2026 SRHE Conference

27 November 2026

Chairing Guidelines

SRHE would like to thank all Chairs for their most valuable contribution to the conference.

As we approach the 2026 SRHE International Conference we would like to share some best practice tips regarding chairing online events. These guidelines are designed to support and help you navigate managing academic exchanges in an online space, as well as provide guidance for those who may be new to chairing.

The Society is committed to protecting and promoting free speech and believes that a culture of free, open and robust discussion can be achieved only if all members engage critically but courteously, peacefully and respectfully with each other.

Please note that every session will have tech support provided by a staff member from NomadIT, and that you as Chair **will not be expected to provide this**.

Before the Session

- **Conference platform:** Oxford Abstracts is the software we are using to manage our online conference, and all sessions on Friday 27 November will be run using Zoom. While a staff member from the Nomad IT will be on hand, it is useful to have some knowledge regarding basic troubleshooting (how to share a screen, how to use the 'raise hand' feature, etc.) Some brief Zoom tips are available here to help you get the most out of the sessions.

- **When to join:** Zoom rooms will be open approximately **15 minutes in advance** of the advertised start time of the panel. Please come along during this time to introduce yourself and panellists to each other, while Nomad IT help to test audio, video. Attendees will be held in a waiting room until the scheduled start time

- **Presentations format:** Paper presenters have been grouped into panel sessions of 2-3 presentations, where possible organised by overlapping research interests, methods, or subject areas. Individual presenters have each been allocated **20 minutes** for their paper followed by **10 minutes** for Q&A.

- **Quick chat with panellists:** Let the panellists know the order of presentations, how you will introduce them, and how you will signal remaining time during their presentations.

During the Session

- **Time & structure:** Begin the session by letting participants know the structure and timings of the panel session. During panel sessions, each paper has been allocated **20 minutes** for presentation followed by **10 minutes** for Q&A. **It is essential to adhere to the scheduled times and order**.

- **Microphones & cameras:** Please remind everyone that only the presenter(s) speaking should have their microphone on. Ensure participants know how, when, or if they are welcome to turn on their cameras and microphones.

- **Q&A:** Let participants know how to ask questions: they can type in the chat or use the "raise hand" reaction. Please make sure they only turn on their microphone, camera, or both when called on by the Chair (avoid asking those who have written their questions in the chat to speak it instead). It is up to the Chair to monitor the various modes of interaction participants have.

- **Steering the discussion**: Make sure you can take notes as you will need to generate and guide discussion during the time allocated after the presentations for Q&A with the attendees. The audience may need some time to gather their thoughts before the discussion or Q&A, so it is very helpful if you are prepared to ask the first question or two. This is also a good way to encourage participation.

- If one topic, idea or a view begins to dominate, the Chair must take control. A number of tactics can be employed to achieve this, eg, suggesting a further meeting to discuss the issue at a later date or that those concerned could continue the discussion at the end of the session. Sometimes it will be necessary to move things forward to the next question.

- If a paper presenter withdraws at the last minute, the Chair can either choose to proceed to the next presentation and start the next paper earlier than scheduled or keep to the schedule of the papers. Attendees may choose to stay in the Zoom room and chat or join another parallel session.

Ending the Session

- **Closing remarks:** Close the session by bringing together the multiple strands of presenters' work and incorporating the most interesting aspects of the discussion.

- **What's next:** Before thanking speakers and attendees, it would be wonderful if you could signpost the next session on the programme, or where similarly themed panels are taking place.

Thank you again.
We are extremely grateful to our Chairs for giving their time to this process; this is essential to maintaining the high quality which distinguishes the SRHE conference.