

## ORPHEUS CONFERENCE ORGANIZATION

### Applications

1. The ORPHEUS *Executive Committee* submits, annually, a call for those interested in organizing the annual ORPHEUS conference that will take place in 2½-3 years.
2. The institutions wishing to apply as organizer must submit a letter of commitment signed by the conference president and the director of the institution.
3. The applications should include the following detailed information:
  - The proposed president of the conference and the local organizing committee (the inclusion of at least one doctoral candidate in the local organizing committee is obligatory; their ideas and engagement are an added value for the organization).
  - The expected number of participants.
    - The expected dates and duration of the conference. Conferences are normally held in the second half of April and run from early afternoon (Thursday) on the first day to early afternoon on third day (Saturday). Time for satellite symposia more dedicated to PhD candidates on the morning of the first day and/or the afternoon of the third day is strongly encouraged.
    - The date for the meeting should be checked. Ensure that there are no conflicts with other major conferences in the city at the same time. Also examine whether there are concurrent 'competing' PhD conferences around the world.
  - Conference venue, detailing the facilities available. These must include space for plenary sessions for all participants, and breakout rooms. A room should be available for an ORPHEUS Executive Committee meeting before the conference.
  - Possibilities for accommodation (including average price) and travel. Ease of international travel to the conference is important.
  - Attractiveness of the location.
  - The suggested theme and general content of the programme.
  - The budget including the degree to which administrative and financial support will be provided by the host institution, and the expected level of sponsorship. The budget is the responsibility of the organizers.
  - The expected social programme.
4. The proposals are evaluated by the ORPHEUS Executive Committee, which provides a proposal for the potential host to the General Assembly (2 years in advance of the conference year). If there is more than one possible host, the General Assembly votes for the host by ballot of those present.
5. If agreed with possible conference organizers the ORPHEUS *Executive Committee* can decide to propose possible conference venues for several years in advance.

**Tasks to be performed as soon as the application is approved**

*Feedback and communication*

One member of the Executive committee will be the liaison with the president of the conference. The president of the conference will report frequently with the Executive committee and will be invited to participate in Executive committee meetings.

*Committees*

The conference committees should be set up and the members identified. It is important to distinguish between the academic and the practical planning, and these two functions should be in separate fora. There should thus be both a local organizing committee and a programme committee.

- The local organizing committee has the conference president as chair, and the committee has responsibility for the practical aspects of the conference (budget, webpage, invitations, registration, programme, abstracts, flyer, sponsors, social event(s)). At least one doctoral candidate should be part of the committee. Members of the committee should be allocated responsibility for specific tasks.
- The programme committee should consist of the conference president (chair), the *President* of ORPHEUS, and other representatives both from the institution (including at least one doctoral candidate) and from the ORPHEUS *Executive Committee*. The programme committee is responsible for setting up the programme.

*Website*

A preliminary webpage on the ORPHEUS website (<https://orpheus-med.org/>) should be set up in collaboration with the ORPHEUS webmaster, stating the dates of the meeting, the venue and the provisional content of the programme as approved by the ORPHEUS *Executive Committee* during the evaluation process.

**Items to be considered shortly thereafter**

*Level of ambition*

The local organizing committee and the programme committee should confirm the level of ambition as regards the intended number of participants, the length of the conference, and whether satellite symposia are to be included. Experience from previous conferences should be taken into account.

The following factors may play a role for the number of participants: the academic content, conference facility size (auditorium and cafeteria), hotel capacity and pricing, conference fee, the time of the conference, conference duration, ease of travel, attractiveness of location, the way the conference's image is presented in brochures and other media, the social programme.

*Professional Conference Organizers (PCO)*

It should be decided if the services of a professional conference organizer are to be used. This is useful for dealing with registration, taking care of accommodation and travel for invited speakers, sponsor contracts, and providing professional advice about the technical aspects of the conference. It is not necessary for the PCO to take care of accommodation for participants; it is sufficient to provide a list of suitable hotels to be shown on the website, and then leave it to participants to make their bookings. The duties of the PCO should be clearly defined and their fee put into the budget. The PCO should take part from an early stage in the planning of the conference. If it is decided not to use a PCO, then it must be decided who will perform these tasks and how these will be paid for. Be aware that the price of the PCO depends on the number of technical staff they must appoint, and that there is one for each live room. Alternatively, members of the organizing team may be given the privileges as co-host to manage breakout rooms, etc.

