

Guidance Notes for Bidding

Information for Institutions wishing to apply to host the International Summer School and Symposium on Humour and Laughter

The School

Since 2001, an international summer school has been held annually which brings an international community of researchers and students of humour and laughter together. The event is called “The International Summer School and Symposium on Humour and Laughter: Theory, Research and Applications” and was initiated by Prof. Willibald Ruch (now at the University of Zurich). From its beginning the world’s best known humour scholars were among the lecturers, and participants came from all over the world. All the Schools so far have been overseen by Prof. Ruch; since 2002, there have also been local organisers.

There is now an Advisory Board, chaired by Prof Ruch and made up of previous local organisers, which supervises the organising of this series of Schools and offers support to the current local organiser.

More information about the schools held so far, the courses, the symposium programmes, etc. can be found at at the main Humour Summer School website:

<http://humoursummerschool.org/>

Why a summer school?

Interest in both research on humour and practical applications of humour has increased sharply since the early 1990s. The **aims and objectives for the summer school** were to ensure that both new research students just beginning their research careers and those already-trained researchers considering a first research project in humour would enter the field with a strong foundation in existing theoretical and methodological issues, and would be well versed in the pitfalls confronting the scientific study of humour. For those interested in practical applications of humour in a variety of settings, the course should introduce them to the kinds of approaches that are being used around the world to put humour to work and to deliver the benefits of humour and laughter.

Structure of Course

Sessions are from Monday morning (when registration occurs) to Saturday afternoon inclusive, with one afternoon (usually Wednesday) free for relaxation, sightseeing, etc. One half day or day is taken up with the Symposium, where participants present their own research. For the rest of the time, classes are presented by a number of lecturers from different disciplines. A course booklet contains the timetable, and abstracts and suggested readings for each lecture; the abstracts for the Symposium can be included or collated separately. The lecturers typically include a recent winner of the Graduate Student Award or the Don & Alleen Nilsen Young Scholar Award from the *International Society for Humor Studies (ISHS)*. Presentations consists of lectures or workshops, and there are also “Meet the Lecturer” slots: opportunities to meet the

lecturers one-to-one. If a formal welcome of participants is included, this would normally be on Monday evening; quite often, there is an informal get-together (e.g. in a bar or restaurant) on the Sunday evening before the School starts. It is customary to have some form of conference dinner, for which Friday is a particularly suitable day.

Future summer schools

Since 2003, the summer school has been held at different locations, always co-organized by the hosting institution and the Section on Personality and Assessment at Zurich University.

Anyone wishing to propose to host the School should contact Prof Ruch initially, with a view to preparing a proposal addressing the criteria outlined below. (An email address is given on the Summer School's website -- see web address given earlier.) The decision is made by the Advisory Board, which will be headed by Prof. Ruch, the Course Director.

The responsibility of the hosting institution will cover all organizational matters (see below). The minimum hosting institution staff should be a main host and a secretary. The main host is a faculty member of sufficient experience in research and/or teaching of humour and laughter who has participated in at least at one (preferably more) prior School. Typically, it is a person of international standing. The selection of speakers and the development of the timetable for the week is usually overseen by Prof Ruch, in collaboration with the local organiser. The Advisory Board also contribute to these discussions, and also give advice about practical matters where necessary.

Organisational requirements for hosting the International Summer School and Symposium on Humour and Laughter

This section lists the information that should be supplied by any institution offering to host the annual International Summer School and Symposium on Humour and Laughter. It does not provide practical advice (based on past experience) about the detailed running of the event; this will be given to the successful bidder. Also, the Advisory Board may stipulate further requirements as the arrangements for the School develop.

Local Organiser(s)

The bid should indicate exactly which members of staff at the host institution will take responsibility for local arrangements, and indicate their past experience with similar events.

Date constraints

If there are any limitations on when the School could be held at the institution, these should be made clear.

