



ECPR GRADUATE CONFERENCES

INFORMATION FOR POTENTIAL HOSTS

The ECPR Graduate Conference is organised in the format of sections, panels and papers and takes place every other (even) year, alternating with the ECPR General Conference. There is also a plenary lecture, and round tables. The ECPR Graduate Conference has taken place twice before:

- 2006 Essex, UK (approximately 350 participants attended)
- 2008 Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain (approximately 450 participants attended)

In 2010 the Graduate Conference will be held at Dublin City University, Ireland. It is estimated that approximately 500 participants will attend the Dublin conference in 2010. Potential hosts for the 2012 Conference should recognise that it is increasingly popular and will need to be able to accommodate at least 500 participants.

A. GENERAL ORGANISATION: WHO DOES WHAT

The **Academic Convenors** of the Conference are responsible for the content of the conference, assisted by the member of Central Services dealing with the Graduate Conference. (The Academic Convenors are the member(s) of the ECPR Executive Committee with the Graduate Conference portfolio) This organising team is delegated responsibility for the conference organisation, for approving and monitoring the budget and for ensuring that the academic programme is broad and balanced. The Academic Convenors select the sections and panels and are responsible for ensuring that section/panel chairs organise these according to established criteria and deadlines. The Academic Convenors are also responsible for the timetabling of panels.

The **local organiser**, together with colleagues/assistants is responsible for ensuring that local facilities are adequate for the needs of the Conference; for making appropriate arrangements for accommodation; for arranging any social events and for the day-to-day running of the Conference itself. The local organiser, in consultation with the Academic Convenors, is responsible for the allocation of panels to rooms. The local organiser's role for the Conference is similar to that of the Joint Sessions, except that the financial burden of covering local costs is much less, because registration fees are designed to cover as many of them as possible. However, local organisers are encouraged strongly to raise local sponsorship for such events as the receptions, lectures and round table, as well as to try to secure the conference rooms at the lowest possible cost. Furthermore, in order to keep costs for participants at the very minimum for graduate students, the ECPR has agreed to budget for a surplus from the General Conference in order to subsidise the Graduate Conference.

Local secretarial assistance will be required to help with the local arrangements and queries and should act as the first point of contact for ECPR Central Services and the Academic Convenors for local issues.

The **ECPR Central Services** are responsible for ensuring the Conference is properly publicised and that the different aspects of its organisation are properly coordinated. That is, it ensures that the web site is kept up to date, the relevant people are informed of deadlines, obligations and so on. Central Services staff are responsible for handling all organisational queries, for on-line registration and for producing the final conference programme (although the printing of the programme should be done locally if possible).

The **budget** is drafted by the ECPR's Treasurer, the local organiser and the ECPR's Administrative Director. The administrative timetable and the day-to-day timetable is agreed by the local organiser, the Academic Convenors and the member of ECPR Central Services staff responsible for the Graduate Conference. The lecturer and theme/speakers for the roundtables need to be agreed by the local organiser and the Academic Convenors as far in advance as possible, a) to ensure their availability, and b) as many potential participants will be drawn by well known speakers.

B. PHYSICAL ARRANGEMENTS/LOCATION REQUIREMENTS

Registration: A large open space which participants can also use as a meeting point, so will be the hub of the conference. It would be beneficial if the registration area had WiFi. The area needs to be large enough for approximately 10 registration desks, and to store all the conference bags, programmes, badges etc. It should also house the information desk, poster boards, message boards and the book exhibition. At least 6-8 people (possibly department administrators or graduate students) are needed throughout the conference, especially on the first day. (Central Services staff are also available to help.) At registration, participants are usually given a pack of information about the host institution and locality, including maps, information about catering, transport, panel rooms, etc., as well, of course, as the conference programme booklet. Sponsors may be willing to provide small gifts or contribute towards the costs of items such as the conference wallet and badges in return for advertising. If students are used during the conference, they should be fluent in English and have a good knowledge of the campus and local area. The registration area should also house the information desk, poster boards with conference information and message boards for participants to contact each other.

