

Conference Guidelines

Introduction

ASERA is the annual conference of the Australasian Science Education Research Association. In 2019 it celebrated its 50th year of sharing science education research in Australia, New Zealand and the Asia-Pacific region as well as more broadly. The conference is intended to be an exchange of ideas, questions and findings among peers who are treated as equals. As such, no academic titles are included on name tags, and there are no keynote talks or featured speakers. There are two forms of presentation - paper sessions and poster presentations - and the focus is on engaging participants in active conversations in which all present are included.

Below are the details for planning an ASERA conference, with a suggested timeline for these events found at the end of this document.

Appointment of Conference Convenor

The host university should appoint an academic as a conference convenor. This person will become a member of the ASERA Board for the 12 months prior to the conference to facilitate ease of communication between the Board and the conference committee.

Conference Preparation

Preparations for the annual ASERA conference should commence at least 24 months in advance so that everything is considered and well in place to ensure a successful conference. In undertaking the organisation of an ASERA conference, the ASERA Board is ultimately responsible, so it offers some guidelines and practical assistance. These guidelines should be closely adhered to and any aspects not in alignment with these suggestions, should be approved by the ASERA Board before implementation. Professionalism is required for the management of the conference so it is expected that a team of academics, well supported administratively, will provide sufficient time to the task. The ASERA Board will provide additional support as required.

Use of the ASERA Logo

The ASERA logo should be used for promotional purposes for the conference. Please contact the ASERA executive officer, for the electronic files: email: info@asera.org.au.

Conference Event Management

The ASERA Board supports the appointment of an events assistant to help with the administrative management of the event. This could be a graduate student or an individual from the events team at the host university. Alternatively, the committee may wish to work with a conference organising company. A starting place to find such a company could be <https://pco.asn.au/accreditation/accredited-event-management-companies/>.

Timing of the Conference

The conference is to be held in late June to early July, so as to align with university breaks and other local conferences. There may be the opportunity to align with the Mathematics Education Research Group of Australasia (MERGA).

- To facilitate delegates' travel, the conference should commence on a Tuesday evening (registration) and finish on a Friday to allow for travel before the weekend.
- The conference dinner should be held on the Thursday evening.
- The ASERA AGM should be held on Thursday after lunch.
- The Early Career Researchers (ECRs)/PhD students' Fireside chat should be held late Wednesday afternoon. The conference committee should liaise with the ASERA Board ECR representative.
- Every second year (even years), the ASERA Board organises a pre-conference workshop on research for ECRs and PhD students. The conference committee should liaise with the ASERA ECR representative.

Conference Budget & Invoices

Before commencing planning for the conference, the conference hosts should prepare a preliminary budget approximately 18 months in advance of the conference for presentation to the ASERA Board. This budget should outline approximate costs and be scaled to represent the possible range and volume of delegates anticipated and the associated costs. A previous Excel template can be provided on request (contact ASERA Board).

Once the preliminary budget has been approved by the ASERA Board, the conference hosts should send all invoices for conference-related expenses to the ASERA treasurer (c/- ASERA executive officer). The treasurer will arrange payment of the invoices, and the Executive Office will store the invoices for our records.

The ASERA Board expects that the conference budget will be kept up-to-date with accurate details of all costs incurred. Receipts should also be retained by the conference organisers and sent through to the ASERA treasurer (CC - ASERA exe).

A formal report on the conference should be submitted to the ASERA board at the end of the conference (eg: budget, numbers, successes, areas for improvement, etc).

Conference Insurance

Currently ASERA is solely responsible for all financial risk related to the conference. Conference insurance is cost prohibitive and in exceptional circumstances ASERA will pay non-refundable costs to the conference host institution should the conference be cancelled.

Conference Sponsorship

The ASERA Board is open to conference conveners soliciting sponsorship, but the ASERA Board will have to approve any sponsors. Sponsors are allowed to offer branding, but not influence conference proceedings and/or give presentations because of their sponsorship.

Refunds

Refunds to delegates are limited to genuine reasons for non-attendance and only paid after all conference expenses are completed. An administration fee of no more than 30% of total costs will be incurred for late withdrawals.

Conference Website

The ASERA website – www.asera.org.au - can be set up to host the conference registration and to take conference payments, with an external, attendee-only password-protected conference website also being created to allow the conference committee more direct control (e.g., adding the conference programme). In this case, the ASERA website should be the 'landing page' for delegates with a link to the conference website which they can access through the 'members only' section of the ASERA website using their ASERE member credentials. The ASERA executive officer can assist with using the ASERA website. The ASERA site is managed by the ASERA executive officer, info@asera.org.au and is hosted by Gordon Digital.

Conference Venue

The ASERA Board expects that the conference venue will be of a high quality to appropriately reflect that the ASERA annual conference is a high-level international conference. When selecting an appropriate venue, consideration should be given to the following:

- Ability to cater for appropriately 150-200 delegates including tea/coffee on arrival, morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea. Special dietary requirements should also be able to be accommodated for.
- The conference will require two large assembly areas (lecture theatres or rooms which cater for up to 200 people) and up to 6 smaller rooms (catering for around 30 delegates) for concurrent sessions.
- As an international conference, facilities should be made available for cultural needs e.g. prayer rooms etc.
- The venue should be close to suitable accommodation facilities, within walking distance. A preference is for the venue and accommodation to be housed together. Please note that inclement weather could be an issue for people walking to the conference venue.
- The venue must be able to provide all conference delegates with good and reliable internet access.
- Reliable AV equipment and technical support on hand as required
- All presentation rooms should have a lectern, PC laptop with PowerPoint installed and data projector.
- Access to business facilities (printer) during the conference
- Surrounding location in terms of tourist activities, shops, restaurants

Please be aware that the ASERA Board does not support the use of University premises as a conference venue where the university wishes to control the conference funding.

Accommodation

The ASERA Board expects suitable accommodation facilities to be reasonably close (within walking distance) to the conference venue and alongside good reliable transport routes so that delegates can reach the surrounding areas easily.

A range of accommodation types and costs should be presented to the conference delegates through the conference website, although it is the responsibility of the delegates to organise their own accommodation.

Conference Registration

All conference registrations should be processed online through the conference website.

Conference registrations should remain open as long as is practicable (for early bird - until April, for standard registration - until early June).

It is strongly recommended that the conference registration form should include the following fields:

- an indication of attendance at the Tuesday night function (to assist with catering)
- an indication of whether the delegate has submitted an abstract for the conference, with a field for including the details of the paper

The registration form needs to be explicitly clear if dinner is not included as part of the registration.

The registration form also needs to be explicitly clear that ASERA membership is not included as part of the registration however it should link to the page to become an ASERA member (<http://asera.org.au/join/>)

The policy on refunds (mentioned earlier in this paper) should be explicit on the registration form.

All costs associated with conference attendance should be paid at the time of registration.

An official payment receipt acknowledging that the conference fees have been paid needs to be issued to each delegate.

A letter of attendance/official recognition of conference participation should be provided to all delegates who request one (required by some international universities).

Previously used registration templates can be provided to the organisers on request (contact ASERA executive officer, info@asera.org.au)

ASERA membership is required for all conference presenters

Three weeks prior to the conference, the organisers should submit the list of presenters and attendees who have paid at the 'member' price to the Board Administrator, who will check the names against the members' list.

Other conference events

ECRs and PhD students' workshop and fireside chat

Every year, the ASERA Board organises a Fireside chat for ECRs and PhD students. This occurs on the Wednesday evening, ~5-7pm.

Every second year (even years), the ASERA Board organises a pre-conference workshop on research for PhD students (and Early Career Researchers). It is a good networking opportunity for early career researchers, but the number of places is limited to 20. ASERA pays the registration and food costs of the pre-conference workshop for participants, and all costs for presenters. ASERA is not responsible for extra accommodation or travel costs for participants.

Whilst the planning of content for the pre-conference workshop and fireside chat should be completed by the ASERA Board or by the presenters who will be appointed by the Board, the Board ECR representative should liaise with the conference committee to see if appropriate space for the pre-conference workshop and fireside chat can be negotiated as part of the conference package and charged to ASERA accordingly. Organisation of food and drink for the ECR workshop and fireside chat should be done by the ECR Board representative. The workshops should include lunch and morning/afternoon tea as appropriate. The Fireside chat should include beer, wine, soft drink and some basic food (biscuits, cheese, dip and antipasto have worked well in the past).

Other workshops at the conference

Any other ASERA-associated pre-conference workshops must be proposed and accepted by the ASERA Board. They cannot rely on the conference conveners for any planning assistance.

The conference committee may choose to run a workshop independently, but they are not to reference ASERA. In the past, such independent workshops have included: Science-By-Doing; See Through The STEAM; Questacon visit.

