ROYAL STATISTICAL SOCIETY

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RSS 2020 Conference
Bournemouth, 7-10 September 2020

Guidance notes for Invited session organisers

These notes are intended to assist you in completing the session proposal form and provide guidance on the role of the session organiser. Please do read through them carefully as the arrangements may differ from other conferences you have attended. You are asked to confirm on the submission form that you have read and understood these guidelines.

Titles and Formats of sessions

Invited sessions will be a standard 80 minutes long but can take any format – two or three speakers with or without discussant, panel discussion, workshop, consultation session, etc. *The organisers welcome innovation in the format of sessions*.

Please note workshops may be best placed in the professional development stream (which have a mixture of 60- and 80-minute sessions).

With any highly technical topics we would expect the session to include either an introductory talk or a discussant.

While the titles of sessions should be as descriptive as possible, short and snappy titles are to be preferred (the same applies for individual talk titles) to assist with marketing.

We are keen to receive proposals for sessions which cover new research and results, areas of controversy/debate, topical discussion, and informative and innovative case studies. We are also interested to receive proposals on topics related to data ethics.

Which topic stream does your session fit within?

The 2020 Conference will be organised into streamed topics:

- Applications of Statistics
- Business, Industry & Finance
- Communicating & Teaching Statistics
- Data Science
- Environmental & Spatial Statistics
- Medical Statistics
- Methods & Theory
- Official Statistics & Public Policy
- Social Statistics
- Professional Development

You can find information about the topics expected to be covered by each stream in the Annex 1.

Each stream is curated by two members of the RSS Conference Board (see Annex 2) who you should liaise with over the content and who will be able to advise on the suitability of your topic for the selected stream (and suggest an alternative if appropriate).

Please note that the support of a conference board member for your proposal does **not** automatically mean the full board will accept it for inclusion in the conference programme.

Speakers and their availability

Please let us know if there are known restrictions on your speakers' attendances at the conference. Typically, the first invited sessions take place from late morning on the Tuesday (8th) and the final invited sessions will be on the Thursday afternoon (10th).

At this initial stage, all topic streams are scheduled to run throughout the conference, however the length may be revised according to the number of proposals accepted. Sessions will be allocated to relevant slots by the end of January and it may be difficult to reallocate sessions after this.

Please note that we encourage diversity in the composition of our invited sessions. Please consider the balance of your proposed speakers in terms of gender, career stage etc.

Registration discounts and expenses

The normal situation is that we do not offer discounts/expenses to speakers in invited sessions and they are responsible for payment of conference fees and their own expenses in the same way as other delegates. This enables us to organise a wide range of invited sessions/workshops across the conference themes.

However, we do not wish monetary considerations to be a barrier to speakers presenting at the conference. If this is an issue, speakers in invited sessions can make a case to receive **one** of the following:

- one-day discount on the conference fee
- one night's accommodation reimbursed up to a maximum of £120 per night
- reasonable standard/economy class travel expenses [see note below]

Requests for a discount/expenses of this nature for a speaker should be made when the invited session/workshop is being proposed. Budgetary planning means that requests made at a later stage in the planning process may not be possible to accommodate.

Once a session proposal has been accepted the RSS Conference office will contact the speaker concerned to obtain details of the case being made.

In general requests for one-day discounts will be granted. Priority for expenses will be given to speakers coming from professions outside of statistics.

In exceptional cases we will consider making more than one type of expense available or can agree an expenses package for a session.

Please note the following maximum amounts will apply for travel expenses – within the UK £200, Europe £300, Rest of the World £500.

Final decisions on the cases presented will be made by the Chair and Vice-Chair(s) of the Conference Board.

Session organisers requesting additional speakers' expenses are likely to be looked on more favourably if they have successfully generated new sponsorship for the conference, whether through direct sponsorship of the session they are organising or by encouraging a new exhibitor or advertiser to participate.

Please note that unfortunately there are no expenses or fee discounts available from the conference budget for session chairs or session organisers (unless as speakers)

Session chairs

It is not compulsory to name your session chair at this stage but if you have someone who has agreed to perform this role please indicate this. The last date for appointing a chair is **15 July 2019**.

The session organisers must appoint a chair who is registered or will be registering to attend the conference – if you do not name a chair the conference organisers will assume you are chairing the session.

Future liaison and communication

As there are likely to be over 50 invited sessions at the conference, you will be asked to assist the conference organisers by ensuring/ reminding your speakers to:

- Submit their abstracts
- Register for the conference

The conference office will inform the session organiser about the scheduling of the session and details of the submission of the final presentation. You will find details of the various deadlines at the end of this document – these deadlines must be adhered to. In particular if a speaker misses the deadline for abstract submission their talk title may be omitted from the final programme and the abstract will not appear in the booklet.

If you are not the chair of the session, the conference office will also liaise with the chair nearer the time of the conference.

Please provide email addresses for all speakers and the agreed chair.

Session organisers will be responsible for ensuring that their speakers are given a clear briefing on the format and timings of the session.

Session organisers are also responsible for ensuring that the conference office is kept up-to-date with any changes to speakers and talk titles.

