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**Standards for Excellence in Conference Education**

# **CONFERENCE GOERS BILL OF RIGHTS**

# Conference Goers Bill of Rights

## Overview

The intention of this document is to outline the standards and expectations for continuing education providers from the participant point-of-view. We believe that by adhering to the host and presenter commitments articulated below which are rooted in values and ethics, organizers and hosts are protected from being unwittingly complicit in the dissemination of unvalidated, inaccurate, or misinformation. Additionally, by adhering to the standards and expectations articulated herein, the integrity and reputation of the host organization are elevated.

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distributed without the prior express written consent of the authors. If a user of this document has a use case that requires editing, condensing, or other forms of transformation of this content for any use, please contact the authors of this document to discuss.

**Organizers and attendees are encouraged to share this document widely.**

Participants have the right to great education in return for the time and financial investment that they have made to participate in any professional education forum. In order to ensure that right, continuing education organizers will ensure that presentations and presenters meet criteria outlined herein.



Table 1: Categories for Conference Responsibility

## Host Responsibilities

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### Foundational

*Elements that are easy to achieve and are core to hosting conferences.*

- Organizers vet and validate each presenters' skills, experience, or credentials, including vetting of video examples.
- Hosting organizations ensure that presenter content is in alignment with the values of the organization.
- Host clearly communicates the purpose and content of the conference to all stakeholders so that expectations are level-set.
- Presenters will not be asked to present on topics outside of their scope of practice.
- The hosting organization will not limit nor constrain a presenter's ability to speak within their scope of practice, put constraints on how a topic is presented, as long as that topic is within the presenter's scope of practice.
- The hosting organization discloses association or affiliation with presenters in the form of a statement of association or affiliation that includes information about the nature of the relationship (e.g., former supervisor, mentor, friend, colleague, employee/employer, any financial conflict of interest or affiliation).
- If the presenter is the representative of the host organization, this is clearly communicated (or transparent).
- Sponsored content will be clearly labeled as such at the beginning of the event, on the first slide of the presentation, in all marketing materials, and published conference materials.
- Host organizations will put a reasonable amount of effort (proportionate to the resources of the host organization forward to evaluate presentation quality; clear learning objectives; presentation is organized; videos support the learning objectives. An example of a high level of effort is having a presenter deliver prior to the conference either live or via a recording. An example of the the least amount of reasonable effort is an off-line review of the presentation for content, flow, structure, and ethics.
- Host organization will put a reasonable amount of effort (proportionate to the resources of the host organization) forward to evaluate presenter quality which includes evaluating the presenter's ability to deliver content clearly, stays on point, on time, on topic; manages time effectively and audience effectively; engages the audience; stays to the presentation structure; words and videos are in alignment with the presentation content.

## Host Responsibilities

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### Achievable

*Elements that may take little effort or resources to achieve, and are not as common but should be strongly considered for conference hosts.*

- The speaker selection process will be inclusive of a variety of diverse and relevant factors, including a variety of academic, professional, practical, and validated skills and knowledge and accomplishments.
- Host will put a reasonable amount of effort to provide a comprehensive overview (knowledge, skills, abilities, areas of interest, expertise levels) of the audience to the presenter so that the presenter can adjust the content and provide examples that will resonate with the audience.
- Organizers will include a transparent process and disclose the presenter selection criteria including the level of vetting required or used for each speaker (e.g., selection includes an application process to encourage new and diverse talent; or talent is selected from a variety of organizations; or an individual or panel is part of the selection process).
- Host organizations will require citations for all content as well as provenance.
- Provide disclosures if content represents evolving practices, applied, evidence-based and/or an overview of a specific study.
- Organizers will make efforts to include presenters that support DEIB, interdisciplinary competence, cultural humility, and an understanding of contextual differences.

