

ISCH conference information package for organizers

Updated on 9 November 2025

Organizing schedule

See the 10-step conference organizing schedule (based on the Rovaniemi 2025 conference) at the end of this document.

Call for Papers

The conference organizer decides the conference theme. The ISCH committee accepts it and helps draft the Call for Papers. It is recommended that the Call for Papers should:

- include a description of the conference theme and a list of examples for discussion themes, ideally formulated as a thematic list, research questions or similar. The conference description should aim for academic rigor, interest, and thematic variety, for example by referencing a brief selection of representative scholarly works that are relevant for the chosen theme.
- mention that both individual paper proposals and panel proposals are accepted.
- include clear instructions on how/when/where to submit the proposals. For individual papers, we recommend max. 300 words for the abstracts, and max 50 words for each presenter's short bio. For panel proposals, we recommend 3, maximum 4 papers per panel and a short (max. 200 words) description of the panel theme in addition to the individual abstracts and bios as described above.
- mention confirmed keynote speakers.
- mention that early career scholars, including PhD students are welcome.
- mention that all historical periods are welcome.
- mention that proposals focusing on methods and theories of cultural history are welcome.
- mention that conference speakers must become ISCH members.
- The CfP, as the conference, may be bilingual, but the CfP must include an English version and mention that papers in either English or the second conference language are welcome.

The following information about ISCH may be included in the CfP (but is not mandatory):

- the ISCH Prize for the best conference presentation.
- publishing in the ISCH journal *Cultural History* and in the "Studies for the International Society for Cultural History" book series (Routledge).

Examples of past CfPs are here: <https://www.culthist.net/past-conferences/>

Promoting the conference

- One year before the conference, during the preceding year's conference, the next conference organizers are invited to present the conference theme and the venue briefly with a few slides (c. 5-10 minutes) at the ISCH Annual General Meeting. The organizer can come in person, be represented by someone, or connect via Zoom. The purpose of this presentation is to publicize the next conference before the CfP is published in the fall, to elicit peoples' interest.
- Publicizing the Call for Papers: ISCH publishes the CfP on the ISCH website, the biannual ISCH newsletter (over 1100 followers), ISCH Facebook page (over 2400 followers), ISCH Bluesky page and CULHIST open mailing list (c. 2000 followers) and H-net (<https://networks.h-net.org/>). Circa two weeks before the deadline, one reminder will be sent on all these except the newsletter. ISCH committee members will also publicize the CfP through their own personal channels and field specific mailing lists (such as the CLASSICISTS list, h_soz_kult, and Conal Conference Alerts).
- It is recommended to create a printable flyer of the CfP (including a QR code to the conference website) that can be attached to notice boards at universities, either by the organizers or the ISCH secretary.
- The conference website should be published as soon as possible after the Call for Papers. The ISCH secretary and executive committee can advise in the creation of the website at the request of the host organization, but the conference website hosting, creation, and management is the responsibility of the institution organizing the conference (under the respective university's web domain, for example, or a completely new domain name). The website can also be integrated into a co-organizing society's website as a subpage.

Budget and money

- See annex for sample budgets of past conferences: [link \(permission required\)](#).
- Conference registration fees must be calculated on the basis of the estimated conference expenses. Usually, there is an early bird registration discount. In fact, most people register before the early bird discount ends. Here are some examples of the registration fees from the past years (early career fee/full fee):
 - Rovaniemi 2025 (circa 130 participants): early bird fee: 120€/150€, late registration: 200€ .
 - Potsdam 2024 (over 200 participants): early bird fee: 40/60€, late registration: 60/80€,
 - Verona 2022 (circa 110 participants in presence + 20-30 online participants): registration fee for in presence participation was 75/120€. There was no early bird discount.
- As a rule, the conference organizer should manage and receive the conference registration payments in their own bank account. A word of advice: a lot of participants usually ask for detailed receipts for these payments. It might be a good idea to set up some type of an automatic receipt system, if possible.
- If the conference organizer cannot receive conference registration payments for bureaucratic/legal reasons, a special arrangement can be made with the ISCH in order to use the ISCH bank account.

- External (non-academic) sponsors are encouraged. For example, Bloomsbury Cultural History series has often offered their sponsorship in exchange for visibility, logos, promotion, thank yous etc. Other possible sponsors include Edinburgh University Press (the publisher of *Cultural History*) or Routledge (the publisher of ISCH book series).
- National scientific foundations and societies (public or private) have often funded a part of ISCH conferences, but each country has different rules and options for this.
- Minor ISCH financial aid is only possible when the financial situation of ISCH allows it.

