

ISCB AFFILIATES PROGRAM GUIDELINES

The core of the International Society for Computational Biology's mission is to advance the understanding of living systems through computation. As *the* international membership organization of computational biologists, ISCB is committed to building bridges across the variety of not-for-profit community organizations that serve bioinformaticians/computational biologists in order to contribute to advancing the science globally.

The ISCB Affiliates Program provides an official designation of "ISCB Affiliate" to non-governmental organizations (NGO), not-for-profit organizations, or other non-commercial entities that meet the necessary criteria within the following categories:

- Membership organizations are open to members from a specific geographic/cultural area representing at least three research institutions/organizations.
- Networks and Consortia of regional, national, or worldwide reach, that are formally organized, providing bioinformatics/computational biology tools, services, or networking.

Definitions

Affiliates Committee:

- membership: one representative for each affiliate (and a designated alternate representative)
- responsibilities:
 - acts as the liaison to the ISCB Board of Directors
 - examines ways to foster collaboration and networking at regional levels
 - establishes procedures for the program
 - brings forward concerns and makes suggestions for new initiatives

Affiliates Review Board:

- membership: the ISCB Treasurer, the Affiliates Committee's Representative to the Board of Directors, at least two at large¹ members of the ISCB Board of Directors, and the Chair(s) of the Affiliates Committee
- responsibilities:
 - reviews applications and annual reports
 - approves/denies applications
 - makes decisions about Tier and funding levels

Affiliates Council:

- membership: the Affiliated Review Board and one representative for each Tier 3 affiliate
- responsibilities:

- provides input to the Review Board re. applications, and tier/funding levels
- provides recommendations for new programs or incentives

¹At-large is a designation for members of a governing body who are appointed to represent the whole membership. This person will be a non-affiliate organizer appointed by the Board who serves as a Director of the Society.

Why should my organization become an ISCB affiliate?

Affiliation Benefits:

- One voting seat in the Affiliates Committee for recommendations to the ISCB Affiliates Task Force or Board of Directors on affiliate matters
- Authorization to use a special “ISCB Affiliate” logo on affiliate’s website and promotional materials
- Potential pool of ISCB member volunteers, editorial assistance for papers / reports / web page content
- Listing of the affiliate’s meeting(s) within the Affiliated Conferences section of the ISCB website
- Possibility of ISCB professional help in organization of the meeting
This might include registration fee collection (not always possible and may involve impediments involving country/currency/tax limitations), marketing, use of abstract submission system, conference planning consulting, sponsorship, fellowship, etc.
- Listing on the Affiliates page of ISCB website, including link to Affiliated Group’s site
- One page of content on the ISCB web site managed by the affiliate (optional)

How does my organization join?

Organizations seeking affiliation with ISCB must submit an online application (<https://www.iscb.org/affiliate-group-form>) demonstrating fulfillment of the ISCB Affiliate guidelines detailed below. Affiliation is granted on a case-by-case basis, taking these guidelines into consideration during the review of each application. These are not strict rules and are meant to provide a framework to help ISCB make appropriate decisions on requests for affiliation. Within one month of receiving a new application the ISCB Affiliates Council will respond to the applicant organization with approval/refusal of affiliate status, or with recommendations of specific actions the applicant must take to qualify for affiliate status.

Each application is reviewed by the Affiliates Review Board with input from the Affiliates Council. As the goal of the program is to build bridges globally to serve the bioinformatics/computational biology community and to advance computational sciences worldwide, it is important that your application demonstrates how you can support this endeavor. Both the application and the organization’s website will be reviewed. Applicants must meet the minimum ISCB Professional Members threshold to obtain acceptance. If an organization is not accepted, ISCB will provide detailed information as to the reason and if applicable allow the group to submit its application.

ISCB reserves the right to refuse Affiliate status to any organization it determines or perceives to be incompatible with ISCB's mission, values or interests as the global bioinformatics/computational biology community.

What are ISCB's expectations of affiliates?

- Submit initial summary report as an application
- Provide annual updates and report (annual updates and reports will be used to evaluate the organization's Tier status)
- Adhere to the guidelines set forth within this document

Tiered Structure for ISCB Affiliates:

New affiliates will be designated either Tier 1 or Tier 2. Tier 3 may be achieved starting with the first annual review.

