

**RSS 2021 Conference
Manchester, 6-9 September 2021**

Guidance notes for Invited session organisers

These notes are intended to assist you in completing the session proposal form and provide guidance on the role of the session organiser. Please do read through them carefully as the arrangements may differ from other conferences you have attended. ***You are asked to confirm on the submission form that you have read and understood these guidelines.***

About the RSS Conference

The RSS International Conference is open to everyone interested in statistics and data science. Every year, over 600 statisticians and data scientists gather from all sectors and from over 30 countries to share information and network.

What is an invited topic session?

The conference programme is divided into different types of sessions (see Annex 3).

Invited topic sessions are sessions that are put together by an individual, group of individuals or a committee with a set of speakers who they invite to speak on a related topic. The session topic should ideally fit within one of the topic streams for the conference (see below). The proposed session is considered by the RSS conference board for inclusion on the programme.

(If you are looking to submit a single talk this should be done via the *contributed* abstract route which will open this autumn).

There is flexibility allowed on the format of an invited session – please see below for details.

Titles and Formats of Invited sessions

Invited sessions will be a standard 80 minutes long but can take any format – two or three speakers with or without discussant, panel discussion, workshop, consultation session, etc. ***The organisers welcome innovation in the format of sessions.***

Please note workshops may be best placed in the professional development stream (which have a mixture of 60- and 80-minute sessions).

With any highly technical topics we would expect the session to include either an introductory talk or a discussant.

While the titles of sessions should be as descriptive as possible, short and snappy titles are to be preferred (the same applies for individual talk titles) to assist with marketing.

We are keen to receive proposals for sessions which cover new research and results, areas of controversy/debate, topical discussion, and informative and innovative case studies.

Which topic stream does your session fit within?

The 2021 Conference will be organised into streamed topics:

- Applications of Statistics
- Business, Industry & Finance
- Communicating & Teaching Statistics
- Data Science
- Environmental & Spatial Statistics
- Medical Statistics
- Methods & Theory
- Official Statistics & Public Policy
- Social Statistics
- Professional Development

You can find information about the topics expected to be covered by each stream in Annex 1.

Each stream is curated by two members of the RSS Conference Board (see Annex 2) who you should liaise with over the content and who will be able to advise on the suitability of your topic for the selected stream (and suggest an alternative if appropriate).

Please note that the support of a conference board member for your proposal does **not** automatically mean the full board will accept it for inclusion in the conference programme.

Speakers and their availability

Please let us know if there are known restrictions on your speakers' attendances at the conference. Typically, the first invited sessions take place from late morning on the Tuesday (7th) and the final invited sessions will be on the Thursday afternoon (9th).

At this initial stage, all topic streams are scheduled to run throughout the conference, however the length may be revised according to the number of proposals accepted. Sessions will be allocated to relevant slots by the end of January and it may be difficult to reallocate sessions after this.

The RSS is committed to ensuring an inclusive and welcoming environment for all who care about good data and statistics and we therefore expect the composition of speakers in the invited sessions to reflect the full diversity of the Society.

Registration discounts and expenses

The normal situation is that we do not offer discounts/expenses to speakers in invited sessions and they are responsible for payment of conference fees and their own expenses in the same way as other delegates. This enables us to organise a wide range of invited sessions/workshops across the conference themes.

However, we do not wish monetary considerations to be a barrier to speakers presenting at the conference. If this is an issue, speakers in invited sessions can make a request to receive **ONE** of the following:

- one-day discount on the conference fee
- one night's accommodation reimbursed up to a maximum of £140 per night
- reasonable standard/economy class travel expenses [see note below]

Requests for a discount/expenses of this nature for a speaker should be made when the invited session/workshop is being proposed. Budgetary planning means that requests made at a later stage in the planning process may not be possible to accommodate.

Once a session proposal has been accepted the RSS Conference office will contact the speaker concerned to obtain details of the case being made.

In general requests for one-day discounts will be granted. Priority for expenses will be given to speakers coming from professions outside of statistics.

In exceptional cases we will consider making more than one type of expense available or can agree an expenses package for a session.

Please note the following maximum amounts will apply for travel expenses – within the UK £200, Europe £300, Rest of the World £500.

Final decisions on the cases presented will be made by the Chair and Vice-Chair(s) of the Conference Board.

Session organisers requesting additional speakers' expenses are likely to be looked on more favourably if they have successfully generated new sponsorship for the conference, whether through direct sponsorship of the session they are organising or by encouraging a new exhibitor or advertiser to participate.

Please note that unfortunately there are no expenses or fee discounts available from the conference budget for session chairs or session organisers (unless as speakers)

Session chairs

It is not compulsory to name your session chair at this stage but if you have someone who has agreed to perform this role please indicate this. The last date for appointing a chair is **9 July 2021**.

