

Guidelines for the Programs of the System Dynamics Society

V0.10 November 15, 2023

Society Programs Oversight Committee (SPOC)

The SPOC is a Standing Committee of the System Dynamics Society (SDS) that is charged with recommending future Program Chairs, session types and formats, topics and application areas, and other items related to the scholarly content of conferences. The SPOC is responsible for overseeing the performance of conference Program Committee members, including Program Chairs, Thread Chairs, and Workshop Chairs. The SPOC consists of 6 members serving staggered 3-year terms to provide continuity. There are 4 rotating members, at least 2 of whom are past program chairs. The VP Publications and VP Meetings shall serve as ex officio members. The VP Meetings shall serve as the ex officio SPOC chair. The SPOC may designate an alternative member to be chair by majority vote. Membership is on a calendar year basis.

Document Purpose

The purpose of these program guidelines is to provide clear standards for the quality of programs that are offered by the SDS. This document captures the lessons and insights of the chairs involved with planning, development, and publication of these programs so that this knowledge can easily be transferred to their successors. This document may be updated by any current SPOC member or Program Chair as new issues and resolutions emerge, but changes to policy and practices should be supported by a majority of the full SPOC. While all topics related to SDS programs could be captured in this document, its main focus should be on the preparation of content for scientific and professional programs to advance the field.

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SPOC Functions

The SPOC performs the following functions during each calendar year:

1. At least once each year at a Policy Council Meeting, the SPOC chair will report out on activities and guideline updates, and record into the minutes as supporting material a copy of these guidelines as they have been revised from the previous version. Significant changes to this document should be approved by a Policy Council vote.
2. By September, select the Workshop Chairs for the conference to be held the following year.
3. By the time of the Summer Conference, recruit Program Chairs for the conference at least 2 years into the future. The SPOC should generally seek to recruit a team of 3 Program Chairs, at least one of whom has prior experience as a Program Chair.
 - a. Two or more Program Chairs should be identified if at least one of them has previously served as a Program Chair. Three or more Program Chairs should be identified if none have previously served as a Program Chair. For a docket of all inexperienced Program Chairs to be accepted, a SPOC member or past Program Chair must also agree to mentor and support them as needed.
 - b. Potential Program Chairs may be identified from recent Thread Chairs.
 - c. Once they have agreed to serve, the Program Chairs selected by the SPOC will be approved by a vote of the Policy Council.
4. After the program development experience, hold an electronic debriefing in order to discuss program-related issues and gather together comments from the Program Committee as a basis for rationalizing Thread management and updating this document.
5. Select the set of Threads and related Focus Areas to be included in the upcoming conference and approve Thread Chairs (more details on this below). This needs to be completed by October so that the Web Portal can be updated.
6. Recruit new rotating SPOC members. Rotating SPOC members shall be appointed by the Society President or other officer with the approval of the Policy Council. An incoming Program Chair should be appointed to the Committee the year prior to their tenure and remain on the Committee through the year after their conference occurs. This will ensure that the SPOC always has a representative of the current year's conference, the next year's conference, and the previous year's conference.
7. Approve the modification of this document based on the changes from the debriefing and the updated Thread list.

Program Chair Duties

This section exists to guide the conference Program Chairs in their duties and to help potential candidates decide whether they are willing to be Program Chairs. The largest part of the work of Program Chairs is concentrated between March and May, when the papers are reviewed, approved, and placed into cohesive sessions. See Appendix B for an approximate timeline of program tasks.

1. Come up with the conference theme and write a paragraph or two around that theme by June of the year prior to the conference. PCs should consult with Organizing Chairs in determining the theme and receive SPOC approval. The conference theme is critical for marketing the call for papers in messaging and the website.
2. Work with SPOC to review threads and Thread Chairs (see *Managing Threads and Thread Chairs* below).

3. Pick plenary topics and recruit keynote speakers, leaving some spots open for high-quality paper submissions (see *Plenary Sessions* below).
4. Add features to the program as appropriate. These may come from outside people sending proposals (e.g., in 2015, someone proposed to place a set of high quality visualizations around the conference).
 - a. New ideas usually create new work. PCs are encouraged to make improvements and do something new, but the PCs must also be responsible to define the item/event and related responsibilities in ample time so as to not create emergencies to be able to implement the new idea at the conference.
5. Determine the overall program timing, in consultation with the organizing committee and Office.
6. Participate in creating communications from the Office about the conference.
 - a. Review and approve office communications in advance of upcoming deadlines. See the appendix for an overview of the annual program planning timeline.
7. Review the reviewers' comments to make sure they are appropriate and valid for the submissions, and rate reviewer quality in the Web Portal. Some Program Chairs read all the submissions, but this is not strictly necessary to determine the quality of the reviews.
8. Arrange the papers into cohesive sessions based on the thread chair recommendations and reviews (see more details below).
9. Ensure all sessions have chairs. Recruit session chairs with assistance from the Office. Note: for the plenary session chairs, be sure to select someone who knows about the chosen theme and session, and for the feedback session chairs, be sure to select someone who can ensure a good learning experience.
10. Open the conference, make announcements each morning, and close the conference.
 - a. For virtual and hybrid conferences, daily morning announcements should be sent by email to attendees, in addition to any announcements delivered live. Communication with conference attendees should be managed in collaboration with the Office.
11. Attend the post-conference debrief (generally held on the last day of the conference).
12. Optional: Write a few SDS blog posts to increase public awareness and excitement about the conference. Others may help. Beginning in 2021, a [Conference Highlights Blog](#) team was formed by the Policy Council for this purpose.