Marketing

The RSS centrally will be marketing the conference through various media, however this will generally be at a broad level rather than focussing on specific sessions. You (and your speakers) are therefore encouraged to promote your session – if doing so via twitter please tag @RSSAnnualConf and use #RSS2020Conf.

The RSS is always looking for new ways to reach a broad audience for the conference so if there are particular mailing lists etc you would recommend for either promoting the conference as a whole or specific streams/topics please let us know via the relevant box on the submission form.

Key Deadlines

18 November 2019 – initial deadline for session proposals

By 31 January 2020 – confirmation of the session's provisional scheduling within the programme

Before 28 February – draft conference programme published

16 April – 16 July – period for submission of invited talk abstracts

5 June – first registration deadline (20% discount)

15 July - last date for appointing session chairs

31 July – second registration deadline (10% discount)

Stream descriptions for 2020 Conference

Applications of Statistics
This stream aims to showcase examples of real world practical applications of statistics. Previous sessions have covered a diverse range of applications such as the use of statistical analysis in professional sport; statistics and the law, astrostatistics, agricultural statistics, to voting patterns in the Eurovision song contest.

Business, Industry & Finance
This stream aims to provide a stage for statistical methods and applications in the business and financial sectors. This might include topics such as risk analysis, experimental design, measurement uncertainty, business innovation, asset management, quantitative finance, big data and business surveys.

Communicating Statistics
This stream aims to showcase new and diverse ways to convey statistical thinking and ideas to a variety of audiences. This might include topics such as: working with schools and inspiring young people; teaching statistics at HE level to students both of statistics and other subjects; or, developing essential and innovative communication skills for sharing statistical information with different sectors of the public.

Data Science
This stream covers applied and methodological advances that support the extraction of value from data. This includes, but is not limited to, developments in the data analytics process, Big Data technology, applications of Machine Learning, cyber security, financial technology, and cross-disciplinary scientific experiments that advance application domains.

Environmental & Spatial Statistics
This stream covers a series of talks and discussions relating to applications of statistics to environmental topics, including those with a spatial or spatio-temporal aspect. This stream covers themes such as air pollution, spatial epidemiology, statistical ecology, climate science and environmental forecasting.

Medical Statistics
This stream showcases approaches and applications of statistical thinking to problems arising from the study of human biology, health and healthcare. Bioinformatics, study design, targets for inference, data collection, linkage, analysis, survival and event history analysis, meta-analysis and reporting all fall within the scope of this stream.

Methods & Theory
This stream provides conference-goers with a snapshot of recent advances in statistical methodology. While often motivated by a particular application, a distinguishing feature of this stream is that the methods themselves are the object of principle scientific interest. The stream welcomes contributions relating to the philosophical foundations of statistics as well as all aspects of statistical modelling and inference.

Official Statistics & Public Policy

This stream aims to showcase the work of official statistics producers and how their work shapes and informs public policy. Sessions can cover any aspect of the production of official statistics, covering a wide range of topics including: overviews of existing statistical work and publications; new developments to support emerging policy; use of technology to improve the production and dissemination of official statistics; and meeting user needs.

Professional Development

This stream is a blend of short informal workshops and training sessions (60-80 minutes) aiming to provide bite sized continual professional development opportunities. Previous sessions have covered a diverse range of topics such as research publication, maximising impact, career development, statistics in the media and short introductions to software packages.

Social Statistics

This stream aims to present novel methods and applications concerning statistics in social contexts. These may be concerned with the collection, dissemination, analysis, and interpretation of statistical data in any field of social inquiry and span, for instance, public and private sectors, politics and the media.

RSS Board contacts for Conference streams

Stream	Board contact 1	Board contact 2
Applications of Statistics	Kim Kavanagh kim.kavanagh@strath.ac.uk	Craig Anderson Craig.Anderson@glasgow.ac.uk
Business, Industry & Finance	Peter Smith peter.j.smith@leidos.com	Neil Spencer N.H.Spencer@herts.ac.uk
Communicating Statistics	Rachael Hughes Rachael.Hughes@bristol.ac.uk	Mel Lewis Melanie.Lewis@ons.gov.uk
Data Science	Mark Briers mbriers@turing.ac.uk	Linsay Gray Linsay.Gray@glasgow.ac.uk
Environmental/Spatial Statistics	Craig Anderson Craig.Anderson@glasgow.ac.uk	Jenny Wadsworth j.wadsworth@lancaster.ac.uk
Medical	Rachael Hughes Rachael.Hughes@bristol.ac.uk	Lisa McFetridge l.mcfetridge@qub.ac.uk
Methods & Theory	Dave Woods D.Woods@soton.ac.uk	Jenny Wadsworth j.wadsworth@lancaster.ac.uk
Official Statistics & Public Policy	Mel Lewis Melanie.Lewis@ons.gov.uk	David Beckett David.Beckett@ons.gov.uk
Social Statistics	Linsay Gray Linsay.Gray@glasgow.ac.uk	Neil Spencer N.H.Spencer@herts.ac.uk
Professional Development	Lisa McFetridge l.mcfetridge@qub.ac.uk	Emily Granger emily.granger-2@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk