



Call for Cumulus Conference Hosts for 2021 & 2022 Now Open!

Cumulus is pleased to announce this call for proposals for member institutions to plan, organize and host the next Cumulus conferences for the period of 2021 and 2022. Members are encouraged to submit a proposal for one of the four slots that are available, consisting of two conferences in 2021 and two in 2022.

The proposal submission deadline is **December 16, 2019**.

Proposals will be reviewed in February 2020 during the Cumulus Executive Board Meeting. The 4 selected institutions will be announced during the General Assembly of the [Cumulus Roma](#) conference June 16–19 2020.

Cumulus Conferences: A Briefing for Hosts

Members should take into account the following information if they are interested in hosting a Cumulus Conference.

I. Overview

Since the early days of the founding of Cumulus, Cumulus members have been invited to gather twice a year to attend the two annual Cumulus Conferences hosted by institutions in the Cumulus network. For a full list of all prior Cumulus conferences to date, please see the Cumulus conference archive in the website.

While each conference is characterized by the unique make-up of the people, culture and region of the institution that is the host, all Cumulus conferences share a common vision: to create learning environments that foster engagement, networking, collaboration and knowledge exchange about art, media and design education and research in an open and friendly atmosphere that celebrates the increasingly diverse and global nature of the Cumulus “family”. For our members, attending Cumulus conferences is one of the most rewarding experiences and tangible results of being a part of Cumulus.

Benefits of Hosting a Cumulus Conference

The advantages of organizing a Cumulus Conference are numerous. For host institutions, organizing a Cumulus conference is an invitation to expose their institution and stakeholders to an inspiring set of peers from around the world and in turn highlight the work happening in their community and region. The efforts that are directed toward hosting a conference will often have a positive impact on the organizational development of the host institution.

Given the international prominence of Cumulus, its advocacy as an association for the role of art, media and design education in society, and its vast network of academic, industry and government partners, Cumulus conferences represent a prestigious showcase for host institutions to be conveners of unique learning moments and networking with Cumulus members and partners from around the world.

II. Important Facts

Timing and Sequence of Conferences

Cumulus Conferences are held twice a year. The first conference of the year is typically held in Europe (where 60% of the Cumulus membership still resides) between the end of April and mid-June. The second conference of the year takes place between late October through mid-November. With the Cumulus membership expanding its global footprint since 2006, the second conference is increasingly hosted by member institutions located outside of the European continent which reflects the diversity of the network’s make-up.

Conference Audiences and Participants

Cumulus Conferences welcome a mixed audience of stakeholders from member institutions including faculty, researchers, university leadership and administrative staff, practitioners, artists, and increasingly--students. Cumulus conference audiences also count with the participation of educators from non-member institutions, and with a variety of special guests from industry, government and other organizations in the Cumulus network. Hosting institutions always make an effort to involve their own constituencies as much as possible in a Cumulus conference. The Cumulus Secretariat and the host collaborate closely to maximize the impact and reach of the conference through broadcasting, live streaming and other outreach and media.

Conference Size and Core Cumulus Programming

For the 1st conference of the year

Attendee range is approximately 500 people.

The programming of this conference integrates two important Cumulus activities coordinated in collaboration with the Secretariat: the New Members Fair and the Cumulus General Assembly (GA) meeting.

The New Members Fair is a lively forum and serves as a showcase within the Conference premises for new institutions to present themselves and network with the Cumulus community. The New Members fair is scheduled at the front-end of the conference in a space that is set up with booths hosted by new member representatives

where they are encouraged to make available materials from their institution and start engaging with the Cumulus family.

The General Assembly (GA) meeting consists of a subset of conference attendees (approximately 150) who are the individuals designated as voting Cumulus representatives. The GA is the main governance body of the association, it gathers annually to review and ratify the Cumulus association annual agenda and budget, to share and deliberate on pertinent issues and to ratify proposals from the Cumulus Secretariat and Cumulus Executive Board. Please refer to the Cumulus Statutes for more information about the role of the GA.

The 2nd conference of the year

Attendee range is approximately 200 to 300 people. Numbers may fluctuate depending on the host country and venue.

Both Cumulus Conferences must accommodate programming slots for Cumulus Working Groups.

Cumulus Working Groups are spaces for Cumulus members to self-organize around key topics of interest to members. There are presently about 10 Cumulus Working Groups that range widely in thematic scope: from Sustainability and Research Vectors in Art and Design (ReVeDa), to Women in Leadership and Business and Industry Innovation (please consult the Cumulus website for the most up-to-date list of working groups and contact leaders). Each Cumulus Working Group is governed by rotating leaders among Cumulus members who help determine the programming and agenda for each session. Cumulus Working Groups are open to all members who might wish to attend and learn about their activities.