The session organisers must appoint a chair who is registered or will be registering to attend the conference – if you do not name a chair the conference organisers will assume you are chairing the session unless you request them to appoint a chair for your session.

Moving to a hybrid model for conference

It is likely that in addition to filming a selection of sessions for future broadcast on the Society's Youtube channel we will moving to a model of broadcasting some parts of conference live to an online audience. You are therefore asked on the form whether broadcasting and/or filming your session would be an option. This is not a firm commitment – we will follow up with those who have expressed interest once the programme is confirmed.

Future liaison and communication

As there are likely to be over 50 invited sessions at the conference, you will be asked to assist the conference organisers by ensuring/ reminding your speakers to:

- Submit their abstracts
- Register for the conference

The conference office will inform the session organiser about the scheduling of the session and details of the submission of the final presentation. You will find details of the various deadlines at the end of this document – these deadlines must be adhered to.

In particular, if a speaker misses the deadline for abstract submission their talk title may be omitted from the final programme and the abstract will not appear in the booklet.

If you are not the chair of the session, the conference office will also liaise with the chair nearer the time of the conference.

Please provide email addresses for all speakers and the agreed chair.

Session organisers will be responsible for ensuring that their speakers are given a clear briefing on the format and timings of the session.

Session organisers are also responsible for ensuring that the conference office is kept up-to-date with any changes to speakers and talk titles.

Marketing

The RSS centrally will be marketing the conference through various media, however this will generally be at a broad level rather than focussing on specific sessions. You (and your speakers) are therefore encouraged to promote your session – if doing so via twitter please tag @RSSAnnualConf and use #RSS2021Conf.

The RSS is always looking for new ways to reach a broad audience for the conference so if there are particular mailing lists etc you would recommend for either promoting the conference as a whole or specific streams/topics please let us know via the relevant box on the submission form.

Key Deadlines

18 November 2020 – initial deadline for session proposals

By 31 January 2021 – confirmation of the session's provisional scheduling within the programme

Before 28 February – draft conference programme published

16 April – 16 July – period for submission of invited talk abstracts*

5 June – first registration deadline (20% discount)

9 July - last date for appointing session chairs

31 July – second registration deadline (10% discount)

** this may change depending on the system in place for the 2021 Conference*

Annex 1

Stream descriptions for 2020 Conference

Applications of Statistics

This stream aims to showcase examples of real world practical applications of statistics. Previous sessions have covered a diverse range of applications such as the use of statistical analysis in professional sport; statistics and the law, astrostatistics, agricultural statistics, to voting patterns in the Eurovision song contest.

Business, Industry & Finance

This stream aims to provide a stage for statistical methods and applications in the business and financial sectors. This might include topics such as risk analysis, experimental design, measurement uncertainty, business innovation, asset management, quantitative finance, big data and business surveys.

Communicating & Teaching Statistics

This stream aims to showcase new and diverse ways to convey statistical thinking and ideas to a variety of audiences. This might include topics such as: working with schools and inspiring young people; teaching statistics at HE level to students both of statistics and other subjects; or, developing essential and innovative communication skills for sharing statistical information with different sectors of the public.

Data Science

This stream covers applied and methodological advances that support the extraction of value from data. This includes, but is not limited to, developments in the data analytics process, Big Data technology, applications of Machine Learning, cyber security, financial technology, and cross-disciplinary scientific experiments that advance application domains.

Environmental & Spatial Statistics

This stream covers a series of talks and discussions relating to applications of statistics to environmental topics, including those with a spatial or spatio-temporal aspect. This stream covers themes such as air pollution, spatial epidemiology, statistical ecology, climate science and environmental forecasting.

Medical Statistics

This stream showcases approaches and applications of statistical thinking to problems arising from the study of human biology, health and healthcare. Bioinformatics, study design, targets for inference, data collection, linkage, analysis, survival and event history analysis, meta-analysis and reporting all fall within the scope of this stream.

Methods & Theory

This stream provides conference-goers with a snapshot of recent advances in statistical methodology. While often motivated by a particular application, a distinguishing feature of this stream is that the methods themselves are the object of principle scientific interest. The stream welcomes contributions relating to the philosophical foundations of statistics as well as all aspects of statistical modelling and inference.

Official Statistics & Public Policy

This stream aims to showcase the work of official statistics producers and how their work shapes and informs public policy. Sessions can cover any aspect of the production of official statistics, covering a wide range of topics including: overviews of existing statistical work and publications; new developments to support emerging policy; use of technology to improve the production and dissemination of official statistics; and meeting user needs.