All conference organizers must agree to the conference dates and planning schedule, which may be proposed by the Office on the basis of prior conferences. Program Chairs are encouraged to make suggestions to the schedule, and will at least want to ensure that they have sufficient time to review the Thread Chair evaluations prior to sending author acceptance letters. Note: Program Chairs will need to review any late submissions that have been granted.

Conference Expectations

The International System Dynamics Conference (ISDC) is generally held on a Sunday through Thursday, or Monday through Friday, in late July or early August. The Student-Organized Colloquium is generally held on the day prior to the main conference program (Sunday or Monday) as well as the Policy Council meeting. Workshops are generally held on the last day of the conference (Thursday or Friday). Decisions about the exact timing are contingent upon site constraints and costs.

The conference is traditionally known as the International Conference of the System Dynamics Society, and this longer name continues to appear in the Conference Record. However, the decision

was made in 2021 to standardize the shorter name and ISDC abbreviation for communication and promotional purposes.

Virtual and Hybrid Conference Delivery

The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated that the 2020 and 2021 conferences be held virtually. The capability of delivering virtual conferences provides opportunities for future hybrid conferences that combine an in-person conference component with an engaging online experience. The first fully hybrid conference was held in 2022. Many design choices enter into the planning of a virtual conference, but an overriding principle is to retain the integrity of the session formats.

Most material presented at hybrid conferences will be recorded, with the notable exception of in-person interactive sessions (posters and table talks). Session recordings will be made available for a sufficient period following the conference to allow participants to view them. The availability of the conference website extends through September, when the permanent Conference Proceedings are finalized.

Upon submission, authors indicate agreement to the temporary availability of conference recordings, and may agree to or decline to allow further use of recorded material by the Society. Presenting authors are invited to create a recording of their work to share via the conference website. This pre-recording may be used in lieu of a live presentation if such a presentation is not feasible due to technical mishaps or time zone incompatibility.

Conference Submission Types

1. **Research Papers** of approximately 5000 words (and not to exceed 7500 words), 5 to 30 pages long, properly formatted with an abstract and bibliography. These papers are considered for all session types. Research papers will be subject to blind peer review, evaluation by Thread Chairs, and final disposition by the Program Chairs. Comments by the Thread and Program Chairs are encouraged, especially for work not selected for standard presentation.
2. **Practitioner Applications** consisting of 10 to 30 presentation slides, including an abstract slide (not for presentation) and a bibliographic slide. Practitioner Applications are considered for all session types. Presentations will be subject to blind peer review, evaluation by Thread Chairs, and final disposition by the Program Chairs. Comments by the Thread and Program Chairs are encouraged, especially for work not selected for standard presentation.
3. **Work in Progress (WIP) Descriptions** consisting of extended abstracts (two-page document, plus a bibliography) describing the work being conducted and preliminary results, if any. WIP descriptions will be considered for WIP and Feedback Sessions. WIP submissions will be subject to blind peer review, evaluation by Thread Chairs, and final disposition by the Program Chairs. Review comments by the Thread and Program Chairs are encouraged, especially for work placed in Feedback Sessions.
4. **Workshop Proposals** require an abstract (~250 words) and descriptions or information on: format, background expectations, and facility requirements. Workshop Proposals are reviewed by the Workshop Chairs and approved by the Program Chairs.
5. **Other Submissions** based on an abstract (~250 words) for material that is of interest to the SD community but does not conform to the norms for conference presentations. This may include roundtable proposals, model exposition proposals, work done by K-12 students, or activities of chapters and SIGs. This work may be considered for Specialized Presentations (roundtable, parallel, poster or another format). Other activities are not part of the standard

review process (i.e., blind review and Thread Chair evaluation), but instead are reviewed and approved directly by the Program Chairs.

All submissions in the first three categories should include 1) a clear statement of the dynamic problem or methodological issue; 2) why the author is addressing this important problem with SD or how the methodology will advance SD practice; 3) methods used (e.g., GMB, client process); 4) a bibliography. Research Papers and Practitioner Applications should include results and outcomes. Preliminary results are encouraged but not required for WIP descriptions.

Conference Session Types

1. **Plenary Sessions** for high-quality work that is of broad general interest. Each presenter will have approximately 20 minutes with 10 minutes for discussion. There would be 3 talks in a 90 minute session or 2 talks in a 1-hour session. Plenary sessions will be recorded.
2. **Parallel Sessions** for quality work that lends itself well to oral presentation. Each presenter will have approximately 15 minutes with 5 minutes for discussion. There would be 3 papers in a 1-hour session. Parallel sessions will be recorded.
3. **Interactive Sessions** for quality work that lends itself well to discussion. Interactive sessions include table talks and poster sessions.
 - a. Table talks are held in person with 3 presenters, a moderator, and audience members sitting around a large table. After a round of introductions, each presenter will have 7 minutes to talk followed by 8 minutes of discussion. Additional time in each 1-hour session will be used for general discussion. Table talks are held without AV and will not be recorded.
 - b. In-person poster sessions are 90 minutes long and enable attendees to circulate among a selection of posters at assigned locations. In-person poster sessions will not be recorded.
 - c. Virtual poster sessions will be conducted with 4 presenters in a 1-hour session, where each presentation is 7 minutes long, followed by 8 minutes of discussion. The moderator should prepare remarks that help foster discussion. Virtual poster sessions will be recorded.
4. **Work in Progress (WIP) Sessions** for discussing work in progress that is of general interest. Each WIP presentation is 5 minutes, followed by 5 minutes of discussion. There would be up to 6 presentations in a 1-hour session. WIP sessions should be organized around a unifying theme that may cut across threads. The moderator controls the slide deck and should prepare remarks that help foster discussion. WIP sessions will be recorded.
5. **Feedback Sessions** for work that needs support and guidance to bring it to the standards of the conference. All presentations will be done by a moderator with suggestions and ideas of things that might be done. Authors would be encouraged to attend. They will not present but should have the opportunity to share in the discussion during the moderator's presentation. There would be up to 6 papers in a 1-hour session based on scheduling requirements. Feedback sessions will be recorded.
6. **Lightning Talks** for quality work that can be presented quickly. This can include virtual poster sessions, updates to work that has been previously presented, simple model insight lessons, and proposed activities for which the presenters want to invite contributions. Lightning talks require strong moderation and a clear theme for the entire session. There would be up to 6 papers in a 1-hour session. Lightning talks will be recorded.
7. **Model Exposition** for interesting models that can be shared with others interactively.

