

Handbook for Organisers of European Conferences

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Introduction

These guidelines have been produced by the authors of a result of contributing to many conferences within Europe, both good and bad! At various times we have all been leaders, members of organising committees, members of scientific committees, helpers, and delegates at such conferences. The guidelines are firmly based on these experiences, and we believe that they demonstrate best practice in the area of conference organisation. We hope that they will be of use to organisers, and will result in an increase in the quality of European and other international conferences.

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Preliminary Considerations

The starting point for the organisation of any conference should be to answer the following questions:

- Why are we organising it?
- For whom is it being provided?
- What is its purpose?
- Is there a demand for this?

The answers should then provide us with a vision of what the conference will look like. At one extreme it may be the annual congress of a chemical society, aimed at presenting the results of our latest research to colleagues, and establishing and developing cooperation with people having similar interests. In this case it is possible that there will be a very large number of delegates, as is the case with the national meetings of the American Chemical Society; typically these attract 15 000 delegates and cover a wide range of different topics. Alternatively, we may be thinking of a one off international summer school for postgraduate students in a given field, the aim of which is to develop communication skills, provide additional knowledge, and place research into wider contexts. Such a meeting would typically have around 30 delegates and be more narrowly focussed. It is worth noting that smaller meetings do allow the opportunity to address niche markets and provide conferences with a unique flavour.

The guidelines which follow are intended to be applicable across the full range of international meetings, but it is important to remember that there will be variations. After all every meeting is, and should be, different!

There are two essential conditions which must be fulfilled for a conference to be successful:

- The appropriate number and quality of contributions.
- An efficient organisational structure.

The need to plan in detail well in advance cannot be overemphasised.

Timing

Conferences may be held at any time of year. However, it is worth remembering the following.

- Summer. Immediately after the examination season there is likely to be free student accommodation and lecture rooms and (in western Europe) relatively good weather. This opens up the possibility of organising excursions and outdoor events. The important consideration related to running a conference at this time of year is to ensure that the meeting will not clash with examinations in countries which are expected to contribute a significant number of delegates.

Notwithstanding this, the early summer (June) may be preferable to July and August to those delegates with young families.

- September. There is also likely to be free accommodation at this time of year. However, in many countries this is the start of the school year and organisers may wish to take this into account to attract delegates with parental responsibilities. A further consideration is that the congresses of many national chemical societies are held at this time of year.
- Winter. Although the period around Christmas is often relatively free of academic commitments, many delegates will be reluctant to attend a conference immediately before the holiday season. Fares are also likely to be expensive and transportation busy. The first weeks of January are more suitable, but here care needs to be taken to avoid clashes with the examination periods in some universities.

As a general rule, always check the dates of conferences in related subject areas which will attract the same potential delegates.

Location

The key factor is to ensure that the chosen location will be accessible from as many countries as possible. There are three general possibilities.

- Your own university, provided that it has appropriate conference facilities.
- A conference centre or hotel near to your own university.
- A venue in an attractive area some distance away from your own university.

The facilities available at the chosen venue must be considered very carefully. If the delegates are accommodated in one building away from a city centre attendance at sessions will be better than if there is competition with local attractions. If the accommodation is some distance from the meeting venue then transportation will need to be arranged. The number and type of rooms available are important, and facilities must be accessible to delegates with disabilities.

Support

Financial support can be sought from organisations such as the ministry of education, the national chemical society, local government, the university, and the chemical industry.

Human resources are also vital. There must be a local team to run the meeting on a day to day basis; it is important that this does function as a

team, rather than as a collection of individuals. Secretarial assistance is also required.

Two committees need to be set up once the decision to run a conference is taken.

- The organising committee is formed first and takes all decisions. Each member of this committee will be responsible for one or more tasks.
- The scientific committee is responsible for the scientific programme and the reviewing process.

It is vital that all members of both committees are formally invited to serve, and have given their permission before their name appears on any documentation.

