Guidelines for Fireside session moderators

What is a Fireside session?

Fireside sessions at ESCAIDE feature themed presentations of accepted oral abstracts, following the order in the conference programme. These sessions highlight new research, inform participants about developments, and create opportunities for connections and future collaborations.

Fireside sessions are scheduled for 90 minutes, with 5-6 oral abstract presentations. Each presenter will have an up to 15-minute intervention during the session, comprised of:

- 7 minutes to introduce themselves and present their work (usually accompanied by slides).
- 7 minutes of moderator-led discussion, based on questions prepared by the moderator, along with questions from the audience.
- 1 minute to transition to next presenter.

Preparing your Fireside session moderation

Your session will include 5 or 6 abstract presentations. The organisers will send you the abstracts designated for your session. Here are steps to aid in your preparation:

- Check the conference programme for the most up-to-date timing and location of your Fireside session.
- Consult the Guidelines for oral presenters, paying special attention to content and structure expected from the presenters.
- Read the abstracts and prepare one or two questions for each presenter to ensure continuous engagement, especially if there are not too many questions received from the audience.
- Attendees will submit questions via the ESCAIDE app (hosted by Swapcard), through the Chat and Questions features. As a moderator, it is your role to monitor these questions, choose the most relevant ones, and use them to guide the discussion around:

  Methodology (validity of methods, selection of cases/controls, etc.)
  Validity of conclusions and alternative hypotheses (valid interpretation of results, possible confounding or sources of bias)
  Public health consequence, and how the work supports public health action.
  Contribution of the work to the current knowledge domain.
  The EU context of the work; i.e. broad implications for EU citizens.

- Consider connecting with presenters beforehand via Swapcard. While optional, providing potential questions or discussion topics in advance can enhance the session and help presenters prepare more effectively.

Before the Fireside session

Please arrive at least 20 minutes early to the auditorium where your session will take place. This will give you time to set up and familiarise yourself with the audio-visual equipment and stage. The technical team will be available to assist with any additional needs.

To introduce each presenter during the session, we encourage you to check beforehand the correct pronunciation of their name. Be mindful of the running order of presenters in the programme.

During the Fireside session

- Begin the session by introducing the Fireside session's central theme.
- Follow the sequence of presentations and discussions as outlined in the programme, ensuring each presenter has their allocated time.
- Your role includes facilitating a 5-minute Q&A after each presentation, plus an additional 2 minutes for audience questions. Please keep track of time to ensure a fair and smooth session for all presenters.

***Remote presenters**:* Some abstracts will be presented remotely, which means the presenters will connect and present online, and their image together with their presentation will appear on screens. We will try to keep you updated of which abstracts these are, but you may only find out just before the session, especially if there are last-minute changes from the presenters.

***Q&A with the audience*:** To ensure equal participation from both onsite and online attendees, we recommend using the Swapcard Chat and Questions features. Before the start of your session, you will be provided with an iPad that will display all questions received through the conference app. You will be able to track, select and even display on the screens the incoming questions.

Should you want to get yourself familiar with the tool, you can have a look at the step-by-step guide here: Chat & Q&A Moderator Tool – Guide for session moderators

The floor is open for questions coming from the in-person audience as well. For this, our hostesses are available around the room with microphones, or participants can use the standing microphone.

End of the Fireside session

At the end of the session, encourage presenters to revisit and respond to any remaining questions in the Swapcard chat.

Write a summary with highlights from your session

After each ESCAIDE day, we recap the standout moments in a daily summary. We'd appreciate if you could draft a concise overview of your Fireside's highlights and email it to escaide.conference@ecdc.europa.eu , with the subject 'ESCAIDE 2026 Fireside summary. "Title of the Fireside session".

Help us promote ESCAIDE

ESCAIDE 2026 is promoted on the ESCAIDE social media channels (LinkedIn, Bluesky, Instagram, and Facebook). Please help us spread the word by announcing your participation on your social media channels, using #ESCAIDE2026, using the visuals available on our website and by tagging our account @escaide.eu on Bluesky and @ESCAIDE on LinkedIn. We will amplify your posts by reposting them.

Online registrations are open for everyone until the event date. Share this opportunity with your colleagues!

Contact details

For any questions you might have, please contact the ESCAIDE organisers at escaide.conference@ecdc.europa.eu.

Additional event information

Conference programme: Visit our website to view the ESCAIDE 2026 programme, showcasing plenary sessions, 200+ abstract presentations, and various side events.

Event online platform: The conference platform, *Swapcard*, will contain the programme with session live-streams and recordings, abstracts to view, participants to connect with, an e-poster gallery, and virtual info-stands. *Swapcard* is available in web browsers and as a mobile app.

Venue access: Only registered attendees can enter the conference venue based on proof of registration. At arrival you will obtain your conference badge, which must be worn at all times to access the venue. For directions and more venue details, visit ESCAIDE Attendance Information.

Cloakroom: These will be operational throughout the event. For security reasons you should not leave personal belongings unattended.

Meals and refreshments: Complimentary water dispensers will be available close to the meeting rooms. Catering services include coffee breaks in the morning and afternoon and buffet lunches. A networking cocktail will be offered at the end of the first day (see the Programme).

Internet and printing facilities: For your convenience printing facilities will be available at the venue for free use, as well as free Wi-Fi.

Continuing Medical Education (EACCME®) credits: ESCAIDE 2026 has been accredited by the European Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (EACCME®). More information on the ESCAIDE CME accreditation is available on our website: CME accreditation.

Many thanks to you for your role as moderator at ESCAIDE 2026!