

GUIDELINES FOR HOSTING IAU GENERAL ASSEMBLIES

The International Astronomical Union (IAU) holds triennial General Assemblies where it offers a rich scientific program to its members and conducts its administrative business. These two main events are documented in, respectively, the IAU Highlights of Astronomy and IAU Transactions.

Schedule of General Assembly and Main Scientific Events

Recent IAU General Assemblies (GAs) have been scheduled over 12 days, from Monday through Friday over two weeks, with registration starting on the preceding Sunday. The General Assembly itself is held over a 10-day period, the *opening* and *closing* sessions being held on Tuesday afternoon of the first week and Thursday afternoon of the second week, respectively.

The scientific programme usually comprises 6 Symposia of 3.5 day duration, spread over 5 days (because of the 2 administrative Sessions of the General Assembly per se). Three of these are scheduled during the first week whereas the three other are held during the second one. During this 10-day period, a number of Joint Discussions (JDs) are held, typically about 15-20 total, with up to 5 running in parallel, and also Special Sessions (SPS), during which are presented results gathered in the interval between the selection of the scientific programme and the date of the General Assembly (usually, a gap of 15-16 months).

Three Invited Discourses (IDs) by distinguished scientists are held as plenary sessions open to all participants and accompanying guests during three of the evenings Wednesday-Friday (first week) and Monday-Wednesday (second week).

All the above events are open to all registered participants at the GA and associated events. Each Symposium, JD, or Special Session is organised by its own international Scientific Organizing Committee which liaises to the Host's LOC through designated representatives.

The scientific programme is decided by the Executive Committee in consultations with the IAU Division Presidents.

Also during the GA period, a large number of business and some scientific meetings of Divisions, Commissions, and Working Groups are held. In parallel, there are administrative meetings with the National Representatives, Finance Committee, Nominating Committee, and Commission Presidents (normally two meetings each).

Non-discrimination

The IAU follows the regulations of the International Council of Science (ICSU) and concurs with the actions undertaken by their Standing Committee on Freedom in the Conduct of Science on non-discrimination and universality of science.

Venue requirements

The average number of participants is close to 2000. Not all participants will stay for the entire 12 days, depending on their interest in the various opening and closing Symposia; total attendance should be highest during the 10 days (from Wednesday morning the first week through Thursday the second week) of the GA itself. From this, the following minimum requirements for meeting rooms are derived:

One major hall seating at least 2,500 persons:
Needed Tuesday and Thursday afternoons (GA sessions) plus three evenings (IDs).

Three lecture rooms with a seating capacity of 5-600 persons:
Needed during the whole period for the Symposia (beginning and end) and the larger JDs.

About four lecture rooms with a seating capacity of 250-400 persons:
Needed during the GA period (1st Tuesday through 2nd Thursday) for smaller JDs and any last-minute sessions on recent topics of special importance.

About 10 smaller lecture rooms (capacity 100-120 persons) for meetings of Divisions, Commissions, Working Group, etc. These can serve also for the larger administrative meetings mentioned above, and at least some therefore need to be available almost the full period.

Preference will be given to venues offering the possibility to hold the whole General Assembly under the same roof.

Other rooms are requested for the following purposes:

- One room (capacity 120) for the meetings of the Executive Committee, the National Representatives, the Nominating Committee, the Finance Committee
- 2 rehearsal rooms (Slides and Digital Projectors)

Such a manifestation requires assistance of specialists concerning all specialized equipments needed in the conference rooms.

Wireless modern broadband Internet access

In addition, the office space for the following IAU personnel and functions must be provided:

- Secretariat (2 rooms)
- President
- President-Elect
- General Secretary (seating 20 persons)
- Assistant General Secretary
- Grants
- Resolutions Committee
- Sub Finance Committee
- Media (seating 10 persons)
- Newspaper (large enough to accommodate 3 persons and their equipment)

These offices all need telephone and computer network connections, with additional needs for the Secretariat.

Services offered by the Host

It is customary to hold a Welcoming Reception for all participants on the evening of the first session of the GA. Usually, this is held with local support and without extra cost for participants.

Coffee and tea during breaks are also usually included in the registration cost. Other social events (any concerts, closing dinner, post- or post-meeting tours or tours on the free Sunday) are considered optional, and a charge for them is acceptable if necessary.