Fees

As a general principle fees should be kept as low as possible, even if this means sacrificing some of the optional extras. As well as the actual direct costs of the conference there may be costs which the organisers incur in the longer term, such as the capital cost of equipment. The ability of delegates to pay is not usually equal, and organisers may wish to consider the possibility of reduced fees for postgraduates and for delegates from eastern Europe and developing countries, for example. Subsidies may be available from the European Union, professional bodies and local industry among others.

It is also possible to set differential fees which vary by the date of registration. A low early bird fee may encourage delegates to register at an early opportunity; this has the advantage of guiding the organisers towards a total number of expected delegates. A premium may be charged for those who wish to turn up and pay. The dates relating to such a scheme must be very clearly displayed and adhered to. It is also important to allow enough time between the confirmation that an abstract has been accepted and the deadline for early bird fees to allow for processing within a delegate's university. This can take several weeks.

Deadlines

Deadlines should be realistic and it should be remembered that many participants will expect to be able to register after the deadline. Publicly there should be strict observance of such deadlines. For example, the web page for registration or abstract submission should be removed as soon as the appropriate deadline has passed. However, potential delegates should be encouraged to contact the organisers if they have good reasons for being unable to meet a deadline; individual arrangements may then be considered informally.

It is worth setting deadlines some 10 to 14 days before absolutely needed by the committee. This should allow a sufficient safety net to deal with unexpected problems.

Visa Requirements

The organising committee should be aware of any countries whose citizens will require a visa to attend the conference. If such a delegate registers then they may need to receive a formal letter of invitation in order to obtain the visa.

Advertising

Promotion of the conference is of the utmost importance, and all available channels of communications should be used. These can include

- Mailshots
- Web sites
- E-mails

They can be sent to:

- Delegates of previous conferences in related subject areas
- Lists of potential delegates. One way of obtaining such a list would be to search Chemical Abstracts and other databases for the names of those publishing relevant papers.
- Members of appropriate societies
- Members of appropriate organisations such as ECTN, COST, IOSTE, ICASE and EuCheMS
- Friends and colleagues

With a request that the recipient distributes the information more widely. The need to advertise widely is even more important for conferences addressing niche markets, where the number of potential participants may be relatively small.

Written Information

This can comprise

- A short colour leaflet with attractive graphics and addressing the what, when and where of the conference. The address of the web page and the most important deadlines should be clearly stated. One segment of the leaflet may be a tear off card on which further information may be requested, or it may be used for preliminary registration. The principal task of such a leaflet is to provide the recipient with the key information about the conference, particularly so they can keep the relevant dates free.

- A poster which can be displayed in a prominent place by the recipient. This should be of the highest quality affordable.
- The first circular, whose task is to convince the undecided. The information should include the names of the scientific committee, potentially interesting topics to be covered, tourist attractions in the region, general travel information, and instructions on the format and submission of abstracts. For a conference which is part of a regular series the main emphasis for distribution will be the participants of, say, the previous three conferences.
- The second circular, which should contain an outline of the programme, the venue, and more detailed travel information.

Electronic Information

The web site should contain the same information as the written documents, but there is opportunity to expand upon this at no extra cost. Additional information which can be included is information on accommodation options, lists of members of both committees, technical requirements for submission of abstracts, a more detailed schedule, weather, exchange rates, visa information, and power supplies and equipment available in rooms. It is also to include links to external sites where appropriate. There should be a balance between the use of attractive graphics and the accessibility and load time of the pages. It should be readable in a range of browsers including older versions. It is vital that the website is kept as up to date as possible so that potential delegates have confidence in the information available. E-mail addresses can be given in the form name'at'address to avoid resulting spam. Steps should be taken to ensure that the web site is indexed by and can be found by all the major search engines.

An up to date e-mail list should also be maintained. This can be refined as the conference approaches. The purposes of such an e-mail list is to make potential delegates aware of the information on the web site, to transmit the latest information, and to remind of approaching deadlines, such as that for abstract submission or early bird fees.

It is worth remembering that e-mails are easily overlooked, and that there are some countries, even in Europe, where electronic communication is not used as widely as elsewhere. For these reasons, total reliance on electronic communication is unwise.

General Timetable for Organisers

Below we set out the major components of a conference which need to be in place at various times in advance of and during the meeting itself. Precise timings will depend very much on the size of the conference.

