

Association of Applied Geochemists — Code of Practice for Symposia

1. Scope

- i. The following Code of Practice applies specifically to the biennial plenary congress of the Association of Applied Geochemists (AAG).
- ii. The official title of the biennial plenary congress of the AAG shall be “The ..th (st or ..rd) International Applied Geochemistry Symposium (IAGS)”. A subsidiary title describing the theme of the Symposium may be added, but is not mandatory.
- iii. As well as being used for the AAG Symposium, these guidelines can also be applied to other symposia sponsored or co-sponsored by the AAG.
- iv. The AAG expect the organizers of any Symposia organized under their auspices to make every effort to adhere to the terms of this Code of Practice. The office bearers of any Local Organizing Committee (LOC) will be required to affix their signatures to a printed document in which they commit to do so; in particular, with regard to timely submission of financial and logistical reports. The AAG, through its Council and Symposium Committee, also reserves the right to amend these guidelines at any time, or to depart from these guidelines if necessary.
- v. The guidelines shall be reviewed by the AAG Symposium Committee, in terms of relevance and applicability, at any time deemed appropriate.

2. Proposals to host Symposia

- i. The AAG shall request proposals to hold a Symposium via the AAG’s newsletter ‘EXPLORE’, and through other formal and informal channels.
- ii. Proposals should be submitted to the AAG Symposium Committee, who will assess the proposal in terms of completeness, and, if satisfactory, pass on the proposal to the AAG Council for consideration. Every effort should be made to submit proposals three years preceding the year of the conference.

iii. The AAG Council shall consider all proposals received and render its decision to the applicants as speedily as possible.

iv. The basis for selection shall include:

- (a) the quality of the proposed scientific program;
- (b) the time and location of the meeting;
- (c) the preliminary budget;
- (d) any other factors that AAG Council may deem appropriate.

v. Before rendering final approval, AAG Council may ask for clarification or amendments to proposals. The AAG Council reserves the right to reject all proposals, or to decide not to hold a biennial meeting in a given year.

The proposal should include the following:

- (a) Executive Summary
- (b) Introduction
- (c) Proposed symposium dates
- (d) Description of city or town of choice, and surrounding region
- (e) Composition, experience and expertise of the LOC
- (f) Description of proposed technical program
- (g) Field Trips
- (h) Social Program
- (i) Budget

3. Local Organizing Committee

i. The Local Organizing Committee (LOC) must consist of four members, at least one of whom must be an AAG member, with the positions of:

- (a) Chairperson
- (b) Vice Chairperson
- (c) Treasurer
- (d) Secretary

and should include further members to cover the following mandates:

- (e) Venue Coordinator
- (f) Technical Program Coordinator

- (g) Short Course (Workshop) Coordinator
- (h) Field Trip Coordinator
- (i) Trade Show and Sponsorship Coordinator
- (j) Social Program Coordinator
- (k) Publicity Coordinator
- (l) Members without portfolio

ii. AAG Council acknowledges the difficulty of recruiting volunteers and the need for some LOC members to assume more than one responsibility.

iii. The AAG Council endorses the use of a professional conference organiser (PCO) to help in the organisation of AAG Symposia. The likely cost of retaining the services of a PCO should be reflected in the draft budget supplied to the AAG Symposium Committee. At an early stage in planning of Symposia, the LOC should identify areas of expertise of both the LOC and PCO. The former should usually retain control of the scientific and technical part of the Symposium (e.g. scientific program, workshops, field excursions).

4. AAG Council Involvement

The Chairperson or Vice Chairperson of the LOC shall report on progress with the symposium organisation by e-mail to the Chairperson of the AAG Symposium Committee at intervals not exceeding four months, until twelve months before the Symposium, at intervals not exceeding two months, until six months before the Symposium, and at intervals not exceeding one month, until the Symposium. Reports should include minutes of any meetings of the LOC. The Chairperson of the AAG Symposium Committee shall pass on relevant details of such reports to Council as soon as practicable.

