# **SLAS 2021**

# **Virtual Conference**

# **12th – 16th April 2021**

## **Organising committee**

As this was the first pre-planned virtual conference, the SLAS committee agreed to organise the event ourselves. We were able to draw upon the expertise of colleagues who had moved the Amsterdam 2020 conference online in response to the COVID pandemic.

## **Online platforms**

Zoom – we used zoom links for the panels and events. We were able to set these up ourselves using our own institutional accounts.

Gather – we decided to invest in having a social space designed on Gather. The space was designed by AMS and the design can be used by SLAS at any point in the future. Gather is free to use if there are less than 25 participants but has a cost after that. We activated the space for 230 participants, but, as the zoom links were sent out separately, we didn’t have that many people using Gather in the end.

## **Budgeting & finances**

As the SLAS committee had saved money by meeting virtually, we decided to re-allocated money budgeted for committee meetings to the conference. The committee also agreed that we could run this conference at a loss so that we could keep registration fees as low as possible and because of our own uncertainty around what support might be necessary. We also sought the agreement of the SLAS committee to commit money to designing a space in Gather, buying in administrative support from University of Aberdeen, and paying PG students to support the public events.

Expenditure

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| CPD Aberdeen – project management | 4000 |
| CPD Aberdeen – Oxford abstracts | 960 |
| AMS – design & use of Gather space | 6785.39 |
| PG support for public sessions | 275.00 |
| TOTAL | 12020.39 |

Income - £2730.00 (from conference fees) + £150 (from publishers)

## **Call for papers & Programme**

The CfP was very open, encouraging alternative formats including workshops, roundtables & interviews as well as pre-constituted panels and proposals for a traditional 20-min paper.

In the programme, there were 9 public events (roundtables & interview with the author), 1 workshop on teaching practices and 34 panels with traditional academic papers.

Panellists were given the option at an early stage to deliver a live presentation or to pre-record and upload their presentation. Only 3 panels opted for live presentations, but in the end not all people uploaded a pre-recorded presentation.

Events began at 1pm BST to ensure that they could be accessed from a greater range of time zones. Sessions tended to have 2-3 parallel sessions.

## **Publishers**

We did not contact publishers ourselves, however 3 different publishers got in touch about sponsoring the conference. We charged a fee of £75 for distributing flyers with discounts on books to delegates and for tweeting the information.

## **Website**

The conference information was posted on the SLAS website.

University of Aberdeen also created a hidden site to post links to pre-recorded presentations.

## **Registration**

Registration was managed by University of Aberdeen. Fees were:

* £10 SLAS members, unwaged participants
* £45 Non-members

## **Things to think about for future online events**

* Gather – possibly think about using Gather as the platform for the whole conference, including for delivery of papers.
* Perhaps in CfP ask for proposals for shorter or pre-recorded presentations as default without the option for live sessions or make the information clearer to participants (feedback on use of pre-recorded presentations was both positive and negative, so it worked for some, but not others).
* Looking ahead to the face to face conference, we agreed there should be a space for a workshop focussed on teaching as the online workshop was very productive. We’d also like to encourage people to continue using different formats like interviews and roundtables when we return to an in-person event.