SIG Convenors Conference Guidance

Please see below the guidelines for SIG Convenors in relation to the BERA Annual Conference.

Abstract submissions
Abstract submission will normally open at the end of the current conference for the next year’s conference.
We encourage you to send out a newsletter to your SIG members encouraging symposia submissions. Symposia have a higher percentage rate of acceptance in the programme than individual abstracts as they are already a coherent session. This also will reduce your workload during the grouping stage as the symposia are already grouped into sessions.

Abstract types
- Symposium (750 words maximum and 250 words extra for references)
- Alternative Format Session (750 words maximum and 250 words extra for references)
- Poster Session (750 words maximum and 250 words extra for references)
- Individual Papers (750 words maximum and 250 words extra for references)

All abstract submissions need to be aligned to a Special Interest Groups. We currently have 33 Special Interest Groups to select from. You can now select up to 2 SIGs to align your abstract to. Your abstract will be reviewed by the first SIG selected.

In addition to the 33 SIGs CEC will sometimes add additional topical topics. For 2020 submissions these include:
- Climate and Sustainability Education
- Medical Education
- Migrant Education
- Prison Education
- Sociology

Reviewing
All abstracts are blind peer reviewed by at least 2 reviewers.

A call for reviewers is online and featured in the general members newsletter. Reviewers must be a member of BERA to review for a SIG. Reviewers sign up with the following identifying criteria:
- Never reviewed before
- Previous experience of reviewing for BERA
- Previous experience of reviewing for another organisation

At least 2 reviewers must review each abstract. Reviewers will only be grouped as:
- Never reviewed before AND Previous experience of reviewing for BERA
- Previous experience of reviewing for BERA AND Previous experience of reviewing for another organisation

Convenors are not allocated any reviewing in the first round of the reviewing process. If you would like to review you can sign up but must select a SIG that is not your own SIG. Also please be aware that you may also need to do some reviewing in the second round for your own SIG as well.
A second reviewing process will happen under the following circumstances:
- A reviewer did not complete in the first round
- An abstract that reviewers were unable to score for various reasons
- There is a difference of 6 or more between the scores

If a third reviewer is needed, the 2 most common scores are used for the average score.

**Acceptances/Rejections**
The cut off scores are decided at the March CEC meeting. The scores are based on a minimum threshold for quality and the number of rooms available, so the total number of sessions we have at the conference. Once confirmed, this is then added to the SIG historical data to ensure there are no large discrepancies from previous years on the percentage accepted or rejected. The acceptance and rejection emails are then sent out which will include a breakdown of scores.

**Concession**
The concessions are determined by CEC each year. In making this decision, CEC was mindful of the role that Convenors can and should play in making a success of conference and so wanted to clarify their expectations of what this complimentary registration entails. By registering and accepting the concession you agree to the following:

**Pre-conference responsibilities:**
- Advertising conference
- Recruiting reviewers
- Reviewing abstracts
- Programming

**During conference responsibilities:**
- Attend and chair your SIG forum meeting
- Available during lunch breaks
- Encourage membership of BERA and your SIG
- Twitter presence highly desirable
- Chairing sessions
- One SIG Convenor to be present for each SIG session. Convenors will also therefore be available when no chair is available for that session (larger SIGs will be supported by Council Members with this)
- Run SIG best paper award if possible

**Grouping/Programming**
All accepted abstracts will be available to SIG Convenors online, once submitters have been notified.

All individual abstracts then need to be grouped into coherent sessions of either 2 or 3 papers. An excel spreadsheet is circulated highlighting how the papers should be grouped. You will also receive a word document with full details, including submitter names and institutions to help with grouping the abstracts.

Grouping now takes place after the early bird deadline to ensure all abstracts grouped are confirmed and registered delegates.

As the symposia and alternative format sessions take up a whole session this information is not sent as they are already coherent sessions. Similarly, the poster sessions take place during the breaks so do not need to be grouped.
Onsite

Forum meetings
SIG Forum Meetings will be held on the Wednesday lunchtime. This will be an informal gathering to discuss work of the SIG. These can be held as joint SIG meetings.

Award - Best SIG Paper at Conference
The Conference and Events Committee introduced the ‘Best SIG paper award’ during the annual conference. SIG Convenors would need to attend all their sessions between themselves. If your SIG would like to award this but are not able to attend all sessions, please let us know and we will provide a BERA Committee Member to judge these papers. A judging paper and reviewing criteria is handed out at the conference. All SIGs that complete these, the winners get a certificate, are featured on the website and included in the members newsletter. Previous year example is: https://www.bera.ac.uk/award/bera-annual-conference-2019-sig-best-paper-award.