

SSM Conference Information for Session Chairs

1. Your Session

We had some late changes in attendance by some presenters, and this has meant that we had to shuffle some of the sessions. Please double-check the Full Agenda (on the Conference website and on the Conference App) to make sure that you know the day, time and location of your Session.

2. Running Your Session

Please be in the room at least 15 minutes before the session begins. A staff member will be assigned to each session room and will be familiar with the in-room technology to assist during each session.

Refer to the Conference Agenda (available online via the conference homepage and on the mobile app) so you have the speakers' names and titles of their talks readily available.

Bring a watch, phone, or another device for keeping time.

Prepare a list of the planned end times for each talk. Pay attention to each timeframe: with the exception of Pre-organized Symposia, all regular sessions are 90 minutes long, and have 3 presenters. (If you are Chair of a Pre-organized Symposium, we leave the time organization etc. to you.)

With 3 papers in the session, we recommend that each paper have 30 minutes total allocated to it—and have advised the presenters that they should expect speak for no more than 25 minutes, leaving 5 minutes for Q&A and discussion. If the presenter uses less than 25 minutes for their presentation, then the remainder (of the 30 minutes) can be used to allow for extra questions and answers. (It is a good idea if the Chair prepares one question for each paper, in order to spark discussion.)

In case of no-shows, let the audience know at the beginning that a paper will not be presented—if that happens, then just skip that presentation, which will leave 30 mins. at the end that can be used for general discussion, etc.

3. Tips for Session Chairs

Welcome the presenters when they come into the room.

Assist the speakers in checking that their files are on the laptop and show them how to use the equipment. (Plan to familiarize yourself with the equipment before the speakers arrive.)

Ask the presenters how to pronounce their names.

Let the presenters know how you will help them keep their talk on schedule. (See the bulleted information below “signal to the presenter.”)

When the session starts, briefly announce the plan for the session . For example, you might say, “Welcome to the session on 'X'. We will allow a total of 30 minutes per talk, including 25 minutes for the presentation itself and 5 minutes for questions if the speaker leaves time.

If you have no-shows among the presenters, tell the audience that you are adjusting the timing to give extra time for Q&A and discussion at the end.

Briefly announce each presenter.

Signal to the presenter when they are getting close to the end of their allotted time. Prepare a page to signal "5 minutes" and "1 minute" remaining. Hold the page up until the speaker signals that he/she has seen them (e.g., by nodding). In case a speaker does not come to an end after their allotted 25 minutes, stand up to politely signal the end of the talk.

Assuming there is time for questions:

Invite the audience to ask questions.

If there is silence, consider asking a question yourself. Write down potential questions before or during each talk in case you need them.

Let the audience know when there is only time for one (more) question.

*Thank you again for accepting our invitation to chair a session at the Conference.
We hope you enjoy the meeting!*