

Guidelines for Session Chairs/Co-Chairs

Role of a Session Chair

Your role as a session chair/co-chair is the key to a successful session. Like a master of ceremonies or 'anchorperson', your job is to guide the session to achieve its intended purpose in the time available.

Preparation before the Conference

- **Make contact with your session co-chair** (if applicable) and agree on your respective roles in the session;
- Contact the session point person for any questions you might have about the session topic or structure;
- **Familiarize yourself with the presentation topic(s) or abstracts before the session;**
- **Make contact with the speakers prior to the session.** Please review their presentation and speaking notes beforehand so that you have an idea of what they will present. Prepare questions that will stimulate audience participation and interaction during the moderated discussion, if applicable.

At the Conference

Please check in at the Speaker Centre at least **four hours** before the start of your session to:

- Collect your final session schedule and instructions;
- Receive any last minute security information or changes to your session.

If your session is scheduled for 09:00 or for 11:00, you should check-in at the Speaker Centre the night before.

The Speaker Centre is located on Level 2. The opening hours are as follows:

Saturday 19 July	14:00 – 18:30
Sunday - Thursday 20 July – 24 July	08:00 – 18:30
Friday 25 July	08:00 – 16:00

- Please meet with the speakers before your session to run through the session line-up (i.e., roles, order, session specifics). Do what you can to make sure speakers are clear about their roles and feel comfortable with one another;
- Ask speakers how they would like you to introduce them – a personal touch is often welcome;
- Arrive at the session room at least 15 minutes before the start of the session;
- Check the room where the session will be held and familiarize yourself with the space and equipment. Introduce yourself to technical staff and room staff.

During the Session

- Open the session and introduce the speakers;
- Manage the timing during the session and stop the speakers if they run over their time. A presentation timer will be available in the room;
- Facilitate dialogue and promote respectful and productive interaction;

- Manage audience contributions, questions and answers during the moderated discussion. As a session chair your own speaking time is limited. Please make sure you give space to presenters and audience;
- Encourage forward thinking: link points made by speakers or other contributors; bring in different perspectives; manage conflicting viewpoints; note where there is agreement, common ground or disagreement; sum up key ideas and proposals for action and next steps;
- Please thank speakers and delegates at the end of the session;
- For chairs of oral poster discussion sessions: ensure that the discussion at the end of the session (about 30 minutes) is divided equally among presenters, and invite the audience to view the posters displayed outside the session rooms once the session has ended.