

AUSTRALASIAN CENTRE *for* ITALIAN STUDIES

Charter for Governance

1 Mission Statement

The Australasian Centre for Italian Studies (ACIS) is a lively connection point for the communities of Italianist scholars in Australasia and beyond. Its core mission is to promote high-level teaching, research, and engagement in the field of Italian Studies, broadly understood.

Established in 2000 in the wake of a substantial philanthropic donation by the Cassamarca Foundation in Treviso, Italy, ACIS is an independent association – both intervarsity and supravarsity. It is a body representative of all universities in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand where Italian Studies, broadly understood, are taught and researched.

Tasked with stewardship over the initial Cassamarca investment, ACIS administers its annual income in a range of initiatives to further its core mission. These include but are not limited to: part-funding of established appointments in Italian Studies at universities throughout Australia (titled ACIS Cassamarca Positions in Italian Studies); hosting of a biennial conference; sponsorship of various fellowships and scholarships; promotion of key research initiatives; and the awarding of publishing grants and publication prizes.

2 The Management Committee

2.1 Summary:

Core governance of ACIS is conducted through its Management Committee (MC) assisted by several sub-committees. The MC is responsible for initiating, directing, and carrying out the aims, objectives, and purposes of ACIS. The MC may apply its funds for the purposes of advancing the teaching and research of, and broader engagement with, Italian Studies in Australasia in whichever ways it thinks fit so long as they are congruent with the organization's core mission. The MC is also responsible for oversight of the ACIS Investment Corpus (currently invested and managed by the University of Western Australia), for the preparation of annual budgets for its activities, and for annual reporting on expenditures. The MC and its members operate in accordance with the recognized rules–procedural, ethical, and legal—for all academic committees in Australia and New Zealand.

2.2 Roles:

More particularly, the roles of the MC are to

- a. promote Italian Studies within Australia and New Zealand, including, but not only, through
 - i. oversight of the ACIS Cassamarca Positions established in several Australian universities;
 - ii. support of activities congruent with the original Deed of Trust (2002);
 - iii. support of research activities, especially of postgraduate and early career researchers;
 - iv. the award and disbursement of funds for scholarships;
 - v. the convening of a biennial conference;
 - vi. the distribution of prizes to recognize achievements within the field;
 - vii. maintenance of a dedicated website, mailing list, and related social media;
 - viii. nomination of an ACIS patron;
 - ix. facilitation of national and international visitors in the field.
- b. keep financial records that document and explain transactions;
- c. establish and monitor performance against an annual budget;
- d. establish and maintain internal controls that help ensure the integrity of ACIS's financial records;
- e. actively manage any actual or perceived conflicts of interest; and
- f. if need be (as decided at its annual general meeting held in Sydney 2015), utilize more of the Capital Fund to advance particular initiatives.

To assist with the carrying out of the above activities a course in financial fiduciary compliance, including issues of conflict of interest, is to be made available to, and undertaken by, all members of the MC on their initial appointment (to be funded by ACIS).

2.3 Membership:

The ACIS MC has no secretariat, and its work is undertaken by unpaid volunteers from tertiary institutions in Australia and New Zealand. It has a part-time paid Project Officer who assists the Chair with administrative tasks.

The MC comprises of 8 members as follows:

- a. five academic representatives of both Australian and New Zealand universities where Italian Studies, broadly understood, are taught, with appropriate consideration of diversity including balance of national geographic location, seniority, discipline representation, and gender;
- b. a Chair, appointed by the MC (and normally with experience of serving on the MC), who shall be responsible for conveying and activating decisions of the MC, and the keeping of its records;

- c. a postgraduate representative;
- d. the Project Officer (*ex officio* but with no voting rights).

If possible, at least five different territorial states and jurisdictions should be covered by the seven voting members, one member of which should always represent a New Zealand institution.

2.4 Nomination of Members:

When a position on the MC becomes available, an open call for nominations is to be made, and applicants are to be assessed and appointed by current members of the MC according to the criteria in 2.3 above.

Normally nominations will be made for no more than two new members in any given year to ensure continuity of process, knowledge, and expertise of Committee functions.