Location (global and local)

The bid document should make clear the exact geographical location of the proposed site, and where, within the town or city, the School would take place.

Transport/travel

There should be good transport links to the location, and the bid document should give details of these. If the location is a large city which has a major international airport hosting low-cost airlines and is on a rail network, this summary can be fairly brief. If the location is a small town, or in a remote area, then the case has to be argued in detail that participants will not find it unduly inconvenient or expensive to attend.

The bid should state what the situation will be regarding car parking for participants, including costs, availability, and locations.

Lecture rooms

A description should be given of the rooms which are to be used. Most of the sessions at the School are plenary, for which one large room should be available. This room should be large enough to accommodate without difficulty all the participants and all the lecturers, since lecturers typically attend each other's talks. It should be easy for participants to write notes during classes. Allowance should also be made for additional items within the room, such as tea/coffee facilities (depending on the catering plans), a display of books, collections of handouts. To give some idea of the extra space needed, the 2003 School had a total of 29 participants and lecturers, but used a room rated by the university as a 40-person classroom; there was no spare space. Usually, the classes have taken place with students seated in a U-shape in a flat-floored classroom, to facilitate discussions. If parallel sessions are planned (as has been the case in several recent Schools), then a second room, perhaps not as big, should be available nearby.

It can be helpful to have some space outside the lecture room where participants can adjourn for discussions, refreshments, etc.

Audio-visual equipment

The bid should describe what audio-visual or other support facilities will be available in the lecture room. This should include, at the very least: a radio microphone and speakers and a data projector for use with computer presentations. It may also be useful to have some means of making impromptu notes during talks (e.g. whiteboard, flipchart). During the planning of the School, individual lecturers may request other support, such as playing videos. There should be no problem in providing these facilities. It is helpful to provide a computer (typically a PC) in the lecture room so that computer presentations (particularly for the Symposium) can be loaded on to a single machine. It cannot be assumed that every presenter will supply their own laptop. Internet connection is also a near-essential part of audio-visual provision. The cost (if any) of supplying these facilities should appear in the budget.

Publicity

The Local Organiser should collaborate with the Advisory Board over publicity for the School. There are two different kinds of publicity:

(a) Attracting the attention of potential participants. This will involve maintaining a website for the school, arranging email announcements to suitable lists, etc. The bid should indicate any particular ways in which the hosting institution can help with publicity (e.g. access to particular communities or forums).

(b) Media coverage around the time of the School. The bid should indicate any ideas or contacts the Organiser may have for achieving this.

Computers and internet

The School relies heavily on the Internet, in the form of email and the WWW. It is essential that the local organisers are at ease with email, use of the WWW (including online registration for the School), and are prepared to take on the creation and maintenance of a website for the School. The latter could require the assistance of a local technical person. Such a website is normally used for the purpose of advertising the school, announcements about practical arrangements, registration, etc. Ideally, it should also contain maps of the area where the School is to be held, transport information (airports, trains, buses, taxis), webcams of city (if practicable), important tourist information (tourist agency, visitor centres, etc). Normally, the web pages are hosted on the Humour Summer School website (see sites for the years from 2008 onwards), but it might be acceptable to have the site hosted locally, if that is the only feasible approach.

The Organiser must be willing and able to take an active part in 2 online forums at Yahoo! Groups: (a) there will be a small organising group consisting of the Organiser and some members of the Advisory Board; (b) there will be a group for all speakers and participants at the School, set up several weeks before the School, which provides not only a discussion forum but also a repository for reading material.

Catering

In the earlier years, meals were not usually arranged for participants, apart from breakfast (where this was included with the accommodation) and a group outing to a restaurant on one evening. Participants therefore had to find their own lunches and

evening meals nearby. Since 2008, it has been common practice to provide lunches for participants, and also arrange a final dinner. The bid document should explain what the plans are for meals, particularly lunch. If the participants are to be given access to the local institution's catering, this should be explained. If the participants have to find their own lunches in the surrounding town or city, a case should be made that this will be straightforward (bearing in mind that the lunch break may be only one hour); that is, are there readily accessible and inexpensive food outlets in the vicinity of the School location?