Aspects to be covered in the reports shall include, but not necessarily be restricted to, the status of the:

- (a) Venue
- (b) Budget
- (c) Technical program
- (d) Finances

- (e) Accommodation and catering arrangements
- (f) Short Courses
- (g) Field excursions
- (h) Publicity

5. Finance

i. The AAG Symposium shall be financed through registration fees and sponsorship. Any surplus funds resulting from the Symposium shall accrue to the AAG, which may also be responsible for making up any shortfalls in Symposium finances insofar as this is covered by the agreement between the AAG and the conference organisers.

ii. The successful LOC may request seed money from the AAG. This money is to be repaid when the Symposium's financial affairs are reconciled. Seed money will not be granted until the initial proposal and budget have been accepted by AAG Council.

iii. The AAG shall levy no interest on this loan, but its approval shall depend upon the financial resources of the Association. Furthermore, if the host nation has foreign currency restrictions that would prevent repayment, seed money will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

iv. In general, AAG alone accepts the financial risks of its Symposia, and uses these events as its principal source of funds. Thus, any profits from Symposia shall be returned to AAG. Under some circumstances, the LOC for an AAG Symposium may seek or accept financial cooperation with other organizations or may seek to use some of the profits locally for the benefit of the AAG or the scientific discipline. In this event, AAG makes the following conditions:

- (a) Any proposals to share risk and profit from an AAG Symposium must be presented to AAG Council in writing by both the LOC and the collaborating organization, at least 12 months in advance of the Symposium. AAG reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to decline any such arrangements to share profit and risk.
- (b) AAG will not enter into an agreement with another organisation in which it receives less than 75% of the profits from an IAGS.

(c) All such arrangements will be to share both risk of loss as well as profit. Any collaborating organizations must satisfy AAG Council that they can meet their share of any losses should they occur, and must undertake in writing to do so. The members of the LOC shall provide Council with a signed document committing themselves to this.

(d) AAG reserves the right to use its share of profits, as determined by the equity percentages referred to above, in any way AAG Council sees fit.

(e) An organization which enters into a risk and profit sharing agreement with AAG over an AAG Symposium shall be liable to contribute its share of any seed capital. In the event that this money has already been paid to the LOC by AAG, the new partner organisation shall immediately pay its share of the seed capital directly back to AAG. Repayment of seed capital is a first call on any profits made by an AAG Symposium.

v. The cost of insurance coverage for the Symposium, particularly cancellation insurance, shall be investigated early in the organization process and budgeted accordingly. As personal liability insurance is likely to be either difficult to obtain, or prohibitively expensive, it is recommended that delegates be asked to sign a waiver releasing the LOC, the AAG Symposium Committee, the AAG Council and the AAG from liability from Personal Injury or other misfortune that may befall them during the Symposium or associated activities.

vi. If the jurisdiction in which a Symposium is to be held imposes a Value-Added Tax, or other tax for which non-residents are not liable, international delegates may be tax-exempt or entitled to a rebate. The Organizers shall seek the advice of a professional, resident tax expert in this regard.

vii. The balance of expenditure between events for which admission is included in the cost of registration (e.g. Icebreaker) and for which an additional charge is levied (specifically, the Symposium Dinner) shall reflect the desirability that the cost of attending the latter should be affordable to the majority of Symposium delegates.

viii. The LOC may set higher charges for delegates who register after a certain date, and may levy all or part of the registration fees of delegates who cancel their registration at short notice.

ix. Non-members of AAG must be charged an additional general registration fee of at least an amount equivalent to the annual AAG subscription. Members may be offered a discount on the registration fee for associated short-courses, workshops, field excursions. A reduced registration fee should be available to bona-fide students.

x. Sponsorship of AAG Symposia is seen as a major part of revenue raising. Various levels of sponsorship should be offered, with the amount of money contributed proportional to the level of exposure at Symposia. The possibility of sponsorship for certain materials (e.g. briefcases), or individual events (e.g. lunches and coffee breaks), shall be investigated.

6. Publicity

i. Publicity material shall be prepared and released at regular intervals as mailed brochures, in the AAG newsletter 'EXPLORE', and on the AAG website. The LOC should endeavour to send out the first circular and call for papers at least two years and 18 months respectively before the meeting date. These should then be followed by reminders.

ii. Advertising of Symposium-related material in AAG-related media (e.g. 'EXPLORE', AAG website) shall be at the expense of the AAG and not the LOC

iii. The AAG shall contact AAG members by email on behalf of the LOC to keep them informed about AAG Symposia matters.

iv. The LOC should also send any promotional material relevant to the Symposium to exploration companies, relevant environmental groups, analytical laboratories and other potentially interested parties.

v. Paid advertisements should be placed in relevant publications and posted on electronic bulletin boards, at the discretion of and cost to the LOC. The LOC shall make use of the best available reduced-rate mail service.

vi. In addition to information dealing with proposed technical sessions, workshops, field excursions, sponsorship and trade display opportunities, and social events, publicity should also include the following information:

(a) Access to the host city (proximity of airports, bus and train stations, major roads).

(b) Accommodation options covering various prices.

(c) Historical, geographical and cultural background information of the host city.

(d) Weather to be expected at the time of the Symposium.

(e) Contact details for more information.

