

Scottish Universities Summer Schools in Physics

SUMMER SCHOOL GUIDANCE NOTES

Scottish Universities Summer Schools in Physics (SUSSP) is currently an alliance of eight Scottish Universities: Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Heriot-Watt, St Andrews, Strathclyde, University of West of Scotland. The partnership was formed to provide summer schools to reflect research interest in one or more of the member universities.

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Summer School Organisation

The main organising responsibilities and tasks prior to organising a SUSSP Summer School are:

- Forming an organising committee (this normally consists of a Director, Treasurer, Secretaries, other committee members with specific responsibilities)
- Deciding school duration (typically 1 or 2 weeks, but can be longer)
- Devising a lecture programme to suit a target audience - (UK and International students), postgrad/post doc
- Inviting lecturers (UK and international),
- Preparing a budget (normally overseen by the Treasurer) and securing funding
- venue/catering/accommodation
- Devising a social programme
- Advertising and marketing, website
- Organising applications and dealing with applicants
- Allocation of any bursaries

Organising Committee

The number of members of the organising committee is at the discretion of the school. As a minimum, there should be a Director, Treasurer and Secretary, but larger schools will want to have more committee members taking on specific responsibilities. Members of the organising committee will be co-opted on to the SUSSP Governing Committee for the duration of the planning period of the school and will continue as members until the final school report is provided and the accounts of the school are completed to the satisfaction of SUSSP's auditors. They will be invited to the SUSSP Business Meeting in October/November and the Governing Committee meeting in March, at which committee members will provide guidance and support. The organiser should submit a progress report prior to each meeting with a budget update ensuring the school is on a sound financial basis.

School Duration

Traditionally SUSSP Schools have been of 2-3 weeks duration but in recent years, there have also been several shorter schools of ~1week. This is at the discretion of the organisers.

Target Audience

This will normally be UK and International PG students or RAs in the thematic area of the school. Organisers should be confident that there is a sufficient international market for the school, taking into account any other schools that will be held around the same time. The lecture/scientific programme should be designed to address this.

Lecturers

SUSSP Schools have a track record of enticing lecturers of the highest international standard, including Nobel Laureates and winners of prestigious prizes. Such people are typically in high demand and plan their summers more than a year in advance, so this should be taken account of in the planning process. As a guide, one might expect to require a minimum of five lecturers per week of school. It would be normal to have a full set of lecturers "signed up" one year in advance of the school.

Budget

You can expect small amount of pump prime funding from SUSSP for the School. The current rate of SUSSP funding per school is £10K. SUSSP funding will be transferred to the organising

committee. The organising committee will normally open an independent bank account. It is anticipated that schools will break even or make a small surplus. Any surplus is the property of SUSSP and will normally be returned to SUSSP after all school outgoings have been met. With agreement of SUSSP, a school surplus could be held at the organising University on behalf of SUSSP, ring-fenced for a future school, with a Memorandum of Agreement stating this intention or the surplus may be returned to SUSSP reserves.

Other than this, the main sources of income are research funding bodies such as STFC and EPSRC and fees from participants. A normal expectation is that a school fee, including all meals and accommodation, will be set at a level such that the school will not make a financial loss if the expected number of applicants attend. This will normally be in the region of £1000 - £1500, depending on the duration of the school. The fee may be reduced with bursaries for some/all of the applicants.

Social Programme

A social programme should be considered an integral part of the school, of almost as much importance as the scientific programme. There are two elements to a successful social programme, formal events and informal events. The formal programme will always include a school dinner and may include several other organised events, depending on the length of the school. Examples include a welcome event, a formal civic reception, organised hill walks and visits to local attractions such as distilleries. Informal social events are almost as important. Local attendees can be enlisted in planning and devising these.

Advertising and Marketing

This is especially important prior to the school to attract as large a set of applicants as possible. Use of “the academic grapevine” email lists etc. is normal, as is sending posters to relevant academics in the field. A school website with as much detail as possible should be created as early as possible. SUSSP and SUPA will be able to assist with hosting of this site.

Applications

Most schools will use University systems to organise applications and applicants. SUSSP can provide advice if required. Occasionally there are non-genuine applicants to a school, so consideration should be given to requiring letters of recommendation from the applicant’s research supervisor. Applicants will typically have many queries about the school, so consideration should be given to setting up a school email address to deal with these.