8. **Roundtable Discussion Sessions** may be organized to engage participants in interactive conversations on a specific subject. The format of roundtable discussions will vary depending on the nature of the submission. Roundtable sessions will generally be recorded.
9. **Dialog Sessions** may be organized to create dedicated time for discussion of a given topic related to presentations that have been given at the conference.
10. **Specialized Presentations** may be made for material that is of interest but does not conform to the norms of other submissions. For example, panel discussions, career fairs, talent shows, and Pecha Kucha style rapid presentations.

Plenary, Parallel, Interactive, WIP, and Feedback sessions will be offered at all conferences. Program Chairs choose whether to offer other session types based on submitted material and logistical constraints communicated by Organizing Chairs.

Conference Session Planning

Plenary Sessions

The selection of plenary speakers is at the discretion of the Program Chairs. Plenary sessions are critical to the success of the conference program. As such, plenary sessions deserve special planning and consideration from the Program Chairs. Following are some guidelines for structuring plenary sessions.

1. Program Chairs should be proactive in inviting plenary speakers. Invited speakers can serve to shape the conference around the conference theme. Early identification of plenary speakers is important for marketing the conference.
 - a. Inviting plenary speakers can begin well before the conference submission system opens. However, it is advisable to allow room in the program for high quality submissions to be included to plenary sessions.
 - b. The expectation is that all presenters, including invited speakers, will pay to register for the conference. Any exceptions need to be reflected in the conference budget, which is part of the overall Society budget that is approved by the Policy Council one year in advance.
2. The following types of talks should NOT be featured in a plenary session:
 - a. Pontification and commiseration about the state and future of the field.
 - b. Talks by people who know something about an area that seems like it should be of interest - but fundamentally has nothing to do with System Dynamics.
3. Since many conference attendees seek to learn about methodology, it is advised that at least some plenary presentations focus in particular on methodology.
4. Efforts should be made to increase the diversity of speakers and moderators in the plenary sessions. This consideration should be made not just within a given year, but also in light of plenary speakers who have already been featured at prior conferences.
5. Have fewer plenaries if there are difficulties recruiting plenary speakers or identifying enough 'plenary quality' submissions to constitute compelling plenary sessions.
 - a. The number of plenary sessions may be reduced to allow for additional parallel sessions.
 - b. Shorter plenary sessions may be planned, so that there is a 60 minute plenary session with 2 talks rather than a 90 minute session with 3 talks.
6. When selecting a paper for a plenary session, please keep in mind that a great paper does not necessarily mean a great presentation. If a speaker of unknown quality is being considered, the program chairs should try to arrange a meeting or obtain references from colleagues.

7. Program Chairs should help plenary speakers structure their presentation so that it is more effective in the context of the other presentations in the same plenary session. For instance, a great paper might be selected for a plenary because of its methodological approach. If the other papers in that plenary were selected to provide an interesting methodological contrast, it would be inappropriate for the presenter to spend most of the time talking about her results while ignoring the methodological dimension of the paper.
 - a. Program chairs should review presentation materials for plenary speakers in advance to make sure the presentation suits the context of a plenary talk and will fit in the time available. Program chairs should not seek to alter the substance of these presentations (unless there is objectionable, misrepresented, or inappropriate material).

Program Organization

Most of the conference program (parallel, interactive, WIP, and feedback sessions) is organized by thread. As such, the Program Chairs (PCs) rely on the Thread Chairs (TCs) to evaluate submissions to the threads. Specifically,

1. TCs evaluate each submission they are assigned to review, including submissions to their primary thread as well as alternate threads. The TC evaluation includes a score of 1-10, where 10 is the highest quality. Two (2) TCs will score each submission. Each submission requires at least one written review by the TC. If a TC recommends to the program chairs that a paper should be rejected, they will indicate whether that recommendation is on the basis of plagiarism or lack of relevance.
2. TCs may provide a recommendation for disposition by leaving a Program Committee note for the submission in the Web Portal. This is particularly important if the TC recommendation differs from the recommendation of one of the peer reviewers of the papers. If the recommendation is to reject a paper or assign it to a feedback session, and none of the reviews support that position, TCs should provide a review for the authors that corresponds to that recommendation.
3. A preliminary session plan will be algorithmically generated on the basis of TC evaluations, peer reviews, and submission affinity. It is the responsibility of the PCs to resolve all the conflicts, decide on the final allocation of papers for the plenary sessions, and structure all the parallel, interactive, WIP, and Feedback sessions.
4. The PCs are responsible for the final decision on all submissions. PCs should add Program Committee reviews that correspond with their decisions if they differ from other reviews, including TC evaluations.