Tier 1 (Provisional Affiliate)

- **Characteristics:** a newly formed group (founded within the past two years) or a group with fewer than 10 ISCB professional members.
- **Benefits:** all of the current benefits (listed above), except for voting rights on the Affiliates Committee.

Tier 2 (Established Affiliate)

- **Characteristics:** a regional group that has been in existence for at least two years and is in good standing as demonstrated by timely submission of annual reports and participation in the Affiliates Committee.
- **Benefits:** benefits that are given to affiliates currently (see above).

Tier 3 (Contributing Affiliate)

- **Characteristics:** organizes activities that contribute to ISCB's mission and provide substantial benefit to ISCB members (e.g., hosting an ISCB-affiliated meeting with an ISCB member discount greater than or equal to the cost an ISCB professional membership, sponsoring an active regional student group), and is active in the Affiliates Committee; there are at least 25 ISCB professional members within the region.
- **Benefits:** all of the current benefits (listed above), opportunities to be involved in governance and oversight of the Affiliates Committee, including a seat on the Affiliates Council; an additional benefit is eligibility to be the Affiliates' representative on the ISCB Board of Directors

Annual Reporting

Each Affiliate is required to submit an annual report. This should include a brief description of the activities conducted by the group over the past year, including how the group supported the advancement of bioinformatics and computational biology. Additionally, Affiliates are requested to review and provide any updated information for

the group's posting to the ISCB website about their current bioinformatics initiatives, including educational activities, conferences, funding and fellowship opportunities, etc. Affiliates are expected to contribute to ISCB by encouraging their leaders and members (and/or member organizations) to become ISCB members, advertising/distributing information about ISCB's activities/announcements to their members, providing feedback about existing ISCB activities and making suggestions on new initiatives/activities/public policies that ISCB could participate in with the group to advance a shared mission.

The annual report format will contain the same fields as the application with an additional section to allow for the activities and advancement of bioinformatics and computational biology reporting requirements. Annual reports are due January 31 to allow for each group to report on all aspects and activities of the past year in its entirety.

Annual Review Process:

The Affiliates Council will review all affiliate groups annually. The review will be based on the submitted annual report. During the review process, ISCB may reassign Tier levels. The following characteristics will be considered for Tier level advancement:

Tier 1 (Provisional Affiliate)

- Tier 1 groups will be moved to Tier 2 if they (1) have at least 10 ISCB members and (2) show 3 years of activity (e.g., organizing regular meetings, providing an up-to-date website or Wiki page).

Tier 2 (Established Affiliate)

- To become a Tier 3 affiliate, a Tier 2 group must contribute significantly to the ISCB community within the past 3 years, for example, by affiliating their annual meeting with the ISCB or mentoring an ISCB regional student group.

Tier 3 (Contributing Affiliate)

- Once an affiliate achieves Tier 3, it will remain at that level for 3 years.

The Tier status of each affiliate will be reviewed on a 3 year cycle, with adjustments made according to the guidelines stated above. ISCB may revoke affiliate status when a group has been inactive for 3 years (as demonstrated by not attending affiliates committee meetings, not submitting annual updates to ISCB, not updating its website, and not responding in a timely manner to ISCB inquiries).

Groups that do not submit annual reports will be in jeopardy of losing benefits as described in the benefits section of this document. In addition to the annual report, each Affiliated Group must review its online information for accuracy.

ADHERENCE TO THE ISCB ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL CODE OF CONDUCT

Science is best advanced when there is mutual trust, based upon honest behavior, throughout the community. ISCB thus expects all of our members and groups affiliated with ISCB to adhere to the highest standards of honesty and integrity in all their actions. Honesty must be regarded as the cornerstone of ethics in science. Professional integrity in the formulation, conduct, interaction, and reporting of bioinformatics and computational biology activities reflects not only on the reputation of individuals and their organizations, but also on the image and credibility of the profession as perceived by scientific colleagues, government, and the public. It is important that the tradition of ethical behavior be carefully maintained and transmitted with enthusiasm to future generations.

Each researcher, practitioner, technician, student, and supplier within the field is a citizen of the community of science. Each shares responsibility for the welfare of this community. Thus, ISCB Affiliated Groups are expected to adhere to the ISCB Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.

ISCB reserves the right to relinquish the title of ISCB Affiliated Group as it deems necessary.