

Symposium of **B**iology **S**tudents of **E**urope



Collective Memory

Version 2; January, 2020

(Version 1 Conceived in July, 2016, Villa Real, Portugal;

Passed by the SymbioSE General Assembly, 30 July, 2017, Lund, Sweden)

Edited 2022/23

1 About this Collective Memory:

One of the main factors that renders SymBioSE truly unique and special, is the fact that it's organised every year by a different, highly-motivated bunch of students from a different place. What is even more miraculous is that SymBioSE has been running since 1997 even though:

- i) there is no formal responsibility by any individual person or organisation to ensure its continuation,
- ii) everything is organised voluntarily and there is no compensation whatsoever for the organisers,
- iii) we have zero core-funding and the organisers have to look for funding every year separately,
- iv) the organisers usually have little experience in the organisation of such a big event, and finally,
- v) the event is organised in such a fashion, that it enables participation even for students from less-rich countries due to low participation fees and included accommodation and food provisioning.

Considering all this, SymBioSE has been happening almost uninterruptedly throughout the last 20 years, with only one exception due to civil unrests and security concerns in Ukraine. If anyone would try to sell this idea to an outsider, they would be told to stop dreaming and that the continuation of such a project is virtually impossible due to the lack of a formal organisational structure, formal responsibility, or core-funding. Yet, here we are!

The SymBioSE community is strong, and information about the event has been passed down from generation to generation. Every new organising team brings new ideas, continues well-liked parts of the event from the past, and thus helps to evolve the event. This is what prompted us to establish a collective memory of things that have happened in the past to be used by future generations.

The SymBioSE collective memory is meant as a compilation of organisational and practical issues in relation to the organisation, planning, and conduction of SymBioSE. It is a guidance to get ideas and is not meant to be published in its entirety. It should be passed on from organiser to organiser.

It is our explicit wish and dear hope that this collective memory serves but a guiding role and will be adapted, changed, and supplemented with new information, ideas and experiences from all organisers. When you are organising SymBioSE, be creative and make this the SymBioSE you want it to be! See this as a living document here to serve the needs of the organisers and participants, to help them and enable them in their endeavour. It is NOT a set of rules! With very few exceptions, none of the parts in the collective memory are mandatory, or fixed. SymBioSE should continue to be flexible and serve the need of the community. We encourage the use of an "archive" attachment at the end of this document, where parts can be stored, that haven't been done in a while but have been part of past SymBioSE so the memory doesn't get lost. This way the information doesn't get lost and can be resurrected if ever the wish arises.

We urge future organisers to evaluate, every year, which part of the collective memory should be changed or supplemented. Use this collective memory, change it and keep it alive for many SymBioSE generations to come.

All the best!

The authors of the first version of this collective memory,

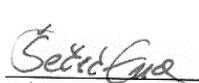
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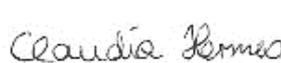
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Updated: 20/01/2020, Glasgow, Stefanie J. Krauth (SymBioSE 2019, Scotland)

Updated: 2022/23, Freiburg, Sebastian Neufeld (SymBioSE 2022, Freiburg)

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3 What is SymBioSE

Biology students are permanently faced with minor and major problems and decisions regarding the choice of university, special interests and ways of covering them, the critical question of “Will I find a job afterwards?” and much more.

SymBioSE is the annual Symposium of Biology Students in Europe. It creates an opportunity for Biology students from all over Europe to get together to inspire each other, discuss their future and the future of Biology, and to think about concerns arising from biological research. Our main objectives are to broaden the horizons of the participating students by excursions, workshops and lectures, to connect participants by discussions and cultural exchange and to inform everybody about current university matters.

The science of biology will always be the running theme, but political and ethical levels lift the focus from pure science when appropriate. SymBioSE meetings are a good occasion to exchange information and thoughts about biology, make foreign contacts and new friends. This is why the motto of SymBioSE is: Biology, Culture, Friendship.

4 About SymBioSE

4.1 Purpose¹:



SymBioSE is a Symposium of Biology Students in Europe. It was founded in 1996 by members of a German student association. The basic idea was to connect all European biology students, allowing for the exchange of ideas, perspectives and experiences about student concerns. This led to the first meeting in Berlin in 1997. After a successful start with twelve European countries, it was continued as an annual event to be held in the different participating nations. Since then, every host country has built upon the initial idea and upgraded it with different aspects of their own cultural background. Thus far, every time this has resulted in a unique and enriching symposium.

Today, SymBioSE meetings have three major goals: to broaden the horizons of the participating students by lectures and excursions, to share information about current university matters and to connect people by discussions and cultural exchange.

The biological topics presented are always based upon the trends in research that complement both, local institutions and their resources. Lectures are usually held at a local university so the students gain a detailed insight into other university systems. Participants are strongly encouraged to present their research or interests, thus gaining experience on an international level. During interactive workshops, students discuss theoretical, practical and ethical topics related to science.

Social events further enhance contacts between the participants. This allows everybody to create a personal network of collaboration and friendship throughout Europe, thereby facilitating student exchanges and international work experience. This promotes a mutual understanding between countries and nations through academic and cultural exchange whilst developing a new perspective on their own educational systems.

¹ This text has been passed by the general assembly as it stands. Any changes should likewise be passed by the general assembly

In general, SymBioSE is not a rigid organisation with a hierarchical structure. Within these international meetings, representatives of the participating countries gather to discuss topics such as: developments within their universities, different biological study programs, and the various ways of student collaboration. SymBioSE is an open and inclusive event and is non-political in all matters beyond science and education. During SymBioSE there is no discrimination based on nationality, religion, gender, or any other personal attributes, identity, or beliefs so long as these beliefs do not lead to discriminating expressions in word or action. SymBioSE is organised annually by students and is open to all students. Participants of SymBioSE are part of a living community that connects biology students throughout the year.

4.2 SymBioSE Philosophy:

Affordable & Motivating: To ensure that primary interest and motivation, and not the students' financial status, dictate their participation, the students' expenses to attend and participate during the symposium (incl. accommodation, meals, excursions etc.), shall be kept low (generally not higher than 150 Euros). Students with little financial means can apply for reduction/omission of the registration fee if the budget allows. Participants who contribute to the symposium by preparing presentations, posters or workshops are granted higher priority in the selection process in which organisers collect short motivation letters from each participant explaining their reason to apply and their respective contribution. By means of external sponsorship, organisers aim to keep the cost for the participants as low as possible.

4.3 List of former hosting countries:

Germany	(1997)	Sweden	(2017)
Portugal	(1998)	Croatia	(2018)
The Netherlands	(1999)	Scotland (Glasgow)	(2019)
Scotland	(2000)	Netherlands (online)	(2020)
Spain	(2001)	Portugal (online)	(2021)
Germany	(2002)	Germany (Freiburg)	(2022)
Norway	(2003)	Slovenia (Koper)	(2023)
Croatia	(2004)		
Finland	(2005)		
Italy	(2006)		
Latvia	(2007)		
Portugal	(2008)		
Russia	(2009)		
Turkey	(2010)		
Switzerland	(2011)		
Hungary	(2012)		
England, United Kingdom	(2013)		
Serbia	(Feb. 2014)	[WiBioSE; spin-off event due to UK problems]	
Ukraine	(2014)	[cancelled due to civil unrests]	
Greece	(2015)		
Portugal	(2016)		

5 Organisational structure of SymBioSE²

5.1 Dates and Duration

SymBioSE is usually held in the time when most European universities are on semester break to allow the attendance of as many participants as possible. The most suitable time is generally end of July/beginning of August. SymBioSE usually lasts about ten days, depending on the possibilities and funding of the organisers. Shorter events have been held before, but a minimal length of 5-6 days should be targeted to enable the growth of the community.

5.2 SymBioSE, an association or not?

So far the question of whether or not SymBioSE should be an official association has come up several times throughout the years. To this date, we have always decided against it simply because a formal association needs a person who is responsible and is subject to the laws and regulation of the country where it is based. Furthermore there are financial and legal obligations that come with an official association. We have decided that, for the time being, it is best not to establish SymBioSE as a formal association because of the administrative difficulties and liabilities associated with it. Irrespective of this decision, several national organising teams have established (temporary), national associations for the duration of the organisation and conduction of the SymBioSE. This has proven to be an efficient and effective way to combine the advantages of an association (for funding, legal liability etc.) with the general flexibility of SymBioSE.

5.3 SymBionts:

Participants and organisers of SymBioSE events are called SymBionts.

5.4 Dinosaurs:



SymBioSE participants are considered “Dinosaurs” when they have attended five or more SymBioSE events. This “title” is given to acknowledge the fact that these participants have “survived” so many years and still attend SymBioSE. Dinosaurs are living SymBioSE history and some kind of “elders” for the community.

The title of “Fossil” is awarded to people participating ten years or more. There was only one participant that we know for certain to have ever reached that state:

Tuomo Jaakkonen from Finland.

5.5 Nationality:



For the purpose of SymBioSE, the nationality of a participant corresponds to the country in which they are studying, NOT their personal nationality. Participants are officially representing the country of their nationality as defined above.

² This section on the organisational structure of SymBioSE is the only section within this collective memory, which is pretty much fixed and should only be changed for good reasons. Changes in here should be ratified by the general assembly.



5.6 The General Assembly:

The final decision organ of the SymBioSE is the General Assembly. The General Assembly consists of all participants, organisers, and main helpers of that year's SymBioSE event. All important decisions concerning SymBioSE are to be decided upon during the General Assembly, usually held towards the end of a year's event. Although SymBioSE is not a legal association, we consider the decisions taken by the general Assembly as binding for the entire SymBioSE community. Decisions of the General Assembly are considered passed when a simple majority (>50%) has been reached, and as failed otherwise. Only members present during the General Assembly have a voting right. Exceptions can be made for decisions concerning countrymen who could not be present at a year's event due to external circumstances (e.g. visa restrictions or other participation barriers). Participation at the General Assembly is mandatory for all participants. External people (e.g. other students who are not officially participants, professors, or funding partners) are not permitted in the general assembly unless it has been decided by the GA before the person joins.