Information Desk: Needs to operate throughout the conference. The conference assistants on the information desk need to have a good knowledge of the local layout and to be able to help with all types of queries, e.g. local transport, restaurants, library, photocopying facilities, internet/WiFi passwords, etc. This can probably be staffed by graduate students.

Book Exhibition: Should be located in a central area where all participants have easy access and will visit frequently, i.e. by registration, tea/coffee facilities and information desk; ideally needs to be locked up securely when not staffed during the evenings and at night. This is often the most difficult thing to find a location for. Space will be required for a maximum of 6 publishers requiring approximately 5m² each. A room will also be required to store all the exhibition materials sent by the publishers. This should be available one month before the conference.

Panel Rooms (approximately 20-25): These can vary in size enormously in order to accommodate panels that are likely to attract a lot of people or else have a very specific

minority interest. It is a good idea to know well in advance how many will be available, so that the Academic Convenors know how flexible they can be in accepting proposals. As with other conferences, it is best for them to be located within easy distance of one another (and preferably in the same building). A lecture theatre will be needed to accommodate approximately 200-250 people attending the lecture/roundtables. AV facilities should also be available to make presentations and speeches.

Meeting Rooms: Needed for members of Executive (one room for up to 20 people), as well as other small meetings.

Computer Room: Computing facilities need to be available to enable participants to check e-mail whilst they are at the Conference. Local hosts should also indicate whether WiFi is available and how it may be accessed by participants who wish to bring their own laptops.

ECPR-Office: Needs to be somewhere central, with a telephone and preferably a PC with printer, and ideally, a photocopier too. This is somewhere members of the Executive and Central Services staff can leave papers, coats etc., so it needs to be lockable and as close to the book exhibition/registration etc as possible.

Catering: Coffee/tea and light snacks should be available throughout the Conference in a central location, preferably adjacent to registration. Demand is high first thing in the morning, mid-morning and mid-afternoon. Ideally a low-priced buffet/cafeteria style lunch should be planned. Preferably something which people can buy on a day to day basis. If the Conference is centrally located in a city, it is likely that there will be food outlets close by, so lunches need not be organised specifically for all participants.

Accommodation. Local organisers need to decide whether they wish to handle this themselves, use an agency or simply provide participants with a list of hotels and leave them to make their own hotel reservations. Handling the accommodation is a great deal of work, so the latter might be the better option if a conference office is not available. If local organisers are arranging accommodation, it is best to block book a range of hotels, though university accommodation could also be used. There should be some very cheap accommodation available for students.

Transport: It is useful to give participants as much information in advance as possible, so that they can plan their travelling and budget for it. Is it recommended to travel by car? Will participants be able to park? Or train? Or by plane? The local organisers need to ensure that they provide the Central Services with this information at least 6 months before the conference takes place, so that participants can refer to the website when organising their travel.

C. SPECIAL ACADEMIC EVENTS

Plenary Lecture: A centrally located lecture theatre is needed to accommodate approximately 200-250 people. The previous lecturers at the Graduate Conference have been Sid Tarrow & Ian Budge (Essex 2006), and Fred Halliday & Giorgio Freddi (Barcelona 2008). The lecture at the Dublin 2010 conference will be given by Mick Cox. The lecturer should be agreed by the local organisers and Academic Convenors. Where possible, the local

organisers should arrange for a reception to take place in the same location immediately after the lecture.

Round table: This should be on an attractive theme that ideally has a local connection. More than one round table can be organised, and it would be a good idea to have an academic and a professional round table. Participants are composed mainly of members of the host country, though in special circumstances, a travel and accommodation budget will be made available for participants from other institutions/countries. Previous round tables have been:

- Essex 2006: (1) Getting published in a refereed journal, (2) Managing one's supervisor, (3) Summer Schools in Europe, (4) Knocking on Heaven's Door: Getting a job in European Academia, (5) Instructing the instructors: The training of young academics
- Barcelona 2008: (1) Regionalism, (2) Publications and Career Development

D. SOCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Opening/Closing reception: Depending on the take up of the book exhibition, this may be funded by the publishers who exhibit at the book exhibition, and should be held in the same location as the book exhibition and registration. If the book exhibition does not generate enough income, the local organisers should endeavour to find sponsorship for it. This is a very popular event, as it is the first opportunity for participants to get together and network. Local organisers should budget for approximately 300-350 attendees.