ISCH membership fee

- The ISCH membership fee (30€ or 50€ per year) will be a separate but obligatory payment for participation in the conference: the organizer should inform participants clearly and repeatedly that ISCH membership is not included in the conference registration fee and must be paid separately. It should be made clear that ISCH membership is required for participation in the ISCH conferences. Reminders of these facts and detailed payment instructions (provided by the ISCH secretary and treasurer) should be visible on the conference registration website and in the emails sent by the conference organizer (for example acceptance notices, reminders, etc.). The conference organizer should provide the ISCH secretary with a list of registered conference participants: the ISCH secretary will collect any missing membership payments before the conference begins.
- If the ISCH conference is co-organized with another society, membership in any of the two societies is sufficient for participation. If participants are not yet members of either society by the time of the conference registration, they may choose which society they wish to join. One way to keep record of the members between two societies could be a shared Excel sheet via Google Drive (or similar) including 1) a list of *all* conference participants, 2) their email addresses, 3) whether they have paid the membership fee for one of the two societies, and if necessary 4) whether they have paid the conference registration fee and the conference dinner fee. Closer to the conference, either the organizers or the ISCH secretary will send a reminder to those who have not yet paid any membership fee. The reminder will again state the option of joining either of the two societies and a detailed description of what is included in the membership.

Conference program

- Number of participants: Ideally, each ISCH conference should have at least 120 participants for ISCH financial reasons. However, it is understood that the number of participants depends on the organizer, the venue, and on the number of abstracts received and selected for the conference.
- The ISCH committee can be asked to help with selecting the abstracts and drafting the program.
- Examples of past conference programs:
 - [Link to Rovaniemi 2025 program.](#)
 - [Link to Potsdam 2024 program.](#)
 - [Link to Singapore 2023 program](#) (co-organized with the Society for Global Nineteenth-Century Studies).
 - [Link to Verona 2022 program.](#)

- Usually, the conference's academic program consists of three plenary lectures and of 8 panel sessions with 4-8 parallel panels (depending on the number of accepted abstracts) over three or four conference days. The program should also include a 1h15min time slot for the ISCH Annual General Meeting (see the section 'ISCH Annual General Meeting' below).
- Optionally, the program may also include other academic activities such as workshops, events for graduate students and early career participants, book launch events or roundtables, social activities such informal get-together events for early career/all conference guests, city tours, etc. (see the section 'Social Program' below).
- A time (c. 10min) should be provided for the welcome address by the ISCH Chair at the beginning of the conference, for example at the conference opening/welcome event or before the first keynote lecture.
- Presenter names and titles of papers for each panel, ideally also their academic affiliation, should be visible in all program versions.
- Panel commentator and moderator names in each panel, ideally also their academic affiliation, should be visible in all program versions.
- Make the detailed conference program available on the conference website in digital format (for example, PDF). We do not recommend printing the detailed conference program because there always are changes until the last minute and for saving paper.
- Abstracts can be published in a separate abstract book or at the end of the detailed conference program. They should contain the name and the academic affiliation of the presenter, the title of the paper and ideally also a short bio, if space permits.

Keynote speakers

- Usually there are 3 keynote speakers, one for each conference day.
- Conference organizers may choose the keynote speakers and inform the ISCH committee of their choice. ISCH committee may make suggestions as well.
- Lectures should be in English.
- Keynote speakers' travelling fees are covered by the conference organizer. Usually, the keynote speakers of the ISCH conferences do not receive an honorarium.
- If possible, the conference organizer should stream live and/or record the keynote lectures, and the recordings should later be made available online through ISCH and/or the host institution. The conference host should ask keynote speakers for permission in advance.

Social program

- The conference should start with a conference opening/welcome event. For example, this can be a simple welcome address in a lecture hall before the first keynote lecture, or it can be a welcome reception if the budget allows it. External sponsors are also possible for this purpose, such as local societies, city mayors' offices, etc.
- We recommend organizing a conference dinner (see below, under 'Food and drinks') for which interested conference guests will register and pay the fee in advance.

- The social program can also include city and nature tours, museum visits, sightseeing, movie screenings, music or theatre performances, informal get-togethers, etc.