Several Years ahead

The approval of partners and superiors to host the conference needs to be sought. It is also wise to have identified possible venues for both accommodation and the academic programme which may be approached.

One to Three Years Ahead

It is worth applying to relevant organisations as early as possible. These could include EuCheMS and the ECTN. Some bodies do have strict criteria on which conferences they will support, and this information should be obtained at an early stage.

At this early stage there should also be

- A firm commitment of financial support
- A specified venue with provisional booking
- A chair of the scientific committee
- An organising committee
- A tentative timetable

Many of these will be refined as the conference approaches.

Finances

The cost of organising the conference will largely depend on where it is held and the number of participants. The earlier the organisation starts the more time is available for obtaining support and increasing the viability of the conference.

Sponsorship

Potential sponsors should be made aware of what benefits will result if they support the conference. These could include displaying their products or written information, having a link on the conference web page, or including their logo in conference materials. Sponsorship may be direct or in the form of materials such as company notebooks and pens, catering, or loan of equipment. A fashionable form of sponsorship is to provide delegates with a memory stick displaying the company logo on the outside and itself loaded with appropriate files and software. It is worth remembering that financial support may be obtained more readily if the number of delegates is large and if the conference is being addressed by prominent figures or already sponsored by well known organisations.

Scientific Committee

This committee should start its work at the earliest opportunity by defining the main topics of the conference and proposing plenary speakers. Personal knowledge of key speakers is vital. The committee should have confidence

that everyone invited to give a lecture will do a good job. This is not always the case when individuals are selected without personal knowledge. A personal approach to speak is also likely to be more successful. It is worth remembering that well known plenary speakers are likely to be very busy. Some factors which may help in successfully inviting them are for them to be approached early by people they know and respect, and to propose an exciting program of which they will be keen to take part.

Up To One Year Ahead

Accommodation and speaking venues should have been reserved, and any excursions should have been booked. If the conference is part of an annual series, it can be formally launched at the previous event. This allows a presentation to describe the venue, after which the website should go live and the registration process can take place as described earlier.

Registration Process

For the organisers and many participants an online registration procedure will be the most convenient. As many contact details as possible should be collected for each delegate; these can include address, telephone number (in international format), fax and e-mail. There is no need to use a drop down menu for countries, as many people find it easier just to include this in the main part of their address. Every applicant should receive a confirmation of their registration which includes a copy of their data. It is vital that a secure backup of this data is kept, both in electronic and hardcopy form. Provision should also be made for the submission of abstracts electronically. It may be a good idea to consult the information technology experts of the host institution in order that these electronic submissions can be made in the most user friendly way.

Careful thought needs to be given to the form in which payment will be accepted; credit cards are often the easiest for participants, particularly for overseas transactions, but do place an extra burden on the organisers. As a general rule, the abstracts of presenters should only be approved for inclusion in the book of abstracts once payment has been received.

One Month Ahead

Information Pack

This should be sent to delegates by whatever means is deemed to be appropriate. It should include the following information:

- What to bring
- Outline programme
- Preliminary list of delegates
- How to reach the accommodation and venue from the airport and/or the railway station, and the cost

- Location of ATMs and the approximate exchange rate
- Important telephone numbers, include an emergency contact number (usually a mobile telephone) in international format

Delegate Folders

It is usual to give delegates a folder or bag. This needs to be assembled at this time, and should contain:

- Name badge
- Paper
- Writing equipment
- Lunch vouchers (when the cost of lunch is included in the registration fee)
- Tourist information describing the university, the town and the region
- Maps of the conference centre and the town
- Book of abstracts
- Conference programme (in full and summary pocket versions)
- Address lists of participants to facilitate networking
- Details of public transportation including tickets if possible

If possible, it is worth identifying each bag or folder with the name of the individual. This helps to prevent confusion when all delegates have identical packs. It is worth having a small number of bags available without participants' details to give to unexpected arrivals. Alternatively, the organisers can be prepared to remove the name specific elements before giving the materials to someone else. The folders should not make a noise when opened in order to avoid disturbing speakers and other delegates. This precludes the use of Velcro fastening. It is important that arrangements are made for delegates to collect these materials; if they are arriving out of hours the bags or folders can be left at the hotel reception desk, for example.