Other Receptions and events: Other receptions can be held, dependent on whether local bodies, e.g. city councils etc, are willing to host/sponsor them. One reception should take place immediately after the plenary lecture. Local organisers should also investigate possibilities for excursions and concerts to coincide with the conference. Participants would be expected to pay for these.

Dinner for conference organisers: This can include members of the Executive Committee, Central Service staff, round table participants, plenary lecturers and local organisers. It should take place immediately after the lecture and reception. Approximately 35 people are likely to attend.

E. ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

Site visits: A site visit should take place after an expression of interest has been received, but before a final decision is made by a potential host institution. This site visit is normally made by the Academic Convenor(s), Administrative Director and/or the member of Central Services responsible for the Graduate Conference. Following a decision by the Executive Committee to accept an offer to host the Conference, a longer site visit is made so that the local organisers, Central Services staff and Academic Convenors can confirm that the local facilities can accommodate the requirements for the conference and agree a broad budget. A

further site visit should be made by the organising team approximately a year before the conference and then again approximately 3 months before the conference.

Other meetings: The academic convenors may need to meet to agree the sections and, after the final paper deadline, the final academic programme (unless this can be done using online evaluation tools). Team meetings can also be scheduled to coincide with other ECPR events such as the Joint Sessions etc.

Publicity & Information: Central Services are responsible for ensuring that the Conference receives proper publicity by way of the production of flyers, posters, email campaigns and the use of social networking sites such as Facebook.

- **WEB SITE:** The ECPR web site will contain all information relating to the Conference, including the contact details of the section and panel chairs, and a summary of each panel. The web site also includes guidelines for panel chairs, paper givers and discussants and information on how to apply to present a paper, a timetable, details about fees, travel and accommodation information.

The quality of the information on the web site is entirely dependent on the Academic Convenors and local organisers, so it may be helpful if the host institution establishes a link with the ECPR site and is responsible for local information, such as travel advice, details about hotels and the arrangements for booking accommodation, information about local restaurants, etc.

- **ECPR BULLETINS:** Information for participants will be circulated via ‘constant contact’, which is sent out as and when important information is available and deadlines etc are approaching. A Facebook group may also be set up to help keep in contact with participants and post important information.
- **FINAL PROGRAMME:** This will be included in the conference wallets, which participants receive at registration. It will also be available online as a pdf. It contains a list of participants and papers, maps showing where panels and meeting rooms are located, local information – maps, restaurants etc. and some practical information, such as where to find the nearest bank. Local organisers may be able to obtain sponsorship from local companies or publishers in order to offset some of the production costs. Central Services and local organisers should liaise over who will produce the programme (i.e. typesetting), though the printing would ideally need to be done locally.

F. LIAISON BETWEEN ECPR CENTRAL SERVICES AND LOCAL ORGANISERS

The organisation of the Conference involves an enormous amount of exchange of information between staff at the ECPR Central Services and the local organisers, mostly by e-mail. It is a good idea for local organisers to delegate the main administrative responsibility to a secretary, administrator or graduate student, who will work part time for a number of months, assisted where necessary by other students. In the immediate weeks before the Conference, it may be necessary to have someone working full-time.

Local organisers will need to provide the Central Services with:

- Contact information: the names of the organising committee, the name of the administrative officer, e-mail address, web site address, logo etc. for all publicity information
- Detailed information about rooms so as to be able to calculate how many panels may take place and, therefore, the participants the conference can accommodate.
- All local information about the social programme, accommodation arrangements, travel information etc, so that this information can be put on the web site as early as possible.
-

Central Services staff will need to provide local organisers with the following information:

- Details of the sections, panels and paper-givers. A Microsoft Access database is used for this purpose. The database is compiled at Essex, then transferred to the host institution a few weeks before the Conference, so that it can be used to produce the list for registration, badges etc. If the programme is being typeset at the host institution, the complete database containing the academic programme will be sent from Central Services at an agreed date to allow for the typesetting to be completed, proof read by the Academic Convenors, local organisers and Central Services staff and agreed to be complete before being sent for printing.
- Details of any other meetings which will take place, such as those of the Executive Committee, research groups etc.

We will also try to give help based on previous experience, for example, in designing the accommodation/hotel booking form, arrangements for registration, etc and previous conference programme templates.

G. LIAISON BETWEEN ECPR CENTRAL SERVICES AND THE ACADEMIC CONVENORS

Because the academic side of the Conference is organised almost entirely on-line, it is essential that the web site is kept up to date. This means that full and accurate details of all the sections and their convenors, all panels and their chairs/discussants and all paper-givers should be confirmed as soon as they are available.

The Academic Convenors are also responsible for timetabling the panels and for ensuring, in doing so, that similar topics (and people) do not overlap and that any specific timetabling requests are taken into account (although cannot be guaranteed). When finalised, the timetable should be sent to the Central Services for uploading to the website, adding to the programme and notifying the participants.

It is very helpful if all those involved in the organisation are kept informed – even of things that may not seem to be immediately relevant, so regular and efficient communication is essential.

H. BUDGET

The costs of organising the Conference will vary a great deal, depending on the country and institution where it takes place. Registration fees are designed to cover as many costs as possible – both local and at the Central Services, as well as planning meetings. This means that it is crucial from the outset to agree a budget as accurately as possible, based on local costs (so that registration fees can be set accordingly). Local costs are largely based on whether charges are made for rooms and/or whether it is necessary to employ administrative/student assistants. Other costs (such as tea & coffee, receptions, wallets & badges) vary a great deal from place to place. The budget should be the main agenda item for the first site visit.

Things to budget for:

- **Planning/organisation meetings:** An initial site visit, a further organisation visit approximately one year before and a final visit by Central Services staff approximately 3 months before. Other meetings may be held during the Joint Sessions if required.
- **Local administrative/secretarial assistance:** The amount of time and, therefore, cost of this will depend largely on whether the host institution is handling all the hotel/accommodation bookings. Administrative assistance is also needed at Essex for general queries and registration.
- **Web site:** If there is a comprehensive web site, less time will be spent answering queries from participants, so the cost of maintaining this should also be taken into account.
- **Seminar/lecture rooms:** including the cost of AV facilities and technicians etc.
- **Student assistants** at registration, for the information desk, for assisting before the conference with signposting, preparing conference wallets, setting up tables for the book exhibition etc. During the conference, students are needed to assist with all aspects of the local organisation, but their specific responsibilities depend on local circumstances. As many as 30 students were on call (on a shift basis) to help at the Barcelona conference.
- **Dinner for organisers:** for approximately 35 people.
- At least one **reception**.
- **Final programmes and conference wallets.** It may be possible to get local sponsorship for this – from a bank, hotel chain, airline etc. You should remember to take into account any costs associated with the typesetting and printing of the programme.
- **Travel and accommodation:** for Academic Convenor(s), Central Services staff.
- **Expenses for special academic events:** Plenary speaker, round table participants

As a registered charity, the ECPR does not have large reserves available to cover all the costs of the Graduate Conference and, as noted above, the budget is calculated to break even (using some of the surplus generated from the preceding General Conference, if possible) This is done by pricing registration fees at an appropriate level and also by trying to raise sponsorship to cover the cost of specific items. The organising team works together on this,

but there is a natural divide, whereby the local organisers approach local authorities and businesses for items such as:

- Receptions and other social events
- Tea/coffee
- The use of lecture theatres and panel rooms
- Conference wallets and badges
- The costs of the plenary speaker

Central Services staff always approach publishers – especially those with which the ECPR has a formal publishing relationship with – to sponsor items such as:

- Advertising in the conference programme
- Receptions/coffee breaks
- Conference wallets and badges

I. FURTHER INFORMATION

A Graduate Conference handbook has recently been compiled and this is circulated to all members of the Organising Team.