## Programme

### *Scientific programme*

Typical conferences have had ca. 10-12 invited speakers, of which typically 3-4 being from ORPHEUS EC. The conference organizer should consider that the majority of the speakers should come from those countries where ORPHEUS has membership, and that country distribution should take into account the geographical distribution of ORPHEUS members. The number of speakers is dependent on the amount of money that can be raised (but remembering that an attractive programme will increase number of participants and thus registration income). The conference president, the ORPHEUS *Executive Committee*, and all other members of the program committee should propose topics and speakers. A variety of formats for the sessions (lectures, workshops, debates, teaser-talks, ...) is appreciated. Select at least one chairperson for each session.

The amount of time to be given to free communications and to posters should be determined. Consider having a teaser session for short presentations of posters by students. Sufficient time should be set aside for discussion and networking. Remember that invited opinion leaders do not necessarily have to give plenary lectures: they can take part in round tables or as chairpersons. Allow space for the ORPHEUS *General Assembly* (1 hour), for attribution of ORPHEUS label/certificates, and at the end of the conference for the flag ceremony and introduction of next year's conference. For the flag ceremony, prepare a logo to represent your university with the appropriate dimensions and stitch it to the flag.

The full programme committee should finalize the proposal not later than one year before the conference and present it to the ORPHEUS *Executive Committee*. The outline programme may thereafter be published on the website and then regularly updated. A full programme should be available six months before the conference.

### *Abstracts*

An abstract deadline should be set so that the organizers can receive contributions 4 months before the conference. Decisions should be made about the format of the abstracts (usually maximum 250 words) and the manner in which they will be submitted. Decisions should be made as to how the abstracts will be published: in the programme book and/or online.

### *Letters of invitation*

Invited speakers and chairpersons should be contacted as early as possible (6-12 months before the conference, probably earlier for opinion leaders). It should be made clear what, if any, financial support will be given (travel, accommodation, ground transport). *Per diem* expenses and honoraria are not usually given. Invite key internal people, e.g. rector, dean or department head. Provide information about time of talk and time for discussion. The PCO should be provided with full details.

### *Conference programme book*

Decide on the format of the programme book and whether it should include abstracts (well appreciated).

## Finances

### *Budget*

The conference budget should be as detailed as possible and include all revenue and expenditure. Revenue items include registration fees, the contribution of ORPHEUS, and possible sponsorship. Expenditure items include coverage of travel expenses and accommodation for selected participants. Include e.g. possible cost of hiring auditoria and equipment, meals, coffee breaks, salaries for student workers and extra officer hours, as well as PCO fee. The (anticipated) budget should be presented to the ORPHEUS *Executive Committee* 12 months before the conference.

The conference organizer will receive a donation from ORPHEUS of €3000 for the conference organization and €2000 for the organization of a session of special interest for doctoral candidates (staged before or during the conference). An additional €5000 will be provided by ORPHEUS to cover the expenses of international speakers (travel and accommodation).

The conference organizer should take into account that all Executive Committee members are exempted from paying the conference registration fee.

### *Sponsors*

Normally for ORPHEUS conferences the major sponsor is the institution concerned through its administrative support and provision of conference facilities. Support from external sponsors is also important, where for example industrial organizations might wish to sponsor specific speakers or to provide support for student participation; or alternatively to sponsor the dinner. Early contact with possible sponsors is advised, and well before September/October the year before the conference, since some potential sponsor companies close their budgets for the coming year at this time. Likely, the reception can be covered either by the institution/university or the mayor, if it is held at the City Hall. Consider to involve the city's mayor's office for support (e.g. bus ticket pass, touristic material, bags). Information about sponsors should be shared from meeting to meeting.

Sponsors may be able to pay for specific speakers. Speakers from governmental and other official agencies might cover own expenses.

Other possible sources: an airline can become "Official Carrier" and offer discount tickets in return for profiling, e.g. an advertising banner on the conference website and an invitation to use it; food companies can deliver drinks or menus if listed as a supplier.

### *Travel expenses & sustainable travel*

Invited speakers usually get their travel expenses paid, at least in part. The organisers should communicate clearly if this is a fixed amount or "cheapest air/train/bus/taxi fare"? ORPHEUS embraces a sustainable travel policy. As a rule of thumb, if a flight is less than three hours faster than train travel, flying should be

discouraged. Three hours is the average time spent on travel to and from the airport plus checking-in and -out.

*Registration fee*

Following ORPHEUS tradition, there should be reductions for early payment, and also for 'students' (to be defined). Registration fees for ORPHEUS members is normally reduced. The registration fees should be discussed with the ORPHEUS *Executive Committee*. Registration cannot be performed through the ORPHEUS website but will be linked to the local administration tool. Registration should be opened at least 6 months before the conference.

*Profit*

Conferences should not aim to make a profit. In the unlikely event that a conference has a surplus the contribution of ORPHEUS will be reduced with the same amount. Any remaining surplus will remain at the disposal of the organiser.

*Loss Guarantee*

The institution is alone responsible for the budget, and any loss cannot be covered by ORPHEUS. It is therefore advisable to have a guarantee against loss either as a result of a budget deficit, or as the result of external circumstances. In case of *force majeure*, ORPHEUS might decide to cover part of the loss.

## Technical aspects

### *Promotion of conference*

Information about the conference and an invitation to register should be sent by mail to potential participants (members, previous attendees, etc.) about 9 months before the conference, with reminders at 6, 4 and 2 months before the conference. ORPHEUS has a large mailing list that can be used as long as GDPR is respected. Ensure that individuals only receive one mail at each time point, and that they are removed from the list if requested. Printed promotional material can be made for distribution at other conferences.

### *Room and auditoriums for the meeting*

Book auditoria for plenary and concurrent break-out sessions as needed and according to expected participation. Space must also be available for coffee breaks, lunches, check-in, cloakroom, etc. The facilities should be open until ½ -1 hour after the event and also ½ -1 hour before the start of the event on the weekend day. The booking agreement should be confirmed a few weeks before the event. Make precise agreements on events outside of normal business hours.

### *Audio visual equipment*

Make agreements about the audio-visual equipment well in advance and determine if any costs are involved. The minimum for each auditorium is a projector, laser pointer, and sufficient microphones (depending on size: speaker, chairmen, two roving for discussion). Ensure that technical support will give instruction on use of equipment and that support is available if anything breaks down. It is important to have a technician on duty for any event. In particular, ensure that the microphone system works (without noise feedback) even when several microphones are being used simultaneously during discussions (speaker, chairmen, participants in auditorium). Have a team of collaborators to help hand round microphones during plenary discussions. Collect (PowerPoint) presentations of all speakers in advance and ask permission to make them available after the conference as PDF files on the website of ORPHEUS.

### *Lunches, coffee breaks and social programme*

Lunch should be provided when the programme includes a lunch period. Coffee/tea should be provided between sessions. Ensure that there is sufficient space for all participants to be served rapidly. A reception should be held on the evening of the first day and a gala dinner on the evening of the second day. The budget will determine the standard of these and whether participants should pay extra. If possible, they should be covered by the registration fee as these events are useful for networking and are an important part of the conference. On the registration form, special requests for food should be specified.

### *Cleaning*

Order any additional cleaning of the rooms, corridors and toilets. Cleaning the toilets is particularly important at evening and weekend events where the toilets have been in use throughout the day or the day before, and the cleaning staff has not been there.

*Accommodation*

As indicated above, accommodation will normally only be arranged for invited speakers and chairmen. A recommendation for a specific hotel should be made to members of the ORPHEUS *Executive Committee*, but the costs do not need to be covered by the organisation. The PCO (or whoever is arranging accommodation) should be provided with a list showing who this applies to, and whether the cost is to be borne by the conference or personally. Select hotels and make provisional bookings.

