Information for session chairs

Dear session chair

Thank you for agreeing to chair a session at iCHSTM 2013. Session chairs are a vital component of any successful meeting. Your help is greatly appreciated!

The following information may be helpful to you in chairing your session. Please read it thoroughly in advance of the meeting!

Before the meeting

Please contact your speakers as soon as possible by email, to introduce yourself and to outline arrangements for the session. We also recommend that you arrange a time to meet up at the Congress ahead of your session – perhaps during one of the evening receptions, or at lunchtime.

If your session has a **commentary,** please direct your presenters to send their papers to the commentator as soon as possible.

We will soon be sending out detailed technical guidelines to all presenters, but we would be grateful if you could emphasise to them the main points:

- All session rooms are equipped with a Windows PC running PowerPoint, LCD data projector (beamer), internet connection and audio speakers.
- Presenters who are using the room PC should prepare their presentations on a USB stick in advance, and if possible load it to the PC **before the first session in the morning** on the day of the session. If this is not possible, they should arrive **15 minutes** in advance of the stated session start time to load the file and familiarise themselves with the room.
- Presenters wishing to project from a personal laptop should likewise arrive early and test the connection carefully. A standard VGA connector is provided.
- **Apple users** will need to make their own technical arrangements, and should bring an appropriate adapter cable for VGA connection and any required chargers or other equipment.

Anyone with special audiovisual requests should advise the organisers as soon as possible at enquiries@ichstm2013.com.

Session timings

Given the unprecedented scale and complexity of iCHSTM, it is very important that we keep closely to the published timings, in order to help everyone attend

the papers they want to hear, and to manage the flow of delegates around the venues at busy times.

Therefore, please begin and end your session on time – this is your most important job!

Please note that in order to minimise crowding and queues (lines) for coffee, we have introduced a ten-minute stagger in the schedule of start and end times. In the early morning session, for example, half the sessions begin at 09.00 and end at 10.30; the others begin at 09.10 and end at 10.40. Please check the exact timings of your session carefully, and make sure your speakers are aware of them.

Introductions

You should begin your session at the appointed time (don't wait for stragglers: in most cases they will filter in quietly).

Please begin by welcoming your audience, and in your opening remarks please **mention the title** of the session (for those who may have come to the wrong room). Please then ask everyone to set to **silent mode** any mobile phones (cellphones), watch alarms, pagers, Blackberries, and other potentially disruptive items.

We are encouraging delegates to tweet and use other social media, so please encourage your audience to do this, so long as their mobile devices are switched to silent. Please also ask anyone intending to take **photographs** of speakers, slides, etc to do so without using flash, as this can be disconcerting or annoying to speakers.

Absent speakers

If a speaker has unexpectedly cancelled or does not show up, **please try to follow the timeslot sequence listed in the programme,** using the vacant spot for discussion (not possible if the first speaker has cancelled). This will allow audience members moving between sessions to hear papers of interest to them.

Timekeeping

Most speakers are well-disciplined and keep to their allotted time; and they will have been advised separately of the importance of doing this – but it's your role, as chair, to make sure that it happens.

Running times within each session slot will depend on how many papers there are. We expect that the majority of sessions will give equal time to each paper, although this is at the discretion of symposium organisers. Please note the following recommendations, which allow reasonable time for introductions and changeover of presenters.

- **3 papers in session:** advise presenters to aim for 22 to 25 minutes of running time. (This allows a reasonable short question period; presenters may be advised that if they over-run, their question time will be cut accordingly.)
- **4 papers in session:** 18 to 20 minutes per presentation, on the same basis

- **5 papers in session:** 15 minutes per presentation, on the same basis
- **Sessions including a commentary:** specify the length of commentary in advance (10 or 15 minutes recommended) and work out the paper times accordingly.

Normally, speakers should finish with enough time to spare to allow for discussion of their paper. Please make sure that all speakers in the session are aware of the time constraints on them, and of the method you will use to signal to them that they need to bring their presentation to a close.

In order to help you keep speakers to time, each room will be provided with coloured and labelled cards which will allow you to indicate to the speaker how much time they have left: blue for 5 minutes remaining, yellow for 1 minute, and a red card labelled **STOP,** indicating that the speaker has run out of time.

The arrangement for most sessions will be to take questions immediately after each paper. Alternatively, by agreement with the speakers and symposium organiser, you may prefer to keep substantive general discussion to the end of the session. In that case, please be particularly careful to keep an eye on the time, as discussion can over-run if not carefully managed.

Sources of help

If you need something or are having technical problems (projector, lighting, etc) please ask one of our team of Congress stewards, identifiable by their purple T-shirts. Stewards will generally be available to help you set up at the beginning of the session, and on call nearby in case of problems.

Further information

Some further useful suggestions about the practicalities of chairing can be found in Linda Kerber's 2008 *Chronicle of Higher Education* three-part article, "Conference Rules," Part One of which provides helpful hints for those chairing sessions:

http://chronicle.com/article/Conference-Rules-Part-1/45729/

Thank you once again for helping to make iCHSTM a stimulating and well-organised event. If you have any questions, please contact enquiries@ichstm2013.com

Sincerely yours,

The iCHSTM Local Organising Committee