Parallel Sessions

PCs should verify or adjust the grouping of papers into parallel sessions. In structuring these parallel sessions, the PCs should take care to do the following:

1. Create a meaningful title for the session to be listed in the program schedule.
2. Verify the primary and secondary thread.
3. Only include papers that are rated parallel and parallel+ in parallel sessions. The role of the interactive+ classification is to allow the PCs to complete a session in case of withdrawal from an author in a parallel session. As such, interactive+ submissions should be of enough quality to be in a parallel session but are probably not there due to a lack of fit.
4. Ensure that all parallel and parallel+ papers are included in a parallel session.
5. All parallel sessions should include three submissions.

6. All interactive+ papers should be assigned as backup papers for one or more parallel session.

Interactive Sessions

Interactive sessions include table talks and poster presentations. Table talks are 1-hour long and will be held in person with three presenters, a session chair, and audience members seated around a large table. After a round of brief introductions, each table talk will be 7 minutes long followed by 8 minutes of discussion time. Table talks will be given without AV support. In-person poster sessions are 90 minutes long and involve placement of authors with their posters in assigned locations to interact with conference attendees. Images of the posters may be viewed through the conference website. Virtual poster presenters will be assigned to a 1-hour online session. Each virtual poster presentation will be 7 minutes long followed by 8 minutes of discussion time. Virtual poster presenters may use their poster or up to 5 slides including a title slide.

Work in Progress Sessions

Work in Progress (WIP) sessions will consist of up to 6 brief 5-minute presentations followed by an equal length of discussion time. All submission types will be considered for Work in Progress sessions. WIP presentations adhere to a slide template with the presentations compiled and managed by the session chair. The Program Committee may need to coordinate across threads in creating coherent WIP sessions.

Feedback Sessions

Feedback sessions will be organized for submissions that need guidance. An experienced SD practitioner will chair the session to summarize and provide feedback on up to 6 submissions. All submission types will be considered for Feedback sessions. Feedback sessions are designed to grow the field through constructive mentorship.

Conference Workshops

Workshops are intended as a way to build skills and share developments in the field in a hands-on environment that can go beyond what is learned in a short presentation of material. Workshop Proposals are reviewed by Workshop Chairs, who recommend which workshops should be included in the conference program. Workshop Chair recommendations are based upon the quality of the proposal and the level of interaction anticipated. Once approved by Program Chairs, the scheduling of Workshops is handled by the Office and conference team, to ensure that they do not exceed the available space and time slots.

Up to four 90-minute workshops are allowed per proposing organization, constituting a full day's worth of workshops. Longer workshops may be scheduled in parts (e.g., a 3 hour workshop may be scheduled in 2 parts with a break in between). In-person workshops are generally scheduled for the last day of the conference (Thursday or Friday). For a hybrid conference, an online workshop day may be scheduled outside of the in-person event (during the week before or after), featuring online-only workshops and allowing in-person workshop facilitators the opportunity to present their material directly to an online audience. Each workshop presented in person may also be offered online for hybrid conferences.

Selection Process

(for Research Papers, Practitioner Applications, and Work in Progress Descriptions)

All submissions will be to a predefined thread and will be sent out for blind peer review based on the selected thread. Thread Chairs will review submissions and make recommendations for placement. Program Chairs are responsible for final selection and session creation based on the recommendation of the Thread Chairs. Session scheduling may be done by the Office or the Web Portal administrator in collaboration with the Program Chairs.

Research Paper and Practitioner Application submissions not put into a Plenary, Parallel, or Interactive session should have a written comment from the Program Committee explaining the reason for the disposition. Feedback to authors may include a reiteration of the standard the different types of work are to be held to (with reference to guidelines in the [documentation](#)).

Submissions that are plagiarized or not related to system dynamics will be rejected by the Program Chairs based on the recommendation of Thread Chairs. Note: there is no target rejection rate.

Work that has been submitted to, accepted for, or already presented at a different conference, or accepted but not yet published in a journal or as a book, will be considered. Special exceptions may be made by the Program Chairs to meet program needs.

Works not of sufficient quality or completeness for Plenary or Parallel presentation should be put into the appropriate session format to maximize the potential for authors to learn. Work in Progress sessions are appropriate for promising work not yet complete, and Feedback sessions are appropriate for work that needs significant guidance. Reasonable Work in Progress Descriptions should be assigned to WIP sessions, but if these submissions warrant substantial feedback, they should instead be assigned to Feedback discussion sessions. The time spent per paper in a WIP or Feedback session is the same, but the difference is whether the author presents their own work (in a WIP session) or whether it is presented by the session chair (in a Feedback discussion session). The greater number of papers (up to 6) in WIP and Feedback sessions pose additional challenges for session coherence and completeness, requiring coordination across threads by program chairs to develop strong sessions.

The decision of the Program Chairs will be final, but they will consider the evaluations and comments of the Thread Chairs. Comments from the reviewers, Thread Chairs, and Program Chairs will be made available to authors when decisions are sent out. Thread Chairs and Program Chairs may also mark a peer review comment as blocked, so that it will not be shown.

Authors are limited to the presentation of up to two papers at the conference. This limitation applies only to the author who is a designated presenter. Co-authors who are not designated presenters may be listed on more than two presentations.

Invited Papers and Convened Sessions

The Program Chairs may invite authors to submit papers and presentations on specific issues. Such work will be submitted to threads but will be marked as invited. The Thread Chairs understand that they are invited papers. The Thread Chairs may, but are not required to, review the invited papers and provide the Program Chairs with feedback. Invited papers should conform to the standards of research papers or application presentations. Invited work does not need to undergo peer review; it may be sent for review at the discretion of the Program Chairs.

