

Guidelines for ISEE Conference Session Chairs

Thank you for serving as a chair for an ISEE session. Session atmosphere and quality depend on your efforts. Your role begins prior to the conference and extends through the end of the session. You can build connections between the speakers, set the session's tone, ensure fair time allocation, assure that all participants feel safe, welcomed, and included, and promote discussion to advance science.

ISEE is a diverse and international society. As a session chair, you can support groups that may need additional assistance: those presenting at a conference for the first time or that speak English as a second (or third!) language. Being a session chair is an excellent opportunity to connect with these members, in particular, to provide encouragement, extra guidance on presentation, and session expectations.

Pre-conference

ISEE sessions usually feature co-chairs. First, please reach out to your co-chair at least two weeks prior to the conference to decide on what role each chair will take on before and during the session and coordinate the logistics.

1. Please connect with your speakers at least two weeks prior to the conference, confirm their attendance, and alert the ISEE program planner of any changes.
2. Lay ground rules. Explain to speakers how the session will run, how much time you will allocate to each speaker, in accordance with the conference guidelines, and when each speaker will take questions. These guidelines will vary from year to year and depend on the allocated duration for each session and the number of presenters.
3. Encourage presenters to share slides or notes prior to the session so other speakers can review and create linkages across presentations and save time by avoiding redundancies (e.g., explaining ozone formation multiple times).
4. Remind presenters that they will need to upload their presentations in advance.
5. Familiarize yourself with speaker names and affiliations.
6. Ask presenters to arrive at the session 10 minutes early. This will give them a chance to meet one another and interact. It also gives the speakers the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the podium and the remote. It also means you can start the session on time. If you have questions about name pronunciation, please ask during this time.

During the session

1. Arrive early and welcome presenters as they arrive. Facilitate introductions between presenters and confirm you have the correct pronunciation of presenter names.

2. When you arrive, please confirm that all the presentations have been successfully uploaded on the computer in the room. Show the speakers how to work the remote to advance slides and activate the laser pointer (if available). Be sure that you have the contact information for someone who is available to assist in the event of an audiovisual crisis.
3. Speakers cannot use their own laptop, they must have uploaded their presentation in the Speaker Ready Room as instructed.
4. Troubleshoot. As the chair, people will look to you if problems arise and expect you to manage the session and respond to any challenges.
5. Begin the session on time. This is imperative in order to give speakers their allotted time to present and audience members ample time for discussion. If the discussion continues after the end-time, please move it to the hallway to permit the next group to set-up.
6. Set the tone. Introduce yourself (name and affiliation) as the chair, invite the co-chair to introduce her/himself, and reiterate the session topic. You may wish to make some short remarks (< 3 minutes) to prime the audience for the session.
7. Follow the presentation order in the program. Some attendees may wish to move between sessions and are disappointed if speakers do not stay in the program order.
8. Introduce each speaker (name, affiliation, general topic) before their presentation. Transition between each presentation by thanking the prior speaker and introducing the next.
9. You may interrupt speakers to ask them to speak more slowly, audibly, or clearly or to face the audience.
10. Treat speakers equally and make sure each receives their allotted time. To aid presenters, provide hand signals for 5, 3, and 1 minute left in their time. Be firm.
11. You must stop a presenter who exceeds their allocated time. Failure to do so is unfair to other presentations and the audience. Here are a few strategies. You have already provided 5, 3, and 1-minute warnings. First, you may firmly tell the speaker it is time to stop now. Another strategy is that when time expires, you stand up next to the presenter. They will likely pause and at this time you can thank them and explain you must move to the next speaker. Stopping speakers will be much easier if you have communicated your responsibility to ensure the session runs smoothly and on time in your email 2-weeks prior and on the day of the session.
12. Facilitate discussion. Audience participation greatly improves the quality of ISEE sessions. Further, audience members will be disappointed if there is no time for questions. Every speaker should have at least 3 minutes to answer questions immediately after their talk and hopefully some time at the end of the session for more general questions.
13. You, not the speaker, will call on audience members. Ask participants to identify themselves (name, affiliation) and speak clearly so the room can hear them. Please request that presenters restate the question prior to answering if the question was difficult to hear or understand.
14. Please scan the crowd and call on those who put their hands up first (as best you can). Set expectations of constructive, professional, and courteous discourse. Request that

audience members keep their questions short and save longer comments or discussions for follow-up after the session. Avoid letting one person monopolize the Q&A period.

15. Please make an effort to write down 1-2 questions for each speaker during their presentation. In the absence of any audience questions, you are encouraged to ask a question in an attempt to stimulate discussion.
16. End the session on time. Close the session by thanking presenters. If another session follows yours, please request that everyone move conversations into the hallway.

Issues that may arise

1. **You can no longer chair the session.** Please alert the ISEE organizing committee immediately so a replacement can be found.
2. **A presenter did not upload their presentation.** Please familiarize yourself with guidelines at the specific ISEE conference you attend. In most cases, you, as the chair, can use a USB to upload at the last minute. This is not preferred.
3. **A presenter goes over their time limit.** Establish rules upfront. Explain why we must stay on time (fairness to other speakers and audience). If the presenter does not seem to be stopping, stand next to them. If this does not work, say something like “I hate to cut such an interesting presentation short, but in fairness to others, I must.”
4. **No one asks questions.** You have jotted down a question or two, ask it.
5. **Presenter does not show up.** Contact the ISEE committee and let them know. Keep the original presenter order and time slots. Again, some attendees may wish to move between sessions and are disappointed if speakers are not in their scheduled time slot. If possible, to fill in for a no-show presenter, please be prepared to start a discussion with the audience regarding the session theme and/or summarize what has been presented up to that point in the session.
6. **Aggressive questioning.** Please be aware of this, particularly if such comments are directed towards a student or early-career scientist or those who do not speak English as their first language. Please intervene in real-time if you witness such behavior. Session Chairs should discuss how to intervene if the situation arises and assign this role before the session. Remind the audience that our goal is to create a safe space for constructive feedback. Consider reporting such behavior to the Conference Committee after the session.