Last update: Oct. 2019

Sociology of Religion Study Group (Socrel)

British sociological association (BSA)

Socrel

Role descriptors

Socrel is a highly successful and internationally high profile study group with a 40-year history. Becoming a member of the Socrel committee is an excellent opportunity for people to contribute to the vibrant and growing area of the Sociology of Religion.

**All committee members must be members of the BSA as well as Socrel.**

Committee members are normally appointed for a duration of three years (with the exception of the PG/ECS Liaison officer who is usually appointed for two years). Contracts may be extended to a fourth year in some circumstances (e.g. bringing stability to the group, allowing more time to find a replacement, etc.). Excepting exceptional circumstances, members must give at least one month’s notice if they wish to step down from their role before the end of the three-year contract. In the event of a resignation, the Committee will appoint a replacement on a temporary basis (i.e. until the following AGM).

Committee members must attend the AGM at the annual conference, and are requested to attend four annual meetings (one face-to-face during the annual conference, and others via Skype).

Expenses to Socrel events will be paid (providing the committee members are involved in their organisation).

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# Chair

**The role of the Chair is to:**

* Represent the membership in national consultations relevant to the field (e.g. REF);
* Chair four committee meetings per year, (three via Skype, one face-to-face);
* Chair the AGM at the annual Socrel conference;
* Deliver opening and closing speeches at the annual Socrel conference;
* Award prizes and thank members and speakers at gala dinner during annual conference;
* Award Outstanding Contribution Award on last year of chairing during annual conference;
* Host Chair’s response day – usually Autumn Semester;
* Lead small judging panel for the Seed Corn funding competition (review applications and chair discussion, by Skype);
* Troubleshoot as required;
* Liaise with Convenor and Committee Members if required regarding new developments and initiatives for the group;
* Smile and keep calm, always.

Familiarity with Socrel and/or Sociology of Religion is highly desirable.

# Convenor

This post is a fabulous opportunity for an early/mid-career sociologist of religion based at a British university to develop new contacts and networks and hone their managerial and administrative skills whilst ensuring the flourishing of their field.

The Convenor is responsible for the day-to-day running of the Study group.

The Convenor is also responsible for the Socrel Mentoring Scheme. This includes mentoring both Early Career Scholars and women.

Key responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

* Working closely with the Chair, especially on the future development of Socrel;
* Supporting all committee members;
* Organising and minuting Socrel quarterly committee meetings;
* Convening and minuting the Group AGM at its annual conference;
* Liaising with the BSA (currently Claire Simmons [claire.simmons@britsoc.org.uk](mailto:claire.simmons@britsoc.org.uk)) and ensuring the Group complies with its rules and regulations;
* Attending bi-annual BSA Convenors meetings (usually held during the BSA conference in April and in London in November);
* Attending TRS-UK AGM meeting (usually held in December in London);
* Monitoring Socrel’s budget which is directly managed by the BSA (currently Gillian Mason [gillian.mason@britsoc.org.uk](mailto:gillian.mason@britsoc.org.uk));
* Organising Seed Corn Funding competition;
* Organising Outstanding Contribution Award;
* Contributing to SocrelNews as requested (e.g. Welcome);

The Convenor must be based at a UK university, and have experience commensurate with the role. Familiarity with Socrel and/or Sociology of Religion is highly desirable.

# Events Officer

The Conference and Events Officer is responsible for organisation of our annual events, coordinating between event organisers, the BSA Events office in Durham and the Socrel committee. The BSA Events team ([events@britsoc.org.uk](mailto:events@britsoc.org.uk)) handles all bookings and financial details.

Events responsible for:

* **Socrel Chairs response day – one day event usually in November**
* **Sociology of Religion Stream at BSA Conference – 3 day annual conference usually in April**
* **Socrel annual conference – 3 day annual conference usually in July**

**Socrel annual conference (July)**

The Officer finds volunteers from the membership to organise events, briefs them, introduces them to BSA Events team, supports them, monitors their progress and reports to the committee.

**BSA Annual conference (April)**

The Conference and Events Officer also serves as Stream Co-ordinator for the British Sociological Association Annual Conference. This entails responsibility for the organisation of the Socrel Stream at this event and funded attendance at this prestigious conference. It also includes submitting a stream plenary proposal on behalf of socrel and, if successful, coordinating this.

**Socrel response day (November)**

The events officer also works closely with the chair to organising a one-off day on a theme (decided by the chair). This involves liaising with the BSA events team to book venues, accommodation and catering as necessary, sending out a call for papers and promoting the event and responding to delegate queries.

Please visit the Socrel Website to see examples of past, current and forthcoming events.

**Other duties**

The Officer is a member of the Socrel Committee and takes part in discussions affecting other areas of Socrel, such as Publications, Internet development, Membership, Finance and Post-Graduate/Early Career Scholar support.

The Events Officer must be based at a UK university. Familiarity with Socrel and/or Sociology of Religion is highly desirable.