It is desirable for there to be a summer school dinner on one evening, either included in the registration fee (if the budget will support this) or with payment of a small additional fee. A welcome reception can also be arranged on the first evening, although this is less essential. An outline should be given of arrangements for these events.

Also, the bidders should indicate how refreshments (tea, coffee, etc.) will be provided at breaks during the lectures.

If lecturers will have to find and pay for their own meals at least some of the time, they should be able to claim these expenses from the School, and the budget should take account of that.

Accommodation

A clear statement should be made about accommodation arrangements. It is usually a good scheme to offer university accommodation (perhaps of varying standards and prices) to the participants. Lecturers also need to be accommodated, preferably in rooms which are not just basic student residence rooms. If accommodation is not within easy walking distance of the lecture room(s), assurances are required about public transport. The bid should indicate whether participants will have to find their own accommodation, and if so how this task can be facilitated. The accommodation for the lecturers must be paid for from the budget for the School.

Administrative support

Organising the School involves a great deal of paperwork and administration. The bid should explain what arrangements will be made to ensure that this work can be handled. Ideally, the Local Organiser (who is normally an academic) should be supported by an administrator or secretary who can attend to email enquiries, finances, registration, liaison with support units within the institution, preparation of lecture materials, etc.

Financial administration

The School has little in the way of continuing funds and it is not normal practice to provide an initial fund for the organisers. This means that initial preparation for the event must be extremely careful. Once registration commences, a systematic way of handling the finances (e.g. a School account within the institution's finance system) is needed. It is possible to use the School's UK bank account and an existing PayPal account to receive registration fees, but normally it is easier to handle finances within the host institution. The bid should make clear how finances (including credit card payments) would be organised.

An outline of the proposed budget for the School is essential. This should make it clear how all the aspects of the School will be supported (e.g. sponsorship or help from the host institution), to demonstrate that the event will not run at a loss.

The normal practice is for lecturers to receive free accommodation (or to be allowed to claim reasonable accommodation expenses). Established lecturers also receive travel and subsistence expenses, but GSA/DANYS award speakers usually do not. No commitment is made to paying fees to lecturers, but it is usual to try to do this from the surplus funds after the School is over. In most years, a fee of around 70 Euros per lecture hour has been achieved.

Preparing materials

The School participants usually receive, on registration, a bag or strong folder containing lecture notes, administrative information, local tourist leaflets, maps, etc. The organising institution will have to make plans for this. It is also common to include some helpful supporting items such as pens and a notepad.

Library and Internet

In earlier years, participants often requested access to the local institution's library, and it was usual to arrange this. This demand has reduced, presumably with increasing use of online resources, but it would be worth considering a scheme for temporary library access.

Access to the internet is essential. Most participants will bring a laptop and/or smartphone, and will expect wi-fi to be freely available. The bid should guarantee that this will be provided. It can also be handy to have one or two internet PCs available (a standard web browser is sufficient) for those few who do not bring computers.

Financial Contribution

The bid should make it clear what financial arrangement is envisaged with the host institution. The host institution should provide either a subsidy (sum to be discussed between members of Advisory Board), or a guarantee to support the event by providing a room for free, website designers' help, administrative help etc. The agreement between the local organiser and the host institution can be broadly of two sorts: the institution guarantees to cover losses (perhaps up to some limit), and in return retains any surplus when the School is over; or, the institution gives no guarantees of cover but does not receive any surplus.

The host may also wish to consider the following:

- scholarships for 1-2 students (comprising free admission, accommodation) or emerging scholars, possibly based on School funds, or
- funds from the hosting institution to provide for a grant for a special guest speaker of high international reputation

Revised 17 July 2012