



NAOC 2020: Guide for Session Moderators & Leaders

This document presents requirements and guidelines for administering the virtual sessions at the upcoming virtual NAOC 2020. Please read through this carefully as your role is crucial to the success of the NAOC.

We will be using Zoom Webinars for oral presentations (including oral papers, lightning talks, symposia, and plenaries). For poster presentations and a few networking events we will use Zoom Meetings. If you are unfamiliar with Zoom, you can find out more about the platform [here](#). You can also sign up for a free limited membership, which is handy for practicing your presentation. Note also that the hosting platform for the conference will be EventPilot (info [here](#)), which will coordinate the conference and help participants navigate the Zoom presentations and other events.

Important: If, for any reason, you find that you will not be able to moderate your assigned session please let us know ASAP either in [NAOC_moderators](#) Slack channel (you will receive an invite to this), or via the [NAOC help desk form](#).

General Overview

A “session” could be a paper session, a symposium, a poster session, a round table, a workshop, or a networking event. The [Virtual Resources page](#) on the NAOC website contains more information on each type of session. Each session will have a Moderator/Leader, who will be the session’s Co-host, and also a Technical Support Specialist (TSS), who will be the Host. The Host and Co-host will have control over the session. The general duties of the Moderator for a scientific session (spoken papers, posters, symposia, lightning talks) are as follows:

- Show up to your session 25 minutes before it starts to make sure you and the speakers are ready
- Introduce the session and give general guidelines (including reminding audience of the Code of Conduct)
- Introduce each presenter before their talk

- Monitor the timing of each presentation to ensure that transitions happen appropriately
- Run the Q&A (including having seed questions)
- Help the Technical Support Specialist as needed

In short, you are there to facilitate the flow of the session. The duties for leaders of other events – such as round tables, networking events, and workshops – depend somewhat on the event itself, but in general involve much more active participation.

Regardless of the session type, you should make sure that you are well acquainted with Zoom and that you are well prepared to run the session. More detailed directions and guidelines are given below.

Running a Standard Oral Session (Including Symposia)

1. *Signing in for your session.* Your session will be a Zoom Webinar, and as a moderator you will technically be the “Co-host” for the webinar (the Technical Support Specialist, TSS, will be the Host, and the speakers will be Panelists). As Co-host, prior to your session you will receive an email from Zoom that will have a personalized link that will allow you to join the session as a Co-host. *It is critically important that you join the session using this link*; do not join through EventPilot, as you would then be a participant (audience member) and will not be able to run the session. Open the email on your computer (**please do not use a mobile device**) and click the link to join. This will open a browser window that will allow you to join the session as a Co-host. *You should plan to join the session 25 min before the actual start of the session to get things running*. The TSS also will be joining then, with panelists (presenters) coming soon after. If you cannot join the session immediately, be patient; you will be able to do so soon after the Zoom license for your virtual ‘room’ has been released from the previous session.
2. *Minimize distractions.* If possible, make sure that others at your location are not using the internet during your session, and turn off wifi on all devices other than those you will be using, and/or plug your computer into the ethernet with a cable. It also is best to keep other people and pets out of the room during your session if possible. Similarly, it is best to have a simple, uncluttered background behind you, or a very simple virtual background (if your computer supports it). NAOC is recommending that you use the virtual background that can be found [here](#). Turn off the computer notifications that might pop up on your screen, and also set it to “Do Not Disturb” if your computer supports that (for Mac users, get info [here](#)). It is best to only have the bare minimum number of programs open on your computer, so turn off email and other things that may pop up during the presentation.
3. *Preparing the session.* During the period before the start of your session, you and the TSS should introduce yourselves to the speakers (panelists) and explain briefly how the session will run:

- a. Reiterate the time limit for each presentation (13 minutes in most cases) and the timing mechanism (below); emphasize that each speaker should also keep track of time with their own device.
 - b. The TSS will run through technical aspects of screen sharing, etc., with each presenter, and during this time you can check on name pronunciations and pronouns.
 - c. About 5 minutes before the start of the session, the TSS will start a slide show that will greet audience members as they join.
4. *Starting the session.* The TSS will end the slide show one minute before the first speaker starts (e.g., if the session starts at 10 am EDT, the slide show will end at 9:59). As soon as the slide show ends:
 - a. Welcome the audience to the session (make sure you aren't on mute!)
 - b. Read the provided script to outline the meeting's code of conduct (email with this script is coming)
 - c. Remind everybody that questions can be submitted via the Q&A box (see below)
 - d. Introduce the first speaker.
5. *Introducing each speaker.* Please keep your introductions very brief – mainly the name(s) of presenters, lead institution, and title of the presentation. You will have just one minute for the introduction of each speaker. While you are doing that, the TSS will switch control to the speaker for screen sharing.
6. *Running the session.* With a few exceptions, each presentation will be 13 minutes (10 minutes for presentation and 3 minutes for Q&A) starting on the designated minute, followed by a 2-minute transition to the next talk. You will do your introduction for the next speaker during the latter half of the 2-minute transition. So a typical session will look like this for a talk starting at 10:00 am:

9:59	Introduce speaker
10:00	Speaker begins
10:10	Q&A begins (ideally)
10:13	Presentation ends and transition to next speaker (hard end – TSS mutes current speaker and switches controls to next speaker)
10:14	Introduce next speaker
10:15	Next speaker begins, etc.
7. *Timing the speaker.* Timing the speakers is critically important to keeping the sessions in sync. The timeline for each presentation is given above – keep an eye on the clock! Use the clock on your computer or another electronic device to ensure that timing is synchronized with other concurrent sessions. To assist you in keeping the speakers on time, we have prepared a sound file with bird sounds at the appropriate times: one after 8 minutes (warning to speaker), one after 10 minutes (end of presentation), and one

after 13 minutes (end of Q&A). This sound file is named NAOC_13_min and can be downloaded [here](#). A few symposia will have talks that run for 28 minutes rather than 13; we have prepared another sound file (name NAOC_28_min) for those talks, with sounds that go off at 22 minutes (warning to speaker), 25 minutes (end of presentation) and 28 minutes (end of Q&A). Have the recording loaded onto a handheld device - NOT THE COMPUTER YOU ARE USING TO ACCESS ZOOM - and start it at the exact start of each presentation. Have the volume on the handheld device turned up, and hold it close enough to your microphone that it can be heard over Zoom (be sure to stay unmuted, or unmute before each sound plays). Be sure to download the audio timer onto your device well ahead of time; depending on your device you may also need to download an app that will allow you to play mp3 files. Also, practice with the timer ahead of time – exactly how it plays and works will depend on the device and app you use. You might want to set your device so that it does not go to sleep during inactivity, as this might cause the recording to pause playing. Test the placement of your device during a practice Zoom session to make sure other attendees can hear the bird sounds on the timer.

8. *Running Q&A.* At the end of the presentation (10 minutes), the Q&A session will start. Audience members will not have microphone capabilities, and so will type their questions into the Q&A box (the Chat Box will be used for audience members to react and chat with each other). You should monitor the Q&A box, and select questions to read verbally to the presenter (who may not be able to see them). After the presenter answers a question, select another to read, and repeat until the Q&A ends at 13 minutes (sharp). It is good to have a question or two of your own to start the Q&A if necessary.
9. *Ending the session.* At the end of the final talk of your session, the session will be over. Please thank the speakers, the TSS, and everybody for attending, and you are done! The webinar will end automatically 5 minutes after the scheduled end time.

Running a Lightning Talk Session

Lightning talks are short (3-minute) presentations, with the slides being shown on the Technical Support Specialist's (TSS) screen rather than the speaker's screen. Steps 1-5 are exactly the same as for Standard Oral Sessions (above). The only differences for Lightning Talk Sessions involve running and timing the sessions (step 6 and onward), as described below.

6. *Running the session.* Each presentation will be 3 minutes, starting on the designated minute, followed by a 2-minute transition to the next talk. You will do your introduction for the next speaker during the latter half of the 2-minute transition. So a typical session will look like this for a talk starting at 10:00 am:

9:59	Introduce speaker
10:00	Speaker begins
10:03	Presentation ends and transition to next speaker (hard end)

10:04	Introduce next speaker
10:05	Next speaker begins, etc.