# Internet Officer

**Website (BSA Socrel Microsite)**

* Update website regularly
* Archive the website and save any important material in case anything is lost
* Ensure the domain is renewed annually
* Liaise with BSA Internet Officer
* Archive conference programme

**Social Media**

* Update Twitter
* Update Facebook
* Add conference videos to YouTube
* Commission blog posts and update monthly at a minimum (save these posts on Word in case they are lost)

**JISCmail**

* Keep list up to date in terms of the membership (liaise with the membership officer)
* Deal with any issues that arise with the JISCmail list
* Monitor the posts that are sent
* Send out any communications to the membership

**Other**

* Film keynote lectures at Annual Conference
* Committee meetings and AGM
* Deal with any requests for the membership only website (currently Wild Apricot)
* Add conference keynotes to membership only website
* Keep camera equipment and USB with important documents and videos

# Membership Officer

Purpose:

* To manage study group membership;
* Be main point of contact for all membership enquiries;
* Manage online membership system (currently Wild Apricot);
  + Edit and maintain automated membership emails for the three categories of membership -
  + BSA, Standard and PG/Low income:
    - New members
    - Renewals – first, second and third reminders
  + Approve new member applications online
* Send out individual chase up emails when they don’t respond through normal email renewal process;
* Provide backup payment arrangements (by cheque or through BSA account) for members where online credit card process fails;
* Liaise with BSA Finance Officer (currently Gillian Mason [gillian.mason@britsoc.org.uk](mailto:gillian.mason@britsoc.org.uk)) as necessary;
  + to check payment for those who pay by standing order;
  + Check that credit card payments are reaching their account
* Liaise with BSA Membership Officer to ensure that BSA members are still paid up with the BSA. Where not contact members to offer direct Socrel membership;
* Report regularly to Socrel committee on membership numbers (including gender status);
* Report annually on the membership section of the Study Group report to BSA;
* Attend Socrel events and be available to talk about membership issues;
* Review and develop membership services.

Note: The BSA is introducing a new CRM (customer relationship management) system over the next few months and we will be investigating whether this could fully or partially replace Wild Apricot as an online membership system.

# Post-graduate and Early Career Scholar Liaison Officer

The Post-graduate and Early Career Scholar Liaison Officer is responsible for championing post-graduate and early career scholars’ needs and concerns within Socrel. The Officer is responsible for the organisation of an annual event for post-graduates and early career scholar (ECS), with the support of the Conference, BSA and Events Officer and in discussion with the committee (please visit the BSA website to see examples of past, current and forthcoming events post-graduate activities). The officer is responsible for allocating bursaries to PG/ECRs to attend selected Socrel events, such as the annual conference. The officer is also responsible for the BSA Socrel Support Fund – a support fund designed to support PG/ECR with the mechanics of academic research.”

As well as keeping in touch with as many post-graduates as possible and feeding back any concerns or comments about Socrel activities to the wider committee, the Officer also feeds this back to the Annual General Meeting at the Socrel annual conference.

The officer will collate and disseminate (via the PG-SOCREL email distribution list) job adverts (<https://www.jobs.ac.uk/>) related to the general studies of Socrel post-graduates. On an ad-hoc basis the Officer also relays other activities and information that may be of interest to post-graduates.

The Officer is a member of the Socrel Committee and takes part in discussions affecting other areas of Socrel, such as Publications, Internet development, Membership, Finance and Event organisation.

This is an excellent opportunity for someone to contribute to the vibrant and growing area of the sociology of religion, while gaining valuable experience in event organisation.

Unlike other committee posts, the PG and ECS Liaison Officer is only elected for two years in order not to overburden the post holder during a formative stage in their career and to maximize the number of people who may benefit from the developmental opportunities that this role offers.

The person taking up this post must be either a current PhD student or within three years of receiving their PhD when they take up the post, thereby remaining within the definition of Early Career Scholar (ECS, see below) for the whole of their tenure in the post.

**ECS Definition**

An Early Career Scholar is someone who:

• Has been awarded their PhD within the last three years;

• May be employed on either a full- or part-time basis, on a permanent basis or on contract, or is unemployed or under-employed;

• Periods of unemployment or breaks due to illness or parental leave may extend the time during which a scholar is considered ‘early career’. If you are more than three years out from your PhD, but have had breaks during this time, please indicate this in your application.

# Publications and Communications Officer

The holder of this role is intended to manage communications for the study group among its members, with the BSA, and with external groups and audiences. This person also facilitates publications relevant to the group, including but not limited to conference proceedings.

**Communications:**

Commissioning, editing and dissemination of the study group’s twice-annual newsletter, Socrel News

Dissemination of information to members through JISCMail lists

(In concert with Internet Officer), communicating through group social media accounts such as Twitter and Facebook

Liaising with BSA Communications Officer and communicating about Socrel to the BSA, including but not limited to reports for *Network* magazine

**Publications:**

Facilitating publications among membership, including support for local organising committee of Socrel annual conferences concerning an edited volume or conference proceedings

Managing relationships with scholarly publishers and journal editors

Administering contests, such as the Peter B. Clarke Memorial Essay Prize (including communication with sponsors, judges, and applicants)

**Other tasks:**

Active participation on Socrel executive committee meetings

Attendance at Socrel events and availability to discuss publications or communications issues with members

Overseeing logistical parts of communications (e.g. ensuring photography at events for promotional purposes)