Conference Organization and Execution

Budget Logic

Cumulus Conferences are organized as non-profit events by either one single member institution, or alternatively, by a consortium of institutions that come together to design a single conference experience that is closely coordinated across multiple institutional venues.

The host institution(s) is responsible for the fundraising necessary to support the conference (through internal institutional resources and outside sponsorship). The registration fees of Cumulus delegates cover only partially (typically 80%) of the total costs that are typically incurred in the execution of these conferences which are non-income generating events for neither the host institution nor the Cumulus Secretariat. The conference budget must take into account a small number of free registrations (typically a dozen or so) for the participation of a range of individuals: from Cumulus student ambassadors to Cumulus strategic partners and special guests. The Cumulus Secretariat currently does not have the capacity to fundraise for Cumulus Conferences. As a matter of principle however, the Cumulus Secretariat and

CEB collaborates with hosts to identify additional resourcing and sponsorships for key initiatives and opportunities that might arise.

Host Institution Imprimatur

Cumulus celebrates the distributed leadership of its membership and as such, host institutions have a significant degree of autonomy with regard to the authorship of the Conference and the Conference theme that they propose hosting under the Cumulus umbrella. Once their proposal is accepted, host institutions must take charge for the budget, planning and the execution of their conference.

Conference Host Coordination with Cumulus Secretariat and CEB

Host institutions and their conference organizing team are expected to coordinate and communicate closely with the Cumulus Secretariat and CEB throughout key milestones of the conference's planning in order to design a successful conference.

There is an expectation to comply with integrating a number of key activities and events that relate to the association's ongoing work within the master schedule of all Cumulus conferences. This close partnership between the Cumulus Secretariat / CEB and the host institution ensures quality standards and the continuity of Cumulus programming across conferences.

Programming that is coordinated with the Secretariat and CEB includes, but is not limited to:

- Cumulus Executive Board Meetings
- New Members Fair
- General Assembly
- Cumulus Working Groups
- DESIS Seminars and events
- Student Ambassadors Presentations
- Special Award Ceremonies and Exhibitions

In addition, Cumulus Conference hosts are expected to liaise with two assigned advisors from the CEB whose responsibility is to act as "mentors" to the conference organizing team. Board mentors typically support the Secretariat and the conference hosts vis-à-vis strategic decisions related to ensuring that there be alignment in the overall content programming of each conference within the mission and values of Cumulus.

Conference Length and Formats

Cumulus conferences are typically 3 to 4 days in length. Conferences are usually scheduled to start mid-to late-week to take advantage of weekend departures which help accommodate long-haul international flights for many delegates.

The format and overall conference programming of each Cumulus conference may vary and is approved by the Cumulus Board at the time of the host institution's bid.

Typical formats will accommodate plenary keynote sessions, parallel sessions with academic paper tracks,

workshops, Cumulus working groups and Cumulus conversations (special sessions co-hosted with Cumulus partners), exhibition openings, and cultural/ social networking events. All Cumulus Conferences include a Gala dinner for conference attendees (this dinner is typically included as an optional activity for delegates and as an additional cost to the conference registration fee). Cumulus conferences include optional programming that can vary widely depending on the host venue: examples include pre-or post-conference related seminars, PhD workshops, exhibitions, and regional or in-country educational/cultural field trips or events (organized by the host or with partners and offered outside the conference fees), to name a few.

III. Key Ingredients in the Recipe of a Successful Cumulus Conference

In submitting a proposal bid to host a Cumulus Conference, member institutions are encouraged to develop a plan that strives to embrace the following 6 key ingredients which are conducive to designing a successful Cumulus conference experience:

1. Embracing Multidisciplinary Conference Themes

Unlike many other academic and professional conferences that may focus on a narrow domain of research or practice, Cumulus conference themes succeed best when they strike a balance in their programming approach. For example, conferences can be provocative about new directions and contemporary issues in art, design and media education, research and/or practice as well as be multi-disciplinary and broad enough to resonate with the wide spectrum of interests and backgrounds of Cumulus delegates.

2. Rigorous Management of the Academic Dimension of the Conference

While Cumulus conferences may vary in format with some hosts choosing to take a more practice focus, all conferences should strive to include a mix of professional sessions and academic papers, panels and poster sessions. Many faculty members in the Cumulus network will only be able to participate if there is an academic program for them to present at. This academic dimension in the programming of a Cumulus conference should be managed with the expected standards of rigor of the Academy (appropriate communication lead-times of deadlines, organization of Scientific Review Committees and double-peer review submissions, organization of track themes, designation of track chairs, publishing of conference proceedings with ISBN-numbers etc.).

