

Guidelines for TWG Leaders

The chief aims of ERME are to promote Communication, Cooperation and Collaboration in Research in Mathematics Education in Europe, in order to know more about research and research interests in different European countries, and to create opportunities for inter-European cooperation between researchers in collaborative projects. This conference is designed as a starting point in promoting these aims in a communicative spirit. Each Thematic Working Group (TWG) should aim to provide a good scientific debate with the purpose of deepening mutual knowledge about the problems and methods of research in the field.

Each TWG initially has 4 or 5 Co-Leaders (including the leader, and including as far as possible a young researcher), from different countries, with interest and expertise in the theme of the group. One of these Co-Leaders, the designated TWG Leader, oversees the work of the group, and is ultimately responsible for decisions and actions. This is made possible by working with a team of TWG Co-Leaders, who share the work of the group in various ways. A member of the International Programme Committee (IPC) is appointed for each TWG to act as *Liaison* between the IPC and the Co-Leaders of that TWG. He or she is available to assist or advise the Co-Leaders, especially before the conference.

A major part of the TWG Leaders' responsibilities is (1) organising the review of submitted papers and poster proposals before the conference; (2) organising the conduct of the Thematic Working Group sessions at the conference itself.

Organising the Review of Submitted Papers and Poster Proposals

1. Initial submission, reviewing and final submission: overview and timeline

CERME10 will use a submission website managed by Keynote PCO (link on the [CERME10 website](#) when submission opens). While this will mean a new procedure for experienced TWG Leaders, this on-line system will assist with the collation of papers and ensure a more streamlined and efficient management of CERME papers. The authors submit the initial version of their paper or poster on the website, indicating a TWG number. The TWG Leader will receive from Keynote PCO the propositions of papers and posters corresponding to his/her TWG. Then he/she will organise an internal review (see next section) in the TWG. The final version of the papers and posters will be directly submitted by the authors on the submission website. Keynote PCO will then arrange the checking of all the papers and posters and publish them on the conference online program.

An online submission system is an important tool, for a large conference like CERME. It requires for everybody to take very seriously all the deadlines. The deadlines for the papers and posters are outlined in two lists below:

A: Papers

- Initial submission by authors: **15th September 2016**.
- TWG Leaders can download all the propositions for their TWG: **16th September 2016**.
- TWG teams send papers to reviewers by **22nd September 2016**.
- The reviewers send back their reviews to TWG Leader by **20th October 2016**.
- TWG Leaders inform Keynote PCO of status of papers by **30th October 2016**.
- Keynote PCO sends authors the information on the status of their paper by **2nd November 2016** (and announces that the reviews will be sent by the TWG leader).
- The TWG Leader sends paper authors revisions requested on **3rd November 2016**.
- The paper authors send a revised version with a description of the changes made to the TWG team (Leader and Co-Leaders) by **24th November 2016**.
- The TWG team takes the final decision and informs the paper authors by **5th December 2016**, and, if needed, discusses with them the final adjustments to the papers.
- The paper authors upload the final version of their paper to online submission system by **12th December 2016**.
- The TWG Leader can check the submission list up to **14th December 2016**. After 14th December no further changes can be made.

Online program available: **13th January 2017**.

B: Posters

- Initial submission by authors: **15th September 2016**.
- TWG Leaders can download all the propositions for their TWG: **16th September 2016**.
- The TWG leader organizes the review process for the posters within the co-leader team.
- TWG Leaders inform Keynote PCO of status of posters by **8th November 2016**.
- Keynote PCO sends authors the information on the status of their paper by **10th November 2016**.
- The TWG Leader sends authors revisions requested on **11th November 2016**.
- The authors upload a revised version of their two-page proposal by **12th December 2016**.
- The authors send their **digital poster** by e-mail to the TWG team (Leader and Co-Leaders) by **16th December 2016**.
- The TWG team discusses adjustments with the poster author if needed, the final digital poster is sent by e-mail before **23rd December 2016**.

The posters are not included in the online program.

2. Managing the internal reviewing process for the papers

The purpose of the CERME review process is to promote communication and collaboration through engaging participants in an in-depth analysis of a portion of TWG papers, as well as to assure the scientific quality of the accepted papers.

Papers will be submitted by the authors through the CERME10 submission website before **15th September 2016**. The TWG Leader will be able to download the papers and posters for his/her TWG by close of business on **16th September 2016**, and will also receive from Keynote PCO a table showing the corresponding author(s) for each paper, with their email address, the title of their paper, and the keywords.

