education Secretary	Three Years
Accreditation Secretary	Three Years
Symposium Secretary	Three Years
Publication (Inc. NewWave) Secretary	Three Years
IQIPS Representative	Three Years
Paediatric Representative	Three Years
Lower GI Representative	Three Years

Administrative support for the Chair will be provided by the minute secretary (admin member).

Deputy positions may be created to share roles, or to aid Council members transitioning into new roles.

In the absence of the Chair, the Council meeting may be convened by an appropriate designate. A minimum of five Council members must be present for a meeting to be convened.

Information regarding AGIP Council Members is published on the AGIP section page of the BSG website and should be listed in NewWave.

1.2 Council Meetings

The Council is to meet a minimum of four times per year (including the Annual General Meeting). Elected Council members must attend a minimum of two of the four meetings each year to retain their seat. In the event of non-attendance, the Council member may submit an explanatory letter requesting the Council to consider retention of their seat. In addition, an individual member may be asked to leave the Council if a simple majority of the other members support a vote of no confidence in the individual's commitment to the aims of AGIP.

1.3 Annual General Meeting

An Annual General Meeting (AGM) will take place if at least 10 AGIP members plus 5 Council members (or their appointee) are present. The AGM can be in-person or online. Adequate notice should be given to all AGIP members of the date, time and joining instructions of this meeting.

1.4 Sub-Committees

Sub-committees or working parties may be formed to discuss and resolve specific issues relating to AGIP. Once resolution of the issue has been reached, the sub-committee may be dissolved. Any appropriate member of AGIP may be requested to serve on a sub-committee. There will be no time restriction applied to serving on a sub-committee, although both the Council and the other AGIP members of the sub-committee will scrutinise an individual's role on the sub-committee for continuing suitability. At least one member of each sub-committee must also be a member of the AGIP Council. The Council Chairperson will be an ex officio member of each sub-committee, and a full written report must be provided to the AGIP Council.

1.5 Bursaries

AGIP members will be eligible to apply for bursaries from the Council to fund expenses related to attendance at relevant scientific meetings or training courses. Bursaries will be dependent on funds being available and will be conferred by approval of the AGIP Council. Currently, the bursaries available are:

- 'Margaret Marples Bursary' (max of £500) to attend the BSG annual meeting
- 'European Bursary' (max of £750) to attend the United European Gastroenterology (UEG) meeting
- 'Graeme Duthie International Award' (max of £1500) to attend the Digestive Diseases Week (DDW) meeting

Priority will be given to AGIP members who have an abstract accepted to the above

mentioned meetings, with the remaining bursaries awarded by a random ballot. All bursaries are conditional upon submitting a scientific report to the AGIP Council, for publication in NewWave.

1.6 Honorary President

The position is held by an international expert in the field at the invitation of the AGIP Council. The post has no fixed term. The role of the Honorary President is to promote the Association within Gastroenterology in the United Kingdom and further afield.

1.7 Membership Criteria

Application for AGIP membership is through the BSG. As such, BSG membership is a pre-requirement to become a member of AGIP. For Allied Health Professionals, Clinical GI Physiologists, Clinical Scientists, and GI Physiology trainees enrolled on a recognised training programme (STP/ASP), the most appropriate route to AGIP membership is through the BSG's **AHP, AGIP and PA Membership**.

Individuals interested in membership of AGIP must first fulfill the criteria to join the BSG either as an Allied Health Professional or as a Clinician who is actively involved in physiological measurements. Once you have joined the BSG at the appropriate level of membership, you will need to forward your CV to the AGIP Membership Secretary for the AGIP Council to assess suitability.

In order to qualify for membership of AGIP, the following criteria should be fulfilled:-

- A healthcare professional with physiological, nursing, technical or scientific background (or on a recognised training pathway)
- Currently employed by an institution responsible for healthcare, the delivery of education or engaged in research and development
- A minimum of one year's experience in carrying out and reporting GI Physiology investigations (or on a recognised training pathway)
- Working at least 0.5 whole time equivalent in relevant activity
- Demonstrable continuing commitment to the investigation and measurement of GI function

Members of AGIP undertaking a career break of up to 2 years may retain their membership, but must inform the AGIP Council. On returning to work, Accredited Independent Healthcare Professionals will be required to submit evidence of competence to retain their status.

1.8 Retired

Associate members of the BSG will not be eligible for continued membership

upon retirement (see limitations in BSG handbook). However, retired members may be considered for Honorary Associate Membership of the BSG.

2. Statement on the Role of an Accredited Independent Healthcare Professional in GI Physiology

Healthcare Professionals in GI Physiology provide a physiological assessment service in Gastroenterology. Investigative techniques of an invasive nature are used to investigate possible abnormalities or disease processes throughout the GI tract. The role of the Healthcare Professional is to be responsible for performing all aspects of the required procedures and contributing to the overall clinical management of the patients. An Accredited Independent Healthcare Professional in GI Physiology will provide expert advice on selection and reporting of the investigation for optimum diagnostic outcome.