7. *Timing the speaker.* Timing the speakers is critically important to keeping the sessions in sync. The timeline for each presentation is given above – keep an eye on the clock! To assist you in keeping the speakers on time, we have prepared a sound file with a bird sound that goes off after 3 minutes (end of presentation). This sound file is named NAOC_3_min and can be downloaded [here](#). Have the recording loaded onto a handheld device - NOT THE COMPUTER YOU ARE USING TO ACCESS ZOOM - and start it at the exact start of each presentation. Have the recording loaded onto a handheld device (NOT the computer on which you are running Zoom) and start it at the exact start of each presentation. Have the volume on your device turned up, and hold it close enough to your microphone that it can be heard over Zoom (be sure to stay unmuted, or unmute before each sound plays). Be sure to download the audio timer onto your device well ahead of time; depending on your device you may also need to download an app that will allow you to play mp3 files. Practice with the timer ahead of time – exactly how it plays and works will depend on the device and app you use. You might want to set your device so that it does not go to sleep during inactivity, as this might cause the recording to pause playing. Test the placement of your device during a practice Zoom session to make sure other attendees can hear the bird sounds on the timer.
8. *Running Q&A.* The Q&A session will be at the end of the session, and will start after all speakers have finished their presentations. Audience members will not have microphone capabilities, and so will type their questions into the Q&A Box (the Chat Box will be used for audience members to react and chat with each other or to ask for technical assistance). You should monitor the Q&A box, and select questions to read verbally to the presenter (who may not be able to see them). After the presenter answers a question, select another to read, and repeat until the Q&A ends at the end of the session. It is good to have a question or two of your own to start the Q&A if nothing comes in from the audience right away.
9. *Ending the session.* At the end of the joint Q&A period, the session will be over (as scheduled on the hour or half-hour mark). Please thank the speakers and everybody for attending, and you are done! The webinar will end automatically 5 minutes after the scheduled end time.

Running a Poster Session

For poster sessions, the presenter gives a live 3-minute oral presentation while the poster is being displayed by the Technical Support Specialist (TSS). Having the TSS display each of the posters in proper succession will eliminate the time required to switch screen-sharing among presenters. Each 90-minute poster session will be subdivided into three 30-minute blocks. Within each of these, a group of 4-5 posters will be presented during a 28-minute subsession, allowing 2 minutes for transition between groups. Steps 1-5 are exactly the same as for Standard Oral Sessions (above). The only differences for Poster Sessions involve running and timing the sessions (step 6 and onward), as described below.

6. *Running the session.* Each presentation will be 3 minutes, starting on the designated minute, followed by a 2-minute transition to the next talk. You will do your introduction for the next speaker during the latter half of the 2-minute transition. So a typical session will look like this for a talk starting at 17:30:

17:29	Introduce speaker
17:30	Speaker begins
17:33	Presentation ends and transition to next speaker (hard end – TSS mutes current speaker and unmutes next speaker)
17:34	Introduce next speaker
17:35	Next speaker begins, etc.

7. *Timing the speaker.* Timing the speakers is critically important to keeping the sessions in sync. The timeline for each presentation is given above – keep an eye on the clock! To assist you in keeping the speakers on time, we have prepared a sound file with a bird sound that goes off after 3 minutes (end of presentation). This sound file is named NAOC_3_min and can be downloaded [here](#). Have the recording loaded onto a handheld device - NOT THE COMPUTER YOU ARE USING TO ACCESS ZOOM - and start it at the exact start of each presentation. Have the recording loaded onto a handheld device (NOT the computer on which you are running Zoom) and start it at the exact start of each presentation. Have the volume on your device turned up, and hold it close enough to your microphone that it can be heard over Zoom (be sure to stay unmuted, or unmute before each sound plays). Be sure to download the audio timer onto your device well ahead of time; depending on your device you may also need to download an app that will allow you to play mp3 files. Practice with the timer ahead of time – exactly how it plays and works will depend on the device and app you use. You might want to set your device so that it does not go to sleep during inactivity, as this might cause the recording to pause playing. Test the placement of your device during a practice Zoom session to make sure other attendees can hear the bird sounds on the timer.
8. *Running Q&A.* The Q&A will be at the end of the group of 4-5 poster presentations, and will start after all speakers have finished their presentations. Audience members will have audio capabilities, so they can either ask questions verbally or type them into the Chat Box. Depending on the size of the audience, you may encourage members to raise their hands to be called on to ask their questions directly (smaller group) or submit their questions via the Chat Box (larger group). You should monitor the chat, and select questions appearing there to read verbally to the presenter. It is good to have a question or two of your own to start the Q&A if nothing comes in from the audience right away. After the presenter answers a question, select another to read, and repeat until the Q&A ends at 28 minutes (sharp). If there is another group of 4-5 posters in your session, start the next subsession immediately following the protocol above.
9. *Ending the session.* At the end of the final Q&A period of your third subsession, the session will be over. Please thank the speakers, the TSS, and everybody for attending, and you are done!

Running a Workshop, Round Table, or other Special Event

Workshops, round tables, society meetings, and other networking events will be conducted as either Zoom Webinars or Zoom Meetings, depending on the number of expected attendees and the extent of interaction desired between the organizers and the attendees. Almost all of those with higher expected attendance (e.g., >100) have been scheduled as Webinars. For Webinars, the Technical Support Specialist (TSS) will be the Host, the main organizer will be the Co-host, and the remaining organizers and presenters will be designated as either Co-hosts or Panelists. All audience members will be designated as Attendees, in listening mode only, with the ability to ask questions by typing them into the Q&A box. For smaller Zoom Meetings, the organizer, or somebody appointed by the organizer, will be the Co-host and the Technical Support Specialist (TSS) will be the Host. Audience members will be Participants, with the capability of muting/unmuting their own audio and sharing their video feeds.

For the most part, all of these sessions will run much like standard oral sessions, except that there will not be any timed presentations. Also, these sessions will vary considerably in format (e.g., instructor, panel discussions, etc.) and in their use of special Zoom features (e.g., breakout rooms, polling, etc.). Be sure that you run through the plan with all of the organizers and with the TSS assigned for your particular event, and that you are all comfortable with what you will need to do. The directions below are general for running such an event and do not address special features, like breakout rooms, that you may wish to use. If you have questions about any technical features or logistics for your session, please send inquiries using the [NAOC help desk form](#). You will be given the contact information of your TSS the week of 3 August.

1. ***Signing in for your session.*** As a moderator you will technically be the “Co-host” for the Zoom Meeting or Webinar (the Technical Support Specialist, TSS, will be the Host). As Co-host, prior to your session you will receive an email from Zoom that will have a personalized link that will allow you to join the session as a Co-host. *It is critically important that you join the session using this link;* do not join through EventPilot, as you would then be a participant or attendee (i.e., audience member) and will not be able to run the session. Open the email on your computer (please do not use a mobile device) and click the link to join. This will open a browser window that will allow you to join the session as a Co-host. *You should plan to join the session 25 min before the actual start of the session to get things running.* The TSS also will be joining then, with panelists (presenters) coming soon after. If you cannot join the session immediately, be patient; you will be able to do so soon after the Zoom license for your virtual ‘room’ has been released from the previous session.
2. ***Minimize distractions.*** If possible, make sure that others at your location are not ~~aren’t~~ using the internet during your session, and turn off wifi on all devices other than those you will be using, and/or plug your computer into the ethernet with a cable. It also is best to keep other people and pets out of the room during your session if possible. Similarly, it is best to have a simple, uncluttered background behind you, or a very simple virtual background (if your computer supports it). NAOC is recommending that you use the virtual background that can be found [here](#). Turn off the computer notifications that might pop up on your screen, and also set it to “Do Not Disturb” if

your computer supports that (for Mac users, get info [here](#)). It is best to only have the bare minimum number of programs open on your computer, so turn off email and other things that may pop up during the presentation.

3. *Preparing the session.* During the period before the start of your session, you and the TSS should introduce yourselves to any other speakers (panelists) and explain briefly how the session will run. The TSS will run through technical aspects of screen sharing, etc., as needed, and during this time you can check on name pronunciations and pronouns. About 5 minutes before the start of the session, the TSS will start a slide show that will greet participants as they join.
4. *Running the session.* The TSS will end the slide show at the start of the session, and you can begin. Introduce yourself and the other panelists to the participants and explain briefly how the session will be run. Exactly what happens then depends on the type of session you are running, so plan ahead and be prepared. At the end of your allotted time, the session will be over. Please thank the speakers, the TSS, and everybody for attending, and you are done!