The position of Project Officer is generally appointed directly by the Chair, and confirmed by the MC.

2.5 Terms of Office:

- a. The term of office of committee members, with the exception of the postgraduate representative, is three years.
- b. The Chair is appointed for a period of four years (for continuity during a membership three-year change cycle).
- c. The term of office of the postgraduate representative is one year, non renewable.
- d. At the end of a term of office, members are eligible to be reappointed for a further three years but should not normally serve for more than two consecutive terms.
- e. The Chair is normally eligible to be reappointed for a further two years. If, however, the Chair assumes their position after already serving an initial three-year term on the MC, then they are not normally eligible for reappointment.
- f. After a lapsed period of two years, previous members are eligible for a renewed appointment but for usually no more than a further three years.

2.6 Transition between Membership Terms:

To assist in a smooth transition between old and new members of the MC, especially in the role of Chair, new members will transition into their roles over a two-month period with mentorship from the outgoing member they are replacing.

3 Sub committees and their Roles

ACIS has several sub committees which can be populated from outside the MC, and which provide a way to involve the wider Australasian tertiary Italianist community as well as former MC members. These are:

3.1 Reviews Committee

Chaired *ex officio* by the Chair, the Reviews Committee is responsible for reviewing the annual reports from the ACIS Cassamarca Positions enabling release of the following year's tranche of monies.

3.2 Scholarships Committee

The Scholarships Committee is responsible for adjudicating applications for up to three annual postgraduate scholarships to assist overseas travel for research.

3.3 Save Venice Committee:

The Save Venice Committee is responsible for adjudicating applications for the two annual ACIS Save Venice Fellowships held in the city of Venice.

3.4 Publishing Grants Committee:

The Publishing Grants Committee is responsible for adjudicating applications for grants to assist with publication costs.

3.5 Publication Prizes Committee:

The Publication Prizes Committee is responsible for adjudicating applications for both the Jo-Anne Duggan and the ACIS Publication Prizes. Due to the significant time and expertise that may be required in assessing the nominations for the ACIS Publication Prize, an honorarium of \$500 is paid to each of these committee members.

4 Meeting Invitees

The following may attend the meetings of the MC, on request:

- a. the Finance Officer/s of the University of Western Australia;
- b. others with specific expertise as may be determined by the MC.

5 Frequency of Meetings, Consultations, and Quorums

5.1 Most of the work of the Committee is conducted via email and it is the duty of the Chair to ensure that all members are informed of decisions, and to receive responses from all members. The ACIS email address (acis.org.au@gmail.com) is the preferred address for all official correspondence so that records can be centrally maintained.

- 5.2 It is the duty of all Committee members to respond in a timely manner to consultation emails from the Chair. Where members do not respond by a designated period (of not less than five working days), their silence will be held to be assent on the principle *qui tacet consentire videtur*.
- 5.3 The Chair is to keep a record of decisions both through email correspondence and via an accessible shared online repository so that a clear record of decisions is available.
- 5.4 In addition, the MC will have at least one face-to-face meeting per year, whether in person or online.
- 5.5 At least five of the seven committee members with voting rights must be present at a meeting for quorum.
- 5.6 Minutes of the meetings will be taken and confirmed by the MC as a true and accurate record.
- 5.7 To ensure a representation of ideas and concerns from all regions the Chair will endeavor to consult with Italianists from institutions not represented in the current committee prior to the annual general meeting and, or as necessary, a formal report to this effect will be made at the annual general meeting so that concerns may be aired and addressed.

6 The University of Western Australia and its Relationship with ACIS

The role of the University of Western Australia in relation to ACIS is to:

- a. manage the investment corpus, a role for which it has a fiduciary duty;
- b. make an annual allocation based upon the MC's previous year's approved projected budget, and transfer funds to the accounts of the institution managing annual disbursements (usually the Chair's institution);
- c. provide the MC with regular and timely financial reports on income received and costs incurred;
- d. provide the MC with regular updates on investment performance and considered financial advice.

7 Review

The Management Committee's Charter and terms of reference will be reviewed at least every two years on the anniversary of its establishment.