

# Guide for Moderators

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Thank you for your efforts to help make ICMB XI a great experience! Your role as a moderator is crucial to ensure each session runs smoothly, presenters have a positive experience, and everyone gets the best opportunity to learn and share their research.

As the moderator, **you have a responsibility to the presenters and to the audience** to ensure everyone's time and experience is respected, and that everyone is able to fully participate.

Meanwhile, we have a responsibility to ensure that service in leadership roles is accessible to everyone, as well. **If you need any accommodations for moderating**, please [contact us](#) as soon as possible.

You should understand your own implicit bias before undertaking any type of public leadership role. If this concept is unfamiliar to you, a good place to start reading is "[Inclusive Scientific Meetings, Where to Start](#)" (Pendergrass

et al., 2019).

## **Creating an Inclusive Conference Session**

The prevalence of implicit biases tends to marginalize underrepresented groups in fields such as STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), which have traditionally been dominated by people from privileged identities: white, cisgender, heterosexual men. Failure to acknowledge implicit biases will result in a meeting environment where underrepresented groups will continue to be marginalized and majority groups will continue to dominate.

Equity is about access and power; whoever has the floor has the power. Listening is as important as speaking, and session organizers can institute appropriate pauses and wait for others to process before sharing. For example, slow responses may be a result of linguistic or cultural differences, which can be accommodated through facilitation approaches that are aware and responsive to these differences.

**Clearly note time constraints and stick to them.** More senior and established speakers (enabled by moderators) might push their time limits, often at the expense of the time allotted to speakers earlier in their careers.

### **Question & Answer Time**

Moderators of question and answer (Q&A) sessions play an important role in making sure discussions aren't dominated by a small number of vocal participants. Moderate Q&A sessions with awareness of inclusion to make sure more junior and less vocal attendees are able to participate.

Here are some ways to promote greater inclusivity in the Q&A portions of your session:

- Take a few questions at a time, ensuring there are questions from a diversity of people (participants from different genders, younger

- audience members, members of an underrepresented group, etc.)
- If you are taking only one question at a time, try starting with a woman, an early career professional, or a member of an underrepresented group.
    - Research shows that men are more likely to ask a question during Q&As; however, this changes if the first question is asked by a woman ([Carter et al. 2018](#)).
  - Intentionally elicit multiple perspectives from multiple types of meeting participants.
  - Invite those who may not speak right away to share their views or ask questions.

## Tech Support

- Each room will have an AV staff member on hand to run slides and manage the sound and display equipment.
- Each room will have at least 2 microphones, one for the speaker and one for questions. The largest room will have 2 microphones for questions.
  - In the largest room, designated volunteer assistants will be available to run microphones into the audience.
  - In the smaller rooms, the AV staff will help run the microphone to questioners.

## Before the Session

- Try to arrive to your session **10 minutes early**.

## Room Check

- **Check with the AV staff** to learn how the microphones work and find out about any known problems or missing talks that will need to be

skipped.

- Check that there is a **chair available for the presenter**, if needed.
- Ensure that **seats are reserved** at the front of the room for deaf and hard of hearing audience members, and that **space is clear** for wheelchair users or others using mobility aids.
- Review any **accommodation requests** (if applicable, these will be provided to you directly by the organizers) and ensure that you know how to meet them.

## **Presenter Orientation**

- Go over the **timekeeping card system** with the speakers (see below).
- Tell every presenter in your session that they must **use the microphone**. Offer them time before the session to practice using the microphone, if desired.
- Ask presenters for **correct pronunciation of their names** and their **pronouns**.
- Check that all speakers are present, and check that the AV staff has their slides.

## **At the Beginning of the Session**

- Leave the door to the session room **open** to minimize disruptions from people coming and going.
- Announce that all speakers should use the microphone and point out the accessible seats.
- Announce that audience members should indicate they have a question by raising their hand, or by asking their neighbor to raise their hand.

## **During the Session**

- **Announce each speaker**, their affiliation, and the title of their presentation.