*Shuttle*

Free shuttle busses to and from hotels and evening events can be provided for all participants or only for (invited) speakers. Alternatively, it is often sufficient to have participants and speakers use public transport if this is available. However, if needed, make an agreement with a taxi company for e.g. to provide taxi vouchers for keynote speakers. Likewise, order buses if participants have to be transported from the hotel to the conference venue.

*Gifts*

Consider whether the invited speakers/chairmen receive a small gift; include that item in the budget.

*Cultural events*

It is a good idea to organize pre- or post-conference excursions. It gives participants a chance to be together in a different setting and to network. Consider whether the PCO should contribute to this part of the planning.



## **On-site arrangements**

### *Local team*

- Set up a team including those at the registration desk, those in the auditoria, those responsible for catering and transport, key members of local organizing committee, etc.
- Make a list of who is responsible at what times, and how and at what telephone number he or she can be contacted. Distribute list for everyone in the team.

### *Registration*

- Have a registration booth, establish the registration procedure, and appoint staff to run it.
- Decide arrangements for on-site registration and for 'late payments'.
- Publish the opening times in the programme book and on the website.
- Provide name and password for the hot spot on the conference site.
- Participants should be given name labels showing names (in large lettertype!) and affiliation.
- Participants can be provided with a conference bag containing programme, list of participants with affiliations and if possible mail addresses, etc. and additional material (e.g. tourist information). However, ORPHEUS supports sustainable development, so unnecessary hardcopies should be avoided and online alternatives considered.

### *Additional items*

- Have a procedure if a speaker does not show up.
- Check that all facilities, common areas and restrooms are clean.
- If needed, establish a procedure and designate a person responsible for the collection of meal vouchers.
- Place water and a glass on the podium for each speaker.
- Flowers for auditoria and reception area.
- Check projector, pointer, and microphones in all auditoria. Know where the lights, blinds, ..., are operated.

### *Evaluation*

- Give participants evaluation forms and time to fill these out. (The *Executive Committee* will prepare a form). This can be sent out by E-mail at the end of the conference.
- Edit the completed questionnaires and include the findings in a professional report to the *Executive Committee* and for the organizers of next year's conference.

### *Follow-up*

- Send a thank you to all speakers, participants, and sponsors, and advertise the time and place of next year's conference.

**Summary of normal time schedule**

| Time before conference | Action  |
|------------------------|---|
| 30 - 24 months         | Applications  |
| 24 months              | ORPHEUS <i>Executive Committee</i> decides which application to accept  |
| 18-12 months           | Website launched<br>Prepare promotional material<br>Seek sponsorship  |
| 12 months              | Provisional programme and technical planning presented to ORPHEUS <i>Executive Committee</i><br>Invite speakers |
| 9 - 6 months           | Provisional programme outline published<br>Open for registration  |
| 6 months               | Full programme published and invitation sent to potential participants (members, previous attendees, etc).      |
| 4 - 2 months           | Deadline for receipt of abstracts   |
| 4 and 2 months         | Reminders sent out to potential participants  |

**General tips.**

The following notes may be of use to conference organizers.

*Conference website*

ORPHEUS will host the conference website and you should provide at your earliest convenience:

- Conference name, theme, time and place - as early as possible. Enhance later with further description of the conference and possibly with presenters' names, etc.
- Possibly welcome from official person.
- Preliminary programme (Update regularly and write that it is provisional) and the final programme (the final programme should include a schedule for each day and the programme point by name, location and time (local and building), speakers' name and the title of presentation or workshop, time and place for breaks and lunches. In the speaker's name include link to photo and short CV.
- Submenu with the social (voluntary) programme such as excursions and tours and gala dinner, etc. Specify if registration is required and remember to apply this on your registration form.
- Submenu for registration with registration form (see details of content further down the page) and pricing: Early and late registration. Member, non-member and student rates. Payment options (get the advice of your accountant or selected PCO).
- Submenu for abstract submissions. Specify format.
- Information on the conference site, for example. Link to a website or description and possible a building map.
- Information about hotels.
- Transport routes and opportunities for both public and private transport.
- Link to Official Carrier (e.g. airline) and other sponsors' websites.
- Link to the city homepage.
- Useful knowledge about the country, currency, visa application rules, etc.
- Submenu with the Local organizing committee and the program committee.
- Refresh pages regularly.

