

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:

- 800-1000 international 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 venue is sourced through our partner Helms Briscoe 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.

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 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 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.

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.
- 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.

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 have introduced a Multi-Faith Room, Family-friendly Room and Quiet Room

The Congress Catering will be served at various stations in 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.

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 ~75-100 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.