5.7 The National Assembly:

The national assembly consists of at least 2 participants from each participating countries. If a country only provides one participant, this participant will be the representative. It is mandatory for participants from every country to name 2 representatives to be present in each national assembly (the persons may change from one NA to the other). The national assembly is held ca. two times during any SymBioSE event. Meetings can be held more often if the need arises. The purpose of the national assembly is to discuss current topics and strategies for SymBioSE, propose actions or suggest a course of action for issues to be decided in the General Assembly. The format is an open discussion round and every country can propose discussion items or "bills" to be discussed and/or proposed to the General Assembly.

5.8 Decision on future SymBioSE organisation

During the SymBioSE event, country-representatives are actively encouraged to consider hosting SymBioSE in their countries. This should be mentioned already at the beginning of the event, and be repeated several times. Towards the end of any year's SymBioSE the General Assembly is going to vote on the organisers of SymBioSE in two years' time. For this, any competing country has to give a presentation of how they envision to organise SymBioSE, where they would get the support from and generally sell their idea to the audience. Proposing participants have at this time point usually already contacted one person from their university and gotten their support. The procedure of presenting and voting is as follows:

Every proposing country presents their ideas in front of all participants. Competing countries cannot be present during the presentation of their competitors. After all countries have presented, there will be an open discussion round, where proponents answer questions from the audience. The audience is encouraged to ask critical questions of interest and should try to anticipate possible difficulties in the proposal and how they would be addressed by the proponents. The goal is to anticipate which proponent has the highest likelihood to organise a good event. Questions can be asked to single proponents or to all of them at the same time. For questions addressed to all proponents, it is advisable to change the order in which the countries have to give the answer.

In the past we have allowed propositions from countries which could not participate during that year's event (through Visa difficulties or other reasons), by means of a Video presentation

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and possibly a conference call. In General, it is advisable that at least one individual from a proposing country has participated in SymBioSE for more than one time, although this is not a formal requirement. Nevertheless, it ensures that the participant knows SymBioSE and has more than one point of reference for their own organisation. We have had first-timers organise an event before, but it has led to additional difficulties. It is highly advisable (and almost mandatory), that organisers selected to organise SymBioSE in two years participate in the following year's (i.e. the year before their own event) SymBioSE, with as many organising-team members as possible to ensure that even the ones newly on board get a feeling for the event.

The voting procedure:

The voting on who is going to organise SymBioSE happens in a two-step process.

Every participant (incl. organisers and active helpers who have participated in SymBioSE before) has an individual vote. The individual vote is entirely free and does not have to correspond to the country votes. It is given before the countries decide on their country vote.

Every participating country has a country vote. All participants from each country have to decide together on what is going to be their country's vote. Each country HAS to come to a joint decision or else, if it is absolutely not possible to reach a decision, abstain from voting.

The organising country has a vote as well. The organisers should decide beforehand which individuals from their team of helpers has an individual vote as well (easiest option is all persons who already attended SymBioSE before. Other than that, it depends on the individual circumstances whether a helper is more like a participant or whether they are really just helping out).

Both votes have to be given anonymously!

Two selected officials will then count the votes publicly. All votes, country-vote and individual vote, have to be counted by both officials and in case of diverging numbers, have to be re-counted by the two of them together.

The winner:

The proponent with the highest percentage of votes (average of the country votes and the individual votes) wins the right and obligation to host SymBioSE in two years' time. The country votes and individual votes thereby count 50% each.

(EXAMPLE: PROPONENT A GETS 60% INDIVIDUAL VOTES, AND 50% COUNTRY VOTES; PROPONENT B GETS 40% INDIVIDUAL VOTES AND 50% COUNTRY VOTE. → A: $(60\% + 50\%)/2 = 55\%$; B: $(40\% + 50\%)/2 = 45\%$ → PROPONENT A WINS).

In case of a tie in the average of the country votes and the individual votes, the proponent with the highest percentage of country votes wins.

(EXAMPLE: PROPONENT A GETS 60% INDIVIDUAL VOTES AND 40% COUNTRY VOTES; PROPONENT B GETS 40% INDIVIDUAL VOTES AND 60% COUNTRY VOTES → BOTH ACHIEVE 50% $((40\% + 60\%)/2)$ → PROPONENT B WINS)

If there is an absolute tie (same percentage of country and individual votes) for two or more proponents, there will be a new round of voting for the tied countries (i.e. if three countries are proposing and two of them are tied in the first part there will be a second round of voting with the same rules as above).

In case there is only one proponent, there will still be a presentation with a question and answer session after which it is formally voted whether or not the country should be given the organisation. This voting can be done by hand-signs (but can be done anonymously as well).

5.9 Dinosaurs, former organisers, and exceptional decisions:

Former organisers and dinosaurs play an important role for the continuation of SymBioSE. Typically, these individuals are very knowledgeable in what has been happening in the last few years and are usually very open to offer help, guidance, and advice to the SymBioSE community and the current or future organisers. Contacting former organisers and/or Dinosaurs, can be helpful especially when SymBioSE is going to be hosted in a country which has hosted it before. Additionally, they are usually the SymBioSE members available and active whenever there is an urgent decision to be taken outside of a SymBioSE event. Former SymBionts are usually contactable either via the SymBioSE Facebook page, or through personal contacts.

5.10 *WiBioSE:*

During the beginning of the year 2014, there was a spin-off event called Winter Symposium for Biology Students of Europe (WiBioSE) organised by Serbia. This event came to be, because the organisers of the SymBioSE of the year 2013 faced difficulties in the organisation due to the financial crisis at the time and could therefore only host an event of 4 days and accommodate only a small number of participants. Because of the last-minute decisions that needed to be taken, many participants could not participate that year i.e. due to visa regulations for eastern European students, the need for last minute travel arrangements etc. Therefore, the exceptional WiBioSE event in Serbia was conducted to enable a participation in that year also for students who were unable to participate in SymBioSE 2013 (UK). Although WiBioSE was a success, it was voted to not happen permanently in order to not split the participation into two events per year.

6 Information for organisers

6.1 Planning and organising a SymBioSE event:

For organising the SymBioSE event, please also refer to the helpful documentation and information passed on to you from former organisers. There should be examples for budgets, schedules etc..

When you have been selected as an organiser, the following list of things, to be considered and organised, can be helpful in your endeavour:

- 1) Get support from your University
- 2) Find financial support
- 3) Find accommodation for the number of participants you want to host (this can be tricky in many instances and should be one of the first things to organise as it will determine the number of participants that you will be able to host and subsequently the budget and other considerations. Don't forget that SymBioSE is a student event with a relaxed character and accommodation doesn't need to consist of private or double rooms. It can be dorms, halls, and even have been tents on a camping site in the past).
- 4) Organise food supply
- 5) Create a SymBioSE [country] homepage and update all information as soon as they are available. Some professors check the homepage to decide whether they allow their students to attend. Make sure to link the SymBioSE Europe homepage and ask to have your homepage linked there.
- 6) Send out posters and contact universities
- 7) Open participation application early enough to give students enough time to learn about the event and apply, as well as ensure that you will have enough time to evaluate all applications, select and notify the participants.
- 8) Select participants (consider Visa regulations for your country and try to ensure that you select and notify participants early enough to enable them to get a visa in due time).
- 9) Make sure you take proper care to ensure all allergies, intolerances and other dietary restrictions are adequately taken care of for all participants!
- 10) Ensure that you have a working plan how to include any participants with disabilities! (many universities have a specific body to help and advise you on this)
- 11) Write a programme (even if it is not possible to have a final programme early in the process, it is highly advisable to have a preliminary programme and publish it online or send it out as soon as you open applications, since some supervisors allow their students to participate only when there is a programme available)
- 12) Prepare certificates of attendance (many students need a certificate of attendance, so try to provide this during the event or only very shortly thereafter)

6.2 Participant selection:

Previous SymBioSE event hosted between 40 and 120 participants. Whereby 70 to 90 participants seems to be an ideal group size easy to handle and big enough for people to network and mingle.

Organisers should make an effort to achieve a balance based on country, gender, classical and molecular biology, and study level (Bachelor, Master, PhD students). It is important to have participants from as many nationalities as possible. Organisers from previous and following

years have priority. Likewise, it should be taken care to choose participants who have already attended SymBioSE before as well as new participants. This helps to keep the SymBioSE spirit alive, transfers SymBioSE traditions and informal knowledge, and ensures the inclusion of new people to create a future generation. Traditionally, the host country doesn't accept many participants from their own country, as it is already represented by the organisers and helpers. A perfect mix of participants would include equal proportions of gender, study levels, classical and molecular biology, experienced and new SymBionts (slightly more new. Where one-time attendees can also count towards the "new" participants). However, this depends a lot on the applications and the organisers will have to decide year by year. It is important, however, to include at least one participant from each country that we received applications from. (An example of the final participants balance from Scotland 2019 can be found in the annex). Of note, organiser teams of next year's SymBioSE are all automatically accepted for participation and it is indeed advised that the whole team attends SymBioSE the year prior to their own event. Although we are a symposium for biology students, we hold it a bit like the Eurovision Song Contest: If someone is a big fan and wishes to take part, we let them in. It is the decision of each organising team whom they invite, but it is completely ok to also admit people from fields that are not exactly biology if it seems like the applicant knows what they apply for and they seem like a good fit. The same is true for people no longer in academia or who seem a bit older than the average participant. If someone applies as a couple or team, we usually try to keep them together and not accept one but not the other.

A few notes on the participant selection form:

From experience there are few things to consider in creating the registration form that can make the selection process easier, especially to achieve the balance mentioned above.

Add a tickbox: I am an organiser/helper for SymBioSE 20XX . This way you can avoid to have to extract this information from text comments.

Ask specifically for the gender of people to allow you to achieve a gender balance. Make sure to add a third option "other".

Make the question "have you participated in SymBioSE before" separate from the "when and where" question. Also ask separately "how many times" so you can easily select by the answer.

Add a note about your cancellation and refund policy in the registration form (as well as the notes about data protection (see dedicated section).

Make it clear when asking for potential talks/posters/workshops that people do not need to be working on a thesis or project to attend or present! If they have nothing to present they can just present a topic of interest and show what they would like to work on.

