



AIDS 2008 GUIDELINES FOR ORAL ABSTRACT SESSION CHAIRS

- * Please check in at the Speakers' Centre 6 hours before the start of your session***
- * Chairpersons are required to collect their final session schedule and important security information and instructions at the Speakers Centre***

Your role as chair is the key to a successful session. Like an MC (master of ceremonies) or 'anchorperson', your job is to guide the session to achieve its intended purpose in the time available. This includes:

- Preparing well with speakers and others beforehand (see below)
- Opening the session: explaining how the session will run within the limited time available
- Introducing speakers (and stopping them if they overrun their time!) A presentation timer is available at the table – you are responsible for keeping the presentations to time.
- Making sure that the session promotes dialogue, and respectful and productive interaction
- Managing delegate contributions, questions and answers
- Making interventions to move thinking forward and promote dialogue such as: making links between points made by speakers / other contributors; bringing in different perspectives; managing conflicting viewpoints; noting where there is agreement / common ground or disagreement; noting key ideas / proposals / agreements for action; summing up areas of agreement and disagreement and next steps. (NB as moderator your own speaking time is minimal – make sure you give the space to speakers and delegates.)
- Thanking speakers and delegates at the end of the session

Preparation beforehand:

1. First of all, make contact with your co-chair and agree on your respective roles in the session.
2. Familiarize yourself with the abstracts before the session.
3. Make contact with the speakers ahead of time. You could ask them to send you their speaking notes beforehand so that you have an idea of what they are going to say.
4. Prepare questions that will stimulate audience participation and interaction.

At the conference:

5. If possible, meet up with speakers ahead of your session. Run through the 'choreography' of the session. Do what you can to make sure speakers are clear about and feel comfortable with their role and with one another.
6. Ask speakers how they would like you to introduce them – a personal touch is often welcome.



7. Check the room where the session will be held and familiarise yourself with the space and layout. Introduce yourself to technical staff and room staff.
8. Be at the session room at least 15 minutes before the start of the session.