The team of TWG Co-Leaders then proceeds as follows.

1. The TWG Leader then distributes the papers more-or-less evenly between the Co-Leaders (including him/herself), as far as possible according to common topics or methods, although this will usually be only approximate. If the number of papers received exceeds 24, the TWG Leader (in consultation with the IPC Liaison for the group) will co-opt additional Co-Leaders from among those who submitted papers, so that no Co-Leader has responsibility for more than 6 papers. In consultation with the IPC Liaison and TWG Leaders they will decide on a 'split' whereby the TWG will effectively work as two separate subgroups. If the number of papers received is fewer than 8, the TWG Leader will discuss the viability of the TWG with the IPC Liaison for the group and the Chair of the IPC.
2. Each paper will be assigned to two TWG participants for review, the responsible TWG Leader making clear what they have to do in the review and the deadline **20th October 2016** for return of reviews. These reviews are 'open' on both sides, i.e. both reviewer and author know each other by name. Situations where there is a close relationship between the author and the reviewer should be avoided. For example, a student's paper should not be assigned to be reviewed by their supervisor or vice versa. Also inexperienced researchers should be included in the review process. However, it is not advisable to assign more than one novice reviewer to any single paper. ***No author should have more than two papers to review.*** This distribution of papers for review can be achieved in smaller TWGs by collaboration between Co-Leaders. In bigger TWGs, each Co-Leader may independently distribute their share of the papers among 'their' authors. In either case, the TWG Leader oversees the process.
3. Each TWG Co-Leader prepares a constructive review feedback to each of the papers assigned to them, as follows:
 - i. They read the papers and form their own opinion about them.
 - ii. On receipt of the reviews, they make a decision about each paper for presentation at the conference regarding:
 - ACCEPT for presentation without further modification
 - ACCEPT for presentation subject to modification as detailed below
 - REJECT but resubmit the paper as a poster
 - REJECT

In difficult cases, they can consult with the TWG Leader or another Co-Leader of their TWG.

5. TWG Co-Leaders' decisions about the acceptance of papers are shared with the other TWG Co-Leaders and the TWG Leader. The TWG team must approve the final decision of accepting or not accepting for presentation and insert it on Keynote PCO by **1st November 2016**.
6. The decision regarding presentation is communicated by Keynote PCO to the corresponding author by **2nd November 2016**.

It is imperative that TWG Leaders do NOT inform the authors directly of the status of their papers – this is to ensure that all papers are submitted through the on-line channel. Should a TWG Leader correspond at this point with an Author who has not submitted their paper through the correct channel, there is a real risk that this paper will not end up being included in the conference programme. This official communication on the status of each paper MUST come from the online system.

In a separate communication to author on **3rd November 2016**, the relevant Co-Leader sends (a) the two reviews of the paper, as well as his/her own reviewer comments, if they have something significant to add (b) a short summary (about 150 words) of the reasons for the decision, including a very clear statement of what modifications must be done before the paper is accepted for discussion at the conference. [Please note that "see the reviews" will not be enough – see below for an example of a summary to accompany reviews].

8. The modified/revised papers (if required) are sent by the authors to the TWG Co-Leader in charge together with a letter, in which the changes are clearly indicated, before **24th November 2016**. Upon receipt the relevant Co-Leader quickly assesses whether or not the required modifications have been made. Together with the TWG Leader, the Co-Leader then decides whether or not the paper is now accepted for presentation or (where appropriate) as a poster, and informs the corresponding author without delay, before **5th December 2016**.
9. TWG Co-Leaders then send a list of final decisions for their papers to the TWG Leader. The TWG Leader then sends a composite decision list for all papers proposals to (a) all the Co-Leaders of their TWG, ((b) the Chair and the Co-Chair of the IPC and (c) Keynote PCO.
10. It is also recommended that the TWG Co-Leaders share the 'other' review(s) of each paper, as well as their own summary and decision, with the two reviewers of that paper. This is an excellent learning opportunity for all reviewers.
11. The authors upload the final version of their paper on the submission website before **12th December 2016**.
12. The TWG Leader can check that the list of the final version of papers on the submission website is correct, and confirm to Keynote PCO before **14th December 2016**.
13. Keynote PCO informs all authors of their papers inclusion in the conference programme by **16th December 2016**.