Conference Presentation Guidelines

ASERA conferences consist of two types of presentation – an oral presentation or a poster presentation. ASERA conferences do not have keynote presentations, as it is intended to keep the conference atmosphere egalitarian.

Oral Paper Presentation Sessions

Oral paper presentation sessions will be allocated 40 minutes and must be given in English. This comprises 20 minutes for the paper presentation time and 18 minutes for questions and discussion time then 2 minutes for delegates to move to the next session. Participants seeking to lead a paper presentation need to be able to engage the audience in 18 minutes of critical, but positive, conversation between themselves as the researcher and their audience.

Participants should provide their email address if an audience member wants a copy of the paper (for distribution electronically after the presentation).

Poster Presentations

Depending on uptake, several poster presentation sessions should be scheduled throughout the conference. Posters will be on display in a dedicated area, which will also be the venue for all meals. Poster presentations can be themed according to submissions.

Researchers should prepare a poster (A0= 841mm x 1189mm, or A1= 594mm x 841mm) that details their research (questions, methodology, analysis and results) and a short introduction to the key ideas of their research.

The poster presentation is a good avenue for presenters with lower English language capabilities.

Proposal Submission

It is recommended that all proposals (for either type presentation) are submitted in MS Word (.docx) file format and emailed to the conference organisers at least two months prior to the conference , (i.e.before mid-February). The abstract should be of no more than 200 words and it is expected that the abstract will be relevant to science education research.

Abstracts should include the following information:

- Author(s) information: Author(s) name/s, Author(s) affiliation, & email addresses
- Type of presentation: Identify whether a Poster or Paper presentation is proposed
- Title of the presentation
- Abstract: context, significance, research aim or question, methodology, findings or results (maximum 200 words)
- Research students should clearly identify their supervisor's name on their proposal. This is so that presentation clashes can be avoided, and supervisors are able to attend their student's session.

It is recommended that you specify the format you wish to receive abstracts in e.g.:

Abstracts are to be submitted in the following format for either a poster or paper presentations:

- File Type: MS Word (.docx)
- Font: Arial 12 point
- Spacing: Single
- Word Limit: No longer than 200 words

All abstracts submitted should be refereed and applicants should be notified in writing if they are successful or not (prior to mid-March).

The number of paper and poster presentation sessions should be determined after the closing date for proposal submissions.

The ASERA Board limits any author to a maximum of two presentations as either first author or collaborator. However, a person can be listed on more than two abstracts if clearly identified as a supervisor of the presenter. Any instances where a person is listed on multiple abstracts should be managed by exception.

The ASERA Board rules that the first author of any abstract must be an ASERA member. The first author of any abstract must also be the presenter. This rule is flexible in the case of doctoral students who may not be able to afford the travel costs.

Students are also required to have ASERA membership to present at the conference, and must be full-time students to qualify for student membership.

Reminders should be sent out in the build up to the abstract deadline date. The ASERA executive officer can send messages to ASERA members on your behalf.

Full Refereed Papers

Occasionally some international delegates require full papers to be reviewed for funding and attendance purposes.

First time presenters

The ASERA Board does not sponsor registration or dinner attendance for first time presenters as defining the parameters for a "first-time presenter" (and subsequently monitoring this) is too difficult for conference organisers and the Board.

Conference Abstract Reviewer Guidelines

The conference organisers should organise conference abstract reviewers from their host university approximately 10 months prior to the conference. These should be academics within the host university (approximately 5). It is expected that the conference organisers are also part of the pool of abstract reviewers to help oversee the process, including allocation of abstracts to reviewers, reviewing full conference papers, and reviewing any submissions that needed to be revised/resubmitted.

Conference organisers can also coordinate with the ASERA HDR/ECR representative to recruit HDRs as reviewers (approximately 5) to help support our HDR members in gaining experience in the abstract review process. The final list of abstract reviewers should be sent to the ASERA EO by the end of November the year before the conference.

Once abstract submissions close (normally the end of February the year of the conference), the conference organisers shall coordinate with the ASERA executive officer to sort/allocate abstracts to the reviewers. This should be done by the beginning of March, with reviewer feedback due by mid-March to give those who may need revisions time to resubmit their abstracts by the end of March.

A more detailed description of the activities that need to be undertaken as part of the abstract review process can be found at the end of this document.

Conference Volunteers

Conference organisers can organise for up to five HDR student volunteers to assist them with conference activities during the week of the conference. This should be organised 6 months prior to the conference in consultation with the ASERA HDR/ECR representative.

To be eligible for selection as a volunteer, an individual must be a full time HDR student, who is also a member of ASERA, and not in full-time paid work.