Papers may be invited as part of convened sessions led by a designated convener who will organize and chair the session. In that case, the designated convener would solicit and review submissions to the indicated session. This process needs to be communicated with TCs of the relevant thread and planned well in advance to avoid rework.

Convened sessions may also be proposed for special session types such as panels, Lightning Talks, and Roundtable discussion sessions. The Program Chairs should proactively invite certain convened sessions as appropriate to their program needs.

Conflicts of Interest

A Thread Chair may submit a paper for presentation. That Thread Chair will not evaluate their own paper and should not view the program committee page for the paper.

If one of the Program Chairs is a named author on a paper, then they should recuse themselves from making any choice as to the disposition of the paper. In addition, the named Program Chair should not view the program committee page for the paper. The Program Chairs should not submit any papers for which all program chairs are named authors. If a Program Chair is a named author on a paper that is appropriate for plenary presentation, the Program Chairs shall request the approval of the SPOC before scheduling it.

Due to the workload, a Program Chair should not simultaneously serve as a Thread Chair or Organizing Chair for a given conference. Exceptions may be granted by the SPOC with support from the other Program Chairs. Decisions about program placement should be independent from considerations of the local host.

Managing Threads and Thread Chairs

Setting expectations for the thread chairs is one of the most significant activities for the SPOC and the PCs. The job of structuring the conference program will be made simpler to the extent that PCs can effectively set the expectations and manage the TCs. Here are some basic guidelines for that process.

1. At least two TCs are appointed for each Thread.
2. TCs will normally serve a term of four years with two years of overlap when possible. Exceptions to this norm may be made on the basis of performance (both good and bad) and contingencies. Adherence to this rotation plan requires a queue of potential TCs to be identified by the SPOC and incoming conference PCs.
3. PCs should keep a log of interactions with TCs that highlight good and bad experiences, points of confusion, or suggestions to improve the coordination of Thread and Program experiences. PCs should inform the SPOC of any issues with TCs.
4. The System Dynamics Society should send a 'thank you' note (from the PCs) to all the TCs after their work is completed (in June or July) and, with it, solicit feedback from the TCs on their experience, recommendations for a replacement if one is rotating out, and whether the TCs not rotating out are willing to continue serving next year. The email should note that re-appointments are not automatic and that the new PCs, in conjunction with the SPOC, will be responsible for those re-appointments.
5. After the conference (in August or September) all Threads, Thread Definitions, and TCs should be evaluated by the SPOC and conference PCs. The outgoing PCs should provide to the SPOC and incoming PCs:

- a. Recommendations for splitting, joining, dropping, or adding Threads. These recommendations should be based on volume of submissions, coherence of submissions, and relevance of work in the Threads.
 - b. Recommended adjustments of Thread descriptions, Focus Areas, and keywords.
 - c. Recommendations for TCs (continuing and new) for both the existing and proposed Thread structure (if different).
6. The incoming PCs should work with SPOC to propose the list of Threads, Thread Definitions, and TCs. Formal approval will require a vote of the SPOC only if there are significant concerns expressed or changes made.
 - a. New threads and focus areas can be proposed by anyone for consideration by the SPOC and PCs, but these will be considered temporary until it is determined by the SPOC that they are useful to retain.
 - b. Thread imbalances may necessitate changes, and threads with low interest should be retired or revised.
7. The PCs and SPOC should review and update the [TC instructions](#) on the SDS webpage as appropriate.
8. Threads can be aligned with specific focus areas. Focus areas may be designated in the Web Portal submission system as a basis for program review and placement.
9. Once threads and TCs are approved by the full SPOC, the incoming PCs should make the appointments (or re-appointments) for *all* the TCs of the agreed threads. While the communication to the TCs might come from the Home Office, it is important that the PCs sign that message to signal the TCs realize that this is a new appointment under 'new management.' This appointment of the team of TCs should be done by September or October so that promotional materials can include this information.
10. By January, before the beginning of the active review process, the PCs should communicate to the TCs their expectations regarding the specific deliverables out of the review process. At a minimum, the communication should state expectations on the following dimensions:
 - a. The date for the delivery of the TC recommendations.
 - b. The guidelines for the TC recommendations.

Note that this information should also be included in the thread chair instructions web page referenced in 7, available to TCs in the Web Portal menu and at the following link: <https://webportal.systemdynamics.org/documents/ThreadChairInstructions.docx>

Reviews

Thread Chairs should rate reviewers using the star rating system, and they should take special note of reviews that are surprisingly good or bad relative to the expectations based on the star rating of the reviewer. They should rate such reviews in order to start adjusting this star rating (this is an exponential smooth of recorded ratings). For reviews that seem particularly inappropriate, TCs should use the Web Portal mechanism to block the written review from being displayed to the authors of the paper (authors do not see the reviewers' quality ratings, but TCs and PCs do). If appropriate, TCs can also send targeted feedback to reviewers through the Web Portal.

While the main responsibility of the Program Committee is the creation of the conference program, there is also an expectation that all authors will receive useful reviews for their papers. If there are submissions without any constructive reviews, it is the responsibility of the TC to ensure that a review for the author is generated. The idea here is that all authors deserve at least one constructive review.

Conference Proceedings

The conference [proceedings](#) are fully refereed, and they also form a permanent and invariant record once published to the web. The use of an ISBN as an established publishing identifier affirms the legitimacy of the Proceedings as a refereed body of work presented at the ISDC and adds to the publication value of presenting work at the conference. Until 2014, the SDS assigned ISBNs to conference proceedings. In 2014, authors were encouraged to submit abbreviated papers instead of full papers for the proceedings, and the use of the ISBN was discontinued for web proceedings. After the 2023 conference, the Policy Council decided to resume the practice of assigning ISBNs to the conference web proceedings, beginning with ISDC 2024. ISBNs are also used for the printed and digital (CD-ROM) [proceedings](#) that are available for purchase from Curran, a third-party publisher.