- Be available to quickly **alert AV staff to adjust the microphone** between presenters, if necessary, so that it is placed appropriately for each speaker.
- Be alert to the possibility that **loud conversations in the hallway** outside the session room may become disruptive for those sitting near the door. If this occurs, either politely request that the people outside move to another spot, or close the door.

## Keeping Time

It is very important to keep time so that we can move efficiently between talks and leave time to move between rooms. Aim to **start talks when they are set to start** on the schedule.

- We have told speakers to plan to **talk for 12 minutes**, leaving 2 minutes for Q&A and 1 minute for move-around time.
- Each room has been provided with **laminated timekeeping cards** and a **stopwatch**.
- **To keep time:** sit somewhere clearly in front of the speaker and hold a card up at the appropriate time until seen by the speaker.
  - After **9 minutes**: raise the 3 Minutes card
  - After **11 minutes**: raise the Wrap Up card
  - After **13 minutes** (if needed): raise the Final Statements card and **stand up**.
  - Give the speaker 30 more seconds to conclude, then intervene to end the talk ("Thank you, we need to move on...").
- In the largest room, you can ask a volunteer microphone runner to help keep time and display the timekeeping cards.
- In two smaller rooms, you are responsible for keeping time and displaying the timekeeping cards. You may ask the AV staff for help, but

they may not always be available.

## Student Evaluations

Many of you will have **student talks to evaluate while you are moderating**. Please do your best to keep short notes on the rubric sheet, but we understand that **moderating duties come first**. There are two people reviewing each student talk.

- **Note which student talks you must evaluate** prior to the start of your session.
  - If you have **more than 1 talk to evaluate and you're in the largest room**, please ask the microphone runners for help, especially with time keeping.
  - If you have **more than 1 talk to evaluate and you're in one of the smaller rooms**, we will try to assign a helper to come assist you. There are only a few such cases.

## Troubleshooting

- **If a speaker doesn't show up**, do not begin the next talk early. Instead, announce that there will be a short break until the next scheduled talk. Contact the organizers (see contact info in email and in your moderator packet) letting us know who missed their talk so that we can try to reschedule them, if possible.
- **If someone does not stop talking**, you **must** interrupt after 15 minutes have passed.
- **If someone is dominating the Q&A inappropriately**, you may interrupt with your own question.

## Handling Code of Conduct Violations

As a moderator, you may witness a Code of Conduct violation. You may also

need to intervene. **Please [review the Code of Conduct](#)** so that you will be aware of which behaviors are unacceptable by our standards.

If you witness unacceptable behavior (according to the Code of Conduct), please take down notes and share what you saw with a member of our Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Language (IDEAL) committee. IDEAL team members will be wearing red lanyards on their conference badges, and someone from this group will be present at the registration desk at all times. Alternatively, you can make a report using the [online Code of Conduct reporting form](#).

## Reporting an Incident

1. **Write down** the basic details of the incident:

- What happened
- Who was involved
- When and where it happened
- Whether the incident is ongoing and how we can contact you or the people involved
- If someone is reluctant to provide some of this information, or doesn't know, **do not pressure them**.

2. Pass the details you noted to an IDEAL team member. **Do not share any of the information with anyone else.**

## Direct Intervention

In urgent cases where it is not possible to contact an IDEAL team member and you believe **immediate action is essential**, you may intervene.

For example, **you may consider intervening**:

- When any delay of action will likely bring **unacceptable further harm** to others. Ongoing aggression or serious harassment are examples of

this.

- If you witness a presentation which is **clearly in violation of the Code of Conduct repeatedly or very seriously**. You might simply say “I’m sorry, this presentation cannot be continued at the present time”. Examples of when this is justified could be significant threats of violence, harassment of others, or continuous sexist jokes. Do not end a presentation over a few inappropriate jokes — but in that case, do report it to the IDEAL team.

After the session, **contact a member of the IDEAL team immediately** to inform them of what happened.

## References & Further Reading

Many thanks to the creators of these guides and studies, upon which we relied heavily while creating this document.

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