Food and drinks

- Conference dinner: Conference guests who are interested in the dinner will pay and register to the dinner in advance. Organizers ask about the conference participant's dietary restrictions when they register. The dinner can be organized at a restaurant, at the university cafeteria, or as a standing buffet – whatever is feasible in each circumstance. The price of the dinner has usually been around 40—60€. Let the dinner guests know the dress code, even when it is informal.
- Coffee pauses: During the breaks between panel sessions (and in the mornings), provide coffee, tea and water. Snacks are welcome but not mandatory. Coffee breaks should be covered by the conference registration fee.
- Lunch: This is usually not included in the conference registration fee. The conference organizer should inform the conference guests about the lunch options nearby. If there is a university cafeteria available, inform them well in advance about the conference and try to negotiate a special price for conference guests. If the conference budget allows it, consider offering drinks or food vouchers, for example for students and early career participants.

Conference materials to be picked up by the participants from the registration desk

- Conference badges: Name and academic affiliation
- An info brochure with the general conference schedule and the venue map + some useful tips such as wifi, qr-code to the detailed program, contact information of the organizers, emergency information, etc. We do not recommend printing the detailed conference program because there always are changes until the last minute and for saving paper.
- Optional extras from the university, organization and/or the ISCH (ISCH can assist with graphic design), such as pens, papers, notebooks, folders, bags, bookmarks, stickers, eyeglass wipes, water bottles, etc.

ISCH Annual General Meeting (AGM)

- For this meeting, organizers provide a lecture hall that allows streaming and/or Zoom, possibly the same lecture hall used for the keynote lectures.
- There should be space for at least 30 people.
- AGM should take place during the conference and be included in the conference program. We recommend one hour and 15 minutes for the AGM.

- AGM should not take place at the same time with any panel sessions. The AGM may take place at the same time with workshops, social activities (city tours, movie screenings, etc.), or the annual meeting of the co-organizing society.
- AGM should take place on the penultimate or final day of the conference, but not as the last point on the conference program. A good moment would be, for example, before any of the keynote lectures.
- The AGM information should be included on the conference website and on notice boards during the conference. ISCH will provide details.

ISCH Prize competition

[The ISCH Prize](#) competition should be publicized when- and wherever possible: before/after the keynote lectures, in the welcome/ending address, on the conference website, on notice boards during the conference, and in the CfP. ISCH will provide the details.

ISCH committee meeting

The ISCH committee will have a private meeting during the conference before the AGM. Hosts should provide a space where the committee (6–14 people) can gather for one hour, usually during a lunch break. This can be an empty room with tables or a space in a library where the committee can have a conversation and use laptops (i.e., seating opportunities, electrical outlets and wifi access should be available).

Practical advice

- Conference notice board at the entrance: information about cancellations, and other last-minute things.
- Offer options for storing the conference participants' luggage at the conference venue during the conference (especially on the last day), if possible.
- Assign technicians to help with technical difficulties, to be on stand-by at the registration desk and in each lecture building so that they can offer prompt support.

PANEL GUIDELINES

At the discretion of the conference organizers, panels can be of two types:

- 1) Chair (moderator) and presenters OR
- 2) Chair (moderator), respondent (commentator) and presenters

Once the preliminary program is available, the conference organizers send a group message to the panelists and the chair, regardless of panel format. This message introduces the Chair to the panelists, and details the Chair's duties, asking the panelists to send a brief bio directly to the Chair.

Commentators (respondents) duties:

In type 2) panels with comments/responses, the commentator/respondent is responsible for reminding presenters 4-5 weeks before the conference to send their papers 1-3 weeks in advance for comments. Commentators keep their comments short and to the point (10-15 minutes per panel) and also prepare a few questions to encourage discussion.

Chairs (moderators) duties:

In both types of panels (1) and 2), Chairs (moderators) collect the panelists' bio blurbs 1-2 weeks before the conference and write an own bio blurb. Bios should follow the conference submission format (as detailed above) and the Chair (moderator) uses them to introduce each speaker (presenters and commentator). The Chair (moderator) also manages the Q&A. Chairs (moderators), please ask a panel member to introduce you or introduce yourselves. Chairs also discuss with the panelists beforehand whether questions from the audience should be taken after each presentation or at the end of the whole session and make sure presenters limit their presentations to the amount of time allotted to them (e.g. by letting speakers know when they have only a minute or two left and then intervening if they exceed their allotted time).