6.3 Sponsors and participant fees:

SymBioSE is practically impossible without the help of sponsors and other external helpers. Sponsors can be acknowledged on the event's website, in the abstract book, and elsewhere as appropriate. However, special care is taken every year in order not to turn SymBioSE into an advertisement platform for companies and keep the relaxed, student-oriented atmosphere alive. Participation fees should be kept to no more than 150 Euros wherever possible to enable participation for students from all countries to attend. If you have to go higher than 150 Euros, try to increase as little as absolutely necessary. We have discussed possibilities for equitising participation fees through various means and you are free to attempt different schemes to do

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so. One possibility is to charge different amounts for Bachelors, Masters, and PhDs, or to vary by country of study and its average income for students. If you try any way of equitising fees, make sure you are still able to budget your income reliably and don't run into troubles with the financing of SymBioSE (you could, for example, set the minimum fee in a way that you can still organise a minimal SymBioSE if you were to only get participants who pay this fee and plan any surplus for additional funding. Also look at previous attendance lists to estimate the number of applicants from different countries/levels of study etc.). If you do successfully try an equitising scheme it would be great to gather some feedback on it and describe the actions, pros and cons in this collective memory since it would be valuable information and experiences for future organisers!

6.4 *SymBioSE logo:*

SymBioSE bears a characteristic logo that combines the word "SymBioSE" with the flag of the European Union (see cover page of this document). This design can be modified by each organising team in order to be adapted to the colours of the host country (e.g. by changing the flag) or to the theme of that year's event. The name of the host country can also be added to the logo, in the place of the word "Europe".

6.5 *The abstract/information booklet:*

For every year, there should be an abstract and/or information booklet handed out to the participants.

Depending on the available space in the booklet, it can contain the following parts:

- All abstracts in either the order of the name or presentation time. Separate talks, workshops, and posters
- The text "About SymBioSE" (See above)
- A welcome note/text
- Information about the University and Country
- The Program (maybe with an overview on each page)
- All abstracts of keynote speakers (possibly with bibliography)
- SymBioSE SOS Survival Guide (with critical contact details and addresses as well as emergency information)
- Abstracts of Excursions (where do we go and what is important there)
- List of participants (incl. contact email)
- List of organisers + pictures
- List of Sponsors
- Short description of each programme point

6.6 *Name tags, participant badges:*

Make sure the name is printed in big enough letters and good contrast on both sides of the name tag as these tend to flip over.

6.7 Code of conduct

If wished, a “code of conduct” could be sent, to the participants before the arrival in the host country together with other information. This document could include important social norms and rules of the country, as well as laws and regulations that need to be known in order to avoid any possible problems due to ignorance or misunderstanding (e.g. smoking, quiet hours, drinking regulations etc.). It could also include rules of the residence venue, the University, and Municipality. Whatever is important in your setting. It is sometimes a good idea to include that participants are asked to attend the entire programme and that they might want to book a few days before or after the event if they want to visit other parts of the country since there won't be much time for this during the event (this statement is included in section 7.2 which can/should be shared with participants). But be careful not to make SymBioSE sound like rigid place. The idea is that we all support each other and the organisers during SymBioSE and all its programme points.

6.8 On attendance during SymBioSE events

Information on attendance that can/should be given to participants can be found in section 7.2. A few notes for helpers and organisers: We ask all participants to attend all scientific events and also social events. Yet, if participants come to you to ask to skip a session for example because they are writing on their thesis or want to chat with another SymBiont or simply need a break, be generous. SymBionts are a great bunch of people doing their best to support each other. Non-attendance is a lot more common in big conferences and considered to be normal and completely valid. Don't take it as an offense or as disinterest (but do try to dissuade skipping a session because the topic of the session is not part of their research interest. You might want to set the stage for supporting each other and learning about topics outside of your own during the welcome event).

That being said, there have been a few (very few!) individuals in the past, who took advantage of SymBioSE as a cheap means of accommodation and food for what they consider their private holidays. Such individuals are highly disruptive to the entire spirit of the event. Participants should be made aware (in friendly terms to avoid giving off a feeling of distrust which most SymBionts don't deserve) that all sight seeings, shopping, travelling, or visiting friends should be planned outside of the SymBioSE dates (or during the last day which is anyway a travelling day) because the schedule will be full and it is unlikely that they'll have time during the event for this (section 7.2).

Individuals abusing the SymBioSE events for their private affairs and/or holidays, are banned from any further participation, and do not receive a certificate of attendance. You would be informed of such individuals by former organisers. Luckily it has mostly been a non-issue.

6.9 Information provision during the event

Information provision during the event is always a tricky issue. Organisers need to make sure that all the helpers and organisers are up to date about last-minute changes and that there are no conflicting information among organisers and helpers (and participants). A good measure to ensure this is to have frequent, short organisation meeting of the organisers and helpers throughout the event to update all responsables on the next few happenings.

The same goes for the participants. In general, it is advised to give information about what is happening next frequently (even if it is written in the programme) and very clearly (e.g. at meals and before breaks).

This could include an official announcement about „what happens next“ after each programme point (before the point is officially over and people leave, and in a loud enough voice), as well as establishing a point of information where the day’s programme is displayed and where people can always go to get information about last-minute changes, etc. This point could be a flipchart, black board or simply a wall where information is being posted (good locations are close to the site of food-intake (breakfast) as well as near lecture rooms, or dormitories.)

6.10 Wake-up

It is a good idea to organise a wake-up for the participants. From experience, this wake-up works best when it is insisting and consistent. This depends of course on the locality and possibility. Generally, it is not very effective to rely on the participants getting up without help but this has changed in recent years.

6.11 Presentation and poster awards

The best student presentation and poster usually receive a prize. How the decision is taken, is the choice of the organisers. However, we discourage the use of a public/popular vote by the participants, due to the resulting competition and potential unfairness. There is usually at least one award for the best poster and one award for the best oral presentation. However, in previous events, awards have been given separately for the different study levels (Bachelor, Master, and PhD). Additional awards can be introduced, if appropriate. The “prize” can be literally anything. A certificate should be given to the winners stating the participant's name, the title of the work and the category (oral presentation/poster). An example of evaluation forms for the evaluators can be found in the annex.

6.12 Chairing scientific sessions

Each scientific session (keynote and student presentations) should be chaired by one or two people who fulfil the following tasks:

- Introduce the speaker (at least: name, study level, university, and title of the talk).
- Make sure, the speaker sticks to the time. A proven tool for that is to give the speaker a signal when they approach the end of their slot (at 8 minutes, for 10-minute presentations, and at 10 and 13 minutes, for 15 minute slots). If the time is up, the chair interrupts the speaker and asks them to finish the last sentence. This procedure should be mentioned at the beginning of each session. Interrupting might sound mean, but it is a good training as this is what usually happens during conferences.
- Leads the discussion session and gives word to the people wanting to ask questions
- Keeps in time during the discussion round
- Asks the first question in case there are no questions from the audience

The chair can be anyone and doesn’t necessarily have to be an organiser or helper. Dinosaurs or external researchers can also act as chairs.

6.13 *Mixing up participants:*

SymBioSE is about getting to know people and mixing with them – no matter their nationality or field of study. Often, people have a natural tendency to stick with participants from their own country, especially if they have known each other before. Therefore, it is a good idea to intentionally mix participants up for various activities.

Some organisers have mixed people and nationalities already for the accommodation to avoid people staying with their friends. This is a great idea and makes it easier for people who travel alone without knowing anyone else to feel included. However, it might be best to still allow people choose a room-mate and/or allow them to change the plan you have made to avoid discomfort or even anxiety in more sensitive participants.

Apart from the accommodation, you could mix nationalities whenever participants have to form groups for certain events or happenings. This will get them out of their comfort zone and enable networking even for the more shy and introvert participants and to overcome language barriers.

6.14 *Moving/managing big groups:*

Moving big groups takes considerably more time and effort than one would expect. Plan transfer times, breaks, wake-up calls, and travels accordingly. Additionally, all information need to be given very clearly, mentioned repeatedly and best written down somewhere. Big groups are much like toddlers when it comes to managing them. Plan more time than you would for smaller groups.

6.15 *On coffee breaks and free time:*

As SymBioSE organisers we want to offer the participants a large variety of activities and programme points and the schedule can easily become very packed. It is important to remember, however, that the participants need adequate free time and breaks to be able to follow the programme. Networking is a major component of SymBioSE and networking happens during the free time! The times of these breaks have to be slightly longer than would be necessary for fewer individuals, due to the added difficulty of getting large groups organised and moving and to supply all with coffee, lunch, and dinner. It is likewise advisable to make sure there is coffee (and tea) available to the participants (or the possibility to purchase some) during breaks, since coffee seems to be a vital ingredient for science to recharge the brain and keep it attentive.

Make sure to include some free evenings as well where people can decide for themselves how they want to pass them. This usually leads to nice spontaneous social gatherings. Additionally, some time is needed to prepare country presentations or other things for the community.

6.16 *(Free) Evening activities*

SymBioSE participants are a happy and social folk³. As such they love to hang out, celebrate and have fun. You should make sure, for one part, that there is enough un-planned time in the evenings that can be used by the participants at their own liberty.

³ Note: “a folk” is not a typo. As in the sentence: “the Europeans are a common folk/ a common people” it signifies that all individuals are part of a people.

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It is advisable to provide some safe room or space where participants can hang out and be social together and have a party. The past has shown, that it is almost impossible to get such a large group to be quiet, so it is better to have a room or space where they don't disturb anyone with their activities (especially in countries with stricter noise rules). Make sure that the room/space is close enough to the accomodation that people can walk to and fro on their own (but separate enough to not disturb people).

