

ACP Summer School Chairs: Handbook of the ACP

Please put here the list of things you would like to pass on to future chairs (do and don't...) and also to the ACP (clarifications and connections that could be improved, ...). The structure of the document is largely "free" at this point, so please add sections as you feel you need them.

The ACP recognises that some sections of our scientific community are often under-represented in particular aspects of our conference programs, including invited speakers, session chairs and program committees. As this can significantly affect diversity in the long-term, the ACP requires its conferences to strive for a level of diversity in all aspects of its conference that, at a minimum, reflects that of our scientific community and, at best, gives some prominence to minority sections.

Advice to ACP Summer School Chairs

Big Issues: Objective: Sponsorship \geq fixed costs, so that the conference makes no loss no matter how many participants come, provided the registration cost covers all direct expenses.

Website: The website is normally to be hosted on the ACP server, as

<http://school.a4cp.org/summer2xyz>, so ask webmaster@a4cp.org to have your page created.

Your website should have a link to the [ACP Policy for Duty of Respect and Equal Opportunity](#).

Sponsorship: Get started on raising sponsorship as soon as you know you are Summer School Chairs: every day counts, as many companies have spent their sponsorship budget for the year Y before year Y-1 is halfway. Even if you have a personal contact at a potential sponsor, write and sign an official letter (a PDF on official stationery) with all details, so that this contact person can pass the letter around. Make it clear what is always included: logo on the website, poster (if any), programme brochure, and bag (if any). Offer potential sponsors the opportunity to fund a particular purpose, such as the catering, etc. Accept all donations, however small. Adjust your template letter for every sponsor, if there is a personal card to play. Apply to the ACP Executive Committee for sponsorship.

It is also important to establish how the sponsorship funds are to be received (for the receipt and for legal contract purposes, if one has to be written). For the 2015 edition of the school, the chairs asked the ACP to collect the funds from the sponsors and provide the appropriate receipts.

Budget: The summer school should charge the students with a high enough registration fee to cover the expense. The budget should be such that more registrations bring more money rather than more deficit.

Co-organization: If the summer school is co-organized with another association (e.g. a local OR association), it should be clear at the beginning, in case of a deficit, what percentage of the deficit will be covered by the ACP and what percentage will be covered by the other association.

Stipends: Consider using some of the sponsorship as stipends to participants in financial need,

for example in the form of awards.

Contingencies: Have a contingency pot, say a few hundred euros, in the fixed costs of your budget, as unforeseen expenses are bound to pop up at the last minute.

Audio: Some speakers want to present videos with sound. Hence you must arrange for an audio system in the auditorium.

Catering: Since CP has an international and very diverse community, please make sure you include vegetarian options in your menu and also observe religious restrictions involving the consumption of pork, some types of meat etc. A possibility is to include those questions in the registration form.

Certificates: Many students require a participation certificate so that they can be reimbursed by their school. A good suggestion is to include this certificate (one page) alongside the course material they receive on the first day, as it is very convenient for them.

Slides: If the speakers agree, include the class slides and any other material in the summer school website (or in a private link of your preference). Many students like to review the material after the class or want to keep a copy for themselves.

Competition: Problem competitions are very engaging for students, as seen in the 2014 and 2015 editions of the summer school. However, in both years some students end up dedicating too much time for the competition problem and may not pay attention to classes. If you are planning a competition, two suggestions would be either to dedicate a time each day for the students to work on the competition problems, or to prepare a short competition (that is, they only have a couple of hours to solve a problem set, for example, with some practice in the previous days.)

Badges: In the registration form, make it clear that the affiliation will appear on the badge as given by the participant, so that no abbreviations should be used that are obscure to most people from outside the affiliation. This will save a lot of time on sanitizing the participant database before printing the badges. People without affiliation can write whatever they want, such as "Independent Researcher".

Credit Card Information: Some delegates from North America had difficulties using their Visa and MasterCard credit cards. It turned out that in North America, it is uncommon to protect such cards with pin codes, whereas in Sweden (CP13), a 4-digit pin code is required for all transactions, not just at ATMs. So it would be prudent to advise delegates to ensure that a 4-digit pin code is attached to their credit cards.

Visa Support Letters: Many participants require an invitation letter to obtain their visa. Such a letter needs to be signed by one of the Summer School Chairs, is printed on the official stationery of that chair, and ideally bears an ink stamp. At CP13, we felt that a requirement for prior paid registration was hard to enforce (credit card payments sometimes only bounce a few days after the payment, or issued invoices are not paid by the deadline). See below for a policy of when to issue invitation letters: note that some applicants register only to get a letter and then they unregister, sometimes even ready to lose the payment of the registration fee, say if you have a tough refund policy. While the final call is of course competently made by consulates (and many applicants underestimate the height of that hurdle), it is your moral duty to weed out unnecessary cases, and you can expect to get telephone calls from consulates. Some

consulates are fine with scans of signed letters, but most consulates still require originals. Release your acceptance letters as early as possible so that the many legitimate applicants have the time to secure a visa by the payment deadline.

At CP13, we had about 25 applications (some 10 of which were definitely legitimate), and we used the following deterring information on the web-page:

Delegates are advised to contact the nearest embassy, consulate, or travel agency for information about the passport and visa requirements from their country for entry to <Country>. If you need an invitation letter for visa purposes, then write in due time to <Email>. To avoid visa fraud, unfortunately we have to ask you to provide the following information:

- + The title of a paper that you authored and that was accepted at this conference or one of its workshops;
- + or the Digital Object Identifier (DOI) of at least one publication in scope of the CP conference series;
- + or a reference letter from a member of the Association for Constraint Programming.

At CP13, we used the following invitation template, which needs to be tuned for each applicant:

Dear Consul of <Country>,

The undersigned is one of the Conference Chairs of the <N>th *International Conference on the Principles and Practice of Constraint Programming* (CP 20<XY>), which will be held in <City>, on <Days> <Month> <Year>. One of the papers competitively accepted/submitted for presentation at the conference [workshop <W>] is entitled <Title>. Its author is <Name>, who is a <Job Title> at <Affiliation>[, which is one of the generous sponsors of the conference]. <Name> will be presenting her/his paper. She/He (or her/his university/company) is responsible for payment of his registration, travel, meals, and accommodation costs. It will be highly appreciated if the requisite visa can be issued to her/him:

<Name>

<Address>

To allow for time-zone adjustment and some further stay in <Country>, a visa duration of <D> days would be commensurate.

Control Room: It is extremely useful to have a control room where material (welcome packs, of the registration desk, of exhibitors, etc) can be stored overnight, where things can be printed, where private meetings can be held, etc.

Wheelchairs: It is important that all your venues, including any official conference hotels, be accessible to wheelchairs, even electric ones.

Volunteers: It is customary for the Summer School Chairs to be operationally supported by some (local) “volunteers” (usually MSc and PhD students, if not postdocs), to perform duties such as the following:

- + design of T-shirts (only for the volunteers), so that the volunteers are easily recognisable; order a few extra in case of excessive sweating or food stains
- + restaurant list and map, both electronic and for the programme brochure
- + badge design and printing
- + get/buy pens, notepads, and badge holders for the welcome packs
- + design and printing of programme brochure
- + coloured coupons for reception and banquet (both included) and excursion

- + packing of welcome packs
- + staffing of registration desk
- + design, printing, and display of signs, timetables, sign-up sheets (excursion, taxis, etc), message board (for communication among participants), etc
- + check coupons/identities at entry to reception and banquet (and excursion)
- + printer, paper, scotch tape, poster pins, scissors, stapler, post-it notes, extension cords, DVI and VGA adaptors, first-aid kit, aspirin, etc for control room
- + emergency phone number, and rostering of that phone
- + generate attendance certificates
- + filming of talks; if affordable, then have this done by professionals (at CP13, it would have cost a fortune)
- + microphone runners at question parts of sessions
- + email address for boarding passes, and printing thereof in control room
- + registry (on paper) for return taxis, possibly including bookings
- + badge holder collection from departing participants

A postdoc can coordinate all this and serve as unique liaison with the Summer School Chairs.

Legal Precautions: The following disclaimers on the CP13 website and registration site were compliant with Swedish law and probably prevented some problems:

Cancellation of Registration: Notification of cancellation must be made in writing and sent to <Email>. Cancellation of registration will be accepted until <Early Registration Date>, up to which date the total amount will be refunded minus <Amount> for cancellation fee. We regret that no refunds or reductions of fees will be accepted for cancellations made after <Early Registration Date>, nor for no-shows for any reasons.

Cancellation of Hotel Reservation: Notification of cancellation must be made in writing and sent to <Email>. Cancellation of any hotel reservation will be accepted until 14 days prior to arrival. If cancellation is received later than this date, or in case of no-show, the hotel will charge your credit card for the whole stay reserved.

Change of Name (for already registered participants): If you have already registered but are unable to attend, you will be given the opportunity to send a colleague in your place. Please contact <Email> as soon as possible. An administration fee of <Amount> will be charged.

Force Majeure: The organisers are not liable for any claims for damages and/or losses if the entire conference has to be cancelled due to a force majeure incident.

Disclaimer: The organisers are not liable for damages and/or losses of any kind which may be incurred by the conference delegates or by any other individuals accompanying them, both during the official activities as well as going to/from the conference. Delegates are responsible for their own safety and belongings.

Insurance and Vaccinations: The registration fee does not cover insurance for the delegates. The organisers recommend that delegates take out insurance in their home country to cover pre-journey cancellation for personal reasons and necessary insurance to cover accidents, medical expenses and loss of personal belongings during the visit. No vaccinations are needed when visiting <Country>.

Transportation: If your school is far from the possible accommodations, you can consider using charter buses to take students and speakers from their hotels. In the 2015 version the charter

buses costs were quite small (less than 5% of the total cost).

Public transport pass: At CP 2014, we have given a public transport pass to every participant. Buying this kind of pass for a large group is often much cheaper than if each participant buys his own tickets and it seems that many participants have appreciated this.

Sponsorship (France only): En France, le secret est de s'y prendre à l'avance, notamment pour obtenir le label "École Thématique du CNRS" qui débloque tous les autres financements. Plus personne n'ose dire non une fois que le CNRS a dit oui. Par contre, le dépôt de dossier a eu lieu en février 2016 pour l'école d'été 2017.

Advertisement: The 2017 organization advertised their summer school in conferences such as ROADEF, CPAIOR, JFPC, ...

Anti-harassment policy: The ACP has adopted an [anti-harassment policy](#). According to this policy, the event organizer must identify, prior to the event, a local organization that is responsible for providing help and advice with these issues. Contact information of this organization should appear on the conference web site. As an indication, most universities have an office that can help their employees to handle situations involving harassment.

If there is not too many participants, it could be nice to plan a little informal time for each people to present themselves and the topic they are working on. It could be pitch session, 3-minutes presentation, poster session or just going around the table and let everyone introduce themselves during one of the social event.

Comments to the ACP

TBA