All material presented at the conference will have the title, authors, and abstract included as part of the Proceedings. Authors of Research Papers and Practitioner Applications delivered as a Plenary, Parallel, Poster, or Table Talk presentation may submit a paper, extended abstract, poster, or set of slides to be included in the Proceedings, in addition to models and other supplementary material useful for understanding the results presented. Figure 1 and Table 1 summarize what may be included in the Conference Proceedings.

Authors choose what to include, since whatever is submitted to the Proceedings should never prevent them from publishing elsewhere. Authors retain the copyright to all submitted work and, by submitting, grant permission for inclusion of their title, abstract, and author names in the Proceedings. Authors of conference papers are welcome to self-archive or publish their work, including depositing it in institutional repositories, without limitation.

Information about the Conference Proceedings is available at the following link: <https://systemdynamics.org/submission-instructions/#conference-record>

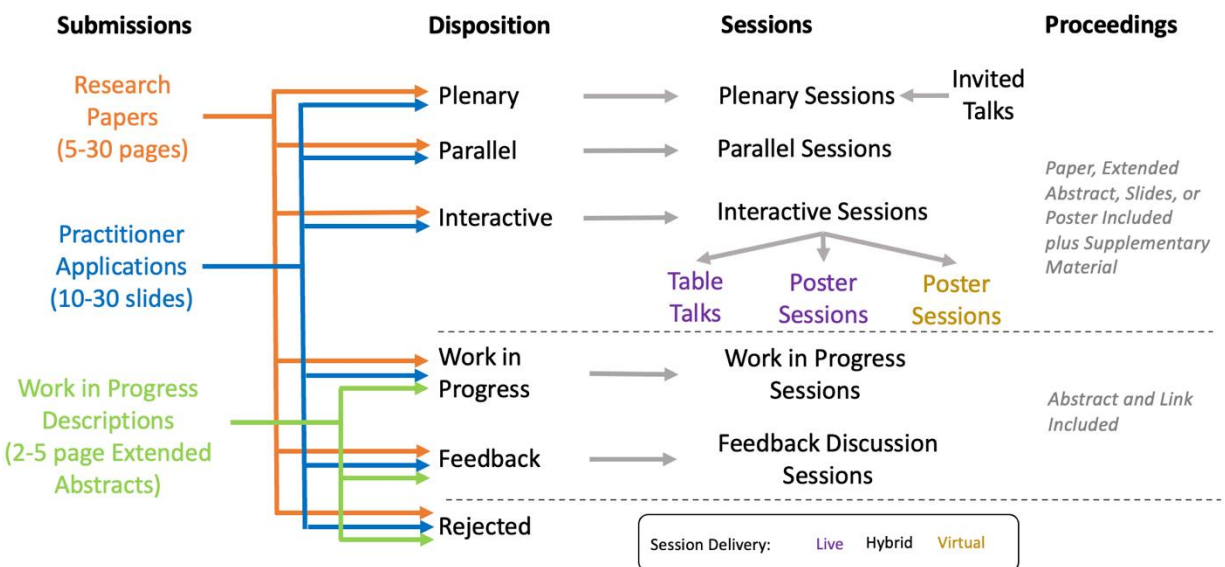


Figure 1. Conference Submission Placement Process

Presented in	Title	Authors	Short Abstract	Author Link	Paper File (Extended Abstract, Full Paper, Slides, or Poster)	Supplementary Material
Plenary	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Parallel	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Table Talk	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Poster	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
WIP	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Feedback	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Workshop	✓	✓	✓	✓		

Table 1. Content in Conference Proceedings by Presentation Type

Ongoing Issues

There are several ongoing issues regarding SDS programs that are revisited regularly and should be resolved in future versions of this document. These are summarized below:

1. Resolving tradeoffs in the formation of sessions between the need to have coherent sessions and fill the sessions with sufficient numbers of submissions.
 - a. Because the sessions are only finalized after authors have registered for the conference, Program Chairs often must rebalance sessions that span across threads.
2. Other guidelines to add to this document:
 - a. Guidelines for curating and releasing material from the video archives of virtual and hybrid conferences after the conclusion of the event as a member benefit or for promotional purposes.
 - i. A committee co-chaired by the VP Publications and VP Meetings, has been established to approve the release of selected material.
 - b. Guidelines for the System Dynamics Society School and Seminar Series.
 - i. The School has been online-only as of 2020 and occurs at least 2 weeks prior to an in-person conference. Future offerings of the School may be in person during the week prior to the conference, where site considerations are favorable. Future online offerings may also be staggered at different times during the year, given sufficient interest and instructor capacity.
 - ii. The Society has offered Seminar Series as webinars since August 2020. The Seminar Series is held throughout the year as a member benefit. As each webinar is 60-90 minutes long, this format is potentially an attractive alternative for conference presenters. Therefore, the timing and marketing of the Seminar Series should be carefully considered so as not to compete with the conference. Since the Seminar Series is currently managed entirely by the Office, it would be beneficial to establish a process for designating a chairperson to be involved in the selection, quality, and timing of Seminar Series offerings.
3. Review process: There is an ongoing concern about consistency of review quality and whether the review process should be open to anyone who wants to do it. However, a challenge of screening reviewers is the likelihood of not having enough reviewers. The standing policy is that any member of the SD community can serve as a reviewer. To address the issue, a mechanism is in place to allow the Thread or Program Chairs to rate reviewers

and/or block unhelpful reviews from being displayed to authors. The reviewer ratings are used to inform future review assignments, so that submissions are not solely evaluated by poor-quality reviewers. The issue remains of whether to waste all those person-hours generating reviews that are not very useful to the authors, or more importantly, reviews that convey the wrong idea of what SD is or is not.