Very good past experiences have been:

- Having an own (private) party room for SymBioSE,
- Partying in the atrium/entrance area of a department/institute (consider regulations and legal liabilities),
- Having some secluded open space where being loud is not an issue (this is almost mandatory, especially in warm countries, as people will naturally gather outside; also see point „flunky ball“),
- Providing beer and other alcoholic beverages (for sale at retail prizes or sponsored) in a make-shift bar and possibly some (mass digestible!) music (not too loud! People really prefer to be able to talk during SymBioSE. There is so much to share, they really don't just want to feel like in a club, even if some individuals do like this). Please consider to not only provide beer as there are people who cannot drink beer due to gluten allergies and other reasons. Beer and wine or cider could be a good combination, plus some alcohol-free drinks.
- Making Sangria (usually organised by the spanish delegation)
- Having common areas where few to no „outsiders“ are present
- Let people assemble spontaneously and develop a dynamic of their own

Less successful (but recurring) ideas that have been shown to lead to little liked and less attended events:

- Go to a pub, club, or party location together (especially when other people are there as well, and/or when people needed to be transferred to the location). This often led to people dispersing into little groups, not coming along because of the transfer etc.
- Have an organised club- or dance party (Especially when a DJ had been organised). DJs tend to stick to one type of music that doesn't appeal to everyone. Even if a majority likes the music, we should make an effort to also include the minority.
- Have very loud music or music of one type only (dance, electro, dub etc.; Mainstream (chart) music is mainstream for a reason, even if not all like it). See above. Also: let's try and protect our ears and allow people to still have some sort of conversation!
- Have organised evening outings to any location – it just doesn't seem to work.
- Basically anything where it was attempted to socialise in any organised form other than simply providing the locality (suitable for spontaneous joining and leaving) and drinks. Exception: organised dance evening with dance instructions (example: Ceilidh in Scotland)
- Leaving the participants in charge of the playlist. Although a great idea in theory, it leads to larger or more dominant groups monopolising the playlist and excluding groups of people with a different musical taste. It is best to have someone of the organisers in charge to change the genre of the music every 20-30 minutes. It has proven most succesful to stick to pop music from 10-40 years ago and intermix a few more modern songs of different genres. Make sure to mix between dance/house/hiphop/latin/rock/metal etc. And include at least one or two popular songs from EACH genre.

- Trying to get the participants to stay indoors or be quiet. It just doesn't work. We neither can nor should be controlling participants as organisers. It is not our responsibility and they are adults. We are providing a platform and that's that. Of course we can ask everyone to stick to basic rules, but we are not, nor should we try to be, controlling the group's behaviour, it would be a miserable task to do so.

6.17 Certificates

Every participant should receive a certificate signed by the main organisers, which confirms their attendance and, if possible, states the kind of contribution to the event (oral presentation, poster, workshop; the title might be mentioned on the certificate, put all contributions on the same certificate).

6.18 T-shirts and merchandise

It has been a successful strategy that the organisers and helpers wear distinctive t-shirts rendering them easily recognisable for participants in case they need to ask for help or information.

There is also the annual SymBioSE t-shirt which is custom made each year for that specific event. This serves as a souvenir and participants can choose in advance whether they want to buy it or not, since the cost is extra and it is not necessarily included in the participation fee (if the budget allows, have extra t-shirts for people who forgot or are new to the event and don't think they want one at first. If they are left over, give some to the helpers. There are ALWAYS people who didn't know they wanted a t-shirt). The organising team designs the t-shirt and it often includes the logo of that year's event as well as a list of all countries that have previously hosted SymBioSE. But the design of the t-shirt is completely up to the organisers.

Other merchandise, such as the eco-friendly mug have also been sold as an added functional souvenir in the past to great popularity.

The organising team can inform the participants in advance about the available merchandise and prices, and asks them to place an order including the quantity and size/colour of preference where applicable. Seeing that many SymBionts are female, take care of the available sizes in advance and either try to include women shirts or offer size xs. One-size t-shirts are often too large for female participants.

6.19 Ecological footprint and cups

As Biology enthusiasts, we care about nature. Organising big events, having drinks etc. is difficult and sometimes you have to use certain materials for convenience. Nevertheless, for the sake of producing as little waste as possible, we should try to use as little disposable material as possible! Wherever possible ask caterers to use reusable plates cutleries etc. and avoid single use items!

A long-used tradition was to provide some form of drinking cups to participants (they can be from a sponsor or just borrowed) to be used during the entire event for coffee breaks and other. If you let participants know this from the beginning, it usually works out well. One good idea is also to have the cups marked with the name if possible (use tape in case of borrowed cups).

Another option is to encourage the participants to drink tap water (only in countries where drinking tap water is safe, of course), and not providing pre-packed food.

Another possibility is to establish a **“we leave this place in a better state than we have found it”** culture from the beginning of the event and make sure the spirit catches on by repeating it and going ahead with a good example. SymBioSE 2017 introduced the concept of a digital abstract booklet, which could be considered for future events (but make sure to post the schedule somewhere for people to see when they don't have their electronic device with them).

6.20 In case of leftover funding

In some cases, it can happen that there is some funding left-over from the organisation of a year's event after all bills have been paid. In the past, we have established the practice that left-over money is passed on to the organisers of the next year's event to give them some starter's help in their organisation. It can also be a good strategy towards funding bodies, to establish this from the beginning.

6.21 Blacklisting

Sometimes, albeit VERY rarely, it has been necessary to “ban” certain participants from further attendance to SymBioSE due to disruptive and unacceptable behaviour. The details about these people are handed down from organisers to organisers, but is luckily a very rare occasion. Banning people should be a very last resort.

6.22 Updating the Collective Memory

Every year the organisers should sit together (shortly before the event or in the middle of the event), look through the collective memory and see which items in the collective memory need to be adapted, supplemented or changed.

You can also ask the SymBioSE participants whether they would like to add or change anything in there (maybe during the first national assembly?). The responsible people should then distribute writing tasks and the writers then change the document accordingly. A main responsible puts all the changes in the main document. In general, the changes in this document can simply be done by the organisers. However, important changes that change the nature of SymBioSE and that you think should be ratified by the community as a whole, should be proposed to the general assembly to approve (or reject) (and of course discussed in the national assembly before). Once the changes have been included in the document, it should be noted on the section “updated” on page three of this document indicating the date (when it was changed), location and, if desired, names of the authors or responsible person. We acknowledge that this can take a little while after SymBioSE has happened, but it is vital that this be done every year!

It is also possible to add notes and changes already during the organising phase when you encounter anything you wish you had known or think might be useful for future organisers to know. In fact, after having organised SymBioSE ourselves, we would probably encourage everyone to add any changes and additions to the collective memory as they occur to you. It is difficult to keep in mind all the changes/additions you wanted to make until after SymBioSE and although it might not seem to be the case, time to actually write up the changes becomes rarer after the event has happened. It would be an option to edit on the go (using track changes) and then review the entire document right after SymBioSE is done. This way we can

ensure to hand over the latest collective memory to the next organisers sooner rather than later [take it from me who is writing this 5 months after SymBioSE has taken place].

6.23 Data protection

Ever since the general data protection regulation has come into effect, collecting and sharing information, particularly any personal identifiable information (name, address, pictures etc.) or sensitive information (allergies or other medical information) comes with a set of specific requirements and steps to be taken.

One aspect is, that you need to inform all participants what type of data you collect from them (e.g. during registration, for abstracts, and during SymBioSE), what you will be using these data for, and how you will store them and for how long. You can only collect data that are strictly necessary to organise and conduct SymBioSE and all aspects related to it.

You will have to collect all applicants' and participants' explicit consent for this! As such you will need to have a data protection information statement and a consent procedure (this can be a simple tick box stating that participants accept and consent to the data collection you outlined in the statement. It must be explicitly ticked by the applicants and cannot be pre-ticked so that participants would have to remove the tick if they were not willing to give consent.)

Every country might have particular data protection regulation and each organising team will have to ensure that the European laws as well as any national laws are adhered to during their SymBioSE. Below is a generic data protection statement that can be used for the organisation of SymBioSE.

A specific consideration in relation to data protection concerns the taking, publishing (e.g. in abstract booklets or on the website), and sharing (with participants or other individuals or bodies) of pictures taken during SymBioSE.

Pictures, videos and other recordings:

We recommend the following procedure regarding pictures:

During the registration for SymBioSE: ask for the explicit consent that pictures may be taken, shared and published. You will need to keep a record of this consent for every participant in your own records (make sure to store this information in a properly protected place since it contains personal identifiable information). We recommend that you collect the consent about picture taking separately to the general data collection statement and consent during the registration process and that you inform applicants that it will not be possible to participate without this consent.

You can use the statement below during the registration process to ask for consent regarding pictures and videos.

6.23.1 Data protection statement templates:

Make sure that each of the statements includes any national regulations and is followed by a tick box (or signature line) asking for consent. Also make sure that the completion of the registration is not possible if consent has not been given!

Data collection, storage, sharing, and retention.

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During the registration process we will collect a variety of personal identifiable information about you that are necessary for the organisation of SymBioSE 20XX.

These information include: Names, gender, date of birth, contact information, addresses, nationality, level, field and topic of your study/research/work, prior SymBioSE attendances, dietary requirements and allergies, diseases, medication requirements, disabilities, and any other personal information you choose to share with us. This information will be shared with all organisers of this year's event and may be shared with organisers of coming events as well. Information that is shared with future organisers will be pseudonomised and not contain name, personal address, phone numbers or other contact details such as email addresses, ORCID or similar. But please be aware that future organisers might be able to identify individuals even from pseudonomised data, if they might have met you during this year's event or at any time prior or past this year.

No personal identifiable information will be shared with external individuals, bodies or organisations unless strictly necessary for the organisation and conduction of SymBioSE 20XX. Some personal identifiable information e.g. your address, country, passport/ID number, and other personal personal details might have to be shared with accommodation providers as part of their service provisions. If you want to know more about the use and storage of this data by the accommodation provider, please contact them directly.

We might also be required to point you out to our caterers and food providers if you have specific dietary requirements.

Data collected during the application process and during SymBioSE might be stored by the organisers of SymBioSE 20XX for up to 10 years. Data shared with others (under the restrictions and limitations detailed above) might be stored for a non-foreseeable time.

I hereby declare that I consent to the collection and sharing of my data as detailed in the statement above!

Taking and sharing pictures, videos, and other recordings:

Pictures and videos may be taken by the organisers or associated individuals during all SymBioSE programme points and social events. These pictures will be shared with other participants of the same year and may be published on webpages, social media, and other media including reports and articles.

