



Guidelines for EMBO | EMBL Symposia Organisers

Outline

EMBO and EMBL are collaborating to follow their mission of developing and providing advanced training to their member states. Both EMBO and EMBL have established a strong portfolio of state-of-the-art scientific conferences, courses and workshops in Europe.

EMBO|EMBL Symposia are held in hybrid format, with a focus on ensuring a meaningful in-person event, whilst incorporating the best aspects and advantages of recent digital developments.

To further promote scientific communication and collaboration, the symposia are jointly organised and funded by both organisations. These joint meetings take place at the EMBL Advanced Training Centre and benefit from the state-of-the-art facilities and professional conference staff.

EMBO|EMBL Symposia aim to provide the European scientific community with a platform to discuss and exchange ideas on forward-looking topics and new developments in the life sciences. The focus of these events should be complementary to existing programmes promoted by both organisations. Topics should emphasize strategically upcoming developments and interdisciplinarity in all fields of the life sciences.

Organisers

The members of the organising committee select the speakers based on their expert knowledge in their respective fields.

- Symposia should have a minimum of 3 scientific organisers (range: 3-5). The composition of the committee must be gender balanced (minimum 33% or 40% women, respectively, in case of an uneven number of organisers) and represent continental diversity (EU / Asia-Pacific / Africa / Americas).
- For repeating symposia, regular replacement of organisers ensures the diversity of invited speakers and increases the ability of the committee to promote emerging ideas and new concepts.

Therefore, no single organiser should remain on the committee for more than three iterations of a symposium. To maintain continuity, we suggest to rotate off half of the organisers after two symposia.

The members of the organising committee are encouraged to suggest new potential committee members.

The sustainability of some symposia relies on a specific organiser. The

EMBO|EMBL Symposia Committee therefore reserves the right to waive the organiser rotation requirement in such cases.

Speakers

The number of invited speakers should be:

- 2.5 day symposium: ca. 5 sessions x ca. 3 invited speakers + 1-3 keynote speakers = ca. 15 – max. 18
- 3.5 day symposium: ca. 6 sessions x ca. 3 invited speakers + 1-3 keynote speakers = ca. 18 – max. 21

The **maximum number** of invited speakers **cannot exceed 18** for a 2.5 day symposium or **21** for a 3.5 day symposium.

To ensure diversity of speakers, the following rules apply:

- The invited speaker list should be gender balanced, with a minimum of 40% women or 40% of the underrepresented gender.
- At least 50% of the invited speakers should be working across a variety of European countries. A minimum of 25% must be based across a spread of the other continents, i.e. the Asia-Pacific region, Africa and the Americas. We encourage invitation of speakers from low- and middle-income countries (as defined by the UN **DAC list**).
- For repeat conferences, invited speakers from the previous conference edition should not be reinvited. A list of the speakers from previous editions will be available on the website or can alternatively be provided to the organisers by the EMBL Course and Conference Office (EMBL CCO).
- At least 20% of the invited speakers should be early-stage researchers, here defined as having no more than 5 years experience as a principal investigator.

The list should be sent to **embo-emblsymposia@embo.org**. Once the list has been approved in writing, an official invitation letter will be sent out by the EMBL CCO.

Timelines

After acceptance, organisers are expected to provide a synopsis summarising the aims of the meeting, a tentative programme and the list of speakers to **embo-emblsymposia@embo.org**, at the latest **18 months prior to the meeting**. This information will be used to advertise the symposium on and offline, providing the content for websites, mailings, print advertising, social media etc.

Symposia Format The duration of the meeting should be 2.5 / 3.5 days.

EMBO|EMBL Symposia are held in hybrid format. All speakers are invited on the basis that they will give their talk in-person, live at the symposium at EMBL Heidelberg and will attend for the full duration of the event. The speakers' talks are livestreamed to remote participants and also recorded, provided consent has been obtained from the speaker, for convenient viewing on demand across time zones by registered participants up to two weeks after the symposium.

The maximum number of on-site participants is limited by the capacity of the EMBL Advanced Training Centre (~470 seats).

