

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR CHAIRING ORAL SESSIONS

Thank you for agreeing to chair an oral session at this year's conference. Many of you will have chaired sessions before and know that good chairing is essential to the quality of the session and conference. To ensure this, the following 'good practice pointers' have been identified.

BEFORE THE SESSION.

- In the break before your session, check at the registration desk that all speakers have registered and identify any withdrawn papers where possible.
- Familiarise yourself with the layout of the room and the audio-visual equipment.
- Introduce yourself to the stewards.
- Locate the '5 minutes left' and 'stop now' cards within the lecture theatre.
- Introduce yourself to the presenters and check their talk titles and how they wish to be addressed.
- Reassure presenters if they are nervous.
- Remind the presenters that talks are 15 minutes long with 5 minutes for discussion.
- Inform them that you will be using the '5 minutes left' and 'stop now' cards.
- Encourage the audience to sit near the front of the lecture theatre.
- Time permitting, read through the abstracts of those in your session identifying one or two key questions where appropriate for discussion.

DURING THE SESSION.

- Start the session promptly, regardless of latecomers.
- Welcome the audience and make any housekeeping announcements if necessary.
- Introduce the first speaker.
- Position yourself so that you can see the audience and a clock, and the presenter can see you.
- If the presenter is not audible, encourage them to speak up.
- Show the '5 minutes left' card 10 minutes into the talk and the 'stop now' card at 15 minutes.
- Insist, firmly but politely, that the talk finishes after 15 minutes.
- Chair 4 minutes of questions; if no questions are forthcoming you may need to ask a 'starter question'.
- As sessions run in parallel it is important that talks are given in the order in which they appear in the programme. If a paper has been withdrawn, please use this time for discussion and/or to enable people to move between sessions, rather than carry on with the next presentation.

SESSION END.

- Thank the presenters and audience for their participation, ensuring they take all their belongings with them.
- Remind the audience of the next part of the programme (e.g. tea/ coffee, poster session).

Thank you again for chairing a session at this year's conference.