Any pictures falling into one or more of the categories listed below, might be shared with other participants via a password-protected portal but **will only be published or shared with external individuals** (who were not part of SymBioSE 20XX) **if and when the people visible in these pictures give their explicit written consent:**

- a) Pictures which show (discernible) parts of a participant's presentation slides (other than the title slide), poster(s) or other types of research outputs
- b) Pictures which show a participant holding an alcoholic beverage clearly identifiable as such
- c) Pictures which depict any form of public display of affection beyond hugs (e.g. kissing or similar).
- d) Pictures where the main object is to depict one or more participant(s) who is/are sleeping

Pictures taken, shared, or published by individuals not part of the SymBioSE organisers, helpers, or other persons associated with the event organisation or conduction, are the

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responsibility of each individual and are not within the responsibility of any SymBioSE organiser, helper, or associated person.

I hereby declare that I consent to the taking, sharing and publishing of pictures, videos or other media recordings under the details and restrictions specified above. I am aware that media published online might be accessed worldwide and that the use of thus published media by third parties can not be entirely excluded.

My consent can be revoked at any time in the future. Media shared or published before my consent was revoked will not be deleted unless otherwise agreed by all involved parties. Group media that was published with the consent of all individuals recognisable in them will not have to be deleted as a result of my revoked consent.

In case it was agreed with the organisers of SymBioSE 20XX, that any previously shared or published media will be deleted from their platforms, I am aware that other individuals who had access to these media might retain a copy of said media. I understand that it is not the responsibility of the organisers to ensure that third-party copies of such media in question will be deleted.

Sharing personal identifiable information and research information:

During SymBioSE we will publish all abstracts for talks, posters, and workshops in our abstract booklet and potentially in other outlets. This might be accompanied by names, titles/study level, picture, affiliations, country, address, contact details, or any other information provided by the participant for this specific purpose.

A list with the names, study level, country and contact details (email addresses) of all participants will be shared among all participants, organisers and helpers.

[Note to organisers: this means you have to ask participants to provide all these information (again) together with their abstracts].

I hereby declare that I consent to the collection, sharing, and publication of my data as detailed in the statement above!

6.24 SymBioSE Website:

The function of the general SymBioSE website is to represent the symposium as a whole to everyone who is not yet familiar with it (including potential participants and supporters). Over the years, it has been implemented on multiple platforms and has been kept afloat by Symbionts – almost single-handedly by Hamid Hamzeiy. In 2018 this arrangement has become unsustainable for various reasons and we were looking for an alternative solution that would not rely on individuals to keep up the website over longer periods of times.

In 2019, we have moved to Squarespace, a service that provides us with a simple and highly visual way to edit the content of the website. The idea is that we can host the main SymBioSE Europe webpage, as well as the individual yearly websites on the same platform if that is what the organisers desire. In either case, we have now arranged it so that the organisers of each year's SymBioSE will ALSO be responsible to maintain, update and pay for the general SymBioSE website to ensure a continuing upkeep.

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Starting from 2020, every year's organising team will be responsible to maintain the general website. This includes updating the content, as well as paying the costs of the service (€132.00, billed annually on **February 20th**) and the domain name (€18.00, billed annually on **January 4th**). The costs are automatically deducted from a **valid credit card**, so the organisers will have to **make sure that they update the credit card information before January 4th**!

Our current plan includes the following features that you might find useful:

- Mobile optimisation of the website
- Website metrics (search keywords, visits, unique visitors etc.)
- Adding media and embedding content, including maps
- Creating forms (but not the cloud storage to record responses – this needs to be arranged separately. A simple Google Drive can be used for this purpose)
- Newsletter sign-up forms
- Adding social media blocks (Twitter, Instagram, Foursquare, Flickr, 500px)

By upgrading to a more expensive plan can give you access to additional options (e.g., setting up a webshop), but this is something that should be arranged with caution and remains the full responsibility of the specific organisers, who is free to discuss any issues during national assemblies and, if desired/necessary call for a vote in the general assembly. The outgoing organising team should make sure that all functions requiring additional costs on top of the plan described above. have been removed from the website before it is transferred to the new organisers. Each organising team decides on the way to collect funds for the website maintenance (via voluntary donations, by including the costs in the budget, or any other appropriate option).

Website administration and maintenance

After each SymBioSE, the new organising team needs to be given access to the website as soon as possible (best during the briefing/debriefing). There should always be two administrators and related email addresses: the SymBioSE account (symbiose.website@gmail.com, current password *SymBioSE-website2020*) and a personal account of the person dealing with the website administration (one of the organisers). The SymBioSE account is the formal owner of the website, hence **it must not be removed**. This is also the email address which can be used for the recovery of the website access. The first creator of the website, Alina Sigaeva (aosigaeva@gmail.com), has, and will remain to have, access to the symbiose.website@gmail.com account. Feel free to contact her, if there are any issues or anything goes wrong. The second administrator should be added as soon as the new organising team takes over the website administration.

Most of the information on the website is of a general character and does not need to be updated. However, certain sections should be kept up to date by the organisers:

- **Main page** (www.symbiose-europe.org). Make sure to update the Next Edition section as soon as possible. At the very least, add the host country who will organise after you as soon as you have access to the website and make your own event the current one.



- **About -> Our supporters** (www.symbiose-europe.org/sponsors). This is the list of organisations and companies that have supported SymBioSE over the years. Whenever a new collaboration starts, make sure you put the logo of the sponsor and the link to their website there. Especially if this is a requirement for their funding. But it can also add credibility to SymBioSE if potential funders and Universities can see who else is supporting SymBioSE.
- **About -> SymBioSE Stories** (www.symbiose-europe.org/stories). This is a blog-like collection of testimonials of the participants. It would be great to have this section up and running, so that the newcomers could see how awesome our event is :)
- **Upcoming Editions** (www.symbiose-europe.org/upcoming-editions). Update this as soon as you know the countries of the next SymBioSE meetings.
- **Previous Editions** (www.symbiose-europe.org/previous-editions). This is a collection of testimonials from previous editions. Keep it updated and try to get someone to write a text for this section **shortly after the event or even before the event is finished**. It has proven to be difficult to get people to write anything after the SymBioSE magic is over ;) If possible, include a group photo of the participants.
- **Support** (www.symbiose-europe.org/support). Make sure that the form entries go to the correct email address.
- **For Symbionts** (www.symbiose-europe.org/symbionts). This is a members-only section, which can be accessed using the password *Biology-Culture-Friendship*. It contains some useful information for all symbionts, as well as separate password-protected pages for the previous editions. These password-protected pages have links to the photos, abstract books and generally any memories that the participants would like to share and to store. Each edition has its own password, **which is to be distributed only among the participants of the respective edition**. One of the ways to do that might be to add it to the abstract book; however, be aware that those can be seen by unauthorised people (e.g., professors in the university!). Update this page shortly after the event – this is a great way to preserve the most remarkable moments of the specific edition.



Interface tips

The interface of the admin section is rather intuitive. You can access this part of the website (to edit the existing pages, create new ones, see the statistics etc.) via www.symbiose-europe.org/config. On this webpage, you will be prompted to enter login and password. If you already have admin access to the website (i.e., you were added as a contributor), you can simply use your credentials. Otherwise, pick “Login with Gmail” option and use the symbiose.website@gmail.com credentials.

Once logged in, you will see the menu on your left and the page that you are currently editing on the right. On top of the screen of your PC you can switch between the default and the mobile device view.

Pages tab gives you access to all pages currently created on the website. Pages in **Primary Navigation** will appear in the header; **Not Linked** pages still exist and are visible to the visitors, but do not have a link in the main navigation menu. **Footer Navigation** allows you to add links

and blocks to the footer. If you want one of the pages to be invisible for the visitors, go to its **Page Settings** (the gear sign next to the page name in the menu) and switch the **Enable Page** to “off”. You can also make it **password-protected**.

Design tab gives you access to the website design. Be careful with it, as any changes will affect the entire site, not just a single page. **Analytics** tab allows you to see the traffic statistics. **Settings** tab gives you access to the settings, including connected social media accounts, permissions (to add/change the website administrators), and billing information.

You can create new pages on the general SymBioSE website and use it for your year’s edition or arrange an external webpage and post a link to it on the general website.

6.25 Hand over all resources to the next organisers

There is a collection of resources from former organising teams which contains a lot of information that might be useful such as template invitation letters for visas, example budgets etc.

Hand over these resources together with this collective memory to the new organisers elected in the general assembly. When you hand over this document, make sure to emphasise once again that the collective memory is not a set of rules to be ticked off but merely a guidance and collection of ideas and memories. Also take care that all personal identifiable information from participants have been removed from the documents. Especially contact information where it was not agreed for them to be shared.



7 Information for participants

The following information may be handed out or send to attending participants by the organisers.

7.1 *Networking and mingling*



Participants are encouraged to interact with people from different countries and mingle and network with other participants. Therefore, the organisation team might assign you to different groups to encourage contact with other participants you haven't previously known. It is likely that you won't be in the same room or group with your friends. Please stay in this group and embrace the opportunity to get to know others, even (or especially) if you are shy and prefer the company of a friend. Take this chance to get to know people from other countries and make additional, new friends.

7.2 *Attendance*



SymBioSE is a supportive scientific and social event for all, and not your average conference where people only attend the topics of their personal research. We SymBioSE participants are generally great people and try to take part in all events put together by the organisers and participants to support each other. We understand that the organisers have spent two years and a lot of effort to prepare the event and the schedule and have invested a lot of time, money, and consideration in it.

Everyone is asked to be present for all scientific sessions and attendance should also be achieved during social, non-scientific events. Should there be a compelling reason why you cannot attend a part of the schedule, please talk to the organisers about it early so that you are not being missed. If you plan to visit friends, do sight-seeing in the country, or go on a shopping tour, schedule some extra days for this before or after SymBioSE (the first half-day and the last day of SymBioSE are travel days which can be used for this purpose as well. Also, there is often a little bit of sight-seeing during the treasure hunt and excursions).

