Western Michigan University
Medieval Institute
International Congress on Medieval Studies

Information and Advice for Presiders (Virtual)

A session's presider is responsible for the running of the session. Duties usually include:

- acting as master of ceremonies and time-keeper
- introducing session participants and announcing their social media preferences
- moderating discussion

Time Keeping

All Congress sessions are 90 minutes long.

In a session of papers, 60 minutes should be taken up by the papers themselves, and 30 minutes by introductions, final screen sharing preparations, and discussion. (Sessions in other formats may be structured more loosely than sessions of papers.)

- In a session of 2 papers, each paper should be limited to 30 minutes.
- In a session of 3 papers, each paper should be limited to 20 minutes.
- In a session of 4 papers, each paper should be limited to 15 minutes.
- In a session of 5 papers, each paper should be limited to 12 minutes.

We encourage presiders to be assertive in enforcing time limits; a well-run session with papers delivered within the time limit will be appreciated by participants and audience alike. The most common practice at the Congress is to reserve discussion until after the papers, but there is no hard-and-fast rule about this.

Introductions

Introductions in Congress sessions are generally short, but we encourage you to contact the speakers in advance in order to learn about them and their work. Contacting the speakers in advance also affords an opportunity to ask about slideshows, social media preferences, and other logistical concerns.

Social Media

Session presiders are expected to inform audiences of speakers' preferences concerning the sharing of their presentations through social media. See the Social Media Guidelines sheet for more information.

Technical Assistance

Confex tech support personnel will monitor all virtual sessions. They will be able to help troubleshoot issues like having problems logging on to the meeting site or sharing slides over Zoom.

The Virtual Experience

All Congress sessions will be held as Zoom meetings linked directly from the meeting site.

- For an optimal experience, download the Zoom client to your device(s), or, if already downloaded, update the app.

- The Join Now link for each event goes live on the meeting site 20 minutes ahead of the scheduled start time. Presiders are encouraged to arrive promptly at that time.
- Clicking the Join Now link sends you to the Zoom waiting room for your session. Make sure your Zoom name allows the Confex tech host to recognize you so they can admit you from the waiting room.
- The Confex tech host will admit the first person who is listed as a session participant from the waiting room and make them co-host of the session. That person can then admit other session participants from the waiting room.
- Session participants may prepare for the session, test screen sharing, etc., before the session begins and audience members are admitted from the waiting room.
- Those not actively involved in the session can be admitted from the waiting room at the start time or shortly before: the exact time will be up to session organizers and presiders.
- Chat is enabled for all events, and attendees may chat with everyone or in private conversations with other individuals attending the session.
- Screen sharing is enabled so that speakers can display slides or share other presentation materials.

Recommended Procedures

It is the prerogative of session organizers and presiders to determine how sessions will run. We do, however, have some recommendations for successfully conducting a Zoom session:

- Presiders should ask all to remain muted unless they are actively participating.
- Contributors should be cognizant of microphone placement (e.g., shuffling papers near a microphone will diminish the experience for auditors); using a headset with a microphone will improve sound quality.
- Save comments and questions for after all scheduled contributions have been made.
- Have attendees signal a desire to contribute by using the Raise Hand feature or typing a question into the chat box.
- Presiders may want to designate a colleague to help in monitoring the chat and raised hands.