Book of Abstracts

This will have two aims. The first is to allow delegates to make an informed decision on which sessions to attend. The second is to provide documentary proof of attendance, which is important for delegates from some countries. Clear guidelines need to be provided on abstract submission, including the required structure, whether or not a bibliography is required, the level of detail expected and, of course, the deadline for submission. This can greatly assist inexperienced delegates. If these guidelines include details of the format the work of the organising committee can be greatly reduced and a professional looking book produced. The maximum length of each abstract should be specified. This should be chosen to avoid expensive blank spaces in the finished book, as far as possible. The abstracts can be ordered according to sessions or by theme; in any case an author index should be included. Careful thought should also be given to the name of this publication. Remember that proceedings of a conference can often be counted as a publication in a way that abstracts cannot. In fact, proceedings are often

published as part of a scientific journal which may increase their status further.

Clear guidelines should also be provided for the anonymous refereeing process. It is usual for each abstract to be reviewed by two people; in the event of disagreement a third referee may be consulted. Referees should be given strict deadlines by which to return the work. An example of a proforma used in a recent chemical education conference is given in the appendix.

The Conference Programme Booklet

The size of this, and indeed whether it is produced at all, will depend on the extent of the conference. Small booklets are obviously more convenient, but for large conferences an A4 format may be needed; this may also be easier and cheaper to produce. Its printing should be delayed for as long as possible in order to incorporate any last minute changes, while still ensuring that it is ready on time. It can usefully include general information on the conference venue, meals etc. Thought should be given to how it can be made as user friendly as possible, particularly when a conference has many parallel sessions.

Name Badges

All participants should wear a badge with their name and institution. For international conferences the name of the country should also be included. It can be useful to have badges of different colours to denote local organisers, plenary speakers, session chairs etc. The text used should be sufficiently large to be read at a distance. It can be helpful to ask delegates in advance (via the registration form) of the salutation and affiliation they would like printed on their badge. It is also worth carefully considering the type of badge used; the principal types are in a holder affixed by a pin, sticky, and worn around the neck with a lanyard. Useful information, such as relevant telephone numbers or a map of the conference venue, can be included on the rear side.

Refreshments

A range of beverages should be available in each refreshment break. At a minimum, this should consist of tea, coffee and mineral water. Any snacks provided should be easy to consume without any potential for mess; these could include fruit, mint sweets or appropriate regional snacks. Drinking water, together with a supply of glasses, should be available for speakers. The addition of lemon slices to a jug of water can be quite refreshing.

Lunch

A variety of food should be served in order to accommodate different diets and religious requirements. This should include at least one vegetarian option

and menus which do not include pork or beef. It is important to label the content of the food served.

The time available for lunch is usually quite restricted, so it is important to take whatever steps are possible to avoid the formation of long queues. This can be a particular problem if the lunch is self service. Lunches should be light, preferably with no alcohol included, in order to facilitate participation at afternoon sessions. If vouchers have been issued for lunch, it is worthwhile having a few additional vouchers available in case any delegates have forgotten theirs.

If the conference venue is in a city centre, the choice of lunch venue can be left to guests.

Accommodation

There are three general options.

- Accommodation can be arranged by delegates themselves. Although this makes life easier for the organiser it is important that information on suitable hotels and other accommodation is provided. It may be possible to obtain preferential rates from establishments in return for this advertising. Cheaper options for students should not be overlooked; these can include hostels and even camp sites.
- Reservation of an appropriate number of rooms can be made. Ideally this should include establishments with a range of rates and levels of comfort. In this case it may be possible to negotiate a more substantial discount. However, delegates need to be given a strict deadline, after which any unoccupied rooms will be released.
- Accommodation within the conference venue can be reserved. This may be particularly appropriate when the venue is a university with a residential campus. Again, it may be possible to reserve rooms with a range of rates. One advantage of this arrangement is that it is more likely to keep delegates together outside the formal programme.