Professional Development

This stream is a blend of short informal workshops and training sessions (60-80 minutes) aiming to provide bite sized continual professional development opportunities. Previous sessions have covered a diverse range of topics such as research publication, maximising impact, career development, statistics in the media and data visualisation.

Social Statistics

This stream aims to present novel methods and applications concerning statistics in social contexts. These may be concerned with the collection, dissemination, analysis, and interpretation of statistical data in any field of social inquiry and span, for instance, public and private sectors, politics and the media.

Annex 2

RSS Board contacts for Conference streams

Stream	Board contact 1	Board contact 2	Board contact 3
Applications of Statistics	Antonia Marsden antonia.marsden@manchester.ac.uk	Christopher Yau christopher.yau@manchester.ac.uk	Scott Heald scottheald05@aol.com
Business, Industry & Finance	Peter Smith peter.j.smith@leidos.com	Neil Spencer N.H.Spencer@herts.ac.uk	
Communicating & Teaching Statistics	Rachael Hughes Rachael.Hughes@bristol.ac.uk	Mel Lewis Melanie.Lewis@ons.gov.uk	
Data Science	Mark Briers mbriers@turing.ac.uk	David Hoyle dchoyle01@gmail.com	
Environmental/Spatial Statistics	Ben Swallow ben.swallow@glasgow.ac.uk	Scott Heald scottheald05@aol.com	
Medical	Rachael Hughes Rachael.Hughes@bristol.ac.uk	Lisa McFetridge l.mcfetridge@qub.ac.uk	
Methods & Theory	Rachael Hughes Rachael.Hughes@bristol.ac.uk	Karthik Bharath Karthik.Bharath@nottingham.ac.uk	Helen Ogden H.E.Ogden@soton.ac.uk
Official Statistics & Public Policy	Mel Lewis Melanie.Lewis@ons.gov.uk	David Beckett David.Beckett@ons.gov.uk	
Social Statistics	Scott Heald scottheald05@aol.com	Neil Spencer N.H.Spencer@herts.ac.uk	
Professional Development	Lisa McFetridge l.mcfetridge@qub.ac.uk	Emily Granger Emily.Granger@lshtm.ac.uk	

Annex 3

Types of presentation and session at RSS Conference

Keynote speakers / Plenary sessions

There are usually up to seven plenary sessions during the conference (usually lasting one hour) organised by the conference programme chair and board. These may include named lectures such as the Champion (President's Invited) Lecture and the Significance Lecture. These sessions feature keynote speakers from across the spectrum of statistics and data science and can also include panel discussions.

Invited topic sessions

These sessions are put together by an individual, group of individuals or a committee with a set of speakers who they invite to speak on a related topic. The sessions run for 80 minutes and are selected by the RSS Conference Board from the proposals submitted to them by the relevant deadline (18 November 2020) and then allocated to a conference stream. Any individual or organisation can submit a session proposal. Invited sessions can take any format and run in parallel with other invited sessions.

Contributed talks

These are individual talks selected by the Conference Board from the abstracts submitted by the relevant deadline (5 April for 2021). Anyone can submit an abstract. These talks are allocated 20 minutes each (including time for questions). There are usually 3 talks to a session which lasts one hour and runs in parallel with other contributed sessions.

Rapid-Fire talks

These talks are five minutes in length with a restricted number of slides and no questions or discussion. In 2020 we also offered rapid-fire presenters the option of presenting a poster on the same topic. Again, these are selected by the Conference Board from the abstracts submitted by the extended deadline for rapid-fire talks (7 May) and will be organised into sessions that run in parallel with each other. Anyone can submit an abstract and can specify that they wish their abstract to only be considered for a rapid-fire talk but other abstracts may also be allocated to these sessions.

Posters

Posters (in A0 portrait format) are usually displayed for the duration of conference in one of the main breakout areas of the conference venue. There will be organised viewing times for the posters (often accompanied by a reception) – in 2021 there will be a reception on the Tuesday evening but posters can remain on display throughout Wednesday and Thursday so they can be viewed by attendees at other break times. Anyone can submit an abstract and can specify that they wish their abstract to only be considered for a poster presentation but abstracts submitted for a talk may be allocated a poster instead. There is usually an extended deadline for poster submissions - 1 July for RSS 2021 Conference.

Workshops

Short informal workshops and training sessions (60-80 minutes) aiming to provide bite sized continual professional development opportunities. Any registered attendee can attend these workshops which are contained in the Professional Development stream of the main conference.

Society business

There are number of sessions during the conference at which Royal Statistical Society business is conducted including the Annual General Meeting and the Awards Ceremony. All conference attendees are welcome to attend these meetings unless otherwise stated.