

Guidelines for Meetings of the General Assembly of the International Mathematical Union (IMU)

endorsed by the IMU Executive Committee on September 15, 2012

About the General Assembly

The General Assembly (GA) is the main body of the International Mathematical Union. It admits IMU members, elects the IMU officers and the members of the IMU Executive Committee, establishes commissions and 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 place and date close to an International Congress of Mathematicians (ICM). An indication of the place and time of the GA meeting is supposed to be 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 to also care for the organization of the GA meeting. Ideally, a mathematician based in the vicinity of the location of the GA meeting should be appointed as chair of the GA organization. He/she is the local contact person and in charge of coordinating the GA meeting with the ICM organizers and the IMU secretary. The number of persons involved in the organization of the GA and the structure of the local GA organization team are up to the ICM organizers.

GA Web server and site

A GA Web server and a GA Web site must be set up. Competent staff has to run the GA server and make the documents needed available on the GA Web site. Mirroring is advisable to compensate any breakdown of the server. The GA Web server should be integrated into the ICM Web server and has to be maintained until a copy thereof is moved to the IMU archive. The GA organizers have to make sure (e.g., by obtaining corresponding copyrights) that IMU has the right that all material dedicated to the IMU archive can be made available on the IMU Web site without time limit.

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	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 team appointed by the ICM organizers	NO
GA local staff	n	persons who help organize and support the GA at the location where the GA takes place.	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 has to contain the following information:

FIRST LINE (NAME LINE): Name of the person (the name provided by the person via the formal registration process, no titles).

SECOND LINE (COUNTRY LINE): Name of the country (the official name of the country 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 a 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 STAFF, ACCOMPANYING PERSON.

Timetable

ICM	– 1 year	IMU secretariat to forward invitations to the GA meeting through circular letter to all AOs
IMU GA	– 3 months	IMU secretary to forward the GA agenda to the AOs
IMU GA	– 2 months	IMU secretary to forward the GA slates to the AOs
IMU GA	– 1 month	IMU secretary to forward some practical advice to the AOs
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 arrival, 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), needs to be jointly planned with the IMU secretariat and should be provided in due course.

Registration

GA participation is determined as follows:

- The AOs of full members have to nominate their delegates to the IMU secretary/secretariat according to the IMU Statutes 19.
- The AOs of associate and affiliate members have to nominate their representatives to the IMU secretary/secretariat according to the IMU Statutes 19.

- The IMU president in consultation with the EC decides on the invitation of IMU representatives and observers.
- The chair of the GA organization appoints the GA organizers and the members of the GA staff.

All GA participants and the accompanying persons have to register. The IMU secretariat defines who is delegate, representative, EC member, IMU representative, observer and IMU staff and provides this information to the GA organizers. The IMU secretariat and the GA organizers have to cooperate in this respect since, usually, some confusion occurs.

The possibility of electronic registration of GA participants prior to the GA meeting via e-mail and the GA Web server should be provided; details are to be coordinated between the IMU secretariat and the GA local organization. At the registration process meal 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 has to register on site in the evening before or in 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, including GA documentation printouts if requested by participants in advance. The registration list has to be handed over to the credentials committee.

Typical GA schedule

- Day before day 1 of GA, IMU EC meeting starting at 09:00
- On-site registration evening before and in 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 in 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 by 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 in 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.

Location

The president of the ICM organization committee and the chair of the GA organization team decide in cooperation with the IMU secretary 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.

WLAN should be provided.

- 1 GA conference room for about 200 persons.
- At least 3 meeting rooms for the 6 GA committees accommodating up to 10 persons.

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

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 appreciated.

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

The GA conference room

Seating plan: Order of countries according to the alphabetical order of the country names. Country nameplate to be arranged in front of each delegate/representative to make visible the country/Adhering Organization represented.

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

Ample space is favored. It is customary that, in breaks or discussion time, small 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

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 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.

Wireless LAN should be available for all conference participants (Internet access is important since the extensive GA documents are not distributed as printouts but are made electronically available via a password protected mail server).

Sufficient number of electrical outlets for the laptops of the GA participants.

Ideally, provision of audio (and video) taping of the whole GA in order 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 together with the chair of the GA organization team.
- Agenda of the GA meeting to be drawn up by the IMU secretary.
- 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 is done most likely at the GA venue itself when the various committees (especially the election committee) have finalized their slates (shortly before the election of the forthcoming IMU representatives).

Committees

The IMU EC has to care for the appointment of five committees that have to 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 participants should be available rather soon 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.

- **Credentials Committee (1 chair + 2 members)**
Review the list of delegates that have registered at the GA and verify that each delegation is correctly constituted and present the list to the president of IMU; Ensure that voting procedures are understood.
- **Tellers Committee (1 chair + 5 members)**
Distribute ballots; Collect ballots; Verify ballots and discard invalid ballots; Count the votes; Report the outcome to the president of IMU.
- **Finance and Dues Committee (1 chair + 5 members)**
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)**

Accept resolutions put forth by delegations prior to the close of the first day's sessions of the GA; Review and edit resolutions received from the delegations; Formulate resolutions; Present the resolutions to the GA with recommendations.

- Election Committee (1 chair + 4 members)

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

- IMU Nominating Committee (appointed about two years in advance of the GA meeting)

Has put together slates for IMU commissions and committees to be elected at the GA. The slates are based on proposals from the AOs.

Local GA secretariat

It is expected that the GA organization team provides a (small) 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 flight, hotel booking, phone calls). The 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 team has to 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, 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 organizing committees have arranged and paid for the transfer from the GA venue to the ICM venue depending on the local conditions (1998 and 2006 transfers by bus, 2002 and 2010 transfers by plane).

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 the IMU and information about mathematics in the host country. Press releases should be issued announcing the celebration of the GA and 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 native speaker is advisable).

Obtain photographs and, if possible, videos to issue 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 interest of all parties involved.

Final statements

The organizers of a GA are requested to share important conclusions with the IMU secretariat in order to profit from their experience with respect to the next GA.