7.3 *Participation fees and cancellation*



In an attempt to make SymBioSE approachable to most students from many countries, the organisers actively try to reduce the cost for the participants, which is usually kept at around 150 Euros (including accommodation, meals and excursions). To achieve this, the organisers try to acquire large sums of external funding and sponsoring.

The participation fee of SymBioSE covers only a very small part of the costs associated with each participant, while the rest of the costs are being covered through sponsoring. Nevertheless, the participation fee is paramount to cover important costs associated with accommodation, food, and other expenses which will have been paid even if you have to cancel your participation. As such, unless otherwise agreed, the participation fee is non-refundable if cancellation happens after an indicated date (and sometimes it is non-refundable as soon as it's paid). The exact date will depend on the host country and may vary from year to year.



7.4 Participant's farewell to the organisers

A note from former participants to current participants: Towards the end of the SymBioSE, participants often feel the urge to thank the organisers for all their effort in making this great event happen. Especially considering that they organised this amazing event completely in their free time without any financial security and often as their first big event (organising a regular conference is much easier than organising SymBioSE).

People get creative in how to thank the organisers and have so far often produced a comical sketch about the year's SymBioSE memorable occasions. The sketches are often satiric in nature and meant to make the organisers laugh and point out the more funny and memorable parts of the event. It is kind of a satiric re-enactment of the year's SymBioSE.

The thank-you, usually also contains some kind of small present or token of appreciation for which the participants have collected money. Some well-received examples contained personal notes from the participants to the organisers, as this is a great sign of appreciation the organisers will like a lot.

Organisers of the previous years' event and of the next years' event often take the lead in this together with any other active participants. Approach them with any ideas or simply come up with something on your own. It is advisable to start this early enough in order to pre-collect funds from participants (for buying presents and/or materials) and create something nice. The organisers know to schedule some time for anything "unforeseen" in the farewell session (after the closing ceremony).

7.5 SymBioSE footprints

In some prior years, SymBioSE has created a lasting "footprint" of their event. These are small surprises for the participants that remain to have a positive impact on the world after the conclusion of the symposium.

SymBioSE 2016: During SymBioSE 2016 a Bay-leave tree was planted in the name of SymBioSE in the botanical garden in Villa Real



SymBioSE Collective Memory

SymBioSE 2019: During SymBioSE 2019 a souvenir plot of land was bought by SymBioSE. The plot of land is being used for conservation purposes. However, owning land in Scotland also makes the owner a Laird or Lady. We may henceforth refer to SymBioSE as Lady SymBioSE. And because the 2019 motto was “people make SymBioSE”, all participants are now Ladies or Lairds.



8 (Possible) Parts of SymBioSE⁴

8.1 *Opening ceremony:*

During the opening ceremony, participants are welcomed and informed about SymBioSE, its history in general and that year's specialities in particular. This is the time to explain how the time will be structured, where to get important information, and what to expect. It has also been an opportunity to sing the SymBioSE anthem and introduce the dinosaurs to the other participants. In SymBioSE Scotland Dinosaurs were introduced to everyone as knowledgeable people that can be approached and asked in SymBioSE matters. At this occasion, we also gave all Dinosaurs a dinosaur related gift to celebrate their "achievements" (in this case a fossil).



8.2 *Lectures / keynotes*

The lectures and keynotes are supposed to be given by researchers from the host university and cover topics of biological research of the host-country/university covering, if possible, classical and molecular fields. Key note speakers from other universities are also welcome. Experts lecture about hot topics that have major impact on science and broaden the present view of the world. The lectures provide direct insights into the frontline of up-to-date research and allow students to discuss the results and their implications with the people who actually made the discoveries.



8.3 *Student presentations*

The aim of the student presentations, which are key elements of the symposium, is not solely to introduce a research project to similarly interested biologists, but also further the communication between the students by giving a talk in front of an audience. There is great value in attending talks from topics outside of your own interest or field of study and collaborations have been known to come as a result of this exchange. The presentation skills of all participants, no matter their level, are developed in a safe and non-judgmental environment supported by the SymBioSE participants.

8.4 *Feedback system*

It might be a good idea to establish some sort of feedback system, where the audience can give feedback to the speaker.

One possibility is to provide post-its to the audience where they can write down what they found good during the presentation, some (kind!) suggestions for improvement and/or ideas that have occurred to them during the presentation. The post-its can then be given to the speaker after the session. If you plan such a feedback mechanism, inform the participants about it before the talks (and encourage them to share positive feedback and not only critique).

⁴ In no specific order

If participants and chair feel comfortable with the idea - it can be a great occasion to discuss general aspects of good presentations and give feedback to the participants (individual if everybody is ok with it or aggregated after a session).



8.5 Poster sessions

Students present their posters during the poster session as decided by the organisers. The posters emphasise the scientific relevance of the symposium by giving an insight into ongoing life-science fields and serve as points for further discussion among participants. It is a great chance for interaction about your own research or any topic of interest.



8.6 Workshops

Students can give workshops on all kinds of topics, from soft skills, to learning scientific methods, learn and teach certain aptitudes, or discussing ethical implications of biology or other issues. A workshop should be interactive and is not meant to be a frontal presentation (classroom lecture). The length of workshops is decided for each year individually but is usually around one hour.

8.7 Excursions

Excursions are an integral part of any SymBioSE programme and can be used to lighten up the schedule between presentations and other programme points. How the excursions are organised and scheduled is ultimately the decision of the organisers.



8.7.1 Scientific excursions

Biological (or even historical) excursions to local/national points of interest are a valued part of SymBioSE. These could include botanical excursions, zoological excursions, or excursions to interesting companies or research facilities. Oftentimes it is of highest value when an excursion is accompanied by a professor or lecturer in a given field who provides information to the participants, much like regular student excursions that happen during study programmes. Sometimes, organisers have offered several small excursions in parallel to reduce the group size and allow participants to choose a topic of their interest.



8.7.2 Non-scientific excursions

Excursions for the sake of social bonding can be interesting especially in the first few days of SymBioSE. Such social excursions could include a visit to the host city, (maybe combined with a Treasure Hunt; see below) visits to museums, shows, fun places, wine tastings etc.. The number of social excursions should remain low, as the focus should be on the scientific excursions.

8.8 Faces of SymBioSE (and picture sharing)

This is a way to memorise the SymBiont of every year and share some lovely pictures. Every year the organisers take a portrait picture of every participant holding their nametag (or other identifier with their name) visible in the picture. This way, at the end of SymBioSE all participants can get a collection of photos of everyone from that year.

This photo collage or album should then be shared/uploaded (possibly along with other pictures and media taken during the symposium) in a fashion that it is accessible to all participants. Announce this as early as possible.

It is generally a good idea to provide a sharing platform for participants from the very beginning of the event so people can upload and download their memories. Edit 2019: Since the introduction of the General data protection regulation, taking and sharing pictures necessitates a series of considerations and steps to be taken before any pictures can be stored or shared. See section on data protection and Picture sharing!

8.9 Treasure Hunt

Treasure hunts have been popular in past SymBioSE events. The idea of a treasure hunt is to get to know the host city and its science, culture, and/or history. The treasure hunt is best done in several small groups (3-6 people) to ensure that everyone contributes to the group effort. Previous experiences show that shy people get easily overlooked in big a group, and that big groups are hard to move. The groups should be mixed up and it is recommended that people who already know each other are split into different groups. Switching groups should be discouraged.

During the Treasure hunt participants can be given different tasks to fulfil which will give them knowledge about topics of interest in the city, in science, or simply provide fun and are team-building challenges. The organisers could give clues, but it should not be the same as a guided tour through the city.

The tasks could include questions, manual tasks, group-building tasks, trust games, science activities, etc. It can be done in a town, a city, a park, a campus, a department or wherever seems suitable.

8.10 Evening programme



A SymBioSE day doesn't end with dinner. In the evenings, participants generally re-assemble for the evening programme with the goal to enjoy the community in an atmosphere in which they can relax from the daytime programme, enjoy a drink, and talk about their respective activities. Because the full-time schedule during the day is dedicated to science, the evening sessions emphasise SymBioSE's social aspect. The evening programme gives plenty of time to make personal acquaintances and networks the students in a meaningful and long-lasting way. Some events are scheduled, while other are free and happen spontaneously.

The resulting exchanges strengthen solidarity, endow comprehension, form friendships and sometimes shape collaborations. The evenings provide the opportunity to benefit from the diversity that comes with the many nations participating. Additionally, the participants may experience local customs, traditions, cuisines and folk music. The country presentations, in turn, give the attendees the chance to introduce tradition and habits from their country's culture. The symposium usually closes with a farewell party at the last day.



8.11 Country presentations

One very popular part happening mostly (but not necessarily) during the evenings is the country presentations. In these presentations, participants have the opportunity to present their country (i.e. the country in which they study) to the other participants and share their experiences with them. This is a unique occasion in which people get to see a country from the point of view of other cultures.

The format of these presentations is entirely open and it is up to the participants how they would like to introduce their country. Generally, sketches, dances, music, and sharing special food and drinks are very popular, as well as funny facts, curiosities, and making fun of the country. It is sufficient to introduce one special part about the country or culture, and it is not the idea to give an overview of numbers and facts about the country, rather what is interesting to the presenters.

Sometimes people use slideshows or videos to supplement their presentations. Classroom-like power-point presentations as well as showing YouTube videos (especially promotional/touristy videos), however, have proven to be very boring for the audience. Country presentations should not take any longer than 10 minutes!

Sometimes instead of presenting their own country, participants have been asked to present each other's countries instead of their own and were paired accordingly. Organisers will inform participants how country presentations will be handled.

8.12 SymBioSE alumni meeting:

During SymBioSE 2019 in Glasgow, we held the first ever SymBioSE alumni meeting. The event was designed to basically be a mini-SymBioSE for former participants who are no longer students and/or do not have the possibility to attend a full-length SymBioSE event. We produced a separate Poster and registration form for the Alumni event but paired the programme with the Programme of SymBioSE in a way that the Alumnis could attend the scientific programme (key-notes, talks, poster presentations) and some social events (Treasure hunt and "conference dinner" with Ceilidh [a Scottish dance evening]).