Virtual participants can ask questions, network and discuss through the event platform. Organisers and session chairs need to ensure that questions from both the on-site and the online audiences are answered. Short talks and poster sessions currently take place live and on-site only by default.

Organisers are encouraged to leave time slots open in the programme for short talks selected from submitted abstracts (e.g. 4 per session); newly emerging topics and to address important developments in the field.

Organisers are expected to encourage invited speakers to present unpublished data and to be on site for the entire duration of the symposium.

We aim to provide the participants at the EMBO|EMBL Symposia with specific opportunities for interaction and discussions beyond the scientific lectures and poster sessions. In particular students and post docs should be encouraged to discuss with the speakers and other participants. Organisers should include at least two of the activities listed below in their meeting (see also appendix for further guidelines):

- Short poster presentations: e.g. "Flash talks" of 1 – 3 minutes per poster
- Meet the speaker sessions: e.g. dedicated lunch tables where participants can informally talk to individual speakers
- Special interest discussion sessions: e.g. presentation and Q+A about a particular technique
- Career development: e.g. career opportunities in the field or tips for looking for postdoctoral/group leader positions, hosted by speakers of the symposium
- Chalk board talk sessions: e.g. explaining a debated topic in the field or a new technique

The EMBL ATC has additional rooms available where these sessions can be hosted. These sessions can be scheduled during lunch break or in the

evenings. Alternative suggestions for networking activities are welcome.

In addition, a pre-symposium can be scheduled for a limited number of the participating PhD students and post docs. See appendix for further guidelines.

Accommodation for speakers will be arranged by the EMBL CCO.

Dinners should normally be held in the EMBL canteen, thus reducing expenditures that would otherwise diminish the resources available for the scientific aspects of the symposia.

Funding

EMBO|EMBL Symposia are financed by the two organisations and from the registration fees.

Funds of up to 3000 EUR may be spent at the discretion of the organisers to finance e.g. exceptional speaker travel costs, additional attendance fellowships, etc. These funds are part of the total budget allocated to the symposium.

EMBO|EMBL welcome additional funds raised by organisers to support covering the overall costs. Such funds may in part be used to cover additional travel grants, additional speakers from overseas and networking functions.

The budget for the symposia will be managed by the EMBL CCO.

The following budget limits apply:

- Conference gala dinner at EMBL Canteen – cap per head: 45 EUR
- Band cap per conference: 2000 EUR plus GEMA (performance licensing)
- Economy class flight cap from Asia, Australia, South-America: 2000 EUR
- Economy class flight cap from W USA / CAN: 1500 EUR
- Economy class flight cap from E USA / CAN / ISR: 1250 EUR
- Economy class flight cap from Europe (except Germany): 450 EUR
- Economy class travel cap for Germany: 250 EUR
- If speakers choose to fly business class, only the cap amounts will be reimbursed
- Hotel room cap: 120 EUR per person per night – note – hotels are arranged for speakers by the EMBL Course and Conference Office
- All social activities for any free afternoons / evenings are priced and charged for in addition to registration fees
- Poster prizes should be limited to a maximum total value of 500 EUR per symposium and the funds may be split between 2 and 5 winners

Registration Fees Registration fees will be adjusted annually. 2023, 2024 and 2025 prices for student / academia / industry can be seen in the table below. Future prices will be published in due course.

	2.5 – 3 day	3.5 – 4 day
2023	€ 540 / 640 / 840	€ 600 / 700 / 900
2024	€ 540 / 640 / 840	€ 600 / 700 / 900
2025	€ 565 / 665 / 865	€ 625 / 725 / 925

Registrations will be handled on a “first come first served” basis.

Open and closure dates for registration in relation to meeting dates will be jointly decided by the EMBL CCO and the organisers, but usually registration opens up to 12 months before and closes 6 weeks before the start date. The abstract deadline is usually 3 months before the start date. Registration deadlines for virtual participation are set closer to the conference.

Grants EMBO and The EMBL Advanced Training Centre Corporate Partnership Programme will provide travel grants and registration fee waivers for each symposium (see appendix for guidelines).

