SMBE conference guidelines

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Statement of diversity

SMBE has a strong commitment to diversity. Organizers should place emphasis on diversity of participants, including gender and geographic diversity, at every level of the meeting, including but not limited to the selection of plenary speakers, symposium organizers, and invited and contributed talks. Please ensure that this criterion is considered throughout the organization of the conference. Information on gender and career stage should be collected such that analysis of diversity is possible. Given the difficulty of making review of contributed abstracts entirely blind to gender, our experience is that it is better to be open where local laws permit openness, i.e. to pass gender information or at least first names to symposium organizers together with a reminder of the nature of implicit biases.

Professional conference Organizer (PCO)

Each conference is organized jointly by SMBE's contracted Professional Conference Organizer (PCO) and the Local Organizing Committee. The role of the PCO is described in its contract with SMBE.

Local Organizing Committee (LOC)

The SMBE conference Local Organizing Committee should include Local Organizers and one member of SMBE Council. The role of the Council member on the LOC is to make sure that the conference organizers adhere to these guidelines. Additionally, one organizer of the meeting from a previous year and one organizer of the meeting for the next year should be included as part of the LOC for the purpose of continuity.

The LOC will be required to sign a formal agreement with SMBE agreeing to its responsibilities.

The LOC should send any presentations it makes – usually their proposal and post-conference feedback – to the SMBE Executive Administrator for archiving.

Financing

It is very important that the meeting is fully costed, with costs borne by the meeting and not by the Society. A rolling budget should be set up with precise costs and with frequent updates on income and expenditure. The Society will provide seed money which will ultimately cover travel costs for the invited speakers. These funds can be made available at any time and used temporarily for other expenditures (such as reserving a venue). In addition, in the event that a short-term loan is required for down-payments on the venue and suppliers, then this can be arranged. Be aware that this loan will be issued in US dollars and all currency change costs, as well as the danger of currency fluctuations, must be borne by the conference. The Society will also pay for on site childcare, as well as registrations for a select group including Council members, Associate Editors, and various other awardees stipulated in the Awards section. The budget should be based on reasonably conservative attendance projections such that all other costs beyond those specifically listed above will be paid by registration fees. Should costs exceed projections by more than 10%, and/or should attendance drop more than 10% what is required for budget neutrality, the Society must be notified immediately.

Size of conference

The conference can currently expect between 1000 and 1500 delegates, although we have seen considerable fluctuations in this number depending on factors such as convenience and cost of travel. Organizers are advised to make two alternative plans for a smaller and a larger conference - i.e. make plans for a smaller conference but include options to expand if registration numbers seem to indicate the meeting will be large. This should happen at the same location with options for a larger auditorium that can hold the entire conference. Conference attendance should be capped at 2000.

Approximate timelines

When	What	Notes
Last day of the conference of the preceding year.	Initial website goes live	Includes 1) venue; 2) opportunities for sponsorship; 3) composition of the organizing committee; 4) contact information for the conference organizer.
10 months before the date of the conference.	Call for symposia opens. Deadline should specify time zone, and specify 11:59pm or 12:01am rather than midnight to avoid confusion.	See 'Call for symposia' below.
9 months before the conference	Call for symposia closes	
8.5 months before the conference	Notification of successful symposia	
8 months before the conference	Titles and short descriptions of all symposia should be placed on the conference website.	
8 months before the conference	Early bird registration opens	This deadline offers discount on the registration fee. Past experience indicates that 50- 75% of delegates will take advantage of this early registration deadline. Early bird registration should be advertised to the society membership, in the society journals, through the social media, on EvolDir, etc.
7 months before the conference	Abstract submission and award applications open	Award details are subject to change by SMBE Council from year to year, need to co-ordinate in advance and often alter previous year's submission site.
6 months before the conference	Abstract submission and award applications close (though it is common to extend by one week, depending on number of submissions and hiccups in submission website).	Share Fitch and Young Investigator applications with Past President and committee they assemble, undergrad awards with other designated Council member.
2-3 weeks prior to council decision of travel awards	Deadline for symposium organizers' talk selection	