Priority for volunteer selection should be given to those HDRs that also volunteer as abstract reviewers for the conference.

As volunteers for the conference, these HDR students will have their conference registration fee waived, but they will need to arrange/pay for their own travel and accommodation.

Emeritus Members

The ASERA Board awards emeritus memberships to individuals for distinguished membership and service to ASERA. The awards are announced at the AGM of the conference each year.

In the year of presentation ASERA covers the cost of registration and the dinner for any new emeritus members. Details of emeritus members can be obtained from the ASERA executive officer.

Conference Programme

The programme should be developed with consideration for optimum opportunities for delegates to attend presentations of interest. In that regard, as much as possible, presentations will be themed and themes presented in strands.

The draft programme should be made available only about a month prior to the conference, with the final program finalised and available electronically a week prior to the conference.

During the conference no group should be allowed 3 consecutive sessions.

Prior to each session Chairs should reiterate the presentation model to presenters (20 minutes for presentation followed by 18 minutes for questions)

The conference programme needs to allow adequate time for:

- The ASERA Annual General Meeting - Thursday afternoon
- Poster Presentations - Thursday at lunch
- Concurrent sessions (up to 6)
- Morning/afternoon tea and lunch breaks which allow enough time for delegates to refresh but still move to their next presentation on time.
- Fireside chat for ECRs and PhD students – late Wednesday afternoon.

Welcome Reception

The evening prior (Tuesday) to the start of the conference, registration should open at the venue in the afternoon and lead up to a welcome reception in the early evening (6-8pm).

Delegates should be issued a name tag to be worn during the conference. No titles (eg Dr, Prof etc) should be printed on the name tags so as to promote the egalitarian atmosphere throughout the conference.

The welcome reception should be held in an open venue allowing delegates to move freely to greet colleagues and enable social interaction. Finger food and refreshments should be supplied.

The conference organisers should provide a brief welcome address. This welcome should touch on:

- what attendees should expect over the course of the conference
- a brief overview of statistics of interest (delegate numbers, countries represented)
- a reminder regarding the AGM (time and venue)
- any other practical notices

Conference Dinner

The conference dinner is usually held on the Thursday evening so that most delegates are able to attend. It is usually a semi-formal occasion with a full dinner and entertainment. Attendance at the conference dinner is voluntary, but should be costed and paid for at the time of registration.

ASERA AGM

The ASERA AGM is to be held during the conference. Agenda items for the AGM usually include:

- a report from the Managing Director;
- a report on RISE
- a report on the financial state of ASERA;
- elections to the Executive Board;
- a presentation from the conveners of the next conference; proposals for future conferences;
- and any other matters suggested by the membership.

Nominations to the Board from the floor are not accepted; nominations need to be made in advance of the meeting.

Issues to be raised by the membership need to be submitted in writing at least 1 week prior to the AGM; no agenda items would be taken from the floor.

The ASERA executive officer, produces all paperwork for the AGM.

Support for scholars from less developed countries

From time to time the ASERA Board receives requests from scholars in developing countries for support in attending the annual conference.

These requests are considered on an individual basis however the following criteria are applied when assessing the application:

- The researcher will be required to present a paper on which they are the sole or first author.
- The full paper must be submitted when applying for financial support
- The deadline will be at least 3 months in advance of the Conference.

Please refer any such requests to the ASERA Board.

Suggested Conference Planning Timeline

Timing	Action	Detail
<i>Two years prior</i>	Select appropriate venue	Research venues in the area which meet the conference requirements (see above for conference requirements)
<i>18 months prior</i>	Proposed budget. NOTE –THIS TO BE SUBMITTED TO ASERA DIRECTORS FOR APPROVAL	Proposed budget should meet the suggested guidelines in terms of cost as indicated by previous ASERA conferences
<i>14 months prior</i>	Simple advertising prepared (e.g. brochure, postcard, flyer)	This material should contain the information about where the next conference is to be held and the contact details.
<i>12 months prior</i>	Presentation given at ASERA. Report of progress provided to the Board of Directors	Information on advertising material supported with further aspects of the conference
<i>6-12 months prior</i>	Firm bookings made for catering, rooms, special events.	Anticipated numbers can be made from the previous year's conference. Suggested range from 150-200.
<i>6-12 months prior</i>	ECR/PhD events	Liaise with ASERA ECR representative to negotiate venue and catering needs
<i>6-12 months prior</i>	Start work on webpage template	ASERA website access to be organised through the ASERA Board.
<i>6-12 months prior</i>	Format all templates	Registration form, Abstract template /guidelines. Letter of acceptance, letters of rejection. Organise a team of reviewers. Contact industry teams –eg publishers etc for trade display.
<i>6 months prior</i>	Conference website goes live	Registrations and abstracts start to come in. Deposits paid to private suppliers for catering, functions, IT support. Price items for attendees conference satchels Organise a team of HDR volunteers
<i>3 months prior</i>	Registrations complete Confirm numbers with venues	Start programme template. Gain final pricing. Order satchel items
<i>2-3 months prior</i>	Provide verbal report to Board of Directors	The Board of Directors require a progress report.
<i>1 month prior</i>	Complete program	Final program uploaded onto the website, sent to the printer.
<i>1 week prior</i>	Prepare satchels (if needed)	Finalise any remaining details.