### Aspirational

*Elements that may be difficult to achieve or require heavy resources or organizational change to achieve, but should be considered in long-term planning for the host organization*

- Hosting organizations and their selection committee adopt a rubric for evaluating and vetting speakers and are transparent about the use of the rubric; hosting organizations may choose to modify the rubric that we suggest and share that rubric with attendees.
- Organizers are encouraged to have a balance of a curated speaker selection process and an open and public call for submissions in order to select diverse speakers, clinics, workshops, and poster presentation selection with criteria for speaker qualifications and lecture topics listed.

## Speaker Responsibilities

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### Foundational

*Elements that are easy to achieve and are core to presenting at conferences.*

#### General and Background Information

- Presenter provides personal qualifications, background, credentials, and/or practical experience for lecturing on a topic.
- Presenter will disclose any and all affiliations (including sponsorships, volunteer activity, board service, and memberships).
- If the presenter sells a product or service, is a brand ambassador, or has any other affiliation with a company or product, they will disclose this affiliation.
- Presenter provides a limitations statement that includes areas of practice that are adjacent to, but not within, one's bailiwick (e.g., presenter is experienced in behavior modification with one species and understands the principles of application to other species, but not worked with any additional species OR individual does not have a specific degree in applied science).
- Presenters are fully transparent by stating biases (e.g., orientation toward the use of aversives; uses a low-stress approach; emphasis on animals' choice and control; the use of deprivation as a motivating operation).
- Presenter will define the session as falling into one of two categories: development of knowledge or building of skills and competencies.
- Presenter welcomes feedback and critique from the host organization and attendees.

#### Didactic Presentation Content

- The presentation is the intellectual property of the presenter. Where ideas and concepts are from other sources these are cited and/or acknowledged in each instance.
- Presenter provides relevant data and/or sources on each slide.
- The sources for presented information are provided through citations, a reference list, data tables, or similar;

## Speaker Responsibilities

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- if information is presented as fact, evidence is provided is from multiple reputable sources and/or peer reviewed research that represents the current state of knowledge (within the last 10 years or seminal works), includes provenance, and is represented as accurately as possible.
- Referenced content is easily verified by attendees (e.g., references include author, date, publication, and/or links to the resource).
  - The type of data and evidence being presented (observations from personal experience, collected by unpublished data, or peer-reviewed research) is externally validated to the largest extent possible by experts in the field.
  - Anecdotes and personal experience regardless of tenure are not presented as being scientifically validated.
  - Videos included are dated, accurately reflect the subject matter, and include original authorship.
  - Videos and examples are those of the presenter, or the source(s) has given permission and is referenced.
  - Presenter negotiates the appropriate amount of time to cover the depth and breadth of the topic in order to meet the purpose of the session, adjusts content and expectations accordingly, and is cautious of the impact of well-intentioned but poor implementation by learners.

## Developing Knowledge in Workshops and/or Hands-On Skill Building

- When teaching a skill, sufficient examples and hands-on and practical practice are included in the learning session(s).
- The procedures presented demonstrate optimal animal welfare (the use of planned or procedural positive punishment, extinction, and intentional exposure to fear-, anxiety-, and/or stress-inducing stimuli at full strength without the ability to escape (flooding) are carefully avoided).
- Every effort is made to reduce potential inappropriate application of techniques, tools, processes, procedures, or protocols.
- Presenter advocates for the appropriate amount of time to cover the depth and breadth of the topic in order to develop learner skill to a specified criteria level (novice, intermediate, expert), provides additional instructions on how to achieve fluency, adjusts content and expectations accordingly, and is cautious of the impact of well-intentioned but poor implementation by learners.



## About SECE

The **Standards for Excellence in Conference Education** organization was started as a working group to document what we consider to be excellence in conference education. As conference organizers, speakers, and leaders across many aspects of animal welfare (veterinary medicine, zoos and aquaria, companion animals, and animal sheltering), we each bring a unique and broad perspective.

### The original SECE working group is comprised of:

Nathan Andrews  
Dot Baisly  
Stephen Cital  
Lisa Clifton-Bumpass  
Amy Phelps  
Ken Ramirez  
Mara Velez