Chair and moderator best practices

Table of Contents

Participating in Congress as a session moderator or chair should be an exciting, not a daunting, experience. To ensure you have an enjoyable experience, we have broken down all the steps of moderating a virtual session for you!

Connect with your association

Reach out to your association before mid-May to confirm the date, time, session format (i.e. Zoom meeting or webinar), and the speakers for the session that you will be moderating or chairing. Your association will also provide you with a biography of the speaker(s). Feel free to utilize this session scenario example (*coming soon*) to establish some important details within the session and with the speaker(s).

Important: Connecting with your association and the session speaker(s) is integral to ensuring a successful virtual session on event day.

Successfully facilitating Q&A on Zoom

One of your primary roles as a session chair/moderator is to monitor and respond to the flow of attendee questions, and identify the questions that the presenter should answer. The steps to answer attendee questions will vary, depending on whether you are the chair/moderator of a Zoom webinar or meeting session.

Answering a question in a Zoom webinar Q&A

As attendee questions come through, your screen should look something like the image below:
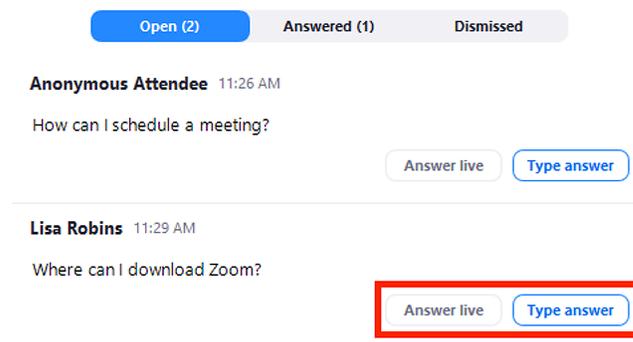
Follow these steps to answer attendee questions as they pop-up in Q&A box:

1. Click "**Answer live**" to answer aloud (ex: if a speaker has answered the question during their presentation content).
2. Click "**Type Answer**" to type back a response.
3. Hover over the question to "**Dismiss**".

Answering a question in a Zoom meeting

Regular Zoom meetings do not have a Q&A function. Instead, attendees can ask their questions through the "**Chat**" feature. An attendee may also "**Raise their Hand**" to react with non-verbal feedback. Learn more about managing nonverbal feedback in meetings here.

Organizing participant's questions

To successfully run a Q&A session as a moderator/chair, you will need to organize attendee questions as they come in, regardless of whether you're in a Zoom webinar or meeting. We suggest that you have a blank Word document at the ready to copy and paste questions into, as they come in. You can visit the Zoom Help Centre for more information on managing Q&A.

Important: Start monitoring the "**Q&A**" and/or "**Chat**" feature from the beginning of the session so you don't miss any questions!

Before your session

Know your schedule

Your first step is to identify when your sessions are taking place and verify that they do not overlap. You can do this by searching your name in the Virtual Event Place (VEP) platform. All sessions that you are moderating or chairing will be listed under "**Webcasts**".

Important: All moderators and presenters must enter their session's Zoom room **a minimum of 15 minutes** prior to the start time of the session. For example, if your session begins at 10:00 MT, you need to enter the Zoom meeting at 9:45 MT.

Accessing Zoom

The steps to access Zoom are slightly different, depending on whether your session is taking place via a Zoom meeting or a Zoom webinar.

Entering your Zoom meeting session
There are a number of ways that you can access and enter your Zoom meeting session:
- Search your name in the Virtual Event Place (VEP platform),
- Refer to your personal Event Agenda, or
- Go through your association's greeting table.

Regardless of the method you choose, you will want to click on the red "**Join Webcast**" button and wait for the Event Technician and/or Room Monitor to let you into the room.

Entering your Zoom webinar session

You will receive a Zoom webinar link two to seven days before your session via email. You will also receive a reminder email the day before your session. On the day of your event, open up the email 15 minutes before your scheduled session start time, and click on the unique Zoom webinar link to access your session.

Note: The Zoom webinar will not be live until activated by the session Event Technician and / or Room Monitor.

Green room time

Before every session, you will receive dedicated time to go over last minute items. The scheduled 15 minutes prior to your session start time is classified as your 'green room time'. During this time, the session Event Technician and/or Room Monitor will complete a video and audio quality check with you. As a moderator/chair, this is also your chance to confirm pre-arranged presentation elements such as, overall session flow, Q&A organization, and timekeeping, with the session speaker.

Need a refresher on Zoom meeting or webinar functions? Here's a helpful guide!

During your session

Your tasks will vary depending on the session that you are moderating or chairing. Tasks could include introducing the session, talking to attendees in-between presentations (e.g. introducing the next speaker, giving special instructions, etc.), facilitating the Q&A session, and giving concluding remarks.

To help you develop your script ahead of the session, we have crafted some sample scripts for you to customize and update as needed.

Introduction example script
- Welcome/Land acknowledgement*
- Special instructions for the session
    - Recording session or not
    - Accessibility options available
- Q&A instructions
    - **For meeting**: You can ask your questions in the "**Chat**". Please send them to "**Everyone**" so we can all appreciate everyone's interesting thoughts!
    - **For webinar**: Please use the "**Q&A**" feature to ask your questions. You can do so by name or anonymously. Refrain from using the "**Chat**" for questions, as we will only be gathering questions from the "**Q&A**".
- Speaker Introduction(s)
- Begin first presentation

*Please note that land acknowledgements can be done at the first session of the day of your conference, or at the beginning of each session. This document has sample land acknowledges that you can refer to for Congress 2021.

Organized by
Organisé par :

In partnership with
En partenariat avec :

FEDERATION FOR THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES | FÉDÉRATION DES SCIENCES HUMAINES

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Between presenters example script

Thank you, [***first presenter***]...

Tip: Be ready to jump in with fun and interesting anecdotes if the second presenter is having technical difficulties. Keep it light and breezy – the audience will appreciate it!

Q&A example script

- **After last speaker**
  - Thank you, [***first presenter***]...
- **Q&A**

Tip: Ensure you are ready with some of your own questions for the presenter in case participants are still gathering their thoughts, or waiting for someone else to go first!

Closing remarks example script

If Q&A is running out of time
- [*If applicable*]: If we didn't get to your question, please visit [***first, second presenter***] in the networking lounge under [***what the Zoom room is called]*** so we can continue this lively discussion right after this session!

Closing remarks
- Thank you to speaker(s) and attendees
- Program highlights/next session

Best practices

Keep these points in mind when preparing for your session:

- Connect with your association and session speakers prior to discuss logistics.
- Prepare your script and read the speaker biographies prior to Congress.
- Enter your Zoom session **15 minutes before the session start time**.
- Have a glass of water nearby.
- Use an attendee's preferred pronouns when addressing their question. If they have not displayed their preferred pronouns in the Zoom name, call them by their full name.
- You are the leader of the session so read the room – a little comic relief never hurt anyone!