Bursaries

Once the school budget is well developed, consideration can be given to bursaries and the school policy on these. Typically, schools will allow applicants to apply for a bursary, provided that they apply to the school by a certain date. Applicants after this date will normally pay full fees. This bursary level should then be set such that the school cannot make a loss. This policy should ensure the financial viability of the school and will provide late financial headway for the organisers.

Summer School Proposals

Written proposals for schools should be submitted to SUSSP and will be discussed at the Governing Committee meeting in March or at the Business Meeting in October. Normally at these meetings, a school proposal will be assessed and advice on planning the school will be provided.

Content of SUSSP Proposal:

- School Title
- Proposed Dates – Duration
- Venue
- Brief Summary describing school and Theme and target audience
- Organising Committee
- Programme – Lectures and Talks
- Programme – Social Events and Excursions
- Forecasted Expenditure
- Forecasted Income

Please submit proposal to: admin@supa.ac.uk

Initial Organisation Checklist

Allocate Organising Committee responsibilities:

- Lectures and Talks
- Events
- Bursaries
- Administration
- Social Programme

Seek early confirmation of Lecturers and Talks

Visit venue and accommodation; liaise with events team, discuss catering options for breakfast, lunch, dinner tea/coffee breaks and social events. Ensure that there are adequate AV resources at the venue to record proceedings. Secure contracts and bookings.

Create a website advertising the school, including:

- School Poster
- School registration details and procedure
- Venue and Accommodation details
- Travel information and recommendations: by air, by road, rail service, bus service, taxi services
- Local information, guides, facilities, weather
- Provide contact details for information and enquiries
- Ensure that the website has a good online presence in the Physics community.

Keep delegates informed pre-school.

Prepare progress reports and updates for SUSSP Governing Committee

Budget and Financial Management

All SUSSP Summer Schools will be formally audited.

During your role as School Director you are a SUSSP Trustee and are responsible for providing clear, transparent, auditable financial information. The Director should establish a budget and is responsible for the school finances. Evidence of every item of Income and

Expenditure should be traceable and available to auditors on request. The organiser is responsible for preparing financial reports and may be required to liaise with the auditors.

Possible Income items – keep all receipts/documents for audit

- SUSSP
- Grant funding bodies, e.g. STFC, EPSRC
- Sponsors
- Industry
- Registration fees

Possible Outgoings – keep all receipts/documents for audit

- Hire of Venue
- Lecturers' expenses
- Lecturers' Honoraria
- Bursaries
- Accommodation
- Catering
- Additional Security/Janitor out of hours costs
- Poster Competition Prizes
- Poster Boards
- Stationery, Printing and Photocopying
- School Promotional pack – branded items
- Entertainment
- Entertainment Bus Hire/Travel
- Bank fees
- Auditor's fees

Video Recording of Lectures:

All SUSSP Summer Schools will be recorded as a record of the proceedings

Advice from Previous School Organisers:

- Plan early
- Research the market
- Try to combine the school with another related conference; this should increase numbers and income

FAQs

Please find below examples of frequently asked questions.

1. Is it a requirement or a suggestion for an organising committee to have allocated a director, treasure, secretaries and other committee members? Can one person take on multiple roles?

A single person can take on multiple roles. We would advise against for a large summer school but it should be OK for a smaller one.

2. Is it a requirement or a suggestion to have international speakers? Is there a target percentage of speakers that need to be international? For example, would one international speaker be enough?

It's a suggestion but we think it adds significantly to both the attractiveness and the kudos of the school to have a significant fraction of such speakers.

3. What is meant by a sufficient international market? How many or what fraction of attendees must be international?

There is no set fraction or number. However, the SUSSP guiding principle is about supporting international summer schools. Physics is an international endeavour and the mixing of Scottish, RUK and overseas junior researchers should be considered an integral part of a SUSSP school. So, for a SUSSP school to get funding we would be looking for a significant fraction of Scottish attendees and a significant fraction of others, some of whom should be from outside the UK.

4. The proposal asks for a brief summary, theme and target audience. It would be great to know about how long this is. For example, 500 words?

Let's say minimum 1 page total, and maximum 1 page each, interpreted generously.

5. All the SUSSP schools are recorded, but are these recordings also shared with the public? It says they are posted online, but is that only for the attendees?

SUSSP does not share these recordings with the public. They are posted online for the school attendees. Some may have also been posted for SUPA students on the MySupa site for schools that were also funded by SUPA, but these are for members of MySupa only.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.