Guide for Moderating Oral Sessions

On behalf of the SER2019 Programme Committee, thank you for agreeing to moderate an oral session. Whether you are coordinating a symposium or moderating one of the regular sessions, we greatly appreciate your contribution to the conference programme.

Please carefully review the information below, which provides an overview of how the breakout sessions will run and describes your role as a moderator. This information is intended both for symposium organisers and regular session moderators.

General information

- Oral sessions are scheduled to run for either 80 minutes or 120 minutes.

- Each speaker in the session will have 15 minutes for his/her presentation with an additional 5 minutes at the end for questions and transition to the next speaker. This 5-minute period is allotted specifically for audience engagement and does not belong to the speaker.

- **It is critical that all sessions run on schedule and that speakers be strictly limited to their allotted time.** This ensures that the last speaker in a session has the same opportunity to present his/her work as the first speaker. It also ensures that talks run simultaneously across the sessions, such that audience members who want to move between rooms to see specific presentations can do so.

- If there are speaker cancellations in your session, or if a speaker fails to appear, we will hold their spot open in the programme to keep subsequent presentations running on schedule. If there are fewer than six speakers in the session, extra time at the end can be used for questions and discussion. While some symposium organisers may have a slightly different structure in mind for their sessions, we ask that you adhere as closely as possible to the standard schedule for the reasons mentioned above.

Your role as session moderator

- Ensure that your session begins and ends exactly on time.

- Introduce each speaker in the session by clearly stating their name and the title of their presentation.

- Keep careful track of time and ensure that speakers are limited to their allotted 15 minutes.

- Facilitate questions and audience engagement after each presentation and during any open time in your session.
- Advise Audio Visual (AV) staff and/or Conference staff of any technical problems or other unforeseen issues that may arise during the session to ensure that it runs as smoothly as possible.

**Before your session takes place**

- Please plan to arrive at your assigned meeting room at least 10 minutes prior to the scheduled start time.

- Introduce yourself to the AV staff and/or Conference staff that will be assisting with your session and check to make sure the speakers' PowerPoint presentations have all been pre-loaded onto the computer.

- Make yourself visible near the front of the room so speakers can identify you. We have asked them to arrive at the session room a few minutes early to introduce themselves and find a seat near the front. Use this opportunity to clarify the pronunciation of their names if you need to.

- If for some reason a speaker did not upload their presentation in advance and shows up at the meeting room wanting to upload it directly from a USB, consult with available staff to determine the best solution. **Under no circumstances will a speaker be allowed to use their own laptop for a presentation.**

- About 1 minute before the session is scheduled to begin, remind all speakers and the audience of the time limit for each presentation, and let them know how you will indicate when their time is running short and when their time is up. Announce any missing or cancelled talks, and let the audience know that these spaces will be held open. Remind the audience of the protocol for questions (see below).

**During your session**

- Make sure you start the session exactly on time. Formally welcome the audience and introduce the theme of the session. Remind audience members to turn off the ringtone on their cell phones.

- Introduce the first speaker and the title of his/her presentation. The AV staff will cue up the speaker’s PowerPoint presentation from the back of the room so it’s ready to go.

- Keep careful track of time and adhere as closely as possible to the stated schedule. When a speaker is at 13 minutes and has only two minutes remaining, warn them that their time is running short. At 15 minutes, stand up and move toward the podium. Ask them to finish in 10 seconds. At 16 minutes, stand right next to the speaker and interrupt them if necessary. Please report any speakers who fail to follow your instructions to Conference staff following the session.

- Invite questions from the audience during the five minutes remaining after each talk. End the question period promptly at five minutes and introduce the next speaker.

- If there are cancelled presentations in your session or if speakers are absent unexpectedly, please hold the time slot open and do not move to the next speaker until after the 20 minutes have lapsed. This keeps presentations running on schedule for any audience members who want to move between rooms. You can use open time for discussion about preceding presentations. Likewise, if your session has fewer than six speakers, the open time at the end can be used for questions and discussion.
At each conference, SER recognizes one student with the William Niering Award for Best Student Paper. If there are students presenting in your session, we may ask you to complete a brief evaluation form to help us select a winner (unless you yourself are a student). We will communicate with you separately about this.

In the event of any problems with the technology in the meeting room or other unforeseen issues that interrupt the session, notify Conference staff immediately and work with them to resolve the issue as quickly as possible.

End your session exactly on time so attendees can proceed to the scheduled break and preparations can begin for the next session.