



DEAR COMPETITIVE SESSION CHAIR:

Thank you for agreeing to serve as a **virtual competitive session chair** at the upcoming AIB conference. The participation of yourself and other volunteers is critical for the conference success. The purpose of this briefing is to offer suggestions on how to chair your session, based on the experience of past meetings.

Session chairs are particularly important as they function both as chairs and discussants, under the title of 'Session Chair'. While not expected to act as a pure discussant, it helps if you can initiate discussion and provide some integrative or manuscript-specific comments following the session presentations. This can be done effectively by directing the conversation to common themes that cut across the individual presentations, while encouraging the audience to formulate their own questions.

Below are some **key recommendations**:

1. GET ACQUAINTED AHEAD OF TIME WITH THE PEOPLE IN YOUR SESSION

As session chair, you should contact everyone in your session well in advance of the conference. For a listing of the participants in your session, please see the conference website:

<https://www.aib.world/events/2022/program/aib-2022-virtual-schedule-of-sessions/>

Please check the date and time of your session (paying attention to time zones) and make sure you save it in your calendar.

2. ENCOURAGE THE CIRCULATION OF THE PAPERS IN YOUR SESSION AHEAD OF TIME

Please encourage everyone in your session to circulate the papers to each other and read them before the session. This way, each participant can attempt, in their presentation, to link their papers to the other presentations for a more cohesive and stimulating session. I am sending out separate guidelines to the authors for all the sessions, but feel free to email them any additional or specific instructions, as the sessions do differ in length, numbers of participants, purpose and content.

3. ORDER OF PRESENTERS

Unless there is a problem, please keep to the order of papers, as outlined in the official Final Program. We ask that each presenter remain in the session in which they are presenting for the entire scheduled time, in courtesy to the other speakers and to ensure a more coherent session.

4. MANAGE THE SESSION TIME

All sessions are one hour and fifteen minutes (75 minutes). Many competitive sessions have 4 papers, equating to 15 minutes for each paper and 15 minutes for audience discussion. Since there are no separate discussants, it is important that you give the audience sufficient time to comment. Therefore, for competitive sessions a good general rule of thumb is:

- Five papers: 12 minutes per paper
- Four papers: 15 minutes per paper
- Three papers: 20 minutes per paper

Timing will be tight. Please enforce the time limits we have proposed. Do not allow a speaker to run on and take time away from the speakers that follow, or from the feedback that they themselves will receive. Please avoid a situation in which the session time has expired, but your session has not ended yet (the session will time out automatically). Watch the clock to ensure that everyone gets their fair share of the time, and the session can be concluded in good order.

Use a clock to monitor the time. Consider using the chat function to notify speakers when they have 5 minutes left, when they have 2 minutes left, and when their time is up. If necessary, interrupt speakers orally when their time is up. Tell the speakers ahead of time that you will notify them via chat and orally about the time remaining and when to stop. When in doubt about the time, err in favor of Q&A from the audience.

Finally, if a presenter becomes defensive about comments they receive, try to intervene and move the discussion in another direction. Presenter defensiveness adds little to the discussion and only reduces time available for feedback to the authors, which is the purpose of the session. If they wish to continue the discussion, invite them to do so informally following the session or during one of the breaks.

5. HOW TO START A SESSION

As chair, it is up to you to start the session. There are two basic tasks:

(i) Start on time. This can be challenging, especially in an online session in which attendees may arrive late. But it is important to start on time, even if others join late.

(ii) Introduce the topic and the speakers. The whole introduction should take no more than 2 minutes. Aim to set an informal first-name tone from the start of the session.

6. THE ONLINE PRESENTATIONS

In most cases, a support technician will be available at the start of the session to ensure the platform is operating smoothly and to assist participants. As a guide on how many slides to prepare for their time slot, presenters have been told to divide the number of minutes they have by two or three (e.g., for a 15-minute presentation, 5 to 7 slides is optimal). As a general rule, fewer slides are better for online presentations. We have advised presenters of this, but it can help if you remind them.

Online sessions often lack the energy of in-person sessions. To counter this, we suggest you enliven the session by encouraging interaction and interest. One approach is to devise a few thought-provoking questions before or during the session that you can ask the presenters. Encourage attendees to use the Q&A panel to ask questions to the speakers. Please have a strategy in place for Q&A. This should include monitoring the Q&A panel for questions from the audience and preparing questions in advance to kick-start discussion in case of a lack of audience questions.

7. OTHER SUGGESTIONS

Advise participants to arrive at least 10-15 minutes BEFORE the session starts so you can provide instructions, ensure that cameras and microphones work, and to enable screen-share, to avoid doing all this once the session is underway. You also may wish to use this time to remind presenters of the time limits and of your role in maintaining order in the session. We suggest you obtain the mobile telephone numbers where presenters can be reached should an emergency occur. Encourage presenters to notify you well in advance if they cannot attend the session. Please be prepared for the unexpected!

8. NO SHOWS

In common with other academic associations, AIB enforces a “no show” policy, to maintain the integrity and quality of the conference. This policy requires that at least one author of each manuscript listed in your session must register, attend, and present in the designated session. You can find more about this policy at <https://www.aib.world/aib-conference-no-show-policy/>. Therefore, we ask for your assistance in informing us if a paper was not presented at your session. At the end of your session, please report any “no shows” via an email to aib@aib.msu.edu.

Lastly, please note that scheduling sessions for a worldwide online conference is very challenging. Participants in any session can reside in time zones that span the globe, from Hawaii to New Zealand. We have tried to schedule sessions as fairly as possible. We apologize in advance if the time of your session proves inconvenient for you.

I hope you find the above recommendations useful and look forward to seeing you at the conference!

Andrew Delios, Program Chair
AIB 2022 Annual Meeting
aib2022@nus.edu.sg