

The Mercian Collaboration Conference Group

Group Principles

Introduction

The following document outlines the principles behind the Mercian Collaboration (MC) Conference Group's (CG) operations. It provides a framework guidance and governance for the team ultimately responsible for organising and delivering on the annual MC conference. Readers should also familiarise themselves with the Mercian Collaboration Conference Group's Terms of Reference (TOR) and Event Outline documents for further details on the Group's remit.

Purpose & Accountability

On behalf of the MC member institutions as a whole, the CG is responsible for defining, planning and delivering all aspects of the annual MC conference. The group's activities, direction and contributions are overseen by the group's Chair, who themselves is supported by the MC Development Officer. The CG Chair, on behalf of the CG, is ultimately accountable to the MC Steering Group. Additionally, the Steering Group provides strategic input and guidance, as well as appointing the CG Chair¹. CG members are responsible to their Chair, who themselves are responsible to the MC Steering Group. CG members are responsible for regularly reporting on their conference planning activities to the CG Chair and the group during each meeting, or if absent via a written report provided beforehand.

Membership

Group membership is open to library staff from MC member institutions. MC Directors will identify, nominate and facilitate staff who be able to contribute to the conference's development. As the conference is envisaged to appeal to a broad library staff demographic, ideally staff from across different levels of seniority and experience should be represented. Additionally, as membership comprises a staff development opportunity, Directors should ideally select staff who would also benefit from such experiences. When a staff member becomes a Conference Group member, it is expected that Directors will facilitate meeting attendance, as well as allowing them appropriate time to contribute.

The Conference Group itself comprises a Chair, plus 6 officers and two ex-officio liaisons². After their term of office is complete, it is anticipated that group members will stand down, and further Director recommendations sought. However, for reasons of effective succession planning this may need to be reviewed. Staff appointed to the group will serve 2 year term³, after which they would normally stand-down. Where more potential members are recommended than openings, the Group Chair⁴, will make the final decision on appointments.

¹ In the first instance the CG Chair will be a member of Steering Group. This arrangement will be revisited by the outgoing CG Chair and the Steering Group following the first conference.

² The MCDO and the MCSDG representative, ex-officio members, providing input and liaison with the MCSG and MCSDG respectively. They may vote as permitted by the Group Chair.

³ With the exception of the Venue Coordinator, who will only serve a year

⁴ Or in their absence the MCSG

Member Responsibilities

Overall responsibilities are to jointly plan, organise and assist in the hosting of the annual MC conference. Group Members hold responsibility for all operational and functional activities relating to this including, but not limited to:

- Scheduling and agreeing the conference programme
- Identifying, negotiating with and booking a suitable venue
- Identifying, selecting and recruiting keynote and parallel session speakers
- Publicising and promoting the event
- Handling delegate bookings and payments
- Handling speaker and venue expenses claims
- Greet delegates, assist speakers and facilitate the conference event

While Group Members hold particular role based responsibilities, it is expected that all members will multitask and support each other throughout the planning and delivery process.

Member Roles

All Conference Group members are assigned a role with particular responsibilities (see below). With some noted exceptions it is anticipated that Group Members will mutually agree on the adopted roles. Where a decision cannot be reached, the Chair can assign roles.

- **Chair:** Handles overall direction, coordination, themes etc. Chairs meetings and works closely with the MCDO to represent the MCSG and Directors' Committee's interests. In the first instance appointed by the MCSG.
- **Booking Operator:** Handles bookings and queries from delegates. Works with Finance Liaison where invoicing and billing matters are involved.
- **Finance Liaison:** Handles all income and expenditures including any speaker expenses, in close liaison and with support of the MC Treasurer, MCDO & MCCG Chair.
- **Marketing Operator:** Handles promotion, social media presence, contributes to web site material in liaison with the MCDO.
- **Speaker Liaison:** Handles contacting, recruiting and liaising with keynote and parallel session speaker talent.
- **Sponsorship Recruiter:** This is an envisaged future (2018-) role. This member will seek, obtain and manage sponsorship income. Will work closely with Finance Liaison where invoicing and income matters arise.
- **Venue Coordinator:** Handles catering, room booking, name badges and reprographics, signs, wifi. There is an implicit expectation that the hosting Director also provides them with support in this role.

The two Ex-officio group members are:

- **SDG Representative:** [Ex-officio] Feeds into planning processes and provides liaison with the SDG committee. Appointed by the MCSDG.
- **MCDO:** [Ex-officio] Provides governance and oversight as the MCSG and Directors' Committee proxy, along with inter-group liaison, as well as general facilitation and support for the MCCG Chair. Appointed by the MCSG.

Group Communication

Formal face-to-face MCCG meetings will be held regularly as defined by the Chair and the conference's needs, but likely no less frequently than every 6-8 weeks. Meetings will be held at within the MC region, as agreed by the Group. The Chair will facilitate meetings, ensuring papers are circulated beforehand. A nominated Group Member will record informal minutes and actions, which should be circulated ASAP. Between meetings Group Members should update the Chair weekly as to their progress (or lack) on any assigned tasks. Where not all Group Members can attend, the Chair can proceed without the absentees, making decisions and assigning tasks accordingly. Meetings will be informal, discursive and inclusive, with all Members expected to contribute to discussions, planning and decision making. Where an external steer is desired, it should be sought from the MCSG. While normally non-group members will not be present for meetings, they may be invited at the Chair's discretion.

It is anticipated that some form of cloud-based project management tool⁵ will be used to facilitate sharing of key information, resources and documents between group members, as well as other conventional means. These documents will gradually build a planning resource for future Group iterations. Transparency and openness will be embraced by the Group throughout, in terms of planning and documentation, with minutes and documents made available via the MC website. Group Members and their roles will also be identified on the MC website.

Review

An annual review cycle has been adopted and to this end, the Conference Group will meet once post-conference to review delegate feedback, reflect on their experiences and to prepare for any handover to incoming group members. Additionally, the Group's Chair will prepare an evaluative report, incorporating any proposed major amendments to the Conference Group's operations or documentation, for the Mercian SG and Directors. This report will subsequently be made available on the MC website.

Documentation Control

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⁵ E.g. Trello