GI Physiology investigations are undertaken for the diagnosis of various disorders of the GI tract. These may include (not an exhaustive list):

- Motor dysfunction of the GI tract
- Sensory dysfunction of the GI tract
- Gastro-oesophageal reflux disease
- Microbial disorders
- Carbohydrate malabsorption
- Pelvic floor dysfunction

Healthcare Professionals in GI Physiology may also undertake therapeutic techniques, such as Biofeedback Therapy or Neuromodulation.

The Accredited Independent Healthcare Professional will provide a range of services, which may include:

- Planning and performing a wide range of investigations for the assessment of GI tract function
- Analysing and providing a technical report of data measurements from the diagnostic or therapeutic procedures undertaken
- The provision of a safe working/clinical environment
- Maintaining records for all procedures for audit purposes
- Managing implanted devices (e.g. devices for sacral nerve neuromodulation)
- Evaluating, procuring, calibrating and carrying out quality control procedures for GI Physiology equipment
- Providing specialist training to other Healthcare Professionals
- Involvement in research and development in the field of gastroenterology
- Involvement in education, training and provision of continuing professional development of GI Physiologists
- Providing professional advice on the appropriateness of investigations
- Contributing to the overall clinical management of the patient

3. AGIP Code of Professional Conduct

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this code of professional conduct is to provide guidance for the expected standard of conduct for Healthcare Professionals in Gastrointestinal Physiology. All Healthcare Professionals must have regard for the physical and psychological needs of patients and their carers, including adults with mental incapacity and children. This code of conduct is designed to provide advice to Healthcare Professionals for guidance only, and should not be seen as a definitive statement.

3.2 Objective

To provide workable guidelines for the Healthcare Professional, to enable good working practice with respect to:

- Relationships and responsibilities to patients
- Professional integrity
- Professional relationships and responsibilities
- Maintenance of professional standards
- Adherence to good clinical and scientific practice

3.3 Statement of Standard to be Achieved

3.3.1 Relationships and responsibilities to patients

- Confidentiality of patient information must be maintained. In exceptional circumstance, where divulgence of information is required, the consent of the patient must be obtained where possible.
- The safety, privacy, autonomy and dignity of the patient must be respected at all times, and informed consent must be obtained prior to any procedure undertaken. This should be written consent for all invasive procedures. The Healthcare Professional must accept that the patient may withdraw their consent for the procedure at any time.
- Care must be given to the same high standard, regardless of the patient's race, gender, sexual orientation or religion.

3.3.2 Professional integrity

- The privileged relationship between the Healthcare Professional and the patient and carer must not be abused.
- The Healthcare Professional must work to the highest standard of integrity and must adhere to national guidelines for equal opportunities.
- The Healthcare Professional must not work when under the influence of any substances that may influence their performance.

- The Healthcare Professional must not accept gifts or favours that may be offered in exchange for preferential management.

3.3.3 Professional relationships and responsibilities

- Both public and patient interest must be served, ensuring that the good standard and reputation of the profession is upheld.
- Loyalty to colleagues must not override the Healthcare Professional's responsibility to report any conduct not in line with correct practice to their line manager.

3.3.4 Maintenance of professional standards

- Procedures should only be undertaken on patients according to established criteria.
- Healthcare Professionals must ensure safe standard of practice at all times.
- Where the Healthcare Professional is involved in research, it is their responsibility to ensure that the project has been approved by the appropriate body and/or ethics committee, and that the work is undertaken in a manner which will not jeopardise the subject's welfare. All results must be presented without prejudice, and all research should adhere to the most recent Declaration of Helsinki principles.
- Professional development must be maintained throughout the working career, and where appropriate the Accredited Independent Healthcare Professional should be actively involved in the development of students and other Healthcare Professionals.
- It is the responsibility of the Accredited Independent Healthcare Professional to seek suitable Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to facilitate personal development, and to submit evidence of this to the AGIP Accreditation Officer as part of the ongoing AGIP CPD process.
- Healthcare Professionals in GI Physiology are legally accountable for any action undertaken as part of their professional duties.
- Healthcare Professionals in GI Physiology must not allow themselves to be misrepresented as other qualified Healthcare Professionals.

3.3.5 Adherence to good clinical and scientific practice

- A formal portfolio should be maintained, which should include academic and clinical experiential history and current activity.
- The portfolio should have evidence to demonstrate good clinical and scientific practice and cover the domains of:
 - Professional Practice
 - Scientific Practice
 - Clinical Practice
 - Research and development and innovation
 - Clinical Leadership
- The contents of the portfolio should meet the standards required by national regulatory bodies, and should be available for review if required.

3.4 AGIP Disciplinary Procedures

A complaint or notification of misconduct arising from certain judicial proceedings or from contravention of the Professional Code of Conduct received by the AGIP Council will be considered and may be referred on to the appropriate body. This may be the employing authority, the BSG Council or the relevant regulatory/registration body. A substantiated complaint may result in suspension or termination of Accredited Independent Healthcare Professional status and AGIP membership.