Event details:

- The Alumni meeting lasted three days (Thursday to Saturday to allow for an extra non-work day to explore the host city).
- To register, the participant had to be a former SymBiont who was no longer a student (PhDs included since their student-status depends on the country of study and they often face similar time-constraints for conference attendances as more senior researchers.)
- The registration fee was 75 £
- We did not provide any accommodation and only provided food during the programme (i.e. Coffee and lunch but not breakfast or Dinner).
- The alumni participants were free to register a plus one for the Ceilidh for a fee of 10£ to cover the dinner.
- Any plus one who also wanted to attend the scientific programme as well would have been asked to register as a participant. We would accept applications from plus one's even if they were not former SymBionts due to their affiliation with the Alumni
- Alumnis were invited to give an oral or poster presentation if they wished to do so (especially if it was a prerequisite that they would get funding for the conference

attendance from their university) but they were told that they are free to simply attend without presenting.

- Alumnis were free to attend the evening programme of SymBioSE or organise their own evenings to their liking.
- Alumnis were also given the opportunity to act as official chairs of the presentation sessions and/or as judge for the poster prizes. Such roles were reflected in the certificate of attendance and presents a valuable opportunity for alumnis.
- We held a panel discussion with the Alumni participants. The topic of this year's discussion was "to academia or not to academia, that's the question". We invited Alumnis to the panel who a) stayed in academia successfully, b) stayed in academia with difficulties (or returned after a break), and c) left academia and now work in other fields. The panellists discussed pros and cons of academic or industry life, openly talked about challenges for either career path and provided insights on strategies to cope with the difficulties of academia and how to advance one's career. Related mental health issues were also addressed openly. The 1h panel discussion was perceived as very positive by both, the panellists as well as the SymBioSE participants.

Reflections on the Alumni event:

- The event was a great success although we ended up with only a few attendees who could actually turn up in the end.
- A repetition or continuation of an alumni event in parallel to future SymBioSE would probably be a highly valuable endeavour
- The participation fee from the Alumni event was helpful in funding certain parts of the regular SymBioSE, especially since the extra costs incurred by the participation of the Alumnis in the programme was minimal
- The participation fee for the Alumni event was kept at a very low level to not deter people from attending. However, it could easily be raised to at least 100 Euros seeing that this is a very low fee for any such meeting, many researchers can get conference costs funded by their institutes, and Alumnis are in all likelihood part of the working population. It might be beneficial to mention that the fee covers the costs for coffee breaks, lunch, room bookings etc. for their own attendance but ALSO helps to fund the main SymBioSE event for which the fees have not been raised in more than 10 years!
- In hindsight, it would have been good to plan the Alumni's presence during the evening programme from the beginning. We didn't do it, because SymBioSE accommodation in Scotland 2019 was about 1h away from the main city and we assumed that the Alumnis would prefer to arrange their own evenings. It would be good to at least officially offer that they attend the evening programme (also for the regular participants to interact with them, especially after the panel discussion) and maybe also invite them to give a sort of country presentation on their own. Instead of presenting their country, they could also present their SymBioSE experience.
- We invited the Alumnis to attend the Ceilidh which nicely fit into the programme and location for both events and acted almost like a conference dinner. In the absence of such an event, it might be nice to organise a night out for the Alumni on at least one of the evenings. This could be as simple as a reservation for dinner in a restaurant.
- If the capacity (and style of accommodation) permits, Alumnis could well be offered to book into the main SymBioSE accommodation and simply pay their stay themselves, but maybe benefitting from any discounts negotiated for SymBioSE.

- Some Alumnis might want to not officially register for the alumni meeting but simply visit the host city and meet up with their friends. They would not be part of the “official” alumni meeting. Just make sure to ask them for a little donation in case they do want to show up for any of the programme points. Especially when food or other bookings were necessary.
- The Alumni meeting was a great idea that turned out much better than was expected and it was a fantastic opportunity to make use of all the organisational efforts and infrastructure that anyways existed for the main SymBioSE, to co-organise an entire event with only very little additional effort and administration. It also provided additional benefits to all, the regular SymBioSE participants (panel discussion, networking with more senior scientists etc.), the Alumnis (getting to participate in SymBioSE despite not being a student anymore, getting the opportunity to officially chair sessions, judge posters and participate in panel discussions), and the organisers (additional awesome programme points for free (panel), extra funding for SymBioSE, seeing old friends who could not participate in a full event).

8.13 The SymBioSE «Anthem»:

For a few years, we have had a SymBioSE song, that is generally played and sung during the welcoming ceremony and several times thereafter if wished. The song originates from a previous SymBioSE events in Finland, in 2005 and has since been expanded. The Lyrics correspond to some memories around SymBioSE events and are put together using popular musical themes with an alternative text. However, neither part of the song is fixed and people are allowed to change and supplement the song to their liking, propose the new song to the SymBioSE participants and see whether they want to adopt the changes. The song is meant to stay within SymBioSE and shouldn't be published anywhere. A recorded version of the song (version 2012) is available in the community. But parts that were added since, have not (yet) been recorded

The current Lyrics are the following:

SymBioSE Anthem	Musical theme:
<p>When I come here well I know I'm gonna be I'm gonna be with other crazy guys like me And when I stay here Well I know I'm gonna see I'm gonna see a world full of Biology And when I go home Well I know I'm gonna miss I'm gonna miss my SymBioSE family</p> <p>That's why I would walk 500 miles and then I would walk 500 more Just to be the one to walk 1000 miles to come to SymBioSE</p> <p>Yes I would walk 500 miles and then I would walk 500 more</p>	<p>The Proclaimers; I would walk 500 miles, 1988</p>

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Just to be the one to walk 1000 miles during the SymbioSE	
I'm a symbiont and I'm ok I learn all night and I work all day He's a symbiont and he's ok He learns all night and he works all day	Monthy Python, The lumberjack song
I have never known a week like this I was alone and I was pissed But now my life is great I'm sitting here with friends and empty.... Lay lay lay la la lay	
(Learning, yes I was learning my ass is burning me black again :) x2	
I'm a symbiont and I'm ok I drink all night and I work all day He's a symbiont and he's ok He drinks all night and he works all day	Monthy Python, The lumberjack song
I wanna lick you but I better not touch I wanna hold you but my senses tell me to stop I wanna drink you but I want it too much I wanna taste you but your sweat is venomous poison	Alice Cooper, Poison, 1989
I'm a symbiont and I'm ok I drink all night and I sleep all day He's a symbiont and he's ok He drinks all night and he sleeps all day	Monthy Python, The lumberjack song
I saw a reindeer and I want to paint it black No rain clouds anymore, I don't want them to turn back. And now we fade away and we have to face the fact That we won't meet again until [Enter the next HOST-COUNTRY]	The Rolling Stones, paint it black, 1966
I'm a symbiont and I'm ok I drink all night and I drink all day He's a symbiont and he's ok He drinks all night and he drinks all day	Monthy Python, The lumberjack song

8.14 SymBioSE games:

Sometimes it could be nice to have some ice-breaking games or SymBioSE games as part of the programme for participants to start bonding. Such games give the participants an opportunity to interact with each other instead of awkwardly sitting next to each other. It facilitates the creation of new friendships and maximises the fun during SymBioSE. Often the games relate somehow to Biology such as the Neurone game etc. Several good examples can be found on the internet and YouTube and below this section. Be creative and add new ones to the list.

The Fruit salad:

Create a circle of n-1 chairs. A volunteer or one of the organisers is the first person in the middle. The other symbionts sit around them. The standing symbiont starts a statement with "I like all people who..." and names a feature (e.g. "wear blue shoes", "love to travel", "have been to Budapest", "like microbiology" etc.). Then all SymBionts who fulfil these features have to get up from their chair and find a new seat (incl. the one originally in the middle). The one, who does not get a chair, asks the next question.

The creation of life:

The participants get told an object they have to form. For example they have to make DNA and the participants then set about arranging everyone in the form of DNA. The images below show the participants creating a benzene and a Paramecium



8.15 SymBioSE reunion

Whenever two or more SymBionts meet outside of SymBioSE this is considered a SymBioSE reunion. Sometimes we try to gather as many nearby-dwelling SymBionts as possible and have a great time for a few hours to days. In previous years, some efforts were also made to have one big SymBioSE reunion every winter somewhere in Europe. This is entirely up to individuals who want to organise such reunions.

8.16 Closing ceremony

The closing ceremony is generally the time where the organisers wrap up that year's event, hand out awards and say goodbye to the participants. It has also been a time where the organising country did their own "country presentation" if it was wished (However, if there

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are regular participants from the host country, they can also just have a regular country presentation on their own, with or without the organisers/helpers. It is up to you how you want to do it). During the closing event any presentation or poster prizes as well as any other recognitions can be awarded. It is also the time to thank all helpers, volunteers and organisers as well as any other supporters.

The closing ceremony is the official end of SymBioSE and is usually followed by the farewell party.



8.17 Farewell

After the closing ceremony, the time has come to say goodbye to all participants and helpers. Make sure to allow for some time in the schedule where participants can present any surprises if they have them. It is also good to host a big party and make all necessary arrangements so that you and your helpers do not have a lot of responsibilities (e.g. to try and keep everyone quiet which is anyways going to be futile) so that you can properly enjoy yourself and your big achievement of a job well done (despite everything that might not have worked out the way you planned)!

9 Ideas for the future

9.1 *Mobile application for the SymBioSE event*

Provide a mobile hotspot (organisers can use their mobiles and tethering to do so.)
A mobile application, if possible even with an offline feature, could contain useful information about

- o Local bus / train /metro timetables.
- o Most commonly used routes during the conference
- o Timetable of the conference
- o List of participants of the conference with contact details (only if the app is restricted to participants)
- o List of organisers with contacts (email and cell phone)

Also: FAQs (+ SymBioSE Collective Memory)

Abstracts

Links on Facebook / webpage

Almost every participant uses an electronic gadget / device, so the offline application may be really useful, if organisers cannot provide mobile hotspots / free Wifi. But of course, additional time is needed for other sources of information (oral/printed/web) about the conference.