(f) Other anticipated expenses that symposium participants should plan for.

vi. Details of technical sessions, oral presentations and posters shall be made available to delegates at least one month before the Symposium, via the Association's Web Site or the specific website of the symposium, and as emailed circulars.

vii. The limits of the LOC responsibilities in terms of financial obligation to and entertainment of delegates, shall be clearly defined in any publicity material. In particular, the word 'invitation' should be used with circumspection.

7. Symposium Venue

Hosting any Symposium in a hotel is not obligatory, and the LOC shall consider on its merits the proposal of any city or town with suitable conference facilities, easy access to major airports, reliable communications and an adequate number of hotel or residential beds, such as a University town.

8. Enrolment of New Members

i. All Symposium registrants who are not members of the AAG shall automatically qualify for one-year's membership (ordinary or student) on registering for a

Symposium, the fee to be incorporated into the higher registration fee charged to non-members (see 5 ix).

9. Social Events and Catering

The LOC should consider arranging a number of social events which highlight the culture of the host country. Amongst these events, the Symposium dinner is seen as the most important social event of the Symposium, and the LOC should endeavour to price this event in order to attract the maximum number of delegates and accompanying persons.

10. Annual General Meeting & Council Meeting

During the Symposium an appropriate time shall be set aside for the AAG Annual General Meeting, which can be followed by an AAG Council meeting. The AGM should be scheduled not to conflict with other Symposium-related activities. An appropriate time for such meetings would be following an afternoon technical session.

11. Accompanying Persons' Program

The organization of an Accompanying Persons' Program is obligatory. If any events are planned and announced, the possibility that they will be cancelled in the event of inadequate support should be clearly stated in the registration package, and in all advance publicity material.

12. Scientific Program

- i. The scientific program of the Symposium shall be organised into themes, which shall be advertised by circulars and on the AAG website prior to the Call for Papers.
- ii. The official language of the Symposium is English, and all presentations (oral and poster scientific presentations, workshops, field excursions) shall be presented in this language.
- iii. The format of abstracts (in terms of font, page layout, and maximum length), and the deadline for their submission shall be clearly stated in circulated publicity and on the AAG website. A maximum abstract length of two A4 pages (including illustrations and tables) is recommended. Prior to the submission of abstracts, the

LOC shall form a technical subcommittee whose responsibility is to determine the appropriateness of offered presentations at the Symposium, and determine whether presentations should be presented in either an oral or poster form. Criteria used for determining whether material is appropriate include:

- (a) Originality
- (b) Conforming with designated conference themes
- (c) Scientific content
- (d) Level of commercial content

iv. Each registered delegate to a Symposium shall be provided with a bound hard copy of the Abstracts volume. Production of parallel hard-copy and digital versions of the Abstracts Volume is encouraged. In the Abstracts Volume, abstracts for oral and poster presentations shall be printed and indexed in a single alphabetic sequence by the first author's last name.

v. In general, abstracts and manuscripts shall comply with the requirements of the *Guide to Authors of Geochemistry: Exploration, Environment, Analysis*.

13. Proceedings Volume

i. The AAG considers that the proceedings of any Symposia organized under its auspices constitute an important component of its official journal "*Geochemistry: Exploration, Environment, Analysis*" (*GEEA*). Consequently, the AAG retains the right of first refusal on the publication of these Proceedings. If this right is exercised, the production and editing of the post-Symposium Proceedings volume shall be the administrative and financial responsibility of the AAG. The editors of *GEEA* may engage the services of a qualified Special Editor (or Editors) for the Proceedings Volume if they consider that it will expedite the Volume's publication.

ii. The deadline for the submission of manuscripts shall be no later than six months after the end of the Symposium.

iii. In general, submitted manuscripts shall comply with the requirements of the *Guide to Authors of Geochemistry: Exploration, Environment, Analysis*.

14. Workshops and Short Courses

- i. The Organizers shall solicit suggestions for Workshop (Short Course) topics from the AAG membership through advertising in 'EXPLORE' and the AAG Website.

- ii. Workshops shall be cost-neutral. The cost of any workshop shall be determined by the cost of hiring the venue for the Workshop, any related equipment costs (e.g. audio-visual) and provision of morning and afternoon teas and lunches for workshop registrants. Based on these costs, a minimum number of workshop registrants shall be estimated to ensure cost neutrality; if this number is not reached within one month of the Symposium, the workshop shall be cancelled, and any registrations received for the workshop shall be reimbursed.

- iii. If the minimum number of registrants is exceeded, then any profit from the workshop shall be divided between the workshop presenters according to their level of contribution.

- iv. Workshop organizers shall produce copies of the notes for all the workshop participants. Subject to the agreement of all workshop presenters, copies of the workshop notes can be posted in the members-only area of the AAG's website.