Suggested Abstract Review Timeline & Instructions

Date	Task	Responsibility
<i>Nov-Dec previous year</i>	Recruitment of reviewers from JCU	Conference organisers
<i>Nov previous year</i>	Abstract submissions open (open Google form and add link to the ASERA54 website)	ASERA E.O.
<i>Dec previous year to Jan</i>	Send list of reviewers to info@asera.org	Conference organisers
<i>Four months prior (end Feb)</i>	Abstract submissions close (Close off Google Form)	ASERA E.O.
<i>Four months prior (end Feb-start March)</i>	Sort and allocate abstracts to reviewers on the reviewer spreadsheet	Conference organisers
<i>Three months prior (start March)</i>	Communicate to reviewers about their allocated abstracts and their instructions for reviewing (share allocated abstracts and link to reviewer spreadsheet)	ASERA E.O.
<i>Three months prior (mid March)</i>	Abstract reviews due (reviewers to add their feedback to the spreadsheet)	Reviewers
<i>Three months prior (end March)</i>	Follow up for abstract submissions: (1) Email those that have had theirs accepted/rejected (2) Email those that need revisions	ASERA E.O.
<i>Three months prior (end March)</i>	Abstract revisions due (those that needed to revise their abstract to send these to info@asera.org)	Presenters

Instructions for Reviewers

Thank you for supporting the ASERA conference through reviewing abstracts. Please use this information as a guide for when you conduct your reviews.

Please find the link to the Google Drive Folder with the ASERA54 abstracts and reviewer spreadsheet below:

ADD LINK TO FOLDER (Tab to do this in Feb 2023)

You will notice two folders in the above link:

- Folder 1 - Abstracts
- Folder 2 - Spreadsheet for Reviewers

In order to review your allocated abstracts, please do the following:

- Look at the Spreadsheet for your allocated abstracts (look for your name in the “Reviewer 1” or “Reviewer 2” column of the spreadsheet)
- Once you have found which abstracts you have been allocated, please find your allocated abstracts in Folder 1.
- Read through your allocated abstracts and add indicate whether to accept/reject in either the reviewer 1 or 2 column of the spreadsheet. If you recommend accepting with revisions or rejecting, please indicate in the “comment” column your feedback (e.g., what needs to be done to resubmit or why the abstract was rejected).

Please have your reviews finalised on the spreadsheet by COB (ADD DATE ~ MID-MARCH)

If you have any questions about this process, please get in touch with the conference organiser (**ADD DETAILS OF CONFERENCE ORGANISER**)

Here are some general principles related to scholarly abstracts that might be helpful in guiding your response:

- Subject/Problem: Is there a clear focus, rationale, model, theory or philosophy on which the proposal is based?
- Design /Procedure: Is the methodology, procedure, design or organisation appropriate?
- Analysis and Findings: Do the syntheses of ideas or analyses and findings appear to be appropriate and complete?
- Contribution: Does the proposal indicate a possible contribution to the teaching/learning of science?
- General Interest: Does the presentation promise to be of general interest to the science educators and others in ASERA?

Here are some sample comments that may be helpful for when you are providing feedback on your allocated abstracts:

This proposed session:

- Offers new and valuable insights into an important area of curriculum/pedagogy.
- Should be presented on Teachers Day. It offers a useful perspective on an important issue in school teaching or an area of school curriculum.
- Should be presented on Higher Education Day. Its context or content are of interest to educators in higher education settings.
- Is not related to the aims of ASERA.

The abstract for the proposed session:

- Is complete and ready for inclusion in the program.
- Needs revisions, such as
- May be more appropriate as a poster session.
- Should not be accepted