



## OLLI at SOU

### Shared Interest Group FAQs

#### 1. What is a Shared Interest Group?

A Shared Interest Group (or SIG) is a group of OLLI at SOU members who form around a common interest, activity or topic. OLLI at SOU SIGs are independent and self-managed. SIG members decide when, where, and how often they will meet.

#### 2. How are SIGs different from OLLI at SOU Courses?

OLLI at SOU SIGs do not take the place of OLLI courses. They offer members another avenue to connect with each other and expand their interests. OLLI courses fall within our three designated terms, whereas SIGs may meet outside of the terms. OLLI courses are taught by both members and non-members, while a SIG facilitator and all SIG members must be “active” OLLI members who paid membership dues for the current academic year.

A SIG does not have an instructor; a SIG is led by a facilitator. OLLI at SOU instructors consistently offer structured lesson plans and content. In contrast, SIG members learn from each other by sharing expertise in relevant topics. The responsibility for leading the discussion, organizing activities and presenting information is shared by SIG members.

#### 3. What is the role of a SIG facilitator?

The SIG facilitator is responsible for administrative and communication details. They communicate with the members of the SIG by notifying them of meeting times, locations and activities. They are also responsible for verifying that all participants are current OLLI members, communicating with the Programs and Activities Committee for scheduling needs and promotional materials, and letting them know if the SIG is suspended or disbanded. The OLLI member proposing the SIG is the initial facilitator, but another SIG member can take over the role of facilitator at any time the group agrees.

#### 4. What do people do in SIGs?

SIGs may be activity oriented, such as writing, art, music, conversational foreign language, photography, needlework, hiking, qigong, meditation, playing a game or attending movies. Others may be discussion-oriented and explore topics such as current events, ethics, cultural studies, history or genealogy. Some may be purely social gatherings, such as dining out or wine tasting.

## **5. How do I join a SIG?**

Members interested in joining a SIG can contact the facilitator and ask to join. Some SIGs require that members have a certain level of skill or experience in a specific area, or some may limit the number of people who can participate.

If the SIG is full, the SIG facilitator can add the interested member's name to a waitlist. If the waitlist becomes large enough, the interested members could choose to propose a second SIG on the same topic.

## **6. How can I start a SIG?**

Any OLLI member can propose a SIG. Visit the [Programs and Activities webpage](#) to learn more and to access the [Programs and Activities proposal form](#).

## **7. Where do SIGs meet?**

SIGs can meet during nearly any time of the year in-person or virtually. Because SIGs are affiliated with OLLI at SOU, the SOU Campbell Center classroom(s) may be made available to them. Scheduling will depend on classroom availability and staff support, as the Campbell Center is only open during set times. SIGs may use other OLLI at SOU venues by request. If the SIG requests an off-campus location, additional paperwork may be required from the university. SIG facilitators should indicate their desired location on the Programs and Activities proposal form.

## **8. When do SIGs meet?**

Meeting times and frequency are established by the SIG members. There are no restrictions on time or frequency. However, SIGs can only use Campbell Center classrooms on days when the OLLI office is open and rooms are available. If a SIG wants to meet at other times of the year, members may choose to meet virtually or find an alternate meeting location.

## **9. Can a non-member be on a SIG?**

All members (including the facilitator) on a SIG must be current OLLI at SOU members.

## **10. Is there a cost to being in a SIG?**

There are no dues or fees to belong to a SIG other than the annual OLLI at SOU membership. If a SIG has specific expenses, it is the responsibility of the SIG facilitator to inform members of the cost, to collect payment, and to pay the venue or host (when applicable).

**11. Are there any SIG regulations?**

All SIGS must adhere to [Southern Oregon University's Student Code of Conduct](#), which applies to all members of the OLLI at SOU community.

**12. How are SIGs advertised to OLLI members?**

SIGs will be advertised on the OLLI at SOU website, promoted in the Newsflash, and on bulletin boards around the Campbell Center.