

> Thursday, October 12th, 2023

14:30 – 16:00

> ACCOUNTING

**RESEARCH
SEMINAR**



EMPOWERING CHANGEMAKERS FOR A BETTER SOCIETY

‘THE RELEVANCE AND POWER OF TECHNICAL STAFF AND SECRETARIAT IN INTERNATIONAL ACCOUNTING STANDARD SETTING’

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of technical staff within the secretariat of a global standard setting organization, the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB). Building on publicly available documents, interviews with staff and Board members, and observations of Board meetings, the staff’s practices of standard setting are systematically analyzed in light of their impact on the standard setter’s decision-making. It is found that the technical staff devise individual approaches to their work on standard setting projects. In doing so they find themselves constrained by, but also shaping, the organizational structures of the IASB. Moreover, in the course of their project work, they become specialist experts in both the projects’ technical as well as procedural domain. This makes the staff powerful agents within the realm of international accounting standard setting, because their practices determine the working and decision-making agendas of the IASB. It also explains why they may be a preferred target for lobbying activities and how they contribute to the standard setter’s public reputation and legitimacy. In summary, it is suggested that the IASB’s technical staff are the most critical resource to the success of international accounting standard setting.