14. The papers and posters will be available online on **13th January 2017**. The TWG Leader should remind the participants that members of a group are expected to read the presented papers before the conference in readiness for working in the TWG.
15. TWG Co-Leaders may choose to encourage their group members to phrase questions, comments or suggestions regarding the papers they read, and to send them directly to the authors prior to the conference. This commenting should be voluntary, and need not involve the Co-Leaders.

Example of a summary to accompany paper reviews

Corresponding Author: *Alice Hulot*

Title: *The experience of the pre-service secondary mathematics teacher of school-based mentoring*

Thank you for your proposal of a paper for CERME10 TWG25. The paper has been read by two other paper proposers and one TWG25 co-leader (John Mulberry). The two reviews are attached with this summary overview by the co-leader in charge. In the light of these reviews, I am writing to inform you that the TWG25 team has decided to

ACCEPT your paper for presentation subject to the modifications detailed below

[Overview of the remarks]

Your paper is very well-written, interesting and relevant to the group theme. You offer some original insights into the experience of these pre-service secondary mathematics teachers and related proposals for practice and for further research. Nevertheless, the two reviews offer some suggestions which you should consider for pre-conference revision. In particular, the review of von Neumann makes several points to be considered under Methodology (which needs more detail) and Statement and Discussion (do not lose sight of the mathematics).

[Recommendations for the revisions]

In the light of this overview and the two reviews – which we strongly recommend that you consider as a guide through the revision of your paper – we expect that a revision addresses the following:

(a) to address the specifics of mathematics (and mathematics didactics) more thoroughly in the paper and

(b) to expand and foreground the implications for teacher education, which you touch on in the Discussion at the end of the paper. Also, please format the paper in accordance with the instructions given in the First Announcement. This is most easily achieved with CERME template, which you do not appear to have used.

PLEASE SEND YOUR REVISED PAPER/NEW SUBMISSION (FOR A POSTER PRESENTATION) TO John Mulberry, John.Mulberry@edu.ucg.es before

24th November 2016

You will be informed of the final decision before **5th December 2016**, and will have to upload the final version on the submission website before **12th December 2016**.

Thank you,

John

[On behalf of the TWG25 team]

3. Managing the internal reviewing process for the posters

1. The TWG Leader distributes the 2 pages posters proposals more-or-less evenly between the Co-Leaders (including him/herself).
2. The Co-leader in charge reviews the posters proposal – see the Review Guidelines. In particular, the review clearly indicates the status of the Poster proposal:
 - ACCEPT for presentation without further modification
 - ACCEPT for presentation subject to modification as detailed below
 - REJECT

In difficult cases, they can consult with the TWG Leader or another Co-Leader of their TWG.

3. The review is sent to the TWG leader (suggested deadline: **3rd November 2016**).
4. TWG Co-Leaders' decisions about the acceptance of papers are shared with the other TWG Co-Leaders and the TWG Leader. The TWG team must approve the final decision of accepting or not accepting for presentation and send this decision to Keynote PCO by **8th November**. Keynote PCO will inform authors by **10th November 2016**.

It is imperative that TWG Leaders do NOT inform the authors directly of the status of their posters – this is to ensure that all posters are submitted through the on-line channel. Should a TWG Leader correspond at this point with an Author who has not submitted their poster through the correct channel, there is a real risk that this poster will not end up being included in the conference programme. This official communication on the status of each poster MUST come from the online system.

5. The TWG Leader sends authors revisions requested on **11th November 2016**.
6. The authors upload a revised version of their two-page proposal by **12th December 2016**.
7. The authors send their **digital poster** by e-mail to the TWG team (Leader and Co-Leaders) by **16th December 2016**.

8. The TWG team discusses adjustments with the poster author if needed, the final digital poster is sent by e-mail before **23rd December 2016**.

Unfortunately, the digital posters cannot be displayed on the conference website (since this was not planned in the initial contract). The TWG leaders are naturally free to find ways to share the digital posters with the participants before the conference if they wish. The digital posters should be included in the proceedings (work of the IPC, in progress).

Publication of Papers and Posters in the Post-Conference Proceedings

The guidelines concerning the proceedings will be sent in a separate document.

The Conduct of the Thematic Working Group Sessions at the CERME Conference

Organising a programme of work for the CERME Conference

The TWG work lies at the heart of a CERME meeting. It is a major responsibility of the TWG Leaders and their Co-Leaders to organise the group work in a way that encourages and supports good scientific debate. In order to promote meaningful communication and interaction in the TWG, extended formal presentations are not permitted. With this same aim, TWGs with more than 24 submitted papers are to be split in two subgroups (possibly with joint sessions).

