INSTRUCTIONS FOR OTSEM MEETING PARTICIPANTS

WHAT MAKES OTSEM MEETINGS DIFFERENT?

The structure of the sessions at OTSEM meetings differs somewhat from traditional international conferences. Full papers are circulated before the meeting and participants are expected to prepare for a number of sessions by reading the relevant papers in advance.

During the session, the contributor summarizes the main points of their paper for up to ten minutes – the full paper is not to be read. **The focus is on the discussion between the presenter, the respondent and the audience**. An OTSEM session is about getting feedback on work in progress.

An **OTSEM paper session** consists of:

- A 10-minute summary of the paper
- A 10 to 15-minute response by the respondent (Q&A format is recommended)
- C. 25-30 minutes for a joint discussion

THE OTSEM WEBSITE

All OTSEM meeting participants need access to the network's website (https://otsem.blogs.uni-hamburg.de/). Please make sure that you know your username and password and that you are able to log in.

If you need help, contact our website administrator: admin-otsem@teologi.uio.no

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PRESENTERS

Presenters at OTSEM meetings are asked to provide the following three documents:

1) AN ABSTRACT

PhD students and postdocs who wish to present at an OTSEM meeting should send a brief abstract (maximum 300 words) to the local organizers. The deadline is 2-3 months before the conference. The local organizers will let you know.

The organizers use the abstracts to plan the conference program and to find respondents and chairs for each paper.

2) A PAPER

Every presenter will complete a written paper in advance. This paper should be no longer than 6500 words (excluding footnotes and bibliography).

The paper must be sent directly to the respondent in an email, and it must also be uploaded to the OTSEM website, where it will be shared with all meeting participants.

The **deadline** for completing papers is c. four weeks before the meeting. It is very important to observe this deadline so that respondents have sufficient time to read papers and to be in touch with presenters.

You will receive information about exact deadlines, your respondent's name and contact information and instructions on how to upload your paper to the website from the OTSEM organizers.

If you are struggling to meet your deadline, please contact your respondent and the local organizers immediately and let them know. Your respondent may be able to respond to a paper that has been submitted a bit late but ask them well in advance of the deadline if this is an

option. Depending on how tight their schedule is, your respondent may also decline to respond if you submit your paper and summary late.

The paper should have a preface indicating what the presenter would like the focal points of discussion to be during the session.

Language. If you find that writing in or translating your work into English represents a major workload, you may ask your respondent if they are willing to respond to a paper written in a language other than English. Your respondent is free to decline this request if they feel that it would represent a major extra workload for them, but it is fine to ask.

Please note that your presentation at the meeting, a 10-minute summary of your paper, must still be in English, even if you submit your full paper in another language. The response will also be in English.

3) A PROJECT SUMMARY

In addition to the paper, every presenter will write a brief project summary (1-2 pages), which **must be uploaded to the OTSEM website at the same time as the paper**.

PhD students should use the project summary to present their doctoral project and its main objectives and methods, and to indicate how the paper presented at the meeting fits into the project.

Similarly, postdocs should use the summary to place their specific paper within their current postdoc project or their research trajectory since their PhD.

The purpose of the project summary is to give respondents and meeting participants a better understanding of the paper's context and to help them focus their response.

If you have not received information about your respondent 6 weeks before the meeting, please contact the local organizers of this year's meeting.

If you have not received information from your respondent 1 week before the meeting, please contact the local organizers of this year's meeting.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR RESPONDENTS

2-3 MONTHS BEFORE THE MEETING

Respondents will be contacted by the local organizers and asked to respond to a paper based on the 300-word abstract submitted by presenters. If respondents feel unable to respond to the suggested paper, the local organizers may suggest another paper.

Language. Some presenters may find that writing in or translating their work into English represents a major workload, and therefore they may ask their respondent if they are willing to respond to a paper written in a language other than English. As a respondent, you are free to decline this request if you feel that it would represent a major extra workload to you.

Please note that even if it is agreed that a paper may be submitted in a language other than English, the presenter's 10-minute summary of the paper and the respondent's response will both be in English.

4 WEEKS BEFORE THE MEETING

Respondents will receive an email from their presenter containing the paper (max 6500 words, excluding footnotes and bibliography) and the project summary (1-2 pages).

If the paper is too long, the respondent may ask the presenter to shorten it.

If the paper is submitted too late, the respondent may decline to offer a response.

If you do not hear from your presenter around the time of the deadline, contact the local organizers and the coordinator. They can help you nudge the presenter and ask them to submit promptly.

1-2 WEEKS BEFORE THE MEETING

It is crucial to the outcome of an OTSEM meeting that respondents and presenters communicate before the meeting. Respondents are asked to contact their presenters ca. 2 weeks prior to the meeting to initiate a dialogue about the presenter's paper and to decide on the main points for discussion during the paper session. If respondents have suggestions about writing style, English language proficiency or readability, those should be communicated by email, rather than in the meeting.

It is often helpful for presenters and respondents to have a brief conversation before the session. We recommend an informal Zoom meeting or to schedule some time to talk during the OTSEM meeting.

DURING THE PAPER SESSION

Respondents are asked to give a brief response (10-15 minutes) to the paper. This response may be delivered as a monologue, but a Q&A format often works better in practice. We encourage respondents and chairs to agree on a format before the session begins.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CHAIRS

The chair is expected to have read the paper and the project summary in advance of the session. Chairs are encouraged to be quite active during the session and to have prepared a few questions for the presenter in advance.

When the discussion is opened to all participants after the end of the response, the chair must give priority to comments from junior scholars in order to facilitate an inclusive discussion.

The chair should leave a few minutes at the end of the session, in which the presenter is able to make a final remark and to sum up the session.

OTSEM chairs are encouraged to keep time carefully to ensure the best outcome for the session.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR OTHER PARTICIPANTS

Academic exchange is one of OTSEM's central goals. Therefore, it is generally a good rule to visit papers presented by colleagues from other institutions than one's own. The recommendation for PhD supervisors is to take part in sessions in which one's own doctoral students are not the presenters.