2 weeks before early bird registration closes	Applicants notified of both award and talk decisions. These can go out in two separate emails as soon as the respective decisions are made. Additional talks may be awarded after the initial emailing, e.g. if moving a Fitch finalist out of symposium clears a slot.	This is essential to allow applicants time to register at Early Bird rate especially if they haven't received a travel/registration award. Some individuals who do not receive funding or are not selected for a talk will not register. There can be loss of many participants as a result.
4 months before the conference	Early bird registration closes, full price registration opens	
2 months before the conference	Full programme available online	
Until the conference begins	Full cost registration	Full cost online registration; allows delegates to submit an abstract, though as an additional encouragement to register early, it should be stipulated that late abstracts can be considered only for poster presentations.
Either on the penultimate day of the meeting or up to two days later	Post-meeting survey	To be emailed to all meeting participants and able to run on a computer OR phone

Structure of the conference

Duration

The preferred conference length is at 3.5 days with the acceptable range from 3 to 4 days (not counting the day of the council meeting/opening reception). The LOC is encouraged but not required to organize Public Lectures on Evolution/Molecular Evolution either immediately before or immediately after the meeting.

Council meeting

One council meeting to be held in a room that accommodates the council plus outside participants (about 16 people altogether). Light breakfast, lunch, and all day coffee, tea, and light refreshments should be provided. This meeting will usually take place on the first day of the conference, starting at 8 or 9 am and must end at least 15 minutes before any other scheduled events.

Scientific content

Limitations of oral presentations per person

Each person is limited to one scientific oral presentation (either invited or contributed) for the entire annual SMBE meeting. If the same person is invited to several symposia, the person is given a choice of in which symposium s/he would like to present. However, if outreach, educational and community-based symposia are planned, the above limitations do not apply to these talks. In other words, one may have a scientific talk *and* a different sort of talk.

Presenter information

Each presenter should have clear instructions on where their presentation is going to be held, when they have been allocated a speaking time, and how to upload their slides.

Plenary lectures

There should be 3-4 plenary lectures, which are attended by all delegates, and usually last one hour. The number of plenary lectures should be limited to keep costs down and maximize the number of multi-speaker symposia. Refer to the 'Statement of Diversity' above in the selection of plenary speakers.

One of these plenary lectures is the Nei Lecture, named in honour of Professor Masatoshi Nei, and is given by the President of the society. This lecture should not occur on the first evening after the President has just chaired Council meeting, but otherwise early placement is encouraged. SMBE has funds for this lecture to be published in MBE. The other plenary lectures are invited by the LOC and the invitees are usually fully funded in the meeting budget (registration fee, travel, and accommodation).

Special symposia

Fitch Symposium

The Fitch Symposium occurs as an exclusive event when no other events or symposia are taking place.

Graduate students and postdocs in their first year of their first postdoc are eligible to apply to present their work in the Fitch Symposium, which is a plenary symposium, again attended by all delegates at the conference. A committee is convened each year by the Past-President to select the 8 talks from thesubmitted abstracts. The President-Elect will moderate the Fitch Symposium. The President will convene a committee to select the winner. Participants chosen both by a symposium organizer and for the Fitch should present at the Fitch Symposium, with their specialized symposium slot assigned to a runner-up.

Faculty awards symposium

There may also be a separate symposium for recipients of the Allan Wilson, Margaret Dayhoff, Motoo Kimura, and Community Service Awards. Recipients of these awards should all be given the opportunity to speak at the meeting, either in the special symposium, or in slots set aside for them in an Open Symposium. The Council members responsible for these awards should be informed of the latest

dates that lectures can incorporated into the programme.

Open Symposium

The LOC is strongly encouraged to include an Open Symposium at which ground-breaking work not covered by the accepted symposium topics can be presented. Faculty award recipients are expected to present in this symposium if the LOC elects to not have a faculty awards symposium. Should faculty award recipients have been selected already to speak in a regular session, they and only they will be allowed two talks. All other selections are at the discretion of the LOC.

Parallel symposia

The LOC should have a (usually audible) mechanism to ensure that concurrent sessions stay on time and try to minimize similarity in content or theme of overlapping concurrent sessions.