These grants will be awarded by the scientific organisers in accordance with the guidelines and administered through the EMBL CCO.

Poster Session When planning poster sessions, the organisers should be aware that a maximum of 320 posters can be displayed throughout the meeting. The number of accepted posters may be limited by the organisers. In case of oversubscription, organisers are expected to select the best scientific contributions.

Speakers for short talks will be selected by the organisers from the submitted abstracts (normally 4 short talks per session).

Organisers should ensure that poster sessions have dedicated time slots with sufficient time for poster viewing.

Abstract Book A digital abstract book will be produced by the EMBL CCO and made available for all participants in the event platform

**Design and
Advertisement**

Advertising and graphic design will be handled by EMBO|EMBL. A graphic designer will work together with a scientific organiser to create a key visual for the event, which is to be used for all future editions. This key visual will be used in marketing materials and campaigns distributed from one year prior to the meeting. Organisers and speakers should actively promote their symposium in their specialist community / field to help the meeting reach its intended audience.

**Operational
Organisation**

The operational organisation and logistics will be handled by the EMBL CCO. All liaison with speakers once invited, and with participants will be conducted by the EMBL CCO on behalf of the organisers. Once the organisers have been introduced to their Course and Conference Officer, they will be invited to take part in a kick-off meeting. These meetings are essential for the operational organisation.

EMBO | EMBL Symposia Guidelines Appendix

EMBO | EMBL Symposia travel grants and registration fee waivers

EMBO|EMBL Symposia fellowships are jointly funded by EMBO and the EMBL Advanced Training Centre Corporate Partnership Programme.

Travel grants and fee waivers shall be allocated by the scientific organisers on the basis of the quality of the abstract submitted, with priority to scientists from the countries listed below. All applicants have to justify the reasons for applying for a travel grant and/or a fee waiver. Organisers are advised to judge the requests on the basis of quality and need.

Amounts of funding and purpose:

The amount of funding distributed to the symposia is dependent on the number of expected registrations for each event.

- Travel grants
Travel grants can be used to cover travel, accommodation and visa fees.
Up to €400 for Europe, up to €1000 for overseas. At the organiser's discretion, the amount of the travel grant can be lowered to benefit more participants.
- Registration fee waivers
See applicable registration fees in the appropriate section of the guidelines.

Fee waivers and travel grants can be combined. Applicants should specify if they are applying for either or both.

Travel Grants and fee waivers shall be given with first priority to participants working in the following countries:

Europe:

Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Serbia, Spain, Ukraine and Turkey.

Overseas:

Australia, India, Singapore, South Africa, Taiwan as well as Africa, South and Central America and Asia (Japan and South Korea do not have first priority).

Registration fees and travel costs must initially be paid by the participant, the sum up to the amount allocated will be reimbursed after attendance.

Special Sessions at EMBO | EMBL Symposia:

Flash talks:

Flash talks are one to three minute presentations during which selected participants get the opportunity to concisely summarize the research presented in their poster. Students and post docs should describe briefly their topic of interest, why it is important and how their work contributes to the field, advertising the work that is presented in more detail on the poster.

Due to the strict time-limit and the short duration, flash talks make the presenters think carefully about what they want to say, forcing them to work out the essence of their project, an excellent preparation for both discussions at the poster itself as well as for longer presentations in the future.

Individuals get the opportunity to highlight their work to all symposium participants, the audience on the other hand gets a broad overview of what is being presented in the poster sessions.

Flash talks can be scheduled in chunks of 30 – 60 min as plenary sessions. Flash talkers should be pre-selected by the organizers. The first of these sessions could be held in the evening of the first day, already introducing some of the participants.

Meet the speakers:

Meet the speaker sessions make it easier in particular for the younger audience to directly address speakers with questions that they did not dare ask in the plenum. Dedicated sessions allow them to approach the speaker when they are ready and available to field questions.