Presentations:

Presentation length is adjusted to panel length and gives each speaker the same amount of time to present. Recommendations for 2-hour (120 minutes) panels:

1) a couple of minutes for the bios (~15 minutes) + 20-minute presentations (allow 2,3 minutes overtime) + Q&A (~ 20 minutes)

2) a couple of minutes for the bios (~15 minutes) + 20-minute presentations (allow 2,3 minutes overtime) + 10-15 minutes for comments + Q&A (~ 10 minutes)

The above recommendations should be adjusted to panel length and communicated by the conference organizers in the CfP and conference guidelines.

All presenters should be given the same amount of time to speak and all panel participants should be introduced to the audience.

10-STEP ISCH CONFERENCE PROCESS ROADMAP

1.5–2 years before the event

- The event venue is selected
- The city and date are chosen
- Consider the booking rates of venues in the area; seasons affect availability. For example, it's not advisable to hold a large conference in Lapland during winter, as everything is expensive during the tourist season
- The organizing committee is formed: a chairperson is selected, key responsibilities are assigned, and decision-making and operational procedures are agreed upon
- Funding applications

1–1.5 years before the event

- Venue bookings: reserve all necessary seminar rooms and other spaces
- Decide on the theme and present it to ISCH
- Invitations to international speakers
- Begin preparing the call for papers texts
- Create an info email address for the conference
- Brainstorm the visual identity of the conference
- Create the website
- Launch social media channels
- Send out a "Save the Date" announcement
- Agree on financial arrangements: who will manage the financial transactions and who will handle registrations
 - Outsourcing can ease the organizing process, and professionals already have functioning systems
 - Possible selection of a conference office / team / service provider
- Decide on the registration system

10–12 months before the event

- Call for papers opens
 - Announced via ISCH, social media, and email lists
- Direct communication with key contacts and stakeholders
- Book the dinner venue
- Reserve/confirm lunches and coffee breaks
- Update the website
 - Practical information
 - Details about fees and related deadlines
- Registration matters: finalize the registration form
- Book flights for international speakers
- Arrange accommodation allotments for participants
- Seek potential sponsors

2–4 months before the event

- Acceptance letters sent to participants
- Recruit session chairs
- Assign presentations to working groups
- Update the programme
- Early bird registration ends
- Final programme: publish abstracts online and finalize the working group / panel schedule

The final week before the event

- Arrange airport and other transportation (e.g. for keynote speakers)
- Orientation for assistants
- Prepare a list of responsible persons, schedules, task distribution, and shift lists
- Orientation for social media assistants
- Compile materials for the info desk
- Final check of venues and technical equipment
- Directional signs for the conference spaces
- Get gifts for keynote speakers
- Print and check participant lists, payment confirmations, and outstanding payments
- Create a WhatsApp group (or similar) for assistants and other key personnel
- Assign hosts for guest entertainment: who takes care of guests at different stages, dinners, transportation, etc.
- Prepare name badges
- Collect printed materials from the print shop

5–6 months before the event

- Registration form opens
- Scientific Board is formed
- Call for papers closes, paper review process begins
- Preliminary program published on the website
- Plan the poster session, if applicable
- Conference secretary begins work (possibly earlier)
- Agree on student collaboration, assistants, interns, and credit arrangements
- Book performers for the evening event, such as musical acts
- Agree on possible live streaming of keynote speeches
- Confirm exhibitors (e.g., publishers)
- Planning events, such as museum visits or guided tours (with local relevance in mind!)

1–2 months before the event

- Late registration closes
- Confirm number of participants with partners: dinners, lunches, etc.
- Possible printed materials: programs, posters, lanyards, etc.
- Panel / Conference room allocations
- Arrangements with custodial and cleaning services
- Technical coordinator or assistants trained in room technology
- Final call for recruiting conference assistants
- Information letters about arrangements (for speakers, session chairs, presentation guidelines, and advance submission)
- Request participants for panel presentation materials beforehand

On the first day of the event

- Set up the info desk
- Display Wi-Fi passwords clearly
- Prepare tables for exhibitors and partners
- Flowers (if applicable)
- Transportation arrangements
- Hang up directional signs
- Ensure keys and doors are in order
- Assign assistants to panel rooms
- Place water, pens, and notepads in lecture halls
- Upload panel presentations to computers in the rooms
- Check all technical equipment (sound, visuals, remote connections if needed)
- Welcome participants at the info desk

