

Student-led GRADnet Conferences *Organise your 1-day Physics Conference*

GRADnet is offering PhD students the opportunity to organise and run a one-day mini conference on a Physics topic of their choosing. Student organisers will be expected to encourage the active participation of their peers in giving talks and/or poster presentations. In addition, organisers will be able to invite external speakers to attend should they wish.

We anticipate that two mini conferences on different topics will be organised.

We anticipate (but this is not a necessary requirement) that the conferences will be organised in areas of physics taken from

- (i) Astrophysics/astronomy;
 - (ii) Particle/nuclear physics;
 - (iii) Condensed matter/atomic physics;
 - (iv) Quantum technology;
 - (v) Theoretical physics
- or
- (vi) Any other area of physics with sufficient critical mass across the SEPnet partners to run a successful conference. Moreover, inter-disciplinary bids on themes merging any of the above physics areas are also welcome.

A budget will be made available to each conference that can be used to:

- Support the attendance (travel and food) of SEPnet students
- Invite and support the participation of high-profile presenters
- Cover any other reasonable expenses.

We would envisage a conference with 20-30 attendees to be organised. Students organising a conference will be required to establish an organising committee amongst themselves with clearly defined roles for the different members. Student organisers will receive the benefits of regular mentoring and support from appropriate and experienced academic staff and the logistical support of the GRADnet Director.

Key Dates, Processes and Points to Consider

Conference proposal

Students wishing to organise a conference will be asked to submit a formal proposal by **Monday 9th Feb 2026** to gradnet@sepnet.ac.uk using the template provided.

Selection process

Proposals will be considered by GRADnet. Proposals will be judged and the best accepted according to the criteria within the bid template. The outcome of this selection process will be announced **at the end of February 2026.**

Organising Committee

Successful applicants will be asked to form an organising committee. Each committee will be assigned a mentor to sound out ideas and discuss conference planning. .

Minute Taking

Committees should meet typically at least once per month (online or face to face depending on what is most appropriate) and invite their mentors. They should ensure that minutes of these meetings are lodged with the GRADnet Director.

Conference Format

There is no pre-required format for the conferences save that they run over one day and are held within budget. You may want a poster session or a conference dinner or an element of training or break out activities within the conference as well as speaker presentations. These decisions will be made by yourselves and within your steering committee and based upon what the committee feel would work best for the conference-the committee will have flexibility around format.

Registration

You will need to think about how attendees can register /lodge an abstract or whether there will be a possibility for delegates to submit a poster request with you. You may want to consider using Eventbrite for some of this.

Promotion Requirement

You will need to ensure that you are able to promote the conference amongst GRADnet (possibly use the GRADnet Ambassadors /Director /your mentor to support etc). You will need to construct a website of some sort (it can be basic) but an online presence to be able to list speakers/a programme will be useful it could also provide the means by which potential attendees register etc . This website can be linked to the GRADnet pages to further support promotion.

Time frames to run conference

If your proposal is successful you can choose to run a conference at a time that best suits you (in consultation with the GRADnet Director). You could run your conference to coincide with another event or as a celebration of a specific day in the physics calendar or when you feel you are most likely to attract interest and attendees or when speakers are available to attend.

Useful for you-

Previous Conferences and Links to Website/Blogs:

- ***New Frontiers: Exploring the Diversity of Astronomy and Astrophysics Research within GRADnet.*** Led By Jessica Copeland Herts
<https://sites.google.com/view/gradnetnewfrontiers/home?authuser=0>
- ***Quantum Futures: the second quantum revolution and how it will impact research and industry*** Led by PhD Student Joe Aziz at RHUL
- ***Physics is You!*** led by Akeem Hart (QMUL) and his organising team; Margaret-Ann Withington and Kymani Armstrong-Williams (Queen Mary University of London) Jess Lock (University of Sussex) Mattia Emma and Leah Wolf (Royal Holloway, University of London).
<https://areyouphysics.wixsite.com/physics-is-you>
- ***Quantum Field Theory, Gravity, and Geometry*** Led by Julian Gupta Herts and his organising team at Hert, QMUL
<https://qft-gravity-geometry25.github.io/>

2025 Blogs

<https://sepnet.ac.uk/blogs/student-led-conferences-19-march-2025>

Student-Led Physics GRADnet Workshops

Application template

Proposed workshop title:

Lead applicant:	
University:	
Year of PhD (1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd etc):	
Contact email:	

(Duplicate the following rows as required. Applications from groups of students, especially those spanning multiple SEPnet partners will be viewed more favourably than those from individuals)

Co-applicant (s)	
University:	
Year of PhD (1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd etc)	

<p>Describe the primary aims and objectives of the proposed workshop. (200 words maximum)</p> <p><i>(Applications that demonstrably serve to</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>widen the Physics knowledge</i> ● <i>or advance the Physics research and</i> ● <i>broaden the experience</i> <p><i>of those attending will be viewed positively.)</i></p>

<p>Describe the format of the proposed workshop. (200 words maximum)</p> <p><i>(Applications that demonstrate evidence of a</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>strong student participation in workshop delivery</i> ● <i>clear and appropriate structure</i> <p><i>will be viewed positively.)</i></p>

Describe the likely workshop participants and how you intend to attract them to the workshop. For instance, do you intend to invite external speakers; is the workshop aimed at one particular sub-group of SEPnet students; would you anticipate others wanting to attend this workshop and if so, how will you advertise it? (200 words maximum)
(Applications that demonstrate strong evidence of

- *thought in who the audience is and*
- *why that audience will wish to participate*

will be viewed positively.)

Describe collaborative aspects of the proposed workshop? (200 words maximum)
(SEPnet through GRADnet wishes to promote collaborations between partner institutes. Applications that demonstrate strong evidence of collaborative engagement will be viewed positively.)

Highlight potential budget considerations (200 words maximum)
(Applications that demonstrate value for money will be viewed positively.) Eg please breakdown (where possible) Venue costs, catering costs, transport payment of delegates, promotional activities (flyers/web link)