

GECCO 2025 Session Chair Instructions

Important Things to Note:

- All talks should be given LIVE - pre-recorded videos are meant only as a back-up, to be used sparingly in the case of serious technical difficulties.
- Onsite speakers should bring their slides to the venue on a USB to upload them to the session room computer ahead of the session. During sessions, there will be no facility to work with participants' own laptops.
- For full paper presentations: Speakers are allocated 20 minutes for their presentation: 16 minutes for set up and presentation and 4 minutes for questions.
- For Hot Off the Press presentations: The oral presentation slots will be 10 minutes long, with 8 minutes for the presentation and 2 minutes for questions.
- Speakers should adhere to the time allotted to them in order to keep the conference running smoothly.
- During the talk, the audience is allowed to ask questions in the Zoom chat; however, the speakers are free to choose to either answer them on the spot or wait until the end of the talk. In the latter case, if there are other (oral) questions from the audience during discussion, we recommend intertwining them with those from the chat in order to engage the audience.
- Zoom settings: The settings for all Zoom meetings at GECCO have been pre-set and locked at the admin level. They cannot be modified for individual sessions.

Your Assigned Session(s):

- We suggest you place the day and time into your personal online calendar along with a reminder. You have already been assigned as "Chair" to the correct session on Whova – please double check this and let us know in case of any issues.
- Double-check that the timezone displayed in Whova is local time (Central European Summer Time or GMT+02:00). Observe that times in the program booklet are local times.
- Prior to the session, you should both familiarize yourself with the data on the Production Schedule for the session(s) you are managing.
- Understand who the session presenters are, the order in which they will present, and which track(s) the papers are from.
- Go to the meeting room in which your session will be held at the host hotel **15-minutes prior to the start of the session**. This is crucial, because, given that the event is hybrid, the student volunteer, the presenters, and you need to work as a team. Many of the technical operations will be performed by the student volunteers (who will also arrive early). Specifically, the student volunteers will assist with the following technical tasks:

- Help online presenters with any last-minute tests
- Switch between lectern settings to facilitate onsite versus online presentations, and the participation of the online audience in the Q&A for onsite talks
- Monitor the Zoom chat for any online questions and raise their hand to bring those to your attention (during the Q&A)
- Access and play the pre-recorded video in the case of a no-show
- Disable the recording for those papers that should not be recorded (and enable the recording after that, if needed)

Session Logistics:

- Onsite sessions in Málaga: should a presenter arrive virtually, direct them to log into the Zoom meeting (accessible through Whova) and they will be allowed to present in the same order as if they were onsite.
- Begin the session at the time the session is scheduled to begin; do not start early, as participants may be moving between sessions/presentations.
- The Session Chair should provide a very short introduction to the session and then introduce each speaker in turn. Ensure to welcome the onsite and online audience and explain that questions from the online audience can be posed either by raising a virtual hand or entering it into the Zoom chat.
- In the unlikely event that a speaker faces serious technical issues, or a speaker does not show up, the Session Chair(s) may direct the Volunteer to play the pre-recorded video of his/her presentation. The recording will be played on their laptop while screen sharing it to the online audience via Zoom.
- Moderate the Q&A session, taking questions from the online audience (if hands are raised), the chat (the student volunteer will raise their hand and read those when prompted) and the onsite audience. If there are no questions, ask one yourself (time permitting). Do not start the next presentation early (or late).
- The audience is encouraged to ask questions in the chat. We recommend intertwining these questions with the ones from the live audience in order to better engage the audience. Make sure not to forget about the questions from the online audience, e.g. checking whether any virtual hands are raised and / or the student volunteer has raised their hand, indicating readiness to read out questions from the chat.
- Ensure that the schedule is respected by the speakers and that the session ends on time. Follow the scheduled order of talks, as well as presentation times. Give all speakers a time warning 5 minutes before the expected termination of their presentation.
- Once the session is over, invite the audience to ask remaining questions offline through Whova.
- Onsite presentations will be recorded (with the exception of those whose authors stated they do not agree with recording).

Session Timeline Details:

15 min – 0 min before session time

- Volunteer, Session Chair(s) and in-person presenters arrive at the meeting room.
- Remote presenters log into Zoom.
- The Volunteer will do a last-minute audio/visual check of presenters and review any last minute details.

At the session start time

- The Volunteer will ask the online audience to keep their video off and to mute as the session begins.
- Session Chair(s) will offer a short introduction to the session and the first speaker.

During the session

- Each presenter will present their slides in sequence and then take questions from the audience, both onsite and via Zoom.
- The Session Chair(s) and Volunteer will keep the presentations moving along within the schedule for the session.
- The student volunteer can view any questions from virtual attendees coming in through the Zoom chat and raise their hand to draw the chair's attention. During the Q&A, the Session Chair will invite the student volunteer to ask those questions on behalf of the online participants.
- The Session Chair and/or Volunteer(s) may pass the microphone to those asking questions. Remark: even if the room is small, if no microphone will be used, people attending remotely will not hear the question.
- In the unlikely event that a speaker faces serious technical issues, or the speaker does not show up, the Session Chair(s) and Volunteer may opt to play the pre-recorded video of his/her presentation. In this case, the pre-recording can be played on the laptop and screen shared to the audience.

5 min before the end of each presentation

- The Session Chair(s) will give presenters a 5-minute warning.

Post-session

- The Session Chair(s) will offer thanks and wrap the session up.