This app should also be reusable for each next year, so the organising team can update information before the next SymBioSE.

10 Annex

10.1 Flunky-ball rules

A popular evening pass-time among ("Drinkfest") Symbionts is Flunky Ball. The established rules are the following:

Materials:

- Empty drinking cans or other non-breakable items that can fall over (not too easily, though)
- A ball (not too big, not too small, make-shift is fine)
- A more-or less level playing field which is wide enough to hold the teams and where no locals are being disturbed
- Two teams of at least 3-4 players each (upper limit on the # of players depends on the size of the playing field)
- One full bottle or can of beer, cider, or other alcoholic beverage for each participant. The beverages should have comparable amounts of alcohol and gas. Exceptions have to be agreed upon by all players.
- A referee (not essential)

The setup:

A straight line of empty cans or other items is placed in the middle of the playing field. The Teams line up at an equal distance either side of the can-line and parallel to the line and place their full cans in front of them on the pre-determined line. The distance of the teams to the can-line is determined by the referee and depends on the size and difficulty-to-fall of the cans, the size of the ball, and the size of the available playing field.

Procedure:

The goal of each team is to empty all their drinks before the other team

A coin-throw determines which team gets the ball first

Team A throws the ball, aiming to topple over the empty cans on the middle line.

If one or several cans topple over, Team B has to put them back on the line (upright, upside-down is fine) and return behind their team-line. Furthermore, Team B has to retrieve the ball and likewise return it to the team-line.

From the point of the toppling-over of the can to the completion of all tasks of Team B (putting the can back on the line, retrieving the ball, and returning to the team line), Team A is allowed to drink their drinks. They have to stop when the tasks are completed.

If no can from the middle line topples over, the other team gets to throw the ball, and the roles are reversed.

This procedure is repeated, alternating between teams until one team has finished all their drinks.

Rules:

- Every person plays flunky ball at their own risk and is responsible to ensure that they don't ingest a harmful amount of alcohol!
- It is the responsibility of the entire team to help ensure the safety of all other players!
- If there are health concerns for any player, the player has to be excluded from further games.
- Any person who throws up, is immediately disqualified from all further games of the evening.

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- At the beginning of each throw, no foot, hand, other body part, or any item may stand in front of the drink of the players. The drink may, however be protected by any means once the ball has been thrown
- If a drink falls over and spills for any reason, the player has to start over with a completely new drink. If only a little bit has spilled, the referee may opt to fill up the spilled amount (and maybe a little more) from another source. It is legitimate for the opposing team to try to purposefully topple over the other team's drinks with the throw of the ball.
- No player may touch their drink unless one of the playing-cans has toppled over. The exception to this, is touching the drink in order to prevent it from falling over or to pick it back up after it has fallen over. Other than that, the drinks can only be touched in order to be drunk.
- A team HAS to stop drinking immediately once the other team has completed all their tasks. This is usually indicated by a loud "STOP" from the referee (and/or the other team or audience). If an individual does not put down their drink in time, the referee may opt to fill up the player's drink (or in severe cases, oblige them to get a new drink).
- All cans that have to be put upright again, have to be still standing when the player returns to the team-line.
- If a player finishes their drink, they have to loudly proclaim it and hold the drink **upside-down** right over their own head in order to give proof that it is indeed empty.
- All players who have finished their drinks, have to leave the playing field immediately.
- Any issue of disagreement is decided by the referee (or by agreement between the teams, in case there is no referee).

Tips:

- Games are generally not separated by sex, gender, age, or other such nonsense, although it can be fun to compete between groups (females vs. males, countries against each other etc.).
- Sometimes it can be a good idea to wait with finishing your drink if you see another team member is not yet there and would be alone on the field if you were to finish now. It can be difficult to finish the game without a partner. However, if you finished your drink, you HAVE to leave the field.

10.2 Sangria recipe

For 50 portions:

15 litres of red wine (cheap will do =))

30 Oranges (non-treated / organic)

30 Apples

2 Bottles Orange-liqueur (e.g. Cointreau, Grand Marnier)

Optional: Brandy, 2 Bottles

Optional: Lemons, or other fruit.

Optional: Fruit Juice (CAREFUL: Ask for allergies! Most fruit mixtures contain pineapple or carrots, to which some may be allergic)

Optional: sugar, to adjust the acidity/sweetness balance

10.3 Possible(!) evaluation forms for oral presentations (used in 2019)

Abstract number:

Evaluator:

Name of presenter:

Not applicable Not at all Neutral Completely Absolutely Outstanding

BSc:

	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I. content												
Work properly researched and done following scientific standards												
Objective / Topic of the presentation well formulated												
Contributions of others properly acknowledged/cited												
Presentation follows a clear story path and structure												
II. organisation												
Stays well in time (not rushed, not overtime)												
Well structured, flowing logically and with good transition between the sections												
Good visual quality (content well visible, font and text size appropriate, slides not overcrowded)												
Colours and animations supportive not distracting												
Figures appropriate for presentation												
III. delivery												
Speaks loud and clear enough (given their English skills)												
Speaks naturally and confidently												
Seeks contact to audience, does not turn back to audience												
Presents engaged and enthusiastic												
Answers questions with degree of confidence												

MSc:

	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I. content												
Work follows proper scientific methods												
Objective / Topic of the presentation well formulated												
Simplicity appropriate for audience, sufficient background												
Research problem clearly stated												
Presentation follows a clear story path and structure												
Work contributes to generation of new knowledge/ improvement of method												
Conclusions to point, corresponding to problem												
Contributions of others properly acknowledged/cited												
Possible further implications of the research work addressed												
II. organisation												
Stays well in time (not rushed, not overtime)												
Well structured, flowing logically and with good transition between the sections												
Good visual quality (content well visible, font and text size appropriate, slides not overcrowded)												
Colours and animations supportive, not distracting												
Figures appropriate												
III. delivery												
Speaks loud and clear enough (given their English skills)												
Speaks naturally and confidently												
Seeks contact to audience, does not turn back to audience												
Engaged and enthusiastic												
Able to answer questions about work understandably												
Answers questions with degree of confidence												

Total points I.

Total points II.

Total points III.

Points/(# items in the section – # items marked N/A)

Abstract number:

Evaluator:

Name of presenter:

PhD:	Not applicable	Not at all		Neutral						Completely		Absolutely Outstanding	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
I. content	N/A												11
Research problem clearly stated													
Context and importance of research demonstrated													
Simplicity and depth appropriate for the diverse audience													
Shows the bigger picture of why the research questions were asked, what is its significance, why is question interesting (beyond mere usefulness)													
Presentation follows a clear story and structure													
Results were easily and clearly interpreted													
Conclusions to point, corresponding to problem													
Possible further implications of the research work addressed													
Work significantly contributes to the generation of new knowledge/ novel methods (not only for application)													
II. organisation													
Stays well in time (not rushed, not overtime)													
Well structured, flowing logically and with good transition between the sections													
Good visual quality (content well visible, font and text size appropriate, slides not overcrowded)													
Colours and animations supportive, not distracting													
Figures appropriately captioned													
Figures big enough and easily legible													
III. delivery													
Speaks loud enough and clear (given their English skills)													
Speaks naturally and confidently													
Seeks contact to audience, does not turn back to audience													
Smooth transition from issue to issue													
Able to answer questions simply understandably													
Body language, voice, pacing, and gestures professional													

Total points I.

Total points II.

Total points III.

Points/(# items in the section – # items marked N/A)

10.4 Do's and don'ts of presentations

Do's

-Find something to present: SymBioSE provides a friendly and safe environment for students to practise their presentation skills. We urge all of the applicants to try presenting, from 1st year undergraduate students to PhD students. There are 1st year undergraduate students that both present and have a poster even though they do not have any of their own research to present. All there needs to be is an exciting topic to talk about.

-Research your audience: SymBioSE has students from many different research areas, University years, and with many different levels of English. For that reason, when using jargon, either define or avoid it. Use a conversational tone and vocabulary, instead of speaking as if reading from a published paper. Sounding formal may be tempting, but the attention of the audience will suffer.

-Structure the presentation: A clear and meaningful presentation structure makes it easy for the audience to follow our thoughts. Using post-it notes to make a story board of how the presentation will flow can be beneficial before making the slides. Organising the presentation in 3 main points is just right. Not too many not too few.

-Stick to the time: train your presentation to ensure that it is not longer than the slot you are given. In many conferences you will be interrupted if you need longer.

Don'ts

-Overload the slide: There is something called the picture superiority effect, where we are more likely to remember pictures rather than words. Words can definitely be used to complement the pictures. However, having entire sentences on slides is not helpful. The slides are meant to support the speaker, not replace him or her.

-Neglect body language: Stand straight, look at the audience, and keep your hands raised above your waist. We remember more to how someone presents than the actual content of the presentation.

11 Contact addresses of (former) SymBionts (vs. 2019) (please add your details if you agree to be contacted by future organisers and update the years for the existing ppl in the list, where applicable)

Name	Function	Participating year(s) (state 2017) ⁵	SymBioSE nationality	Personal nationality	Contact
Stefanie J. Krauth	Core organiser (2011 & 2019) & Dinosaur	2011 - 2019	Swiss / Scottish	German	Stefanie.j.Krauth@gmail.com
Axel Hochstetter	Core organiser (2019) Dinosaur	2012 - 2019	Swiss / Scottish	German	Axel_hochstetter@web.de
Ena Šečić	Participant	2014 - 2019	German	Bosnian- Herzegovinian	Ena.secic92@gmail.com
Vasiliki Garefalaki (Vasso)	Core organiser (2015) & Dinosaur	2008, 2011, 2012, 2014 (WiBioSE), 2015-2017, 2019	Greek	Greek	vasoula377@hotmail.com
Paula Díaz	Core organiser (2017)	2015-2017, 2019	Swedish	Spanish	paudifer@gmail.com
Duarte Brandão	Participant	2016-2019	Portuguese	Portuguese	duarte.polvora.brandao@gmail.com
Sebastian Neufeld	Core organiser (2022)	2019- 2023(ongoing)	German	German	Sebastian_neufeld@yahoo.com

⁵ The participating years will have to be updated every year and the version in the header as well.