

Guidelines for Session Chairs: Organization and Duties

A **Session Chair** is identified by the responsible Study Commission. The decision about the Session Chair should be made at latest on March 31st and in any case before the session is put together. The Session Chair is typically one person, but for extraordinary and justified reasons, the Session Chair duty can be shared by two persons. In the latter case, one of the chair persons will be appointed by the responsible Study Commission president to be the responsible chair person. The choice of Session Chair is one of the most important decisions for the responsible Study Commission.

Criteria for fulfilling the role as Session Chair: It does not necessarily follow that an eminent scientist makes an ideal Session Chair. However, if the Session Chair has a good scientific reputation and a good network within animal science then is more likely that he/she can recruit invite good speakers.

What is required for being an ideal Session Chair also includes: being a reliable administrator, a good organiser and having the right personality to lead the session in a way so that the audience get a good experience with sufficient time for questions and discussions with the speakers.

The **President of the Study Commission** is responsible for informing the Session Chair about his/her duties as Session Chair. The President of the Study Commission is also responsible for supervising the activities of the Session Chairs appointed. The President of the Study Commission will typically act as the contact person with the Session Chair to assist him/her in the duties. The President of the Study Commission might delegate the job, as contact person, to a member of the Study Commission. If a member of the Study Commission is appointed as contact person, the Study Commission President must liaise with this contact person as well as with the Session Chairs and ensure that progress is being made in organising the session. The Study Commission President or the appointed contact person remains responsible for providing the necessary information to corresponding abstracts authors and accordingly informing the Session Chair. No matter how it is organized within the Study Commission, the ultimate responsibility for organising the session rests with the Study Commission President.

Duties of the Session Chair:

The Session Chair is responsible for the session content and to identify potential invited speakers and suggest these to the President of the Study Commission. The President also liaises with the other members of the Study Commission in agreeing on the decisions about invited speakers. The Session Chair will inform and make

agreements with presenters of invited papers about the length of the talk. Invited speakers will normally be given a 30 or 45 minutes time-slot to cover the talk, some immediate questions/clarification as well as podium transition. Thus, a time-slot of 30 min could cover a 23 min talk, 5 min for questions/clarification and 2 min for podium transition.

The Session Chair will contact invited speakers to confirm their contribution and to inform the President of the Study Commission or the contact person of any requirement for financial support. It is the responsibility of the Study Commission President to formally invite the speakers and, in particular, to inform the invited speakers of any offers of financial support that has been agreed upon with the EAAP Secretariat. The Session Chair reviews the abstracts submitted for the session and organize the programme and time schedule of invited and offered Theatre papers and Posters. Thus, the Session Chair has to organize the session within the given time frame, typically a 4 h time slot with one fixed coffee/tea break included leaving 3½ h for scientific program.

Before the annual meeting, and in accordance with the deadlines given, the Session Chair should provide the EAAP Secretariat and Wageningen Academic Publishers with a brief description of the session (up to 200 words), this is to inform potential presenters about the different sessions they can choose between and to submit their abstract to. The summary will be posted on various websites (EAAP, Wageningen Academic Publishers, Annual Meeting) to inform potential participants about the purpose and topics of the session.

How to chair a session:

Chairing the session at the meeting includes:

1. Introducing the session topic and the speakers
2. Ensuring that speakers keep strictly to their time allocation. This is very important to allow participants to attend parallel sessions
3. In case there are no-shows that are not known in due time to change the timing of presentations, the chair should do the following in the given order:
 - I. invite authors of posters presented in the same session to use the available time for a theatre presentation, if this is not possible then
 - II. if the no-shows are more than one, use the empty time to discussion further about the previous presentations and about the main topics of the sessions
 - III. close momentarily the sessions for the given time-slot of the no-show and invite all participants to reconvene for the next available presentation
4. Encouraging discussion. The chair should have in reserve at least one question in case that there are no questions from the audience
5. Encouraging the inclusion of the posters in the discussions
6. Briefly summarising the main points of the session (spend a maximum of 5 min at end of the session)

Following the annual meeting, and in accordance with the given deadlines, the Session Chair has to the Chair of the Scientific Committee and to the Secretariat one “key finding” from his session to be listed in the Newsletter, and the most interesting ones will be followed up and get more space, through an interview with session chair or the presenter..

Structure of the session:

About the structure of the theatre session, each theatre session is normally programmed to last for up to 4 hours (including the fixed coffee break). Important considerations in planning are:

- The standard time for offered presentation is 15 minutes. to include presentation, immediate questions and podium transition. Invited papers should be planned to take either 30 or in some cases 45 minutes. Consider carefully not to use too many of the 45 min presentations.
- A coffee break of 30 minutes is planned at the mid point
- A major objective within each session must be to encourage discussion and debate after the presentations.
- The time schedule should be strictly followed
- For example, a session of 4 hours could consist of:
 - Brief Introduction by the Session Chair
 - Presentation of invited papers of 30 or 45 minutes (either at start of session or where they fit the best in relation to the other presentations)
 - Coffee break of 30 minutes
 - From 4-5 (if many invited papers are presented) to 14 (if no invited talks in the session) offered short papers of 15 minutes
 - If a final discussion of 15 minutes is included this should be announced in the program and described in an abstract submitted by the Session Chair
 - Free Communications sessions will comprise a series of 15 min offered papers

The Session chairs or, if this is previously agreed, the appointed (by the President of Study Commission) Study Commission Secretary or Vice President should ask theatre presenters to report to the Session Chair at least 15 minutes before the start of the session and been informed about any possible absence.

The appointed (by the President of Study Commission) Study Commission Secretary or Vice President will have to prepare the final version of information about each session, consisting of:

- The title of session
- Category of the sessions (list the categories)
- The Study Commissions and other bodies responsible for organising/supporting that session

- The Session Chair(s)
- The Contact Person from the Study Commission member
- Location of the session
- Title and authors of Invited Papers
- Title and authors of offered Theatre and Poster papers
- Time table for each paper and for the sessions as such
- Possible sponsors

This set of information will be given to the Secretariat and to the relative President of Study Commission for further dissemination and coordination.

Authors will be informed of the acceptance of their paper together with the session and mode of presentations (theatre or poster) within around 4 months of the date of the meeting (usually late April/early May).

Theatre presenters should report to the theatre at least 15 minutes before the start of the session. It is the responsibility of the presenter to check that the power-point file is working properly. Local organizers should provide the necessary facilities and personnel for the presentation. For this purpose there should be at least two members of support staff present throughout the theatre sessions (although this can be reduced to one for the smaller single Study Commission sessions)

Summary: Important things to remember:

- The Study Commission decides the title and topic of the session
- The Study Commission appoints the Chair of the Session
- The President of the Study Commission is the final responsible for the session
- The President of the Study Commission or the contact person is responsible for supporting the Session Chair
- The Session Chair decides, in coordination with the Study Commission, for the content and the structure
- The Session Chair has to be strict with keeping the time-schedule
- The Session Chair must be prepared to manage no-shows
- The Session Chair has to provide the report of the session to the Scientific Committee (SC) and Secretariat
- Authors should be present with relevant material at least 15 minutes before the beginning of the session. The Session Chairs or, if this is previously agreed, the appointed (by the President of Study Commission) Study Commission Secretary or Vice President should facilitate this action.