



Code of conduct for seminars

Seminars are a forum for the speaker to present their ideas and to allow other attendees to learn, as well as contribute questions or comments. The aim of this code of conduct is to create an inclusive and productive environment that fosters the exchange of ideas, which is free of harassment and discrimination, and where all participants feel that their presence is welcome and their contributions are valued.

- Allow presenters time at the beginning to frame their talk without interruption. Seminar convenors should consider whether it is necessary to adopt a “5-minute rule”, allowing only brief clarifying questions during this initial period, especially in the case of PhD students presenting.
- All attendees should treat speakers and other attendees with respect and consideration and appreciate the ways in which power and status affect how people express themselves and interpret what is said. This is important to consider especially when speakers are PhD students, job candidates, and early career researchers.
- Share the floor. Please remember seminar time is a scarce resource. If you have not had a chance to read the paper beforehand, try to determine whether the paper addresses your question before you ask it. If you have already asked several questions, allow time for others to contribute. Listen carefully to questions asked by others to avoid repeating a question asked previously.
- Raise your hand to indicate that you wish to ask a question or contribute to the discussion. This avoids interrupting the presenter mid-thought and allows the presenter to manage the discussion. If the presenter doesn't see someone's hand, the convenor can intervene to point it out.
- A question or comment often leads naturally to some back-and-forth exchange with the speaker. But if you continue to be dissatisfied with a response, do not hold up the seminar. Instead allow the presenter to move on and follow up with your question after the seminar.
- Make every effort not to interrupt or talk over the presenter or another participant.
- Avoid discussions with other attendees during the presentation, as these can distract the presenter as well as others in the audience.
- Strive for fair and equal treatment. Many studies suggest that women are likely to be interrupted more often than men in seminars. The same may be true for softer-spoken participants regardless of gender.
- The seminar convenor is formally in charge of the seminar. Seminar convenors should be prepared to call attention to an overlooked raised hand, to return the floor to the presenter, or to remind audience members of the school's expectations concerning their conduct. Senior faculty present should also be mindful of this code of conduct and support the seminar convenor in ensuring it is followed.