Judicial proceedings include:

- Proven fraud or dishonesty
- Conviction for any other criminal offence
- Proven professional negligence

Non Judicial proceedings include:

- Expelled from membership of a professional or registration body on grounds of misconduct

A sub-committee will be convened to address individual breaches of the Code of Conduct and will consist of the Chair or an appropriate appointee, a full member of the BSG, and at least 2 other members of the AGIP Council.

4. Criteria for Entry to the Accreditation Register

4.1 Accredited Independent Membership

AGIP registration as an 'Accredited Independent Healthcare Professional' in GI Physiology will be given to those Healthcare Professionals who:

- Are associate members of AGIP (BSG)
- Are State Registered where appropriate
- Have a minimum of 3 years of experience in GI Physiology
- Have followed an approved training pathway and obtained appropriate academic qualifications and professional competencies (defined in Section 5, Training Pathways)
- Have a formal portfolio that evidences practice conforming to the highest standards of good clinical and scientific practice (see 3.3.5 above)
- Members whose primary qualification and training was undertaken outside of the United Kingdom may apply directly to the Council for consideration for Accreditation

To retain registration as an 'Accredited Independent Healthcare Professional in GI Physiology' members must:

- Demonstrate a commitment to continuing professional development. This must be evidenced by attendance at appropriate continuing professional education. This should be a **minimum of 10 hours** per annum, of which 5 hours may be obtained from mandatory in-house training and 5 hours external training / courses (the AGIP Symposium including the AGM fulfills 2.5 hours of external CPD; attendance at 1 full day of the BSG annual conference fulfills all 5 hours of external CPD required per annum)
- Reflect on any development activity undertaken. A separate Reflective Practice Account should be submitted for each of the six (3 per year) reports required for submission. Each Reflective Practice Account must be signed and dated by the appropriate Line manager (or equivalent senior colleague) and the applicant, or they will not be accepted
- Give a brief list of any planned CPD for the following year (there is no need to list any more than five objectives)
- Return appropriate CPD forms and appropriate evidence to the AGIP Accreditation Officer before the end of April every other year (late CPD submissions could be subjected to a late submission fee, payable to the BSG)
- Maintain a portfolio of CPD which should be available for scrutiny
- Comply with codes of professional conduct
- Maintain Registration status where appropriate
- Obtain appropriate training (and provide evidence of this) when developing and expanding into new modalities

Independent Healthcare Professionals whose role now includes a high percentage of management, specialism or teaching must ensure that competencies in direct patient testing are retained at a level that ensures compliance with safety and diagnostic testing criteria.

Application for '**Accredited Independent Healthcare Professional in GI Physiology**' membership should be made using Form 1

4.2 Fellowship Status

Fellowship status will be available to Accredited Independent Healthcare Professionals who:

- Have a minimum of 10 years of experience in GI Physiology
- Have taken an active role in AGIP
- Are considered by the AGIP Council (as voted by a majority) to have made an outstanding contribution to GI Physiology

Fellowship status will also be available to AGIP members with no clinical experience who have been employed in academic research or development or teaching and who fulfill the criteria for fellowship. Those Healthcare Professionals who have attained the status of Fellows would be recognised as having the appropriate experience to give expert advice in their field of practice.

Such individuals must be proposed by two Fellows of AGIP, scrutinised by the AGIP Accreditation Officer and ratified by the full Council. Fellows may use the designatory letters FAGIP.

Application for '**Fellowship of AGIP**' should be made using Form 2

5. Training Pathways

AGIP recognises the Scientist Training Programme (STP) for Gastrointestinal Physiology (Modernising Scientific Careers) as a suitable training pathway for Gastrointestinal Physiologists.

AGIP also recognises the Accredited Specialist Scientific Practice (ASP) route open to individuals working in the arena of GI Physiology in conjunction with the National School of Healthcare Science (NSHCS) and Newcastle University. Individual modules within this programme are available to Healthcare Professionals as part of CPD in 'Upper GI Physiology' and/or 'Lower GI Physiology'.

Members given Independent Healthcare Professional status in GI Physiology will have successfully completed an AGIP recognised training pathway.

AGIP recognises the Higher Specialist Scientist Training Programme (HSST) for Gastrointestinal Physiology (Modernising Scientific Careers) as suitable training pathway for Consultant Clinical Scientist in Gastrointestinal Physiology.

6. Criteria for Unit Accreditation

AGIP recognises the processes for unit accreditation provided by the Improving Quality in Physiological Services (IQIPS) programme and the assessment process provided by the National School of Healthcare Science (NSHCS) for units involved in the formal training of Clinical Scientists. All units should work towards the standards set out in the above mentioned schemes.

7. Application Forms

Please note that these application forms must be filled in to initiate the process of scrutiny. Additional detailed information may then be requested from the applicant. The following application forms can be downloaded from AGIP's web page:

- Form 1:** AGIP registration as an Accredited Independent Healthcare Professional in GI Physiology
- Form 2:** Fellowship of AGIP
- Form 3:** Nomination for consideration to become an AGIP committee member
- Form 4:** Continuing Professional Development

Membership of the British Society of Gastroenterology (available online:
<https://www.bsg.org.uk/join-online.html>)