Appendix A: Conference Threads

Current ISDC threads are as follows (see also <https://systemdynamics.org/conference/threads>):

1. **Business and Strategy:** Features applications of System Dynamics in businesses and organizations including strategy development, profitability, marketing, competitive dynamics, product launches, project dynamics, and accounting.
Focus Areas: Competitive Dynamics; Marketing; New Business Models; Project Management; Strategy Development
2. **Diversity:** Features applications of System Dynamics on topics such as gender, race or ethnicity, class, age and ability, etc.; racial justice work that addresses issues including, but not limited to, structural racism, interpersonal discrimination, or institutional bias; and submissions that demonstrate diverse experiences with System Dynamics.
Focus Areas: Age and Ability; Equity and Inclusion; Gender and Sexuality; Racial Justice
3. **Economics:** Features papers improving understanding of economic dynamics including macroeconomics, microeconomics, trade, business regulation, economic development, economic policy, insurance, and risk management.
Focus Areas: Business and Financial Organization; Economic Growth and Development; Equity and Income Distribution; Macroeconomics; Microeconomics
4. **Environment and Resources:** Emphasizes dynamics of natural resource management and policy for the environment including food, water, energy and climate change, pollution, environmental laws and regulation, and ecology.
Focus Areas: Agriculture and Food; Air, Water, and Land Use; Climate Change; Ecology and Biodiversity; Energy and Fuels; Environmental Regulation; Pollution and Waste Management
5. **Health:** Applies System Dynamics to issues related to health and health care including health policy, health services research, population health, and physiology.
Focus Areas: COVID-19; Epidemiology; Health Disparities; Health Service Delivery; Physiology; Population Health; Treatment and Disease Management
6. **Learning and Teaching:** The manner in which system skills are taught and learned including pedagogy, learning experiments, curriculum development, workshop design, and interactive activities designed to be part of an educational experience.
Focus Areas: Community Dissemination; Interactive Activities; Learning Experiments; Pedagogy and Curriculum
7. **Methodology:** Welcomes contributions to System Dynamics modeling and simulation including quantitative and qualitative aspects of model development, model analysis, validation, graphical presentation formats, computational techniques, and integration of System Dynamics with other approaches such as Artificial Intelligence and Predictive Analytics, among others.

- Focus Areas:** Artificial Intelligence; Graphical Presentation Formats; Hybrid Modeling Approaches; Model Analysis; Model Development; Qualitative Methods; Validation
8. **Operations:** Includes business and other process operations including capacity management, quality control, operations management, supply chains, workflow, queuing, and workforce planning.
Focus Areas: Capacity Management; Project Management; Service Operations; Supply Chains; Workflow; Workforce Planning
 9. **Psychology and Human Behavior:** Explores the dynamics within and between social groups, including social environments or individual psychological factors, and spanning families, organizations, and societies.
Focus Areas: Cognitive Science; Community Development; Historical Dynamics; Organizational Behavior; Social Psychology; Social-Environmental Decision-Making
 10. **Public Policy:** Covers issues including governance, social welfare, equity, justice, political science, urban dynamics, and infrastructure.
Focus Areas: Equity and Justice; Governance; Infrastructure; Political Science; Social Welfare; Urban Dynamics
 11. **Security, Stability, and Resilience:** Investigates issues related to security, stability, and resilience, including defense, social and international conflict, military operations, insurgency, counterinsurgency, cybersecurity, disinformation, safety, disaster management, peace engineering, justice, (financial and economic) crime, policing, incarceration, socioeconomic inequality, and food-energy-water security.
Focus Areas: Conflict, Defense, and Military; Crime and Policing; Cybersecurity and Disinformation; Disaster Management; Food-Energy-Water Security
 12. **Stakeholder Engagement:** Emphasizes engaging and influencing stakeholders through participatory activities such as group model building, facilitation, facilitated modeling, games, and management flight simulators, with emphasis on assessing the impact of the engagement.
Focus Areas: Community Outreach; Group Model Building; Participatory Activities
 13. **Transport and Mobility:** Covers all aspects of transportation systems and mobility, including transport and urban planning policies; new services, technologies or business models; decarbonization and sustainable mobility; transport and health; and freight and logistics.
Focus Areas: Accessibility and Equity; Decarbonization and Sustainability; Freight and Logistics; Infrastructure Planning and Policy Design; New Technologies and Services; Non-Car and Multi-Modal Transport; Public Health and Traffic Safety

Appendix B: Program Planning Timeline

Table B-1 provides an overview of the annual program timeline with key program tasks indicated by month. Additional, ongoing program tasks include the following:

1. Identify and invite plenary speakers
2. Review messages to TCs, authors, reviewers, session chairs, and attendees
3. Coordinate with the conference organizing committee to align plans
4. Monitor and track conference submissions and allocations by type and thread

The information below is intended as a rough guide. Specific deadlines and timelines will vary by year. Responsibility for completing these tasks is shared between the Program Chairs and the SPOC

as indicated below, and supported by the Office. A detailed SDS task list with specific deadlines will be actively maintained by the Office during the current conference year.

