Conference Group

Group Roles

Introduction

The following is an update and ancillary document to the Group Principles drawn up in 2017.[i] It reflects the evolution of the group and the conference format. Additionally, it is provided to offer an overview of group member specific responsibilities. Please refer to the other governing and policy information on this group for further information

Member Responsibilities

Overall responsibilities are to jointly plan, organise and assist in the hosting of the annual Collaboration conference. While the Chair holds overall accountability for delivering on task, all group members are jointly responsible for achieving all necessary operational activities relating to the successful delivery of this event. This will include, but not be limited to:

Pre-Event Planning

- Agreeing overall theme, venue and format
- Assessing speaker abstracts for suitability
- Attendance at all conference group planning meetings[ii]
- Conference ambassadors within own institution and professional networks
- Identifying, selecting and recruiting keynote and other speakers
- Outlining, scheduling and agreeing programme
- Promotion of call for speakers, delegates and general event awareness

Event Delivery

- Attendance at and facilitation of event
- Engaging with delegates and assisting speakers
- Pre-event warm-up visit/platform testing
- Session moderation and discussion facilitation

Post Event Wash-Up

- Handling speaker and venue expenses claims
- Providing reflective evaluation on their experience
- Reviewing feedback and insights for next planning cycle

Member Roles

Each group member holds one of a number of role-based responsibilities, as mutually agreed within the committee or in extremis appointed by the group Chair. However, as demands on each role vary from month to month, it is expected all members will support each other throughout the year. The following is an outline of each role and its responsibilities.[iii]

Chair	Overall responsibility for the planning, organisation and delivery of an annual Collaboration-wide conference. As such, with reference to input from the group members and Steering Group, defines the theme, title, format, keynote and event programme. Calls and chairs committee meetings, writes annual report and sets group policy, with reference to other group members and pending Steering Group approval. Draws support from and works closely with the Vice-Chair, Collaboration Officer and Group Sponsor. Reports and represents to the Steering Group and Directors on behalf of the group, in concert with the Officer and Sponsor. Acts as conference co-host with the Officer. Normally appointed as a Vice-Chair for a year, before progressing to Chair.
Vice-Chair	Deputises for and supports the Chair throughout their term in any and all activities and requirements as above, in preparation for assuming group leadership. Normally succeeds as the next Chair following the end of their predecessor's term of office[iv].
Communications & Programme Coordinator	With reference to the Chair and other members as needed collates speaker biographies, images, contacts and session abstracts, along with incorporated sponsor logos and other materials into programme. In collaboration with the Officer, drafts promotional event news items for the Collaboration website. Provides particular input into the programme outline.
Delegate Liaison	With reference to the Chair, handles bookings and enquiries from potential/actual delegates. In collaboration with the Officer, sets up booking forms. Collates delegate lists, alongside ensures joining information and programme shared successfully with delegates. Provides particular input into promoting conference bookings.
Speaker Liaison	With reference to the Chair, creates outline schedule and final programme. Handle relationship management and communication with speakers and keynote. Ahead of the event responsible for confirming speaker attendance, obtaining copies of slides and other materials, along with biography and session abstract details for programme. Responsible at the event for providing support to all speakers and troubleshooting any problems. For online events contributes to speaker training and testing sessions. In cooperation with the Chair and Vice, approaches and recruits the keynote speaker. Provides particular input into the call for speakers and collation of submissions

Sponsor Coordinator	With reference to the Chair, approaches, recruits and handles communication with potential sponsoring commercial companies. Liaise with and supports sponsor representative engagement during conference, as well as post event formal thank you communications. Provides logos and other material to Programme Coordinator as per sponsorship policy. Arranges for invoices and payment of sponsorship funds in concert with Collaboration Treasurer. Provides particular input to sponsor policy to chair.
Venue/Platform Coordinator	With reference to the Chair, leads on all venue[v] related tasks. For physical events handles areas including signage, catering, room booking, name badges, reprographics and Wi-Fi requirements. For online events handles areas including: technical support, session recording, troubleshooting and session facilitation. Additionally, in concert with local technical/media teams responsible for recording sessions, testing platforms and recording usage data. Provides particular input into event format.

Ex-Officio Roles

There are three group members who contribute officially as ex-officio individuals, but in practice continue to provide much needed input and insight alongside practical event support and facilitation.

Collaboration Officer	Provides governance and oversight as the Directors' Committee proxy, along with facilitating inter-group liaison. As part of their wider Collaboration activities conducts promotional, research and evaluative labour for the group. Provides clerical, strategic and operational support to the group Chair and Vice. Advises on and oversees group governance and policies. Employed by and appointed by the Collaboration Chair on behalf of the Mercian Collaboration.
Group Sponsor	A member of the Steering Group appointed as the group sponsor to advise at a strategic level alongside and provide a direct representative link between the two groups.
MSDG Representative	Feeds into planning processes and provides liaison with the Mercian Staff Development Group committee. Participates in the delivery and planning of the conference event as their time allows. Appointed by the MCSDG.

Standing Down

Group members normally stand-down from group membership after two, or at most, three years of service. While personal circumstances may force members to standdown sooner, members should endeavour to see out their terms of office. Where this may be an issue, they should bring it to the Chair's attention at the earliest convenience. Departing members are encouraged to provide the Chair with insight and feedback on their experiences, and handover documentation where suitable, to help support future iterations of the group.

Contact & Further Information

For more information on these roles or any element in this document, please contact the current Conference Group Chair, or the Collaboration Officer (mercianlibrariescollaboration@gmail.com).

Endnotes

[i] See: Conference Group Principles: https://merciancollaboration.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/Conference%20Group-Principles-V1.0.pdf

[ii] The annual cycle of meetings includes between 5-8 meetings, with 60% individual attendance normally expected. As of writing, all meetings are online – but it is anticipated for the 22/23 academic year some f-2-f meetings may be hosted.

[iii] This is by no means an exhaustive list, and the Chair may require additional tasks from any and all members, as per the needs of the group and event.

[iv] Terms of office for the Chair's have varied in the past. Currently the expectation is a chair will have served at least one year as a committee member, then one as Vice-Chair and finally a year as Chair before standing down from the group altogether. This makes them one of the most experienced members of the group.

[v] For online events, for venue read platform.