

Migrating out of Poverty: From Evidence to Policy

Guidance for chairs and discussants

Many thanks for agreeing to take part in our conference, as a chair or discussant in a parallel session. Your contributions are very welcome. We look forward to meeting you at our conference, which will bring together a range of audience members with a passion for migration research and provide excellent opportunities to hear about work and share insights into policy and practice from across the world.

Chairs

You have been asked to chair a parallel session which will comprise a small number of papers and will run for an hour, or an hour and a half, with two or three presentations respectively. Each presenter is given 10 minutes to speak. The discussant should then provide 10 minutes of reflections on the papers that are presented. The remaining time will be used for a facilitated discussion which you will be expected to direct.

- Your primary role is to coordinate the session that you're chairing. Please read through the outline of the whole meeting, and in particular the session for which you are responsible.
- The main task of the chair is to ensure that sessions start on time, that presenters and the discussant keep to their allotted time slot and to help manage the ensuing questions, and answers.
- Please agree with the presenters and discussant beforehand how you will signal that they've approached their time limit, and the action you will take when the paper needs to be finished.
- Before your session please familiarise yourself with which room your session will take place in.
- Computer and projection equipment will be provided in each of the rooms and the slides will be loaded by technician staff at SOAS a day or two before.
- Read the abstracts of the presentations in your session before the session itself, so that you are familiar with the topics being presented. Where possible, presentations have been grouped to bring together different perspectives on linked topics. You might like to mention briefly any links you can see between the presentations when opening the session.
- Sessions that over-run can cause catering/scheduling problems, as this is a large conference, and we need to avoid this wherever possible.
- When opening the session clearly introduce yourself as the Chair and welcome the audience. Briefly announce the name of presenters and their paper titles and the discussant so that everyone knows that they are in the right room. It is also useful to let the audience know how the session will be structured.
- In each session there will be a note taker and it is likely that points made by the speakers, discussant, and the audience will be shared via social media in real time. Please make all participants aware of this and ask them to be clear if they do not wish their points to be shared in conference proceedings or with a public audience.
- A conference photographer will also be in attendance. Please remind the audience of this.
- When facilitating the discussion please try to make sure everyone who wants a chance to speak has that opportunity – allowing for time.

- Try to stick to one question per person before giving someone the opportunity to ask a supplementary or second question. This ensures that everyone gets a fair chance.
- Ask people who pose a question to stand up, identify him/herself turn towards the audience and speak up so that everyone can hear the question. If the audience cannot hear, ask the presenter to briefly restate the question before answering it or if you feel it is unclear, restate it for the benefit of the audience.
- If there were still hands raised to ask questions and time is running out, take one more question and apologise to those who did not get to ask their question, emphasising that there should be time during breaks to pose their question to the presenter.
- As the chair, people will turn to you should problems arise and expect you to manage the session and respond to challenges. Should the projector not work, the room be too hot or too cold, or something happen to the room itself (a spill, noise intrusion, etc.) please contact Allison Baldasare at 07710 916 994 or moop2017conference@sussex.ac.uk – The SOAS conference office is on the 2nd floor, where the breakout rooms are located. And a SOAS technician is booked for the Lecture Theatre.
- At the end of the session, ask the audience to join you in thanking the presenters for their presentations (with a round of applause if this has not already followed the presentation). If you have any queries regarding the chairing process, please do not hesitate to get in touch with the conference organising team.

Discussants

You have been asked to be a discussant which means digesting and responding to two-to-three papers and presentations. The allotted time for this is 10 minutes.

- Your primary role is to provide the audience with perspective and insight about the substance and significance of the papers. You should briefly summarize the individual contributions in the papers, but then move on to integrate them and relate them to a broader body of policy and research on the topic.
- You can do this by highlighting key ideas, identifying key themes across the papers, posing challenging questions, and suggesting important directions for future work.
- We have asked all presenters to send a written paper in advance of the conference. We will make these available to you by email two weeks ahead of the conference.
- In your analysis of presentations, note the paper's contributions and strengths as well as its weaknesses. Please highlight major issues only. Focus your critique on issues that members of the audience will need to understand in order to integrate, interpret, and reconcile the research that has been presented. It is also important to draw out the links and differences between the papers. If you want to provide feedback about minor issues, please give them to the authors in writing or orally after their presentation.
- Remember that the audience may only have seen the presentations, not the full papers. If you are addressing a point that was not clearly presented by the author during the session, explain the context for your remarks to the audience.
- Please keep to time and be attentive to the chair of your session, who will be trying to ensure that the session runs smoothly and efficiently.
- If you have any queries regarding the discussant role, please do not hesitate to get in touch with the conference organising team.