

The World Muscle Society (WMS) Congress Venue Specification

The WMS was established in 1995. Its Congress is held annually and takes place in destinations all around the world:

https://www.worldmusclesociety.org/web_pages/view/past-world-muscle-society-congresses

This is the premier annual Congress on neuromuscular disorders, attended by established and young physicians, researchers, therapists and neuropathologists worldwide.

The Congress typically attracts:

- 1000-1200 in-person international participants
- 300-400 virtual participants
- ~15 keynote speakers, ~33 selected orals
- 300-500 in-person poster presentations
- ~30 sponsors and exhibitors
- Eight industry-sponsored symposia within the programme

The Congress venues and hotels are sourced through our partner HelmsBriscoe who takes care of the research, negotiation, site visits and contracting. They approach the venues directly on our behalf. The committee can of course make suggestions for venues that they will investigate. If the committee do approach venues and hotels with an initial enquiry, please make it clear to them that HelmsBriscoe will follow up if the enquiry moves forward.

The Congress usually takes place between the last week of September and the first two weeks of October.

The Congress usually commences on a Tuesday and concludes on a Saturday with a Pre-Congress Teaching Course taking place Monday to Tuesday, a faculty dinner on Sunday evening and a whole course dinner on Monday evening.

It is important that the congress days including likely travel days do not clash with any religious holidays/events.

The Congress is formally opened on Tuesday evening with a special lecture from a person of local interest or relevance to the field and is followed immediately after by the Congress Networking Reception (additional registration fee required). This presentation is not necessarily by a scientist and can cover different topics such as the history of the venue and hosting country or a scientific presentation of more general nature and will be chosen in agreement with the Executive Board.

There is usually a Group Activity (additional registration fee required) to a place or a selection of places of local cultural interest on Thursday afternoon with a reception in the evening, particularly if delegates have been on different activities in the afternoon, to bring

everyone together again. Some congresses have had the Group Activity on Friday and dinner afterwards to fit in with scheduling/venue constraints.

The Congress Networking Dinner (additional registration fee required) usually takes place on Friday evening with a seated dinner and dancing.

During the Congress programme, there are eight industry-sponsored symposia of one hour each, two in parallel (one in the plenary auditorium and the other in the secondary auditorium). These are generally attended by ~300-400 delegates and may include some additional catering (at a cost to the sponsor) depending on the timing and requirements of the sponsor.

Congress venue requirements

The location of the Congress venue and hotels to the airport and downtown area is important for the overall delegate experience. Delegates need to be able to easily and safely walk to a good selection of restaurants, bars, cafes and shops from the Congress venue and hotels. Therefore avoiding non-central to city venues.

There should be direct flights to the destination city from most major international airports. Closest hotels to the congress venue

The flow of the overall congress spaces is important. Attendees need to be able to easily navigate their way around the various elements of the building with minimal time or effort. Lots of natural light is preferred as well as space for attendees to sit down to eat and social seating spaces.

Plenary sessions are ideally in a tiered auditorium with an aisle with a capacity for a minimum of 1200 participants.

Industry symposia sessions are ideally in a second, tiered auditorium close by, for ~ 500 participants. If it has space outside or very nearby for catering that is ideal.

Networking Reception for the opening evening. Typically for 500 attendees at the congress venue, however, this can be held at an offsite venue if preferred by the local organisers.

The exhibition space is ideally large and with lots of natural daylight. With space for ~30 stands typically 3m x 2m, 6m x 2m and 8m x 3m according to the level of sponsorship.

The poster area is ideally in the same area or nearby the Exhibition, with sufficient space for the Congress catering and approx. 400-500 poster board sides. Currently, ~5 digital poster screens are required for attendees to view virtual posters.

New for WMS 2022 were Short Oral Presentations, which involve selected posters being elevated to a short oral presentation in an informal, less intimidating setup. The space available at each venue will decide.

The basic AV and equipment requirements for the plenary and secondary auditoriums are

- A fully accessible stage and seating area for attendees with mobility challenges,
- A screen/s large enough for detailed slides to be visible with secondary screens further back if required.

- Adequate wi-fi capacity for delegates to access and use the congress app in all areas of the venue
- Full PA system, various microphone options including lectern, lapel, handheld and roaming.
- Lectern with the potential to add branding,
- Top table for moderators or chairs on stage with a coffee table, confidence monitor and time management visible for speaker and moderators, laser pointer,
- Full live streaming and recording setup to feed into the virtual platform,
- Option for potential stage branding and anything else required according to venue requirements/set-up.
- Hearing loops - do they have them, how do you access them, instructions?

A Registration Desk close to the main areas being utilised is required throughout the Congress week.

At least 10 **meeting rooms** will be required for meetings during Congress and for sponsors to book throughout the week, from 5-50 participants.

In addition:

- Organisers Office
- Speaker Preparation Room
- Media/Press Room
- For WMS 2023 we introduced the following additional spaces and rooms:
 - **Myology Café** - a focal point of the exhibition and catering area. Baristas serve specialty teas, coffees and hot chocolate to delegates at key times throughout the week with tables and seats of varying heights to make it accessible for all and a welcoming place to network. This was a new initiative and will wholly depend on the flow and size of space available as well as budget available.
 - **Quiet Room** - a dedicated quiet space which we are calling our Quiet Room where delegates can take some quiet time to regroup before returning to the congress activities. No devices, talking, eating or food will be allowed so that the space is truly welcoming and calming for all.

Support from the DMC and venue will be required to create a relaxed and welcoming space. Sofas, coffee tables, soft lighting, natural light, wellbeing magazines, water only, planting.

- **Family-friendly Room** - a dedicated family-friendly room for attendees with young children who will be in attendance.

Support from the DMC and venue will be required to create a relaxed and welcoming space with child-friendly snacks and activities including an arts & crafts table, age-appropriate games, and an assortment of small books and

toys. Children and families are welcome to use and share items within the room as needed.

A private area for breastfeeding/pumping, ideally with a small fridge and reheating facilities.

The Congress virtual platform will be live-streamed into the space so WMS attendees with families can experience the Congress content while also spending needed time with family members. The AV team will include a laptop and a screen etc in the room to facilitate this.

Please note that children are not permitted within the rest of the congress spaces or events.

Multi-Faith Room - a dedicated multi-faith room to ensure that all attendees, regardless of their religious beliefs, have a welcoming and inclusive space where they can practice their faith, reflect, and find solace during the congress. If there isn't already a dedicated room for this in the venue then a room will be created with some tables, chairs, yoga mats, and fresh water available.

The Congress Catering will be served at various stations amongst the exhibition stands. A full Congress Catering brief will be provided. Catering should be allowed in the auditorium spaces for the sponsored symposia sessions. Beverages and a buffet lunch on open Congress and Course days are included in the delegate registration fees. A lunch bag may be required for the group activity day.

WMS Dietary Requirements Guidelines are available on request.

Pre-Congress Teaching Course venue requirements

The venue for the course is often at the local hospital and arranged through the local organiser based there. It can also be held at the congress venue in a separate space from the main Congress as it will take place mostly during Congress Setup times.

A Learning space for ~100 participants plus ~15 faculty members including a breakout area for patient demonstrations in smaller groups. The local organisers may be asked by the Course Chair to arrange for some local patients to participate.

A Catering area for the refreshment breaks is required.

A faculty-only dinner on Sunday evening and a whole-course dinner on Monday evening.

Accommodation

A 3-4* HQ hotel within 10-15 minutes' walk of the congress venue. The congress will contract for ~60 bedrooms single occupancy B&B for peak Congress nights, including the

course nights. Other bedrooms can be contracted on allocation for delegates with a release date close to the congress venue thereby no financial risk.

The current Congress website is always a good resource for up-to-date information on how the congress space is being used and the programme is being delivered that year:

<https://www.worldmusclesociety.org/m/events/future-wms-congresses>.

Any prospective venues, including accommodation venues, should be fully accessible for people with limited mobility, hearing or sight impairment. The WMS believes in including everybody regardless of disability.

Catering should account for global dietary requirements, including providing options based on religious practices, food intolerances and the shift towards plant-based diets for the benefit of the planet.

Offsite events

Thursday afternoon Group Activity options nearby/within a maximum of 30 minutes transfer time. Typically, 5-6 different options for delegates to select from. All groups end up at an evening Group Activity Reception for 400-500 attendees.

Friday evening Networking Dinner. A seated dinner with a plated three-course meal in a venue with a dance floor for 500-600 attendees nearby/within a maximum of 30 minutes transfer time.

Additional information

- Venues and hotel refurbishment plans up until and including the congress dates.
- Venues and hotel ownership change up until and including the congress dates.
- How will the venues and hotels support WMS towards making this event more sustainable? Sustainability Policy (WMS's policy is available on request).
- How does seasonal weather impact the venues, hotels and destination overall? Which procedures do the venues, hotels and destination have in place to minimise the impact of any adverse effects on the event?
- The rates quoted for the congress year should be fixed at the time of contract.
- At least one complimentary site visit for the Congress Manager and up to five Committee Members before the Congress.
- Any concessions available that might enhance the proposal.
- Any specific country or local pharma compliance regulations that we need to be aware of.
- Toilets - are all toilets in the venue/s accessible? Are the taps easy to use for people with different accessibility requirements?