Possible formats are:

- Lunch/dinner tables dedicated to individual speakers. Participants can join to discuss with the speaker. Speakers could be asked to be available for such sessions.
- Speaker speed-dating: individuals get e.g. 2-minute time slots to talk to individual speakers (see above). This format prevents individuals to monopolize speakers.

Special interest discussion session (round table discussions):

Discussion session around a topic of interest to a subset of the participants, e.g. a particular technique ("Protein labeling techniques"), could include a short presentation followed by Q+A.

These sessions can be held in break out rooms during a longer break. Several can be held in parallel to cover different topics. This could take the format of chalk-board talk (see below).

Career development:

Session aimed at the younger audience getting them to think about their future and get advice.

Possible formats are:

- Round tables where selected speakers field questions on defined topics ("What should I be looking for in a postdoctoral position?", "How to combine science and family?",

“Publishing: How important is it for your career? When is your story ready to be published? Which journal to try? Who should be involved in writing the paper, and who should be co-authors?”, for more topics see, e.g., here: <http://www.the-embo-meeting.org/career-skills/pursuing-an-academic-career>)

- Present career opportunities in the field, within and outside academia
- Science writing/how to review a paper: invite journal editor to talk about these or similar topics

Chalk board talk sessions:

A “chalk-board talk” lends itself to present concepts and ideas, rather than large amounts of data. A new finding in the field, overturning dogma, or a new technology may warrant this format, allowing the audience to better digest the information given.

Possible formats:

- plenary talk
- satellite talk, in parallel with special interest discussions (see above)

Speed networking:

Speed networking encourages interactions on the first day of the conference and is open to all delegates, including organisers and speakers. This session not only provides delegates with the opportunity to enhance their skills at effective networking, but it also allows them to meet new people on the first day of the conference, meet potential postdoc advisors and employers, get feedback on research, and find potential new collaborations.

A speed networking session should be scheduled for 60 – 90 minutes, allowing individuals to meet 12 – 18 fellow participants. Each participant couple has 5 min to get acquainted to each other before both move on to the next partner. The EMBL CCO can propose a format and arrange the session.

EMBO/EMBL Symposia pre-symposia:

EES pre-meetings can be organized for selected PhD students and post docs who have registered for the respective EMBO/EMBL Symposium. EES pre-symposia give the young researchers the opportunity to present and discuss their research in an intimate but international environment, receiving feedback and advice from their peers and some of the speakers at the main symposium.

In addition to research talks organizers can schedule a half-day training session on one of the following topics:

- Communication skills (how to make yourself understood and avoid misunderstandings)
- Negotiation skills
- CV writing and interviewing
- Research ethics
- Packaging your research message

A summary outline can be found below.

EES pre-symposia take place 1- 1.5 days prior to the main symposium and are limited to 20 – 25 participants.

If no additional funding is available, an extra fee of €125 per person will be charged for the pre-symposium.

Organisers should let the EMBL CCO know if they want a pre-symposium to take place. Organisers can delegate the organization of the pre-symposium to their co-workers, if desired, and should select up to 5 speakers from the main symposium to participate. This group should select the participants and speakers for the pre-symposium from the applications (applicants must have submitted an abstract).

The training sessions must be requested at least 6 months in advance in order to be able to book the professional trainers.

Training session summary:

- Packaging your research message
 - Conveying a clear research message in grant applications, publications and job / grant panel interviews is an invaluable skill for a successful scientific career. In this workshop you will learn how to decompose your research into a few key ideas, which can form the basis of clear and well-structured scientific communication in a variety of formats.
- Communication skills (how to make yourself understood and avoid misunderstandings)
 - This workshop will create awareness about basic communication skills & conflict management. Trainers will present tools and practice them on the spot based on real life examples.
- Negotiation skills
 - Becoming aware of the mindset behind efficient negotiations will give you an insight into how to improve your professional relationships, and understanding what makes up the negotiation process will enable you to be better equipped when building a partnership.
- Responsible conduct of research
 - The do's and don'ts in scientific practice: learn about responsible conduct and what you absolutely need to know when conducting, documenting and publishing your research
or
 - when working with animals or samples derived from humans.

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