Table B-1. Approximate Timeline of Key Program Tasks

Month	Task	Program Chairs	SPOC
May to June of year prior	Determine conference theme and suggest any Thread changes	Propose theme and thread changes	Approves theme and thread changes
August	Review Thread descriptions and Focus Areas	Propose changes	Approves changes
September	Identify and invite Thread Chairs	Propose changes	Approves TCs
	Review and revise online Thread Chair Instructions	Propose changes	Approves changes
October	Update Review Guidelines and Questions	Propose changes	Approves changes
	Draft Block Schedule Overview of Program	Propose to organizing committee	
	Finalize Thread Chairs	Recruit alternatives as needed	Approves changes
November	Estimate maximum paper capacity for allocations by category (plenary/parallel/interactive/WIP/feedback)	Coordinate with organizing committee	
	Review and update Submission System Instructions for Authors and Reviewers	Propose changes	Approves changes
	Prepare invitations for potential session conveners who may be contacted to organize special sessions	Approve messages	
December	Identify and invite session conveners	Recruit conveners	
	Review and revise post-conference survey	Provide input	
January	Conference registration opens	Test functionality	
	Communicate paper allocation guidance to Thread Chairs	Communicate with TCs	
	Web Portal submission system opens	Test functionality	
	Prepare letters of acceptance and rejection	Approve messages	
February	Manage TC activities – send reminders and hold TC meetings as needed	Communicate and attend meetings	Communicate and attend meetings
	Start to review and evaluate submissions	Check submissions and reviews	

Month	Task	Program Chairs	SPOC
March	Record distribution of submissions by type and thread after submissions close	Save submission file	
	Review any special session proposals sent directly to Program Chairs. In Web Portal, review Program Notes in Special/Other Sessions	Communicate with proposers as needed	
April	Evaluations due from Thread Chairs	Determine ranking breakpoints	
	Program Chairs finalize placement decisions	Assign session backups	
	Develop internal program schedule	Resolve conflicts	
May	Notify Authors of Acceptance/Rejection and Presentation Format	Edit and approve messages	
	Program overview by thread posted on the web	Adjust as needed	
	Edit and send Thread Chair thank you notes (with request for input on experience)	Approve messages	Gather input on TC experience
	Follow up with authors, send info on presentation format, tasks, and deadlines	Review and approve messages	
June	Ensure all sessions have chairs	Suggest chairs	
	Final program schedule available conference website opens	Check content	
	Prepare plenary speakers so that their presentations will be effective in the context of other presentations in the same plenary session	Review plenary material and meet with speakers as needed	
July - August	Conference Opening and Closing Ceremonies	Plan and Present	
	Conference Debriefing	Attend meeting	Attend meeting
	SPOC post-conference debriefing to gather information for updating these program guidelines	Attend meeting	Host meeting
August - September	Provide information for conference report, including survey results, reviews, threads, papers per thread, and lessons learned	Provide information to SPOC	Report to Policy Council
	Follow up with authors to submit material for the permanent Conference Proceedings	Approve messages	

Appendix C: Version History

- V0.01 October 6, 2011. Prepared by Rogelio Oliva (SPOC Chair). Captures experience from the 2007 conference, conversations with program chairs for the 2009 conference, and debriefing meeting with the chairs of the 2011 conference.
- V0.02 November 21, 2011. Prepared by Rogelio Oliva (SPOC Chair). Incorporates feedback from past program chairs to v0.01 and adjustments after the Thread Chair selection and appointment process during the fall of 2011.
- V0.03 July 10, 2012 Prepared by Bob Eberlein (upcoming Program Chair) The roles of the SPOC and Workshop Chair were added in order to bring more of the non-administrative program related issues into a single document. The section on Conflict of Interest was added.
- V0.04 December, 2012 Prepared by Bob Eberlein (incoming Program Chair). Created details regarding the new proposed Thread Chair rotation process.
- V0.05 January, 2019 Prepared by Karim Chichakly (SPOC Chair). Changed program chair requirements to allow three inexperienced chairs. Merged 2017 approved session changes. Added draft list of Program Chair duties. <https://bit.ly/isdcProgGuide5>
- V0.06 October 31, 2021. Prepared by Sara Metcalf (SPOC Chair). Created Table of Contents for ease of reference. Clarified Program Chair and SPOC duties. Updated description of different session types. Clarified options for contributions to the conference record. Added details regarding virtual conference format. Updated list of unresolved issues. Added some edits previously suggested by Andreas Größler (then SPOC Chair) in a February, 2016 version of this document. Added appendix with updated Thread list and monthly program timeline. <https://bit.ly/isdcProgGuide>
- V0.07 February 16, 2022. Prepared by Camilo Olaya (SPOC Chair). Added workshop details to unresolved issues. Updated links and thread descriptions, added focus areas, and removed list of ISDC 2021 threads.
- V0.08 August 31, 2022. Prepared by Sara Metcalf (VP Meetings) and Camilo Olaya (SPOC Chair). Updated committee structure per revised SDS Policies to include VP Publications and VP Meetings as ex-officio members. Reduced redundancy and removed outdated information. Streamlined schedule in Appendix B and added columns to indicate PC and SPOC roles. Created Appendix C for version history. Clarified that Policy Council approval should be sought for significant changes to this document.
- V0.09 December 19, 2022. Prepared by Sara Metcalf (SPOC Chair). Added details about Interactive sessions, which include Table Talks and Poster sessions.
- V0.10 November 15, 2023. Prepared by Sara Metcalf (SPOC Chair). Updated Workshop and Thread Chair roles. Added information about ISBNs for conference proceedings. Updated Virtual Poster format.