

CALC Call for Papers Guidance

What is this guide for?

This guide is designed to help you to submit a paper to present at the Critical Approaches to Libraries Conference (CALC). As conference organisers we are aware that submitting a presentation can be confusing, intimidating and sometimes opaque and we want to try and prevent those feelings. It is also a key aim of the conference to platform underrepresented, marginalised and first-time speakers so we hope this guide will help.

What is a Call for Papers (CfP)?

Most academic conferences source their presenters from people submitting their ideas for a session at the conference. Conference organisers publicise that they are accepting proposals for their conference, this is known as a 'Call for Papers' [sometimes the term 'Call for Proposals' is used alternatively]. The Call for Papers takes place a few months before the conference will take place to give organisers and presenters time to prepare. When you submit a Call for Papers proposal conference organisers will review the papers and decide whether to include your proposed session in the conference programme.

How is my CfP submission reviewed?

Different conferences use different processes to review CfP submissions. At CALC we use a single-anonymised review system; your proposal will be reviewed by the conference organisers Michelle Bond and Darren Flynn. Once the CfP ends your submission will be anonymised and the organisers will review your paper. Papers are reviewed based on three criteria:

1. Relevance: does the paper fit within the scope of the conference?
2. Originality: does the paper offer an original perspective, experience or topic?
3. Utility: does the paper offer a topic or issue that will be useful for attendees in either practice, further study or in reflection

Paper authors are then contacted with one of four outcomes:

1. Accepted without amendment: the organisers are happy with your paper as is and invite you to be on the programme.
2. Accepted with amendment: the organisers are happy with your paper but would like you to make some changes/clarifications before it goes onto the programme
3. Rejected (with reasons): your paper has not been accepted on the programme, the organisers will give you specific reasons for this
4. Not within scope: the organisers feel that your paper does not fall within the scope of the conference

How do I submit a paper?

At the CfP stage you are not expected to submit a complete session (slides, activities etc.). Instead you submit an abstract; this is a short description of the session you are proposing to give. CALC has three options for submitting abstracts:

1. Traditional abstract: this is a statement approx. 200-300 words long describing your proposed session
2. Guided abstract: these use a question and answer approach to writing an abstract and are designed for people who haven't submitted abstracts before or prefer a more structured approach.
3. Video abstract: this allows people to record a video outlining their proposed session

All papers are submitted via an online form.

Why are there two stages in CALC's CfP?

A key aim of CALC is to provide a venue to share the voices, experiences and perspectives of library workers, researchers and users who are underrepresented and/or marginalized by traditional academic conferences. In many library conferences where a single CfP is used, programmes can be filled by a small number of presenters who have greater experience and confidence in writing abstracts; this is problematic if this prevents speakers from underrepresented or marginalized backgrounds appearing in conference programmes. We believe that past initiatives to increase the diversity of conference programs have not gone far enough and that urgent action is necessary to address this gap. We hope that by trialing a two-stage CfP we can create a more even playing field. We believe that positive action in this way is warranted and preferable in this context to alternatives actions such as positive discrimination through quotas.

What paper type should I select?

CALC has three options for types of conference session

1. Short paper: these are 30 minutes long and should cover a single issue, project or piece of research
2. Long paper: these are 60 minutes long and should either cover a broader project, larger piece of research. These also cover workshops that may be more practical in nature
3. Panel discussion: these are 30 or 60 minutes in length and include a number of panel members. Panel members usually give a short introduction or perspective then take questions either within the panel or from the attendees

If you are unsure which paper type to submit we can discuss this before submitting (calcconference@gmail.com). The organisers may also accept your proposal but ask that you change the paper type.

Do I have to present on my own?

CALC welcomes presentations by pairs and groups. CALC will liaise with the lead presenter in the expectation that they will communicate with their co-speakers any important information. If you are presenting work done by a group you may nominate a single presenter to do so while including all collaborators in the conference literature. Presenters should be mindful to avoid having too many speakers presenting within a single session (particularly during short papers) as they can be disorientating to attendees.

Do I have to buy a ticket to present at CALC?

As conference organisers we believe that presenters should not have to pay, or have their employer pay, to present their work. It is therefore our policy to give a free place to any presenter who has a paper accepted on the conference programme. If the conference takes place in person we aim to provide a free place, reasonable travel expenses for the lead speaker. Unfortunately we cannot guarantee expenses for additional speakers.

What if I am an international speaker?

International speakers are welcome and encouraged to present at CALC. The conference takes place in UK time, where this may be problematic due to time zones pre-recording may be used. All conference sessions and literature are in English though non-English speakers may choose to use an interpreter to deliver a presentation or to pre-record a session. Unfortunately CALC are unlikely to be able to contribute to translation or interpreter fees.

Do I have to present myself?

Proposers of short or long papers who feel unable to present themselves may request a surrogate to deliver the presentation on their behalf. CALC organisers will work with the proposer to match them with a potential surrogate speaker. The original presenter would be included in the conference program with an additional note in the abstract naming the surrogate presenter.

Will I be paid for presenting?

CALC is a low-cost, non-profit conference and we aim to keep attendee costs as low as possible in order to increase accessibility of the conference. As such we cannot pay speakers for presenting at the conference. Keynote speakers at the conference are paid through funds raised by sponsorship or ticket sales.