The Host shall produce the Program Book for the General Assembly and the Abstract Book for the science meeting. The manuscripts for these two books shall be provided by the IAU no

later than 4 weeks before the General Assembly.

The Host will be responsible for the issuing (preparation and printing) of a daily Conference Newspaper.

Different categories of badges shall be prepared in consultation with the IAU.

Upon arrival all participants will receive a satchel containing the Programme Book, Abstract Book, maps and other relevant information.

The Host is expected to offer all other normal services associated with the running of large international scientific meetings (Registration Desk, Information Desk, Travel Desk, hotel booking).

Associated events

It is customary that the inviting country takes the advantage of the presence of the best specialists in Astronomy/Astrophysics and organise public events with their collaboration. Also, meetings with teachers should be organized.

The Peter Gruber Foundation (PGF) Cosmology Prize for the year of the IAU General Assembly, plus two PGF scholarships, will be presented as an integrated part of the Opening Session. These events will be coordinated by the IAU. In addition, the PGF usually organize, separate, a reception and dinner, in consultation with the Host and the IAU.

Accommodation and local transportation for participants

In keeping with the strong wish of the IAU to allow as many astronomers as possible to attend the GA, regardless of the financial conditions at their home institutes, availability of cheap accommodation, is an important consideration in the choice of venue for an IAU GA. Cheap accommodation is usually in the form of university student dormitory rooms, assuming that the GA is held outside university terms, but other options are possible and acceptable.

As university dormitories normally offer single rooms only, a good supply of hotel rooms (at least 500-1000) should be available, with some advance block booking possible. Again, most rooms should be in the low to middle price range; very few astronomers require luxury rooms, and those are normally always available.

Similarly, ample opportunity for low-cost meals should be available nearby, if possible including quick and cheap facilities for informal lunch meetings.

Easy access between hotels and dormitories and the venue of an IAU GA is highly desirable.

National support

The government bodies of a hosting country, as well as its astronomical institutions, must commit themselves to provide adequate financial contributions to the running of an IAU General Assembly. In addition, an IAU GA will inevitably also require extensive support from the national astronomical communities. An invitation to host an IAU GA must demonstrate the interest and quantify the support to be offered.

The GA Host shall play a proactive role in promoting the GA, nationally and well as internationally.

It is a general sign of national support that the host has a good record of paying its yearly membership dues in time.

Sharing of expenditure between IAU and the Host.

The IAU is sponsoring the scientific programme by offering Travel Grants to a large number of attendees in accordance with its rules for distribution of these.

The LOC is responsible for the financial arrangements for the GA, including the cost of the meeting venue and any assistance by Professional Conference Organizer (PCOs) or others, in preparing and running the GA. Apart from the Registration fee paid by participants and its help in announcing the meeting (see below), the IAU does not provide financial contributions to the operation of the meeting. Normally, the LOC will need to raise substantial additional funding from other sources, but the actual amount will depend on the type and cost of the local arrangements (see above).

Exhibition space is usually provided for major observatories and research agencies, aerospace companies, publishers, etc. It is common practise to request a fee for such space, and this income goes to help the LOC in covering other expenses. Sponsoring of GAs as a means of supplementing the funding from other sources, and of reducing the registration fees, is encouraged.

The GA host is expected to offer, free of charge, adequate exhibition space for the host of the next GA.

The Registration Fee (flat rate for all participants) needs the approval of the IAU Executive Committee as part of the acceptance of the invitation; the currently accepted ceiling is of the order of USD 500.

The IAU will, first, produce and mail an issue of the IAU Information Bulletin announcing the details of the GA to its ~9300 members plus a large number of libraries, institutions, etc. Second, the IAU provides substantial travel support to selected participants, upon the recommendation of the SOCs of the main scientific events; the actual amount depends on the amount of external funding raised, but has often been of the order of 100,000 USD total.

An invitation to host an IAU GA must include an approximate budget.

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Host and IAU

Based on the offers received for hosting of second next IAU General Assembly, the IAU Executive Committee will select a first and second candidate.

Immediately after the General Assembly one will prepare and conclude an MoU specifying the responsibilities for the various elements discussed above. In the event that the candidate Host shall be unable to fulfil the specified conditions, and to sign the MoU within 6 months, the negotiations will be taken up with the second candidate Host.

Paris, April 22, 2005
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IAU General Secretary