3. Gaining a Deeper Understanding of the Richness of the Local Institutional and Regional Context

Providing Cumulus delegates with an introduction to the host institution is paramount to the experience of a Cumulus conference. Finding ways to honor the richness of the host's local and regional context in the overall programming of the conference and any related pre-or post-events is an important consideration. Host institutions are encouraged to shape this experience in a variety of ways that make sense to their unique circumstances. Past conferences have included tours of campus facilities for example, but also orientations about a particular approach to pedagogy in a degree program or the visit to a novel research lab or partner venue. The Cumulus community always sees as a great gift the opportunity to share knowledge and participate in conferences where every touch-point from a keynote speaker, a workshop, an exhibition, a field trip or a meal have been designed with the aspiration to foster engagement and networking that honors the local culture of the host. Building networks with local stakeholders is an additional beneficial aspect of this intentional planning.

4. Cultivating a sense of community

The "open and friendly atmosphere" of the Cumulus family is foundational to all conferences organized under the Cumulus umbrella. Designing a conference program that allows for delegates to network and celebrate being together through sharing expertise, connecting over a coffee break or meal, participating together in a local cultural or social event or field excursion is a very important part of a Cumulus conference.

5. Professionalism and Production Matters

A great majority of Cumulus delegates are educators, artists and designers that will pay attention to the details of the whole conference experience: i.e. conference website, branding, badges, wayfinding, schedules, conference venues, access to local transportation choices and pre-negotiated and diverse range and price-points in accommodations etc.

6. Diversity, Access and Inclusion

Cumulus is committed to celebrating the diversity of its membership and see that diversity reflected by conference hosts in key aspects of the programming of all conferences (inclusive of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, disability, etc.).

In terms of access, initiatives such as the Cumulus Plus travel scholarship program offer support that broadens the participation of educators and academic staff in universities of art, design and media in regions of the world where Cumulus is poorly represented and where financial resources to attend a conference may be a barrier. Conference hosts are always encouraged to design ways to make their conferences as inclusive as possible both from the perspective of programming topics as well as by identifying mechanisms to encourage wide participation (i.e. offering a menu of pricing structures for example for partial attendance)

IV. Cumulus Conference Requirements

- Once accepted, Cumulus host organizers should start the active preparations of their conference a year and a half before their proposed conference. They must attend a minimum of two prior Cumulus conferences, and actively participate to brief the Cumulus Secretariat, CEB and Cumulus members of their progress in conference planning.
- Host Institutions should consult with the Cumulus Secretariat before setting the final amount of registration fees. In recent years, registration fees have been in the 400 Euros range.
- Host Institutions should anticipate a period of great intensity six months prior to a conference happening. The demand of communicating closely with the Secretariat during this time period and have in place the adequate operational plan and infrastructure to execute on the conference becomes critical. A dedicated conference manager and team should be in place that will be responsible for registration, program oversight, website, social media, visa guidance, finance issues etc.
- Cumulus Conferences must integrate the Cumulus organization branding and logo in all key conference materials (print, digital and key signage and wayfinding). This co-branding supports the host institutional brand as well as the visual identity related to the host conference theme.
- Cumulus Conferences are expected to produce conference websites (linked to the main Cumulus site) that are effective at communicating the various components and programming of a given conference. Hosts must design a communication strategy to promote the conference adequately (through press releases, social media channels etc.) to ensure the target attendance is reached. Hosts should keep the Cumulus Secretariat closely apprised of their communication plan.
- English is the language of Cumulus conferences and all of their communication materials; conference hosts must arrange for live translation services if needed in plenary and other main conference related events and/or publications.
- Since the academic components of a Cumulus conference require double-peer review, conference websites should typically go live with the call for papers at a minimum 9 months before the conference takes place. The site should include all of the necessary information to allow for delegates to register and plan their participation. The website should be designed as an archival repository of conference proceedings that Cumulus will have access to after the Conference is over.
- Cumulus Conference must provide delegates with accepted abstracts and the full conference program schedule in downloadable format before the conference via the conference website.
- Cumulus Conference organizers should make every effort to plan for live-streaming of plenary sessions and keynote portions of the conference to include members who may not have the opportunity to attend live.
- All Cumulus conference proceedings must be published digitally within a timely schedule after the conference has taken place; 6 months is the maximum time allotted for publication of proceedings post conference. Print publications of conference proceedings are at the discretion of the host.
- Proceedings must include a Cumulus ISBN which is provided by the Cumulus Secretariat to the host Institution. The host institution can also include a second conference ISBN number as appropriate.
- All Cumulus hosts should plan for visual documentation and professional photography and media capture (including social media) of the conference (and obtain any necessary advance permissions from participants and speakers). Hosts must commit to transfer a curated set of visual assets from the Conference to the Secretariat for promotional and archival purposes.

