

LTRC VENUE ROTATION GUIDELINES

ILTA's annual international conference is the Language Testing Research Colloquium (LTRC). LTRC is organized each year by a local committee according to a set of Standard Operating Procedures (outlined in a separate document made available to the conference hosts) and with support and advice from the LTRC Advisory Committee and ILTA's management services company.

Since 2005 (when LTRC was held in Ottawa), the annual conference has been held four times in North America (Denver 2009, Ann Arbor 2011, Princeton 2012 and Toronto 2015), four times in Europe (Barcelona 2007, Cambridge 2010, Amsterdam 2014 and Palermo 2016), twice in Asia (Hangzhou 2008 and Seoul 2013), once in Australasia (Melbourne 2006), and once in Latin America (Bogotá 2017). Plans for the coming years include Australasia (Auckland 2018), North America (Atlanta 2019) and North Africa (Tunis 2020).

To date, there has been no fixed policy regarding the choice of venue for the LTRC. The choice has been largely dependent on the availability of willing and qualified hosts with access to an appropriate professional network. At the same time, other factors have influenced the ILTA Executive Board's decision-making. These have included: a) accessibility (financial and geographical) for ILTA members; b) outreach, in line with ILTA's aim of building language assessment literacy in locations with limited access to relevant professional expertise; and c) financial viability, given ILTA's reliance on revenue from the annual conference to support its other activities. Proximity to related conferences has also been a factor, particularly in relation to North American conferences such as AAAL or TESOL.

In past years the ILTA membership has been invited to formally endorse conference proposals at the annual ABM three years in advance of the proposed conference or to cast a vote in the event of competing options. However (as per the ILTA By-Laws, Article II, Section 2), the outcome of this vote is, advisory only and the Executive Board retains the right to make the final determination.

More explicit guidelines on the conference venue rotation have now been formulated to aid the Executive Board and the membership in future planning, to improve transparency, and to ensure that the abovementioned issues of accessibility, outreach and financial viability are adequately balanced. It may also be necessary to solicit proposals proactively rather than simply react to proposals as they come in. This could be done informally or via a public call. Either action would need to take place around four years in advance and at least six months before the annual LTRC, to allow proposers to prepare the relevant documentation and have their proposals reviewed by the Executive Board well before they are presented to and voted on by the membership.

The current geographical distribution of the ILTA membership is roughly as follows;

- North America (35%) and South America (7%) = 41%
- UK (13%), Europe (6.5%) and the Middle East (0.5%) = 20%
- Asia (7%), Australia (6.5%) and the Pacific (0.5%) = 14%
- Other or Source country unknown = 25%

While the membership distribution is likely to fluctuate over time, in the interests of *accessibility* for the current membership, it currently makes sense to consider a three-year rotation cycle for LTRC, with a conference held in North America more often than at other venues: at least once every three years (Year One) and preferably in close proximity to other relevant conferences like AAAL, NCME or TESOL. In the intervening years (Years Two and Three) the conference should alternate between the other two substantial membership blocs, namely a) Europe + the Middle East and b) the Asia Pacific region (including Australasia), with proximity to other relevant conferences taken into consideration in scheduling arrangements.

In the interests of *outreach*, at least once in every six-year cycle, it would be desirable to host the conference in a country without a strong tradition of language testing. This is in line with ILTA's mission to build assessment literacy in new locations and to expand its membership. Thus the cycle would be as follows:

Y1: always North America

Y2: Europe/ME or Asia Pacific (with the option of a 'third' region instead)

Y3: Europe/ME or Asia Pacific (with the option of a 'third' region instead)

The question of *financial viability* will be directly addressed in negotiations between the ILTA Executive Committee and the conference proposer, and in the guidelines set out for potential conference hosts.

While these venue rotation guidelines cannot be set in stone (given possible difficulties in locating suitable conference hosts) and may need to change over time as the membership distribution changes, we trust they will aid in planning on the part of those submitting proposals for LTRC as well as assisting affiliated local assessment organizations in planning their conference events in such a way as to complement rather than conflict with LTRC.

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November 2017