

European Seminar in Ethnomusicology (ESEM)

Guidelines for local organisers

These guidelines for local organisers of the European Seminar in Ethnomusicology (ESEM) have been compiled taking into account ESEM's preference for small, affordable gatherings valuing focus on academic exchange and debate, as well as experiences from previous meetings.

1. People involved (staff)

- A Local Arrangements Committee should be formed, led by one person with primary responsibility (the Chair of the seminar). The Chair should be a member of the Programme Committee (see below), and is also automatically part of the CORD (the board of ESEM) for the year of the meeting.
- The Local Arrangements Committee is responsible for disseminating information about the programme, seminar location, accommodation and travel arrangements.
- The Local Arrangements Committee is also expected to arrange for one or more technical assistants to attend the whole meeting.
- A Programme Committee should be constituted, normally comprising two members of the ESEM CORD and at least three local scholars, normally including the Chair. (Ideally, having a non-even number of members might facilitate decision making.) The Programme Committee is responsible for deciding the seminar themes (in consultation with the CORD), writing and distributing the Call for Papers, deadlines and deciding on the final programme.

2. Location and facilities

A conference hall for up to 80 people is usually sufficient for ESEM events.

Technical facilities need to be made available as follows:

- Data projector and screen(s), with good quality audio outputs
- Computer or laptop for showing PowerPoint or similar presentations, as well as adequate connection for presenters' own laptops (although participants may be advised to bring their own adaptors for extra safety)
- Depending on the meeting space, suitable amplification for presenters

Participants may wish to use other media. The provision of such facilities is at the host's discretion and participants should be informed of availability.

If the programme includes poster presentations, a suitable space should be arranged which should be well connected to the conference hall.

If film presentations are included in the programme, the organisers should ensure that projector, monitor and speakers are of adequate quality.

Accommodation is normally required for about 60 people. The local organiser is expected to provide affordable accommodation or a list of options that include cheap solutions.

Accommodation is expected to be comfortable, and either within walking distance of the conference location or well-served by public transport.

Participants should be facilitated in taking all breaks and meals together wherever possible. Coffee breaks will be provided at the seminar venue. Depending on logistics and local facilities, the host could consider making arrangements also for meals. When catering is not provided or is partially provided, the host is expected to compile a list of cafés/restaurants options which include affordable solutions.

3. Structure

- The duration of the seminar is normally up to five days, including arrival and departure.
- The seminar is usually held in September, although this can vary depending on local factors. Seminar dates are to be agreed in consultation with the ESEM Secretariat.
- The seminar should not have parallel sessions.
- In normal circumstances, ESEM seminars are expected to take place in person; this should be stated clearly in the Call for Papers. Any possibility to include remote contributions would have to be discussed with the ESEM CORD well in advance of the seminar and would have to be supported by a strong case put forward by the Local Arrangements Committee: any decision to change the mode of delivery of contributions should be indicated in the Call for Papers.
- The programme should include time for the ESEM General Assembly, which should take place roughly in the middle of the meeting (e.g., day 2 or 3). The General Assembly should be scheduled in the programme for two hours.
- The programme should include a keynote lecture - *The John Blacking Memorial Lecture* (JBL). The keynote speaker is appointed by the Programme Committee in consultation with the CORD. Lecture time is normally about one hour and is not expected to be followed by a Q&A session. Where technological support allows it, the Programme Committee should consider broadcasting the JBL in live streaming and advertise this broadly among relevant academic societies and mailing lists. When proposing a keynote speaker to the CORD, the Programme Committee is encouraged to take into account gender balance and other dimensions of diversity, and to consider previous keynote speakers for reference.
- The official opening of the meeting is normally held by ESEM's president, the Chair of the seminar, and one or more representatives of the host institution.
- Paper sessions are held in the mornings as well as the afternoons, with coffee breaks offering some refreshment. Breaks should allow for relaxation and discussion among participants: a length of 30 minutes is recommended.
- Paper sessions may be interspersed with other sessions, for variety – e.g. poster sessions, film/video presentations, or free discussion sessions.
- Some evening events are usually organised for participants, e.g. welcome reception, special conference dinner, music and dance party.
- A welcome reception should normally be arranged on the evening before or on the first day of presentations.

- A full-day or half-day excursion or other local visits are optional. If a full day excursion is organised, this should ideally take place after the end of the proceedings.

4. Financial arrangements and support for participants

The Chair and Local Arrangements Committee are responsible for the seminar budget, including costs for seminar location (conference hall), technical equipment, support staff, coffee-breaks, any excursions or cultural programs, welcome reception, and editing and printing of materials. Lunches and dinners should also be provided by the local organisers whenever possible: if such arrangements are not feasible, a list of available local cheap meals/snack options should be made available to participants.

The keynote speaker's travel and accommodation expenses are usually covered by the host.

The seminar costs are normally met from:

- A 'seminar registration fee' paid by all participants, which should be communicated as early as possible: if it is not feasible to announce the registration fee with the Call for Papers, information about it should be communicated with the letter of acceptance at the latest. Organisers are expected to keep this fee as low as possible. Organisers should also consider the possibility to offer a reduced "early-bird" registration fee.
- Whenever available, sponsorship (e.g. from the host institution).