Even with fewer than 24 papers, group activities must be designed carefully in order to ensure that everyone feels heard and included, and to provide opportunities for collaboration. Try to avoid organising sessions in a way that highlights some papers and ignores others. Make sure that every author feels that their (accepted) paper has been considered and discussed in depth, in their presence, by at least some participants in the TWG. Do not overlook 'affective' as well as scientific aspects of participation: try to ensure that every participant in the TWG feels that they belong in the group.

Some formats for organising the sessions that have proved to be effective are described here:

1. Discussing single papers or small groups of papers. A possible structure could be:
 - i. Allow an author, or a small group of authors, 5 minutes each to recall the main ideas in their paper. Proceed to plenary discussion based on the papers, supported for example by short small-group activities and other ways of structuring participation.
 - ii. These 5 minute recall sessions by authors can be replaced or complemented by short reactions to one or more papers. These reactions can be prepared by one of the reviewers or one of the TWG Co-Leaders, but can also be attributed to other authors,

- to increase the number of different persons who made a deep reading of the paper. The follow-up discussion could then be organised as a panel.
- iii. In order to give individual papers more time, subgroups can be organised around common key ideas in 2 or 3 papers, being discussed intensively only in these subgroups, which could report back briefly to the whole group (perhaps providing slides or posters for the reports).
2. Working on deepening understanding of selected aspects of the papers. Possible approaches include:
 - i. Before the conference, identify some key ideas or themes, asking each participant to prepare just one slide on each idea/theme to express their view on the issue. Collect and organise the slides in advance: this gives less fluent English speakers more time to express their ideas.
 - ii. Discuss some of the data from one paper with the theoretical lenses of others in order to gain a better understanding of mutual perspectives.
 - iii. Develop a collective meta-analysis on selected topics or themes, drawing out what can be said about a topic/theme by drawing on the findings of several papers.
 3. Going beyond the content of the presented papers in at least one session. For example:
 - i. Try to identify/specify collectively some key ideas or further questions that could be the focus of further research.
 - ii. Develop ideas for research designs to be implemented in different countries.

Facilitating deep and inclusive discussion during the conference

The TWG Leaders and Co-Leaders have responsibility for maintaining good scientific quality in the group sessions. They are also responsible for ensuring that every participant is, and feels, included and able to contribute. Most critical feedback after CERME Conferences relates to dissatisfaction with one or both of these factors, and sometimes where it appears that the TWG Leaders and Co-Leaders have not been successful in keeping them in balance. In the past, successful TWG Leaders and Co-Leaders have adopted a variety of strategies in order to achieve democratic and stimulating discussions during the Thematic Working Group sessions. These strategies include:

- Informing participants in advance on their plan for the organisation of the group work, thus allowing participants to prepare themselves accordingly.
- Creating a welcoming and open atmosphere in which everybody feels free to participate actively. This could include direct and explicit attention to building community and trust in the TWG e.g. by making time for introductions, or by including an 'ice breaking' activity.
- Setting out at the outset some 'ground rules' for presentation, discussion and debate in the TWG.
- Ensuring that discussion is not dominated by only a few participants. This is a very common problem, and sometimes confident individuals with strong opinions have to be restrained by the Chair for the session.

- Including and involving those participants who did not submit a paper to the TWG, or whose papers were not accepted for presentation
- Being aware of language issues, and reminding participants of the importance of speaking slowly and articulating clearly
- Preventing native English speakers from dominating the discussion
- Encouraging non-native speakers to participate, organising support to overcome language obstacles
- Making sure that spoken contributions can be heard by everyone by considering the layout of the room, acoustics etc.
- Promoting high-quality work by judicious input when the discussion appears to be superficial or weak in content
- Seeking and drawing attention to connections between papers
- Inviting group participants to discuss and contribute to the final session reporting the work of the TWG.

In conclusion: the working sessions of the Thematic Working Groups need to be planned and managed by the TWG Leaders and Co-Leaders. A good balance of scientific quality and democratic inclusion is unlikely to occur by chance, and is more likely to be achieved when the Leaders and Co-Leaders and all participants consciously work to achieve it.

At CERME10, the TWGs will be allocated 13 hours each. 12 hours are dedicated to the TWG work as described above; 1 hour will be dedicated to a meeting with the editors of a future ERME book on 20 years of research development (on the occasion of ERMEs 20th birthday). The details of this meeting will be presented later.