If possible a welcome envelope containing essential details should be given to delegates when they register for their accommodation.

Programme

Plenary sessions should be truly plenary and should not have to compete with other sessions. Thought should be given to their timing. Usually they will be at the beginning of each day but other arrangements may be more appropriate. It helps to present a coherent programme if a plenary lecture is followed by a session on a related topic. Some sessions may have a mix of topics, on the other hand. There are considerable benefits to including workshops which require the participation of delegates. These can be run as plenaries or in parallel with each other. It is worth remembering that no one programme can

accommodate the needs of every delegate; however, an attempt should be made to accommodate the needs of as many delegates as possible.

Transportation

As a general rule, transportation needs to be provided if delegates are expected to undertake a journey of more than about 1.5 km, or which would take 20 minutes on foot. The host organisation may already have links with a bus operator which can make the arrangements easier. It may help to assign delegates to individual vehicles, and to have a helper who travels on and is responsible for each bus. It is vital that information on such transportation is available to delegates as they check in to their accommodation. It may also be helpful, or more appropriate, to provide a supply of tickets for the local transportation, together with a map of routes.

Computer Facilities

Delegates will often expect to have access to networked computing facilities in order to read their e-mail and browse the world wide web. It may also be useful to provide printing facilities for those who have a need for this during the conference.

Meeting Rooms

The criteria here refer to rooms used for lectures and workshops, although they will not all apply in every case.

If possible, rooms should be chosen with doors at the front and back in order that delegates may move between sessions without unduly disturbing others. It is worth checking that the doors open and close silently and rectifying any problems before the meeting starts. Rooms should have

- Overhead projector
- Multimedia projector
- Networked computer
- Laser pointer
- Flipchart/whiteboard/blackboard with pens and cloth
- Microphones for speaker and audience
- Drinking water and supply of cups
- Name plates for chairs and speakers
- Large clock

These must be checked before the start of each session, and every presenter should have the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the equipment. A technically competent individual should be assigned to each room to provide assistance as necessary.

It is worth noting that computer keyboards differ between countries, and allowance should be made for this. The computers used should have an

operating system which is capable of reading memory sticks and other peripherals without the need to install driver software.

Information

Information is a key aspect of the organisation of any conference, which is often vital to the mood of participants who are in a foreign country or in an unfamiliar town or building. The following should be provided:

- A prominent sign on each of the buildings in which meeting rooms are located.
- Signposts pointing to these buildings along the routes that delegates will be using.
- A noticeboard in a central location so that it will be seen by delegates on a regular basis. This should display current news, last minute changes, plans of the conference venue and city, prices of transportation, emergency telephone numbers, the conference schedule, a list of posters, and any correspondence received for delegates.
- Signs on the doors of each meeting room showing the schedule for that room today.
- Clear signs to and on toilets, noting that the symbols used in Europe may not be easy to recognise by people from other continents.
- Signposts showing the way to meeting rooms and the computer room within buildings. These can usefully be colour coded.
- Maps indicating the routes, distances and time between the principal conference venues.
- Competent people available at the conference desk at all times while sessions are in progress able to provide help as required.

Social Programme

The timetable for the conference should be relatively intense, but should allow time for networking and bonding. This can simply be free time for delegates, and organisers should not feel under any obligation to provide a social programme. However, they should use their local knowledge to suggest activities which delegates might enjoy and provide appropriate guidance on leisure activities. Advantages to not providing a social programme are that it eases the burden of organisation and can help to keep down the cost for participants. On the other hand, this may make networking between delegates more difficult. One or more social events can be provided on an optional basis and be charged for separately.

If delegates have been attracted from large distances there may be more of an expectation of a social programme. It may be possible to organise post-conference tours for those who are interested, and in some cases a separate paid accompanying persons' programme.

Medical Assistance

Detailed information on where to obtain emergency medical treatment must be available. This should include the addresses of institutions, telephone numbers, and opening hours. Delegates should also have the mobile number of the local organiser for use in emergencies. Numbers should ideally be given in international format. It is worth considering the first aid expertise of the local team and whether a first aid kit should be provided. For larger conferences a more formal medical team may need to be organised.