Participants are responsible for their own accommodation costs.

ESEM is committed to supporting all its members, especially those who might be in a financially disadvantaged position. Every year, depending on availability of funds, a small amount of money will be offered to support travel and/or accommodation expenses for some participants who prove to be in genuine need. However, as these funds are likely to be extremely limited, local organisers are expected, whenever possible, to find additional support in the form of financial or in-kind help, for which participants in greater need will be priorities. Examples include, but are not limited to, fee waivers, free conference receptions/meals/excursions, or free accommodation (in the past, for example, some local students have hosted student delegates).

Support will be advertised as soon as possible and ideally with the Call for Papers, in consultation with the Secretariat and the CORD.

The ESEM is an association of professional ethnomusicologists and students, and its meetings are intended for members of the organisation. Therefore, all participants should be ESEM members in good standing and the Local Arrangements Committee is responsible to ensure that participants are informed that ESEM membership fee is to be paid in addition to the seminar registration fee and in advance of the seminar.

The keynote speaker is considered a guest of ESEM and is therefore not expected to pay the ESEM membership fee for the year of the meeting.

5. Publication of papers

The Chair is encouraged to prepare at least one publication stemming from the seminar. ESEM encourages the host/editor – whenever this is possible – to publish a peer-reviewed volume to be made freely accessible online.

The President and Secretary General can provide support and advice on potential target publisher/series (e.g. the *European Journal of Musicology*).

Publication costs are expected to be covered by the local host/editors. Depending on need and availability of funds, ESEM might consider contributing to costs for copyediting and printing/distribution of any publication arising from the seminars.

6. Seminar preparation timetable.

Below is a sample timetable which organisers are encouraged to follow. Key dates/deadlines in the process are identified in order to allow participants to apply for funding whenever possible and can be adapted by organisers to fit local needs. This is a sample schedule for a seminar taking place in September: seminars taking place at different times should adapt the timetable to fit the local schedules.

The Call for Papers should include a brief but clear call for applications for those who seek financial support.

Oct.	<p>Identification of seminar themes in consultation with CORD.</p> <p>Preparation of an outline of the Call for Papers: this should then be checked by the ESEM President and Secretary General for final approval.</p> <p>Finalisation of the Call for Papers.</p> <p>The potential keynote speaker should be contacted as early as possible in the process to allow for a smooth preparation of the draft programme.</p>
Nov. – Jan.	<p>Circulation of the Call for Papers (suggested deadline for submissions: mid-January). The Secretary General will circulate the Call for Papers and any subsequent reminder through the ESEM mailing list; the local organisers are expected to circulate communications through other societies/lists as widely as possible.</p> <p>Set up of information on ESEM website and/or preparation of conference website with link to ESEM website.</p> <p>The local programme committee is encouraged to allow for a few days after the deadline for late submissions (which ESEM is normally willing to accept).</p>
Early February	<p>Collection of submissions and completion of selection of papers by the Programme Committee. The selection is expected to take place through a blind review process and a simple grading system.</p>
Mid-February	<p>Notification of acceptance/rejection of papers to applicants by the local organisers (this stage should not be delayed, in order to allow participants to apply for funding through routes outside of the seminar support scheme).</p> <p>Announcement of general information about registration, conference location, travel, accommodation and details about weather, etc. This information should be circulated broadly, i.e. beyond the list of accepted participants, in order to reach as many potential non-presenting participants as well.</p> <p>Preparation of a preliminary conference programme.</p>
March – May	<p>Finalisation of logistic organisation (rooms, facilities and contact with hotels).</p> <p>Set up of information on ESEM website and/or preparation of conference website with link to ESEM website.</p> <p>Opening of registration.</p>
Mid-May	<p>Early bird registration deadline.</p>
Mid-July	<p>Registration deadline.</p>

Mid-August	Finalisation of programme with session chairs
Late August	Email circulation of final programme.
September	ESEM seminar.

7. Publicity and Communication.

The Local Arrangements Committee should ensure appropriate public outreach and communication. In order to maximise visibility and participation, they are also encouraged to advertise the event beyond the list of participants.

The Local Arrangements Committee will liaise with the ESEM Secretary General for the circulation of any seminar-related e-mail communication among ESEM members. However, they are expected to take responsibility for the distribution of announcements and information through other routes, including other mailing lists. If social media are used, the local organisers are expected to communicate an information and/or updates to the ESEM's social media coordinator.

The Local Arrangements Committee is normally expected to maintain a website with up-to-date information about the event. The website should include information on costs, venue and accommodation, as well as a preliminary/final programme (ideally, not only as a PDF but also in an accessible HTML format, in order to ensure an easily readable schedule and – when possible – access to abstracts.) Local organisers are also expected to liaise with the ESEM's website coordinator to ensure that the information provided on both the ESEM website and the conference website is up to date. If it is not possible to set up a separate conference website, the local organiser is expected to liaise with and support the ESEM website coordinator.

17 April 2026