Associate Editors' Symposium

As a thank you for service, an incentive for attendance, and given a history of high quality, the inclusion of a symposium exclusive to MBE and GBE Associate Editors is encouraged, as a specialized form of an Open Symposium. Presenters will be selected by the journal Editors-in-Chief from among Associate Editors who have submitted abstracts but who were not accepted by a specialized symposium. The Editors-in-Chief will chair.

Number of symposia

There should be approximately 20-30 symposia, usually with no more than four parallel sessions. SMBE Council considers that if there are more than four parallel sessions then delegates feel they are missing too many talks (fewer than four is fine), while less than 20 symposia would restrict the intellectual breadth of and participants' opportunities to speak at the conference. Moreover, recent experience has shown that more sessions and/or additional plenary speakers can put the meeting into financial jeopardy. Symposia receiving more abstracts should be assigned longer blocks of time than those receiving fewer, so when similar symposium applications are received, it is best to either choose one of them, or else engineer a voluntary merger, rather than require participants to think strategically about which closely related symposium to submit the same abstract to.

It is at the LOC's discretion how to allocate time among submitted specialized symposia, LOC-run specialized symposia (often selected after a gap is detected among submitted symposia), Associate Editors' symposia, and Open Symposia. Note that the more specialized and editors' symposia there are, the fewer slots there are for submitted talks, and that the more specialized symposia there are, the greater the expense in speaker travel.

Call for symposia

Two distinct descriptions should be solicited in the symposium call: one terse and so suited for use on the conference website to help attendees decide where to submit their presentation abstract, and another additionally "selling" the timeliness of the symposium to facilitate evaluation by the LOC.

The call for symposia should indicate that if a symposium is selected, the invited speakers will have their registration fee, reasonable accommodation and travel costs covered by the conference (at the level of approximately $2000 per invited speaker against receipts; adjusted reimbursement for intra- and intercontinental travel is allowed). The support for invited speakers must be maintained by the LOC under all circumstances.

One or at most two confirmed invited speakers per symposium should be requested in response to the call for symposia.

Selection of the symposia

Most symposia are selected by the LOC on the basis of proposals, and depending on whether the same topics were covered by symposia at recent SMBE meetings. Symposia should reflect the broad range of interests in the SMBE community, not simply the most popular topics. The LOC may choose to organize their own symposia, following the symposium organizer guidelines at the end of this section, to fill in perceived gaps.

Symposium proposals should include a summary of the topic, why it is timely for the SMBE meeting, and which speakers have been invited and confirmed. If there are two or more proposals on the same topic, the LOC has a choice of selecting one proposal or merging two or more proposals. Merging two or more symposia either reduces the number of invited speakers that can be supported by SMBE or the number of slots available for contributed talks and is therefore discouraged unless the number of invited speakers can be reduced.

Each symposium organizer can only select one talk from her/his own research group. That includes his/her own talk. In the event of too few submissions, exceptions to this rule may permit one additional talk from the organizer's group, but only after consultation with the LOC.

Timeslots

Recent conferences have settled on a structure where a 'unit' of time is 15 minutes. This includes time for questions (usually, 12 minutes for the talk and 3 minutes for questions and movement between rooms). This makes it especially important to have rooms in close proximity to each other. Invited speakers thus can be allocated 15 or 30 minutes. It is also prudent to remind symposium organizers that delegates frequently move between symposia, so it is useful to be sure that the layout of seating is conducive to movement between rooms.

Selecting speakers

It is acceptable for a delegate to be allowed to submit their abstract to more than one symposium (though logistically, it is probably best to restrict this to two symposia). However, the exact details of this process are to be worked out by the LOC. In the end, the LOC will match delegates and symposia and communicate to both the symposium organizers and the delegates the outcome of this process.

Each symposium of contributed talks will select its preferred speaker list from the list of contributed talk abstracts, taking speaker diversity into consideration (gender, ethnicity, national origin, etc.; see Statement of Diversity above) as well as a range of career stages (student/postdoc/junior/senior investigators). The LOC is responsible for ensuring that symposium organizers adequately address diversity. If the organizers do not adequately address diversity, the LOC may take action up to and including substitution of speakers.

Alternate speakers should be chosen for all symposia, to allow prompt substitution if a speaker gets "promoted" (eg to a Fitch talk) or is unable to attend the conference. .

Final composition of symposia must be determined *before the Early Bird registration closes* as it affects many scientists' travel funding, and no later than 4 months before the conference.

Poster sessions

Poster presenters frequently feel that they do not get adequate opportunity to present their work, so it is important that each poster presenter is given enough time both to talk to other delegates and to have the posters visible (at breaks, etc.). Poster sessions should have accompanying refreshments and each poster should have at least two sessions when they are available to be seen. Although not always possible, it is desirable to have sufficient space that all posters can be viewed throughout the meeting, so that participants (and poster judges) have plenty of opportunity for viewing. The website should indicate when posters can go up. Poster space should only be made available to participants who have registered and sent payment, to minimize "no-shows." Obvious, easily read signage is required to help delegates navigate the poster sessions to find the posters in which they are most interested. Grouping posters by symposium and/or subject area is highly desirable where possible. Posters submitted by undergraduates should not be segregated into an undergraduates-only area, but we encourage marking them with a "don't bite the newbie" or similar flag.

Social events

Please provide vegetarian/vegan options with all catering. Please provide quality non-alcoholic beverages as alternatives at events where alcohol is served.

Breaks and catering

It is expected that the conference will provide morning coffee break, lunch on all days, afternoon coffee breaks on each day, preferably with some small snack (fruit, cookies, pastry, etc.), and poster sessions.

Welcome reception

This typically provides ample snacks, enough for all participants, in addition to at most one or two drink tickets. Additional drinks can usually be purchased at the bar.

Gala Dinner (banquet)

Delegates can choose to pay extra for this dinner or choose not to attend.

Awardees present at the meeting, including all Fitch participants, should have free Gala tickets. A few venues include an after-dinner speaker, and some venues include dancing. Drink tickets may be provided at registration for the Gala, with additional drinks available for purchase.

Awards Ceremony

If the awards are not distributed at the Gala Dinner, then 20-30 minutes should be set aside for an Awards Ceremony in the middle of the last morning (to allow enough time for decisions to be made on poster prizes and to maximize attendance), typically adjacent to a plenary talk to maximize the number of attendees in the room. This ceremony is usually combined with an invitation to the next meeting (10-15 minutes).

While not all poster participants typically attend the Gala, due to cost, unless it is covered in registration, neither will all participants attend a separate Awards Ceremony, due to other choices on the last day, including packing and checking out of the hotel.

Post-conference survey

Each delegate should be invited to evaluate the conference, either using a paper form that can be dropped into a box onsite or an online form that can be completed either on a computer or smart phone. The survey should be organized by the PCO and its content checked by the SMBE Council representative before distribution.

Certificates of attendance

Some delegates will require a certificate of attendance for their home institutions or for funding agencies that have supported their travel. These certificates should be provided on request and made available at the conference venue or sent after the meeting.

Post meeting reporting

Meeting organizers are required to provide a summary document to the Council after the meeting, including the diversity statistics of the meeting participants, (gender, geography, and career stage). Therefore, providing the option for participants to self-identify as part of the registration process is desirable.

Awards (see http://www.smbe.org/smbe/AWARDS.aspx)

SMBE provides several types of pre-conference awards, which should be administered via the conference abstract submission system. It is essential that time is allowed for awardees to be chosen and applicants notified before Early Bird registration closes so that attendees can make informed financial decisions about registration options and travel; a minimum of three weeks is required and more is preferable.

Those receiving awards that include travel need to pay in the first instance and will then be reimbursed by SMBE according to the terms of the particular award. Wherever possible, registration will be awarded up front via a free registration code, to avoid having award recipients waiting for reimbursement. To be eligible for an award, applicants must be SMBE members.

SMBE's Faculty, Best Paper, Fitch, and Best Poster awards are presented at the Awards Ceremony. Faculty and Best Paper awardees, as well as all eight Fitch presenters, should receive free Gala Dinner

tickets. Poster award winners will only receive complimentary dinner tickets if the award ceremony is during the Gala Dinner.

1. Faculty awards

Faculty award-winners are reimbursed for registration and travel to the meeting. SMBE Council will select award winners, with public information on who won available well in advance.

2. Fitch awards

All those selected to present in the Fitch Symposium (i.e., the eight finalists) are eligible for a free Gala Dinner ticket, and will be reimbursed for registration, travel, and accommodation. The Council will appoint two separate committees, one to review the initial applicants to the Fitch symposium and another to determine the winner among the finalists (see timeline above).

3. Undergraduate mentoring and diversity travel awards

SMBE will pay registration, banquet ticket, reasonable travel costs, and a capped accommodation allowance to be set each year. The LOC should recommend a reasonable travel allowance on the basis of their local knowledge of modest but convenient options. Ten undergraduate mentoring and diversity awards are available each year to undergraduate students submitting abstracts.

One or two SMBE Councilors assigned by the Council will take charge of selecting undergraduate awards, with a recommendation to balance funding those selected to give oral presentations where necessary with the goal of the Statement of Diversity. That Councilor(s) will find a mentor for each student receiving an award so that they can be guided before and during the conference. That Councilor(s) will also arrange first-night dinner for all 10 students, their mentors and themselves. The PCO should also reserve 10 banquet tickets for the awardees (to be charged to SMBE) and the LOC should liaise with the Councilors in order to find an appropriate restaurant for the mentoring dinner, to take place after the opening reception.

4. Young Investigator (graduate and postdoc) travel awards

SMBE will pay for registration, reasonable travel costs to the meeting, and a capped accommodation allowance to be set each year in discussions between Council and LOC.

SMBE provides graduate and postdoc travel awards (typically about 60-100 in total) for the purpose of enhancing gender and geographic diversity where known as well as rewarding merit. The awards are chosen from eligible applicants who are SMBE members and who have expressed a desire to be considered for such awards. The Past-President will head a committee to determine the awards, in a combined process with the Fitch and Registration awards.

5. Poster awards

The poster prizes will be decided by a committee convened by the President-Elect. Poster prizes consist of up to 9 prizes of $500 each, to be distributed in the 3 categories of postdoc, graduate student, and undergraduate prizes (it does not have to be 3 each).

6. Best GBE and MBE papers awards

Award recipients (1-2 for each journal) receive registration waivers, travel awards to attend the meeting, and a Gala ticket.

7. Registration awards

These are registration only awards, typically about 50 in total. These are generally runners-up for the Fitch or other young investigator awards.

8. Carer awards

SMBE recognizes that many members are also carers and that these personal responsibilities can present a major challenge to attending scientific meetings, and hence to career advancement. Carers know best how to care for their own relatives and what their needs are. In some cases, members may themselves require a carer so that they can attend the meeting. Any SMBE member who has a child, cares for a dependent adult at the time of the conference, or is in need of personal assistance, and is also attending the SMBE annual meeting, may apply for this award. If the member has already been chosen

for another travel award or giving an invited presentation in a symposium, the member may still apply for this additional funding. Priority will be given to applicants who have demonstrated need and/or are in early stages of their academic careers (e.g., graduate students, postdocs, pre-tenure or within 6 years of starting their first independent lab). The SMBE Business Office will be in contact with all recipients to help with the collection of the required documents.

 Information about Carer awards should be included in emails promoting conference registration. Applicants should be informed to email the person responsible for the current year at the same time that they register for the conference, and payment for registration should be organized such that applicants are not deterred from registering because of uncertainty about child care provision, e.g. by allowing payment by postdated bank transfer.

Registration

The registration site should be structured so that registration is only possible after accepting our policies on harassment, discrimination and liability. We encourage the development of questions to solicit disability accommodations. We suggest the use of questions such as "do you need a chair next to your poster?" that solicit positive answers from those who do not identify as disabled, but may eg be pregnant or elderly.

Payment for registration

The online registration system should accept all major credit and debit cards using the conventional inputting mechanism. Credit card fees charged to the conference should be less than 3% per transaction.

Registration fees

SMBE members receive discounted registration. The discount for SMBE members must be at least $30, but a higher differential between member and non-member registration is allowed. Students and postdocs should be given a further discounted registration rate as well; the discount should be larger for graduate students than for postdocs. The conference registration page should allow conference delegates the opportunity to join SMBE on the spot, e.g. by linking to the SMBE website membership page in a new window (currently http://www.smbe.org/smbe/MEMBERSHIP.aspx). Finally, while most registrants will use the website, it should also be possible to register onsite ('walk-ins').

Registration data

Registration data, including lists of delegates, should only be given to SMBE officials and used for SMBE business. Third parties, including organizers of future conferences, must not be given the lists without express permission from SMBE. Personal data should not be collected unless needed (e.g. legal name might be needed for visa-related letters but professional name is sufficient in all other cases) or helpful for the aim of promoting diversity.

Registration data on career stage determine eligibility for undergraduate/graduate student poster and talk awards, and allow SMBE to maintain a participant database with student or postdoc status recorded. The conference organizers must maintain a database of participants with this information, as well as abstract numbers and titles as separate entries, email addresses, affiliations, etc.

Registration should include self-identification items as follows:
- career stage (faculty, postdoc, graduate student, undergraduate, other, prefer not to say)
- if local laws allow, gender (female, male, non-binary/third gender, prefer to self-describe, prefer not to say)

Registration giveaways at the meeting

Printed conference material should be kept to a minimum. Sponsors should be encouraged to provide advertisements and information on the conference website or app or instead of printed flyers.

Badges

Each delegate should be provided with a badge. This must not include advertising promotion for any journal or society other than MBE/GBE and SMBE, though non-journal sponsors may sponsor lanyards. Badges should give name in large letters, and also give affiliation, preferably printed on both sides –

additional information is typically not necessary. An exception is badges that designate Editors and Associate Editors of the journals as well as a separate designation for Council members, and/or LOC. These have traditionally taken the form of sticky ribbons added to badges. Badges should preferably be made of environmentally friendly materials.

Other swag (bags, bottles, USB thumb drives, etc.)
Should be kept to a minimum to reduce environmental impact and should avoid advertising for journals directly competing with society journals.

Conference website, programme, and app

SMBE conference promotion should consider environmental impact and minimize the use of printed materials.

Website
Must include
- promotion of Travel and Carer awards
- SMBE policies on harassment and broadcasting (text in Appendix to this document)

All images either posted online or used in emails related to the conference should be approved by the Council liaison and take gender balance and diversity into consideration regarding the people shown in the images. When possible, images from actual previous SMBE meetings should be used.

Programme
The timetable should ideally be available in three formats:
- "at-a-glance" format, simply detailing the session/symposia times and locations.
- a more detailed version with each speaker shown in column format so that parallel talks are on the same row. This helps participants plan their schedule. Once the meeting starts, it should be updated live online (or at least daily), since changes do arise.
- a detailed online-only booklet with each speaker listed along with all co-authors, affiliations, and abstract.

Be sure that all authors are visible in the complete online program, not just the presenting author, since many people choose to attend a talk based on the laboratory or senior author. It is helpful if this information can be provided in column format.

The programme should include SMBE policies on harassment and broadcasting (text in Appendix) and an email contact to report any violations of these policies.

The most updated printed or printable conference programme should be the version with concurrent sessions in columns and concurrent talks in rows to make it easy to choose a path.

Additional requirements for the online programme
A participant list should be provided in the web programme.

The entire conference program, complete with timetables, should be made available for download to laptops or mobile devices, usually in PDF or Excel format.

The online programme should also contain all the logistical details for the conference, including the best and most cost-effective means of ground and air transportation to the meeting location.

Essential conference app features
- Available in both iPhone and Android formats
- Useable offline, since many travelers do not have a data plan and some hotels charge fees for wifi. Wifi quality can also be unreliable at large meeting venues.
- If possible should not require registration (unless necessary for those who want to customize it, for example to create a personalized program)
- Updateable and updated daily

- Include first author name, surname, and talk title, hyperlinked to abstract with all authors.
- Allow announcements
- Include SMBE policies on harassment and social media (text in Appendix) with quick email link to report violations
- Include quick link so that a poster presenter can invite another meeting participant to her/his poster. (This should not require composing an email each time.)
- Include, if possible, the ability to create a personalized schedule, selecting talks and/or abstracts to attend, by clicking on (such as "liking" or saving to schedule) either the talk title, speaker name, or abstract from any of its views. This may include the option to set reminders. Reminders, alerts, or notifications (for example of poster sessions closing or a talk about to start) should always be **inaudible**.

