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RSS 2025 Conference
Edinburgh, 1-4 September 2025

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***.

KEY POINTS TO NOTE:
- Invited sessions can take any format within the allocated 80-minute session.
- The Society expects speaker line-ups to reflect the full diversity of the Society and single gender line-ups will not normally be accepted.
- There are **no** automatic registration discounts or expenses for invited speakers, but these can be requested (see page 3)
- The default position is that sessions will take place in-person in Edinburgh, but we may be able to facilitate remote presentations in exceptional circumstances.
- Deadline for session proposals is **21 November**.

About the RSS Conference

The RSS International Conference is open to everyone interested in statistics and data science. Every year, around 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, an organisation or a Society 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 later 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 2025 Conference will be organised into streamed topics:

- Applications in Business, Industry & Finance
- Communicating & Teaching Statistics
- Data Science & AI
- Environmental & Spatial Statistics

- Medical Statistics
- Methods & Theory
- Official Statistics & Public Policy
- Other Applications of Statistics
- Social & Wellbeing 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 (2nd) and the final invited sessions will be on the Thursday afternoon (4th).

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.

While presenting remotely will be technically possible we would expect speakers to be present in Edinburgh wherever possible and sessions should be planned on that basis.

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. The conference board may request changes to the speaker line-up in the event of that diversity not being reflected. We are unlikely to accept a single gender speaker line-up.

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 attendees. 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 in invited sessions 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 £150 per night.
- reasonable standard/economy class travel expenses [see note below]

Requests for a discount/expense 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 make contact 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 **19 July 2025.**

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.

Filming sessions

It is likely we will film a selection of sessions to be made available post-conference. You are therefore asked on the proposal 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 70 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. <u>You will find details of the various deadlines at the end of this document – these deadlines must be adhered to</u>.

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.

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, as well as 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 X (formerly twitter) please tag @RSSAnnualConf and use #RSS2025Conf.

The RSS is always looking for new ways to reach a broad audience for the conference so if there are 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

21 November 2024 – initial deadline for session proposals

By 31 January 2025 – confirmation of the session's provisional scheduling within the programme

Before 28 February – draft conference programme published

5 July – deadline for submission of invited talk abstracts

19 July - last date for appointing session chairs

Stream descriptions for 2025 Conference

Applications in Business, Industry & Finance
This stream aims to provide a stage for statistical methods and applications in the business, manufacturing & engineering, 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 Higher Education 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 & AI
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, 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 at the cutting edge of statistical methodology and it's theoretical foundations.

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.

Other 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, agricultural statistics, to voting patterns in the Eurovision song contest.

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. We are also interested in sessions on the development or a demonstration of statistical software or component – (e.g. R package, Python library, SPSS plug-in) – and on reproducibility of statistical analysis and research, using software.

Social & Wellbeing 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
Applications in Business, Industry & Finance	David Hoyle dchoyle01@gmail.com	Robin Nicolson robin.w.nicolson@gsk.com
Communicating & Teaching Statistics	Antonia Marsden antonia.marsden@manchester.ac.uk	Mona Kanaan mona.kanaan@york.ac.uk
Data Science & AI	Scott Heald Scott.Heald@phs.scot	David Hoyle dchoyle01@gmail.com
Environmental/ Spatial Statistics	Ben Swallow bts3@st-andrews.ac.uk	Lisa McFetridge l.mcfetridge@qub.ac.uk
Medical	Rachael Hughes Rachael.Hughes@bristol.ac.uk	David Mclernon d.mclernon@abdn.ac.uk
Methods & Theory	Karthik Bharath Karthik.Bharath@nottingham.ac.uk	Rachael Hughes Rachael.Hughes@bristol.ac.uk
Official Statistics & Public Policy	Scott Heald Scott.Heald@phs.scot	David Beckett David.Beckett@ons.gov.uk
Other Applications of Statistics	Bev Hale b.hale@chi.ac.uk	Antonia Marsden antonia.marsden@manchester.ac.uk
Social & Wellbeing Statistics	Altea Lorenzo-Arribas altea.lorenzo-arribas@bioss.ac.uk	Joy Leahy joy.leahy89@gmail.com
Professional Development	Lisa McFetridge l.mcfetridge@qub.ac.uk	Ciarán McInerney ciaran.mcinerney@sheffield.ac.uk

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 up to one hour) organised by the conference programme chair and board. These may include named lectures such as the Campion (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 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. 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. We also offer 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 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 landscape 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). 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.

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.