



## Oral Communication and Symposia Sessions Guidelines for Chairs

### Overall role of the session chair

Thank you very much for agreeing to chair an oral communication or symposium session. You are the leader of the session. Please, try to:

- Convey enthusiasm
- Be comfortable with the topic of the session and the speakers' backgrounds
- Be a good time keeper
- Be equalizer
- Be relaxer
- Be civilizer

Be prepared for the fact that you are the one both speakers and audience will turn to if there are problems.

### Before the conference:

- *Make contact with each of the speakers:*
  - Individually or as a group (the goal is to make them comfortable)
  - Confirm personal details (name, title, pronunciation?, etc.)
  - Agree on session times and format (Confirm starting time, length of presentation, audience questions at the end of the session). You have 75 minutes to distribute to the talks. Please adjust this time depending on the number of talks.
    - 5 talks: 15 minutes each one
    - 4 talks: 18 minutes each one
    - 3 talks: 25 minutes each one
    - 2 talks: 30 minutes each one
  - Confirm technical requirements (laptop and beamer) run OK
  - Establish an order of presentation
- *Acquaint yourself with the topic and the presenters*
  - Arrive early and acquaint yourself with the room
  - Do some background reading if necessary
  - Make yourself aware of any other publications by the speakers
  - Confirm location and any AV requirements: either familiarize yourself with the AV required, or know how to get help quickly.
  - Greet the speakers - relax them! Confirm the details of their presentation - it may have changed since the program was printed. Confirm they are ready and offer to assist if not. Ensure they are aware of the time limitations and how you will enforce them.

## **At the session**

- *Start the session on time*
- *Introduce the session:*
  - Welcome (Good idea to check that the audience can see and hear you OK)
  - Self introduction
  - Housekeeping: mobile phones, location of toilets
  - Confirm the session details and list the speakers involved
  - Confirm format so the audience knows what to expect
- *Introduce the speakers:*
  - Ensure accuracy and be respectful
  - Say something individual about that speaker, especially if you know them
  - Mention any co-authors
  - Keep to the allocated time
  - Use prompts
  - Don't rely on the speaker to check with you or to keep time - concentrating on other things
  - If necessary interrupt directly if other cues ignored - remember the next speaker. But try to interrupt at an appropriate time
- *Be prepared to assist the speaker if necessary:*
  - Advise them if their voice is too low
  - Give them water if necessary
  - Assist them to adjust the technology if necessary
- *Manage the general question time (15 minutes at the end of the session):*
  - Call for audience questions/comments
  - Request them to introduce themselves and their affiliation
  - Have a couple of questions prepared for the inevitable silence
  - Be aware of how the speakers are handling the questions - intervene if necessary
  - Conclude the session on time
- *Closing the session:*
  - Summarize the content of the session
  - Acknowledge all the speakers
  - Acknowledge the audience
  - Info the next session in the room

## **After the session**

- *Thank each of the presenters*
- *Give them an opportunity to 'debrief'*
- *Thank you very much. Relax and enjoy the rest of the STAR 2012 conference!*

**Thank you very much for your contribution  
as Chair to EAM 2016**