*On the website after the conference*

- Advertise deadline for the closure of the conference website.
- Discuss if parts of the website can be transferred to the ORPHEUS website. A short report should be provided. Possibly also make a photo report, summary or similar from the conference.
- Close the conference website down or indicate that the page is no longer updated.

## *Information material and invitations*

General: Consider design, logo, material, colour, etc. Use the same design line in all materials (also on the website, as far as possible). Set up the materials and make a welcoming layout. Among the printed materials can be:

- Invitation (s).
- Information brochure.
- Programme (for shipment or delivery).
- Menu signs for catering.
- Name badges for lanyards.
- Directory signs along the way at the conference, e.g. hall or workshop premises.
- Banners on buildings and lectern.
- Name notices for reserved seats.
- Indoor banner with stand for stage or instance.
- Entries with bus schedules.

Ask your faculty if they can be of assistance.

Other marketing materials can be.

- Advertisements in relevant journals and newspapers.
- Calendar of events at various societies.
- Link to the Centre, department, institution, faculty, university website.
- Link to the conference website from external websites.

## *Registration Form*

Create a system, for example a database that can handle all participant information; if your budget permits, have a PCO do this. If you do it yourself make a plan for registration of entries. It is recommended that it is left to participants to make their own hotel arrangements.

After signing up you should send confirmation to participants along with information about hotels, printed reading material (e.g. brochure with more information about the conference and keynote speakers, papers and the like), possibly meal tickets, maps of the conference area provisional list of participants, programme update, etc.).

- Keep an eye on the number of entries.
- Your registration form should include:
  - First name.
  - Surname.
  - Title.
  - Institution.
  - Department.
  - Address / street.
  - ZIP code.

- Town.
- Country.
- Phone Number.
- E-mail address.
- Name and surname of any accompanying person
- Need for vegetarian or special meals.
- Allergies.
- Early/late registration (low/high entry fee).
- Selected payment method.
- Arrival and departure (date, time and place).
- Option to opt in or out to different parts of the programme? (e.g. reception or gala dinner) and/or social programme (e.g. excursions and the like). Not encouraged!

#### *Conference material*

- Conference folders.
- Blocks.
- Pens.
- Name badges.
- Order free conference items from your university if possible.

*Conference bag (keep hardcopies and hence potential waste to a minimum, use online alternatives where appropriate. Notepads and pens can be made available freely at the registration desk rather than adding them to every bag)*

- Information materials.
- Updated participant list, name tag, meal tickets.
- Abstracts/papers/programme that are not published in advance.
- Maybe ticket for public transport.

#### *The reception area should include:*

- PC to include registration, internet access, printer.
- First-aid kit.
- Phone list of local team and other relevant persons.
- Phone to doctor, taxi and emergency room.
- Map of the city.
- Map of the country.
- Needle and thread, safety pins, scissors, tape, rubber bands, paper clips, extra name badges etc.
- Registration at the meeting.

- Open as far as possible for registration a few hours before the conference start to avoid the long queue.
- One suggestion to speed the registration process is to put all name badges up on a table and ask people to find their name badge and then go to the registration table. Dedicate a person to help people find their name badge. This makes it easier for both the participants and assistants, as participants can just show their name badge instead of having to spell their name.
- When registering some want a receipt with the signature (and seal) of their expenses, even though they may already have received an electronic receipt. Prepare in advance or an itemized receipt for all participants for a) registration fee; b) meals (if they are not part of the conference fee); c) hotel; d) printed matter, etc.
- Prepare and give out a possible participation certificate handed out at the conference's final day, or prepare to send the certification by E-mail.
- Preparedness for cancellations.

#### *Marketing and Information, press and press releases*

- Appoint a press officer to handle inquiries from the press both before and during the conference. Everyone needs to know who the person responsible is and how to get hold of him/her.
- The press officer shall ensure that one or more press releases about the conference are published and distributed.
- Consider whether the press release also be translated into English.