
Tips for Chairing a Session Well



Make Contact

Contact your speakers before the conference to answer any questions they may have and to make sure they know when and where their presentation will take place.



Be Prepared

Familiarize yourself with the general topic of the session and read abstracts (and full papers if they are available) to familiarize yourself with the content of the individual presentations. If you think two speakers are in danger of covering the same issues contact them in advance to give them an opportunity to tailor their presentations.



Face-to-Face

Arrange to meet your speakers at the conference venue to ensure they know the time and venue of their presentation, and that they bring any problems or special requirements to the attention of the conference organizers.



Think and Plan

Plan the general format of your session, think about how to introduce the speakers and state that questions will be taken at the end of the session.



Introduce Session

Get the attention of the audience, introduce the topic of the session and present the format of the session.



Introduce the Speakers

Prepare some information to introduce each of the speakers. Keep the introductions short and accurate.



Timing

Monitor the timing of each speaker closely, speak up and remind them they have only 2-3 minutes of speaking-time left if they show no sign of concluding their presentation. 10 minutes for questions at the end of each session.



Discussion

Have a few questions ready in case the audience doesn't. If questions are too long, or complicated interrupt and suggest that the issue is discussed after the session.



Closing -

Conclude the session with a short summary of the content of the session, acknowledge the speakers and announce the next sessions.



The End

Before they leave the room, thank each of the speakers for their contribution.

Thank you for chairing the session.