During the Conference

This is where the presence of a well briefed local team is essential. Typically this will consist of postgraduate students or colleagues; the number depends on the size of the conference. They should be adept at coping with the unexpected, staying cool, and avoiding disasters. It is useful if individual members can be in contact by mobile 'phone.

First Day

Arrival of Guests

It is not usual to arrange transport from the airport, although for small meetings this may be possible. In that case participants need to provide details of their expected time of arrival and flight number.

Registration

Before handing out the name badges and material, the effecting of payment should be checked. However, it is important to avoid any embarrassment to delegates. Signing a list of participants may be necessary for reporting purposes, for sponsors and grantors. It is vital that those manning the registration desk are polite and friendly to delegates. In particular, the local team should be reminded of the importance of smiling.

Introduction

This short session provides the opportunity for the local organiser to introduce themselves and their team, and to provide any information on domestic arrangements. It is desirable to have such a session on each day of the conference in order to provide up to date information.

Opening Session

The first lecture often determines participants' perception of the conference. It should be delivered by an excellent scientist, who is also a good speaker. In some meetings it may be appropriate to run an icebreaker session to allow delegates to get to know one another. It is particularly important with this session that a member of the local team remains outside the venue in order to

direct latecomers. This practice can usefully be adopted for other sessions as well.

Welcome Reception

It is customary to hold a welcome reception on the first evening of a conference. This can provide an opportunity to run an icebreaker session as described above. The extent of the catering at such a session should be made clear to delegates; if they will still require a meal then the timing of the event should take account of this.

Subsequent Days

There is a balance to be struck between allowing delegates to attend every session and the length of the conference. Obviously the extent to which this will be a problem will depend to some extent on the size of the conference and the number of contributions. As far as possible, topics selected for parallel sessions should be as different as possible so that only a few delegates will be disappointed.

Chairpersons

The duties of a chairperson are to keep the session running to time, comment on a presentation at the end, ask one or more questions in the absence of questions from the audience and to summarise the overall session. Consequently they need to be selected very carefully. They should be provided with biographical information on each speaker in the session. The chair of each session should be allocated well in advance and their names should appear in the programme.

Poster Session

Those delegates whose contributions have been selected for presentation in the form of a poster should be given the dimensions, orientation, and fixing method of the poster boards well in advance. The area used for posters should ideally be one which will be visited by delegates throughout the conference, such as outside the main meeting rooms. Each poster board must be numbered to coincide with that of the abstract, and placed in such a way that several people can view it without getting in the way of other posters. Fixing materials should be provided; the usual options are double sided sticky tape, drawing pins, blue tack or Velcro. Several pairs of scissors should also be available. It is also helpful to have one or more lists of the number, title and author of each poster in prominent places.

If possible, delegates can be invited to put up their posters at the start of the conference so that they can be viewed throughout. This helps people to focus on the posters of most interest during the formal poster session. However, at large conferences it may be necessary to use the poster space for successive

sessions so that information about when to put up and take down posters must be provided.

Authors of posters may be asked to prepare short (three minutes or so) presentations of their work in the form of one or two slides shown in a plenary meeting at the beginning of the poster session, so that other participants can make an informed choice about which posters to view in detail.

It is also worth considering holding a poster competition. Prizes can be awarded in various categories, such as those for postgraduate students, postdoctoral researchers and academic staff.

Workshops

Workshops require detailed and careful preparation and a talented leader who is able to stimulate the activity of the participants. It is imperative that a workshop format is adopted, and that this is not just a longer lecture. It is particularly important that abstracts are provided for each workshop so that delegates have a clear idea of what to expect. If there are a number of workshops it is sensible for them to be run in parallel so that they compete with each other and not with lectures.

Discussion Sessions

These can provide a useful alternative format for a session. Participation can be maximised by dividing delegates into groups, which then work on the same or different topics. It can be helpful to nominate a spokesperson at the start of each session who will report back to the whole group at the end. Alternatively, a session can take the form of a panel discussion, led by a group of experts with contributions invited from the audience.

