Speaker Guide for Flexible Futures 2020 Conference

Congratulations! On behalf of the Flexible Futures 2020 Program Team, we are thrilled to have you participate in the virtual Flexible Futures Conference.

The Conference will take place on 4 **August 2020**. Our virtual event platform, Blackboard Collaborate, will allow you an in-person conference attendance from the comfort of your own home.

We want to urge you to visit the Blackboard Collaborate help site to learn more about the presenter and moderator role.

We have arranged support sessions for moderators and presenters.

Moderators: COMPULSORY: Please attend ONE session
Tuesday 28 July: 08:00 – 09:00 - Session Link
OR
Monday 3 August: 09:00-10:00 – Session Link

Presenters: Please attend ONE Session
Wednesday: 29 July: 09:00-10:00 – Session Link
OR
Monday: 3 August: 11:00 – 12:00 – Session Link

If you have any additional questions, please reach out to: carla@carlamani.co.za

Thank you and look forward to seeing you online!
The Flexible Futures Program Team

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Presenters and Moderators

Please visit the preparation for speakers before the Conference. It includes information about:

- How do I get started? ○ Which browser should I use? ○ Start here with the basics!
- How do I join a session? ○ How do I set up my camera and microphone?
- Best practices

Presenters: Contact your moderator to answer any question you may have about your sessions.

We want to thank the Blackboard conference organizing committee for allowing us to adapt their speaker guide for the Flexible Futures conference

Collaborate Platform

Blackboard Collaborate is a real-time video conferencing tool that lets you add files, share applications, and use a virtual whiteboard to interact. Collaborate with the Ultra experience opens right in your browser, so you do not have to install any software to join a session. It is a simple, convenient, and reliable web conferencing solution built for education and training. Engage with the material and your instructor. Thanks to the robust collaboration and conference tools, everyone feels like they are in the same room together, regardless of their location or device. Watch the Blackboard Collaborate with the Ultra experience user interface tour video to get an overview of the software.

Presentation Preparation for Speakers

You are encouraged to go through the content provided in the document to become more familiar with the software. Moderators can make participants presenters. It means that you can upload, share, edit, and stop sharing content. You can also see hand raise notifications and can lower hands.

Content

Blackboard Collaborate makes it easy to share your knowledge. You can upload content, including PowerPoint® presentations, or share your desktop screen to show more details. You are also able to share your screen and build polls into your presentation. You have the option to show the results of the poll or not show them. You can also show the results of the poll at a different point in the presentation. Visit the share content page for more information. Please note:

- Browser/OS Requirements – This page breaks down the browser requirements.
- Add the Desktop sharing extension
- Collaborate test room – This room allows you to test your webcam and audio devices Click the gear icon in the bottom right corner.

Presenting Your Content

Please log in to your session no less than 15 minutes before your session is set to begin. Your presentation moderator will be in the room to help you.

Your session moderator will be responsible for starting and stopping the session recording and ensuring that all your content is loaded into the content panel. You will be able to chat with this session moderator throughout the session if you have any issues or questions.

Once in presenting mode, advancing slides will advance them for everyone, *including attendees.* Add a profile picture to be visible to the attendees. It allows you to share your video at the beginning of the presentation and then have your image visible if you stop sharing the video during your presentation. This will reduce the required bandwidth for participants. Read the instructions to share content, whiteboard or an application during the presentation.

Indicate to the audience how you will allow them to engage with you during the presentation. When you share your desktop or application, it is seen by everybody in the live session and anybody viewing the recording later. **Make sure to close any windows and apps you do not want others to see before starting to share**.

Moderators

With the number of moving parts to any presentation, we will rely on you to act as a moderator and to ensure that the attendees enjoy the presentations. This moderator will be there to assist in engaging attendees through the chat room, monitor and sort the questions that come in and keeping time. Even if you have multiple presenters in your session, we suggest having a moderator who is not involved, so they are able to focus on ensuring a smooth session. You are more than welcome to allow other EI staff members to assist in moderating sessions. You will have to make them moderators in the session.

It is essential to discuss your desired flow with your presenters so they know when you would like Q&A to be asked or how they can assist.

- We will provide moderator training and support. Sessions scheduled

If you have any additional questions, please reach out to the conference team (carla@carlamani.co.za).

Presenting Tips, Tricks & Best Practices

There are many ways to design sessions that will generate meaningful collaboration, foster engagement, and share knowledge. The following is just guidelines.

The Basics

Clothing

- Be comfortable and be yourself but try to **avoid busy patterns** (stripes can make people dizzy!) that will provide a distraction to the content. Solid colours, especially jewel tones, work well.
- This virtual event and current climate allow for a more casual on-camera look, no ties or jackets required. ☺

AV/Tech

- **Mute anything** else in your office/room that beeps or buzzes, so you do not distract yourself or others in the audience.
- The best way to avoid feedback is to wear a **headset** and change your computer's audio settings to be input and output through the headset and its mic, but you can certainly use your computer's built-in microphone.
- If you have a hardline internet connection at home, then we suggest you use it. If you do not have one, use a high-speed internet connection. If you live in a very remote area with spotty internet, please let us know so we can adjust your session to a prerecording.

- If you will be using a laptop, plug it in and leave it plugged in. It stops the computer from disabling certain power/battery functions, and it is a backup in the event you forget to charge it!
- If you are using speaker notes, they need to be in your PPT slide notes sections. Unfortunately, the notes are not visible in the application screen. You may need to print them or divide your screen to be able to view it.
- Please close out all applications other than the window browser you are using.
- Keep your browser current. Only use up-to-date Internet browsers that are supported by Blackboard Collaborate.
- Limit video use. Some of the attendees may struggle with a stable internet connection. Use video during the session only when necessary.
- Disable Adblockers. Browser Adblockers can turn off your audio and video and can cause buttons not to show up.
- Turn your presentations into PDFs. PDFs put minimal demand on a network. Convert what you plan to share into a PDF and upload it into to Collaborate.

Webcam Visuals

- **Adjust the laptop or your webcam** so that your head and shoulders take up most of the frame. If you need to, put the computer on a phone book or close the cover of your laptop just enough to fill the frame. Ideally, the camera will be capturing you straight-on or looking slightly down on you (most flattering like in selfies). If the camera is underneath you, you will magically grow double and triple chins.
    - It creates an illusion that you are talking directly to the person watching and provides a more personal connection.
- It is all about the **lighting and placement** of the lighting. Your primary light source should come from behind your webcam. If the light is coming from behind you, you will appear very dark on camera.
- Be sure to wipe out any additional lighting from office windows etc. that may interfere with the clarity of the video stream.

During Your Presentation

- No matter what is happening on screen, when you are "listening" **look directly into the camera**, rather than at the screen. Otherwise, it will seem like you are not paying attention.
- If you are comfortable doing more than one thing at a time, feel free to play, engage, chat and share with the audience.
- **Do not be afraid of silence**. There might be a 3-10-second lag depending on buffering speeds, so you might want to type in your question before you ask it out loud to give the virtual audience time to think and respond. Or ask the question, fill in time with something else and come back to see what they think.
- **Use your voice to guide viewer attention**. Vary your intonation to keep the attendees engaged.
- **Speak in a way everyone can understand**. Try to avoid long words when short ones would do. Use the active voice rather than the passive one. Try not to use a foreign phrase, scientific words or jargon when a plain language equivalent is usable.
- Do not rely only on slide pointers or annotation tools provided on Web conferencing platforms.
- Encourage your attendees to share what they are learning on social media.

Creating Your Presentation

This Flexible Futures Conference will be different for several reasons. It means that we will likely have an increased number of attendees, from a wider variety of national geographical locations, and a broader job role spectrum.

Introductions

Your **introduction** will be more critical than ever. You may need to introduce yourself and establish the groundwork for your session within the first few minutes to get the audience hooked. A good introduction will meet the following objectives:

- Capture the audience's attention
- Motivate the audience to listen by relating the topic to their frame of reference • Establish your credibility on the topic
- Present your purpose (that is, your *exact* purpose or a variant of it)
- Preview your main points (today, I will talk about)
- Assess the audience's experience with the topic (hello, polls ☺)

Consider creating accessible content

Here are some essential tips on how to create accessible content in PowerPoint

- Use the built-in features of PowerPoint ○ Styles, especially those for headings and lists
  - ○ Table properties ○ Picture format
- Think about colours, font families, text alignment, and text formats like Bold
- Think about alternatives to charts, graphs, sophisticated data tables, and math formulas
- Keep the language as simple as possible
- Use the accessibility checkers
- Find more information on Microsoft Make Your PowerPoint Presentations Accessible pages
- Four principles of PowerPoint accessibility ○ Slide titles ○ Reading order ○ Alternative text for images ○ Self-describing links

If you are planning on using multi-media in your presentation, keep the below tips in mind. You will have to provide your video file separately from your presentation so it can be loaded into the presenter console before your session.

- Avoid content that flashes or blinks
- Add audio description where possible in videos
- Have a text transcript available that contains the dialogue and any important visual cues
- Have a text transcript of all audio-only files
- Find more information on creating accessible audio and video content from WC3's

  Multimedia Accessibility FAQ page

Building Your Slides

Here are some additional tips on creating your slides:

- **Use large areas of colour sparingly**. Use them to make an impact.
- **Include photography where appropriate** - Avoid too much detail in your visual aids. Use simple, dramatic images. And remember – not every image means the same thing to every viewer.
- **Use layouts that enhance your content and message**. Use builds (progressive disclosure) rather than a single very complex slide.

- **Streamline and simplify your visuals.** Avoid unnecessary animations, fancy borders, ornate fonts and vertical text.
- **Spread your content out over more slides,** so there is a frequent on-screen change for audiences.
- Design your slides as if you are creating them for viewers in the back of a large auditorium – **use larger fonts and adequate spacing**, and do not put things near the edges of your slides. Assume that many will be viewing your online presentation from smaller laptop screens or even on mobile devices.
- **Assume that some people are multitasking** during an online presentation.
    - One thing you can do is make sure the titles on your slides are more descriptive and capture the main point of the slide.
    - To bring people back to slides, say something like 'What do you see below the picture of the woman on this slide?' or 'Look at the data on the right-hand portion of your slide.'

Attendee Engagement

You have probably attended your fair share of virtual webinars and events at this point. A significant portion of holding a virtual session is ensuring your attendees remain engaged with your content! Check out some tips on how to best engage your audience below.

- From the outset, and throughout your session, ensure that you are interacting with your attendees and building in opportunities for attendees to share and interact with each other.
    - What is your hook? Consider starting the session with a short ice-breaker. Capture what attendees hope to learn from your session in the chat or via a poll!
    - Intermittently ask for feedback during the session and ensure everyone is following along.
    - Incorporate Q&A throughout your session, not just at the end. Quick gut checks and polls are also helpful tools.

- Give attendees time to share their thoughts and experiences on your topic. Ensure space and attention for quieter attendees. Model empathy and acknowledge vulnerability.

Marketing Your Session

Now that you are presenting make sure your peers and networks know!

- Use the hashtag #FlexibleFutures20 when talking about your session
- Share the time you are presenting and encourage others to add it to their schedule.

FAQ's

When is my content due?
All the information that will be loaded into the session, before the session. Please contact your moderator and make sure that he/she has got access to your presentation at least the day before the session. Thank you in advance for adhering to this deadline.

How early do I need to log into my session?

You need to log into your session 15 minutes before your session to do a final check of your technology. Ask the moderator for assistance about the platform if you need it, confirm the process for chat and questions with your moderators, and do any final rehearsals with your copresenters.

Do I need a moderator?

It is a best practice to have a moderator assigned to each session to assist in answering chat questions, monitor the Q&A, and ensure the session runs smoothly within the allocated time. We will be providing a Department for Education Innovation staff members as moderators so you can focus on delivering a professional presentation.

Will there be any technical help for my session?

There will be a technical support person who will be "onsite" during the Conference. The moderator will check your audio and video during that 15 minutes before your session and start the recording.

Can I get a demo site to get familiar with the platform?

There is a Collaborate room available to allow you to get comfortable with the environment. PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS ROOM IS ONLY FOR TESTING PURPOSES.

I want to show a video in my presentation. How do I do that?

If you have any video content that will be played in your slides, please provide the URL to the attendees to watch it. You can create a placeholder slide in your deck to show where the video should watch, but please do NOT embed it into your PPT. Allow the attendees time to watch the video before you continue.

Can I advance my slides?

Yes. There are next and previous buttons to move through slides. NOTE: Once you are presenting, all presenters/moderators may advance slides.

What do I do if I have external URLs that I want attendees to visit?

The public chat allows for clickable links.

What about slide notes?

They will not be visible. It is best practice to have a copy of your presentation handy, even printed out! You can also share notes via a sharable Google Drive link with the audience.

If my webcam is on, can the attendees hear what I am doing?

Yes– You can mute yourself if you would like, but rest assured nobody will hear you unless you mute your audio and video

Do I have to be on camera?

While we do not require it, being on camera is highly recommended for the first few minutes. It helps the audience connect with you and provide that interpersonal link. If you are not going to be using video, the system will share your headshot for you to talk over. Otherwise, it will be a blank profile photo.

Wait, I am on a panel or have multiple presenters, how will we switch the cameras to the new presenter? What if I have something to say?

Because this is a virtual presentation, we can only have one person talking at a time. The system will display the live person video. The moderator will be able to use audio cues to manage the focus on the panel members (i.e. “I will hand it off to Prof X to talk you through…”). When practicing your presentation, be sure to include these transitions. It will be up to you how you want to manage this during Q&A.

Can I link out to external software or whiteboard to get feedback? Can I toggle between PPT/Screenshare/Video?

Yes, there is a screen sharing feature. You can share a browser tab, application, or your full desktop. When you share your screen, the audience will see it, but you will not see it displayed on your console. It does not populate on your console to prevent tunneling of the windows. If there is the indicator in the top right of your screen that says you are sharing your screen, the audience can see what you are sharing.

Will I be able to see who is attending the session?

You will be able to see the detail of the attendees logged in to your session.

Will attendees be able to see who else is attending the session?

Yes, They will see other attendees names as they participate in the chat.

How will audience members know what to do in the console?

There is an overview of the features of the system when a user joins the session. The majority of University of Pretoria attendees may be familiar with Collaborate.

Will audience members have the ability to talk via microphone during the session?

Yes. The moderator will be able to manage the audience access to the different features in the system, including the ability to speak.

Will you be providing training on the platform?

While we do not have any scheduled training session, you are welcome to contact your moderator for assistance.

Will my presentation be available on-demand? Will it be recorded?

All presentations will be recorded and available on-demand on the conference web after the Conference for a short duration. Please inform the conference committee if you do not want to share the presentation via the internet.

Who can I ask if I have more questions?

Please email carla@carlamani.co.za if you have any additional questions.