During the conference

- Welcoming and assisting participants at the info desk
- Uploading each day's panel presentation materials to the computers
- Checking technical setup (sound, visual display, and functionality of any remote connections)
- Responding to emails and making any necessary updates to the program published on the website

After the conference

- Thank-you messages to all funders, speakers and performers
- Thank-you message to participants
- Update the budget: actual expenses and income
- Final debrief meeting
- Schedule the closure of the website
- Close the website

ISCH Conference Planning Schedule (text version)

1.5–2 years before the event

- The event venue is selected
- The city and date are chosen
- Consider the booking rates of venues in the area; seasons affect availability. For example, it's not advisable to hold a large conference in Lapland during winter, as everything is expensive during the tourist season
- The organizing committee is formed: a chairperson is selected, key responsibilities are assigned, and decision-making and operational procedures are agreed upon
- Funding applications

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- Begin preparing the call for papers texts
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- Send out a "Save the Date" announcement
- Agree on financial arrangements: who will manage the financial transactions and who will handle registrations
 - Outsourcing can ease the organizing process, and professionals already have functioning systems
 - Possible selection of a conference office / team / service provider
- Decide on the registration system

10–12 months before the event

- Call for papers opens
 - Announced via ISCH, social media, and email lists
- Direct communication with key contacts and stakeholders
- Book the dinner venue
- Reserve/confirm lunches and coffee breaks
- Update the website
 - Practical information
 - Details about fees and related deadlines
- Registration matters: finalize the registration form
- Book flights for international speakers
- Arrange accommodation allotments for participants
- Seek potential sponsors

5–6 months before the event

- Registration form opens
- Scientific Board is formed
- Call for papers closes, paper review process begins
- Preliminary program published on the website
- Plan the poster session, if applicable
- Conference secretary begins work (possibly earlier)
- Agree on student collaboration, assistants, interns, and credit arrangements
- Book performers for the evening event, such as musical acts
- Agree on possible live streaming of keynote speeches
- Confirm exhibitors (e.g., publishers)
- Planning events, such as museum visits or guided tours (with local relevance in mind!)

2–4 months before the event

- Acceptance letters sent to participants
- Recruit session chairs
- Assign presentations to working groups
- Update the programme
- Early bird registration ends
- Final programme: publish abstracts online and finalize the working group / panel schedule

1–2 months before the event

- Late registration closes
- Confirm number of participants with partners: dinners, lunches, etc.
- Possible printed materials: programs, posters, lanyards, etc.
- Panel / Conference room allocations
- Arrangements with custodial and cleaning services
- Technical coordinator or assistants trained in room technology
- Final call for recruiting conference assistants
- Information letters about arrangements (for speakers, session chairs, presentation guidelines, and advance submission)
- Request participants for panel presentation materials beforehand

The final week before the event

- Arrange airport and other transportation (e.g. for keynote speakers)
- Orientation for assistants
- Prepare a list of responsible persons, schedules, task distribution, and shift lists
- Orientation for social media assistants
- Compile materials for the info desk
- Final check of venues and technical equipment
- Directional signs for the conference spaces

- Get gifts for keynote speakers
- Print and check participant lists, payment confirmations, and outstanding payments
- Create a WhatsApp group (or similar) for assistants and other key personnel
- Assign hosts for guest entertainment: who takes care of guests at different stages, dinners, transportation, etc.
- Prepare name badges
- Collect printed materials from the print shop

On the first day of the event

- Set up the info desk
- Display Wi-Fi passwords clearly
- Prepare tables for exhibitors and partners
- Flowers (if applicable)
- Transportation arrangements
- Hang up directional signs
- Ensure keys and doors are in order
- Assign assistants to panel rooms
- Place water, pens, and notepads in lecture halls
- Upload panel presentations to computers in the rooms
- Check all technical equipment (sound, visuals, remote connections if needed)
- Welcome participants at the info desk

During the conference

- Welcoming and assisting participants at the info desk
- Uploading each day's panel presentation materials to the computers
- Checking technical setup (sound, visual display, and functionality of any remote connections)
- Responding to emails and making any necessary updates to the program published on the website

After the conference

- Thank-you messages to all funders
- Thank-you messages to speakers and performers
- Thank-you message to participants
- Update the budget: actual expenses and income
- Final debrief meeting
- Schedule the closure of the website
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