Developing the use of either the conference or app or a simple physical noticeboard is encouraged to help match participants seeking postdoc positions with PIs offering them.

Venue
Rooms
The conference venue should have at least one room that can hold at least 80% of delegates. Past experience indicates that for the plenary talks approximately 80% of the delegates will attend. Therefore, it is preferable that there is a room to hold this number. If this is not possible, then there should be a facility to relay the plenary lectures to another comfortable room via video link.

The venue should additionally have enough rooms for all parallel sessions and these should be sufficiently large to accommodate approximately one third of the conference, given the difficulty in predicting the numbers of delegates that attend any given talk. The rooms should be located no more than a 1-2 min walk from each other and have seating or aisles arranged to facilitate movement between sessions.

Kindly ask the venue to refrain from using air freshener during the conference in all locations, including registration desk and lobbies. Some participants are allergic to it and it exposes all participants to poor air quality.

Free, secure wifi should be available throughout the venue.

Onsite childcare
Organizers will arrange for onsite (in the same building as the conference) childcare, as this is an issue of great importance to the members of the Society. SMBE will help defray the cost of childcare. Please communicate early and often with the Society as to the costs, barriers and opportunities for child care. Ideally the onsite location should be no more than a five minute walk from the sessions, but not right next to a room where there are talks, to provide quick access to parents and let children be children, while also keeping the noise level during presentations acceptable.

Speaker set-up
There should be a set-up room for speakers to check their presentations. The preferred presentation file format is pdf, but ideally both Powerpoint and Keynote should be accepted. Both modern (current OS) Apple and PC computers should be provided for presenters.

Insurance
The LOC is responsible for liaising with SMBE and the PCO to ensure that all insurance requirements are met.

Appendix 1: SMBE policies

Policy on harassment, discrimination and liability
SMBE and the Annual Meeting organizers are dedicated to providing a safe, hospitable, and productive

environment for all attendees. Accordingly, the SMBE Annual Meeting prohibits all forms of discrimination and harassment. Behaviour that undermines the integrity of intellectual discourse and interactions will not be tolerated. This applies to all conference participants, including staff, volunteers, and attendees. If a participant engages in harassing or discriminatory behaviour, the SMBE Annual Meeting organizers reserve the right to take action ranging from a simple warning to the offender to expulsion from the conference. If you have a question or concern about this policy or would like to report an incident involving yourself or another person, please contact any member of the Local Organizing Committee or email [email address for the appropriate year's conference PCO]. We take such issues seriously and will maintain your confidentiality (unless legally compelled otherwise). Neither SMBE nor the SMBE Annual Meeting organizers shall be responsible for any defamatory, offensive, or illegal conduct of Meeting participants, and shall not be held liable for personal injury, property damage, theft or damage of any kind suffered by the participants at or in connection with the SMBE Annual Meeting.

Broadcasting policy

The SMBE Annual Meeting supports the communication and discussion of science. Information presented at the Meeting (in oral or poster format) may be reported and discussed by attendees and science writers via blogs, Twitter, or other formats, **unless** any of the authors requests otherwise. We do request that communications are respectful and do not directly reproduce visual materials (e.g., no posting of photos of slides or posters) unless permission is obtained from the presenter or if they have already made this information freely available in an open-source forum. If a presenter does not want information from his/her presentation to be photographed at all, or broadcast, they should make this clear in their talk/poster and we ask that attendees respect this. If you have questions or concerns about this policy, or would like to report an abuse of it, please contact any member of the Local Organizing Committee or email [email address for that year's conference PCO].

Appendix 2: Call for proposals for conference

The President-Elect issues a call for proposals four years (e.g. call issued in 2017 for meeting in 2021) before the conference year, following the rotation below:
- North America
- Europe
- Rest of the world

Applicants will be required to submit written proposals following a standard template to SMBE Council. Applicants are required to work with SMBE's designated PCO.