- Conference hosts are responsible for all logistical and hospitality arrangements connected to the organization of the conference. They should anticipate the complexity of welcoming international delegates including planning for crowd management and adequate spaces to accommodate plenary sessions and parallel sessions; conference meals; negotiating a diverse price-range of accommodations (and making available as much as possible affordable and/or free accommodations to Cumulus Student Ambassadors and Cumulus Plus Scholarship Travel grant recipients); arranging when possible and/or necessary for local transportation arrangements between accommodations and main conference venue (s); organizing optional pre-or-post cultural/educational events, seminars, and cultural trips.

Cancellation Policy

After the bid to host a Cumulus conference is approved by the Cumulus Executive Board, the agreement that ensues between the Cumulus Secretariat and the host is binding. Only force majeure circumstances are to be considered as permissible grounds for cancellation.

Conference Bid Proposal Required Content

How to Apply?

Cumulus Conference proposal bids consist of a comprehensive narrative written in English approximately 4 to 5 pages in length. The narrative should touch upon the 8 required content areas listed in the application content section.

Writing this narrative is an opportunity for the institution applying to gain a clearer understanding of their individual approach and capabilities to host a possible conference. The application must include an endorsement letter signed by a senior authority of the applicant institution in official letterhead with institutional logo.

The application package should include supporting documents as indicated in the required content section below. Once accepted upon review by the Cumulus Executive Board (CEB) and Secretariat, the application is binding.

Application Content

1. Institutional Contact

Please provide the name and address of your institution, city, country and full contact details of the conference organizing team. (Contact information: Address, email, phone/skype/whatsapp/wechat, etc.)

2. Team

Please describe the qualifications and capacity of the organizing team. For the academic and scientific dimension of the conference, please articulate the expertise you will rely upon to fulfill the academic rigor expected in the conference. Provide a copy of team organizers CVs with the application.

3. Motivation

Please give a short statement about your rationale for wanting to host the conference and how your vision aligns with the overall objectives and values of Cumulus and how the conference may serve its members. Articulating the anticipated regional or national impact, business, industry and non-governmental presence of the conference is also a relevant consideration to include.

4. What

Please provide the (provisional) title and overarching theme of the conference. Describe what the key sub-themes of the conference might be and how they might connect to your institutional context and/or cultural and regional expertise and interests. If possible, provide a list of potential or desired keynote speakers and/or presenters with the application and any other material that might inform your overview.

5. Where

Please provide the location (s) you will anticipate using for the conference programming. Indicate what conference facilities are available, the number and size of lecture rooms, space for poster sessions and workshops, and exhibition venues (if planned). Include a description of planned networking and cultural activities, such as field trips and tours pre-and post-conference. Provide photos and /or architectural plans of the facilities in your application.

6. When

Please provide a range of proposed dates for the conference per Cumulus guidelines. When proposing dates, please review academic calendars to avoid conflicts with major national and/ or religious holidays. The Cumulus Secretariat will review your proposed dates and advise on any possible competing conferences from other prominent international associations that may have Cumulus cross-membership.

7. How

As future conferences should create more access and impact through digital media for people not attending the conference physically, please provide an overview of IT services, live-streaming capacity, translation services and your intended communication/outreach strategy for the conference. Indicate the availability of hotels and student accommodation, their locations and distance from the venue. Include details about travel access to the conference venue (major airport hubs and transportation centers). Include information about general visa timetables applications when applicable.

8. Recommendation Letter(s) and Supplemental Materials

If applicable, please include references from existing member institutions or partners of Cumulus and/or authorities such as the city, region, chamber of commerce, government, companies, etc. that you intend to engage. If your proposal is selected, the Cumulus Secretariat will follow-up with you on this information. Feel free to include any other supplemental materials that may inform your application.

The Cumulus Executive Board will review the proposals in its first meeting in February 2020.

CEB is entitled to ask for any further information necessary from the applicant before or after the meeting. The Cumulus Secretary General and a board member may visit the host if necessary and may negotiate further regarding the conference bid with the applicants before the selection of conferences are presented in the General Assembly for final approval by members during the Cumulus Roma conference June 16-19, 2020.

Deadline

December 16, 2019

Proposals and any questions should be directed before the deadline via email to:

Cumulus Secretary General, Eija Salmi at eija.salmi@aalto.fi;
with copy to Cumulus Coordinator, Justyna Molik at justyna.molik@aalto.fi