15. Technical Presentations

- i. The LOC shall provide the AAG Council with a list of suitable keynote speakers to present at the beginning of each themed session of the Symposium. Where possible, keynote speakers will be identified who plan to attend the Symposium, thereby avoiding any commitment of the AAG to finance the attendance of such speakers.

- ii. Each session Chairperson shall be a recognized authority in the field dealt with by the Session. Chairpersons shall be rigorous in their enforcement of allotted times for oral presentations and questions. During question time, contributions from the floor shall be restricted to questions directly related to the paper just presented.

- iii. Multiple sessions are not encouraged, but if they are seen as necessary by the LOC — and with the agreement of the AAG Council — a maximum of two concurrent oral

sessions should be run. In the case of multiple sessions, the program must be organized to ensure that presentations with similar themes are not presented concurrently. The success of multiple sessions relies on strict adherence to presentation times, and ensuring that transition of delegates between speaking venues does not disrupt the program.

iv. The LOC shall ensure that suitable audiovisual equipment is available for technical presentations (including back-up equipment in case of breakdown) and the availability of suitably qualified personnel to operate such equipment.

v. Unless agreed to by the LOC, all presentations shall be made using a single projection screen, using Microsoft Powerpoint™. The audiovisual equipment shall include at least one computer operating under the Windows XP operating system or higher. Oral presentations should be loaded on to this laptop using media such as thumb drives or compact discs (CDs) at least one session before the scheduled presentation time. Presenters are responsible for ensuring that all images project correctly.

vi. The use of overhead projectors or slide projectors is not supported.

vii. The LOC shall make available information on the size and composition of display boards for posters in appropriate advertising material, including the AAG website. This information shall also include the maximum space available, and its dimensions.

viii. A suitable location will be provided for the display of posters throughout the conference. Posters shall be arranged in themes similar to the oral sessions. A two-hour time slot will be scheduled for poster viewing each day of the technical sessions. At least one author of each poster will be required to be available for questions and discussion for at least one of those two hours, for every day while the poster is on display. Poster presenters are encouraged to make available free of charge A4-size versions of their posters to delegates.

16. Field Trips

- i. The LOC will evaluate the choices of Field Trips simultaneously, for acceptability based on criteria including but not limited to adequacy of technical content, and variety of scope. If a Field Trip takes place in an area with locations of exceptional non-geochemical interest (for example, world-famous archaeological sites), not more than 20% (that is, one day in five) may be allocated to visits to such locations.
- ii. Each field trip should have two leaders: one whose primary responsibilities are as Technical Leader; and another whose primary responsibilities are administrative. However, in the event of indisposition of one leader, the other shall be sufficiently familiar with his or her responsibilities to take them over.
- iii. Each field trip must have at least one leader or participant who is resident in or thoroughly familiar with the locale, in order to deal with safety issues and emergencies. Safety protocols of the highest standards should be adhered to in running a field trip, with all field trip leaders well versed in safety. At least one of the leaders or helpers on a field trip should be trained in First Aid.
- iv. Because many delegates will have to meet the schedules of international flights, the dates of the beginning and ending of Field Trips shall not be changed later than two months before the Symposium.
- v. If a Field Trip is cancelled for any reason, participants shall be notified not later than one month before the Symposium, and their payments refunded in full.
- vi. A guide book or pamphlet should be made available for each Field Trip participant.
- vii. For field trips that are distant from the city in which the Symposium is being held, and where it is not possible to negotiate a good concessionary rate for air tickets, participants shall be given an opportunity to proceed independently to and from the rendezvous point.
- viii. An estimate should be made of the minimum number of participants necessary to make any field trip cost neutral. Should this number not be reached, the field trip

should be cancelled. Should the number be exceeded, any resulting profit shall be returned to the AAG.

ix. The cost of transport, accommodation and food of field trip leaders shall be incorporated into the cost of the field excursion.

17. Reporting

i. A final report on the Symposium shall be presented to the Chairman of the AAG Symposium Committee not more than 6 months after the end of the Symposium. The report should provide an overview of the Symposium, and include the following information:

- (a) Total number of registrants
- (b) Number of AAG registrants
- (c) Number of non-AAG registrants
- (d) Number of 'early-bird' registrants
- (e) Number of 'walk-up' registrants
- (f) Number of accompanying persons
- (g) Registrants according to country of origin
- (h) Number of workshop registrants, subdivided according to individual workshops
- (i) Field Trip registration
- (j) Attendance at lunches, Symposium dinner, and other social events

ii. The report should also include a summary of the important technical and administrative issues raised during the Symposium.

iii. The report should include a detailed financial statement.
