



# CERF 2025

9–13 November 2025 / Richmond, Virginia

## Instructions for Session Convenors

Thank you for volunteering to chair a session at CERF 2025. The scientific program relies on convenors to ensure a smooth schedule of oral presentations. The following guidelines are intended to help you conduct your session:

### IN ADVANCE OF YOUR SESSION

1. Please promote your session on social media using #CERF2025, and include the date, room, and times. We encourage you to email everyone in your session, both oral and poster, and remind them of the details of your session as well as the guidelines for presentations, which can be found online at: <https://conference.cerf.science/oral-presentation-guidelines>
2. CERF has been sending emails to all presenters, but if you want to email your session participants as well you can remind them of the following information:
  - a. Please remind oral presenters that they must upload their slide deck at least twelve hours in advance of their presentation. They can [use this link](#) to upload. Please also remind them that traditional talks must be no more than 12 minutes and lightning talks must be no more than 5 minutes.

### DURING YOUR SESSION

1. Please arrive a few minutes early to make sure that all talks have been loaded to the session room laptop.
2. Each room will have a student worker assigned to assist you with keeping time, helping with switching slide presentations, tracking down a roaming A/V technician if there are technical problems, or similar assistance. Please do reach out to them for support.
3. PLEASE DO NOT MAKE CHANGES IN YOUR SESSION SCHEDULE. If scheduled talks were withdrawn, they will show in the program/app as **WITHDRAWN**. If there is a withdrawn talk or a presenter does not show, please use the time for discussion.
4. Please start on time, or even a few minutes early with housekeeping points:
  - a. Remind people of the CERF Code of Conduct and the importance of civil discourse.
  - b. If your session has associated posters, please encourage attendees to view them during the appropriate poster session. You could even have a slide at the start or during discussion panel that lists associated posters and their times/locations.
  - c. Remind people to please turn cell phone ringers off.
  - d. Let people know that photos, video, and audio recording of scientific content from oral and poster sessions, plenaries, and keynotes are allowed **unless the author/presenter specifically prohibits it**.
5. **Keep your speakers on time!** Be brief with introductions; there is no need to read the entire title and speaker information, as it is in the app and on the title slide. Traditional oral talks should be **no more than 12 minutes** to allow 3 minutes for questions. Lightning talks should be **no more than 5 minutes** to allow for 2 minutes of questions. Please give each speaker at least a 2-minute and 1-minute warning (for traditional talks, you may also want to

give a 5-minute warning). Let the speakers know up front how you will notify them that time is up and keep to it! Remember, as session chair, YOU are ultimately responsible for keeping your session on time and ensuring that all speakers have equal opportunity to offer their presentations to the audience and to provide responses to questions!

6. Ensure that speakers are using the microphone and can be heard in the back of the room.
7. There will be a microphone on a stand in each of your rooms; please encourage folks with questions to use those microphones so they can be heard.
8. When moderating the Q&A portion, please keep in mind power dynamics and maintain civil discourse (see tips below). Prepare a question in case there are none from the audience. Repeat the question in the microphone if necessary.
9. Remember, this may be the first time a student or early career professional is giving a talk or a poster, so please help make it a positive and encouraging experience!

### **OPTIONS FOR PANEL DISCUSSIONS**

If your session has a scheduled panel discussion or has open time due to a withdrawn talk, here are some facilitation tips:

1. If you know there will be time for a panel discussion, let presenters know the format in advance so that they are prepared to participate.
2. Invite poster session presenters to participate in your panel discussion.
3. You may use whatever format you choose, but here are some options:
  - a. Passive/traditional Q&A: Moderate questions from the audience.
  - b. Facilitated discussion with presenters: Prepare and share questions in advance to allow for different viewpoints to be shared on a similar topic.
  - c. Non-verbal engagement: Use [slido](#), [mentimeter](#), or other online interactive tools to facilitate audience engagement. This is an especially relevant device to encourage participation from those in the audience who may be more reticent to speak up.

### **NURTURING INCLUSIVE SCIENTIFIC DISCOURSE<sup>1</sup>**

Whether during a panel discussion or individual Q&A, we request you use these tips to ensure productive and positive discourse:

- Uphold CERF's [code of conduct](#), [code of ethics](#), and the values of integrity, diversity, inclusion, equity, belonging, and civil dialogue.
- Treat everyone with the same level of formality and respect, regardless of title, career stage, organizational affiliation, social identity, etc...
- Foster discussion focused on science.
- Remind participants to speak clearly (slowly avoiding acronyms) and "leanly" (short).
- Remind participants (speakers, audience members asking questions) to introduce themselves, their affiliation, and their pronouns if they are comfortable doing so. Model this when you introduce yourself as session chair.
- Ensure that all participants use the microphones provided to ensure everyone can hear.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted with permission from the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC)

- Be intentional about the order in which you accept questions, allowing multiple diverse voices to be heard.
- Be an ally as needed.

### *Incivility*

- Incivility is speech or behavior that does not adhere to the CERF code of conduct.
- Incivility can often be received as microaggression, harassment, or bullying where there is a power or demographic difference between the transgressor and the target.
- Silence can be seen as an action not an inaction.
- Allies should be mindful of the relationship between the target and the transgressor as well as their relationship with both.
- An ally you may choose to point out and gently correct behavior, offering grace and guarding against shaming the transgressor, either in the moment or privately later.

### *Strategies for Handling Incivility*

- Pivot or change the topic so that that it can be addressed privately later: "For the sake of time, let's move on and continue this discussion afterwards."
- Question or interrupt: "Can you explain what you mean by that?"
- Arouse dissonance: "Did I hear you correctly?" or "I am surprised to hear that..."
- Disagree: "I don't think we should make such general statements ..."
- Express emotion: "I am uncomfortable with this conversation."
- Advocate: "That term is no longer acceptable..."

### *Resolving Incivility*

At CERF, while we strive to offer tips and strategies to create inclusive places, we are mindful that incidences do occur, and we will work to resolve those under our problem resolution process.

To report unacceptable behavior, please alert CERF event staff or [use this form](#). There is also a neutral, independent, off-the-record [conference ombuds](#) who is available on-site to hear concerns confidentially.