Final Day

The programme should be designed to maintain the interest of delegates until the end. One way of doing this is to schedule a major lecture for the last day. Some conferences end with a formal closing ceremony, but this can be embarrassing if many delegates have left early.

Thanks

It is important that opportunities are taken to thank all those who were involved in the organisation of the conference. This includes the organising and scientific committees, sponsors and helpers. This should be done both verbally during the conference and in written materials produced.

Certificates of Participation

Some institutions may require proof of attendance, which can be achieved by presenting delegates with a certificate of attendance. These can also act as an attractive souvenir if they are designed appropriately.

After the Conference

Proceedings

Organisers should consider producing proceedings for a conference since these do provide a permanent record of the event. The prospect of publication may also act as an incentive for delegates to attend. This can be structured according to the conference sessions, or using some other appropriate scheme. Participants can be invited to bring full papers to be submitted during the conference, or even asked to submit papers two or three months before the meeting. This will considerably speed up publication compared to asking for submissions at a later date. Detailed instructions on the structure and length of papers and the format of submissions must be given. This will be particularly helpful to new presenters. Authors should be asked to confirm that they have given agreement for their contributions to be used. All papers should be refereed; the same referees can be used as for abstracts, but contributions will be expected to be more detailed. A cheap way of producing proceedings is in electronic form, either on a web site or on a CD which is distributed to participants. In either case the proceedings should constitute a formal publication with an ISBN so that contributors can reference their contributions.

Evaluation

All too often no attempt is made to evaluate a conference, meaning that the same mistakes are repeated sometimes over and over again. It is desirable to collect written evaluation as delegates leave, and to analyse this as soon as possible. The evaluation should identify each session and include feedback on both the arrangements and content. Feedback from the chairs of each session should also be sought. They should be asked to provide numerical information such as the size of the audience and number of questions asked in each session, as well as their opinions on how well the session worked. The organising team should have a debriefing meeting at which this evaluation is considered, and the results of this should be made available to the organising team of the next conference in the series, where this is applicable. It may also be worthwhile to contact a small number of delegates after the meeting to obtain more in depth feedback, and/or inviting external evaluators to contribute to the process. The results of the evaluation can be published on the conference web page, together with a selection of appropriate photograph.

Appendices

APPENDIX 1

Checklist of Items

Initial Stage

- Are the proposed dates suitable?
- Has a suitable venue been identified?
- What is the expected/maximum number of delegates?
- Has appropriate support been identified?
- Has the cost of the conference been confirmed?
- Have suitable promotion activities been identified?
- Has an advertising strategy been agreed?

Intermediate Stage

- Has the scientific committee been appointed?
- Has the local organising team been appointed?
- Have the accommodation and catering facilities been booked?
- Has transportation been arranged?
- Have the technical facilities been booked?
- Has the registration process been implemented?

Immediately Before the Conference

- Is the book of abstracts available?
- Are other conference materials available?
- Have presentation facilities been checked?
- Have all key delegates arrived?

After the Conference

- Has the evaluation been analysed?
- Has the book of proceedings been produced?

APPENDIX 2

Example of Review Sheet

8th ECRICE – 2006

Reviewer sheet

Title of presentation:

<i>Form of presentation suggested</i>	<i>by the Author</i>	<i>by the Reviewer</i>
ORAL PRESENTATION		
POSTER PRESENTATION		
<i>Topic of presentation suggested</i>	<i>by the Author</i>	<i>by the Reviewer</i>
Teacher's training in the light of Bologna declaration		
Information and communication technology in chem. educ.		
Nanochemistry and chemical education		
Context-based chemistry education		
"Live" experiments in chemistry teaching – What is needed?		
Solution to environmental problems: green chemistry		
Other		

Overall recommendation of the reviewer (please underline):

1. Accept (no revision required)
2. Accept (with small revision)
3. Resubmit with changes before final decision
4. Reject

If you have chosen option 2-4, please indicate the nature of the changes required (in the case of option 2,3), or explain the reason in details (in the case of option 4):

Would you accept to be put in touch with the author if necessary? YES/NO

Date:

Reviewer's name: