



50th International Chemistry Olympiad

Bratislava, Slovakia Jan 9-11 and Prague, Czech Republic Jan 11-13, 2018

Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

Members of the Steering Committee

Elected:

- I-Jy Chang, Taiwan (2016), Chair
- Fung Fun Man, Singapore (2014, 2016)
- JL Kiappes, USA (2016)
- Peter Wothers, UK (2016)
- Gábor Magyarfalvi, Hungary (2017)
- Ben Pilgrim, UK (2017)

Ex officio:

- Ekasith Somsook, Thailand (2017)
- Martin Putala, Slovakia (2018)
- Petr Holzhauser, Czech Republic (2018)
- Anne Szymczak, France (2019)
- Nobuhiro Kihara, Japan (2021)

Co-opted:

- Worawan Bhanthumnavin, Thailand
- Alexandr Gladilin, Russia
- Cecilia Hernandez, USA

All members were present.

1. Introduction, Opening

Welcome – UNIBA Vice-Dean welcomed the SC to Bratislava. Chair of SC, Chang I-Jy thanked the hosts for their huge efforts organizing the Olympiad.

2. Report from Thailand

- Tentative final report was distributed to SC.
- The final report will be sent to the SC members and all mentors.
- SC confirmed that final (detailed) scores for every student should be published as soon as the competition is completed each year.

3. Report from future Olympiads:

- 2019 France
 - Anne Szymczak presented an update on preparations for the 51st IChO. The dates are confirmed: 21-30 July 2019, Paris.
 - Student accommodation has been confirmed. The location will be booked exclusively for IChO students and with fully security.
 - Funds are insufficient. SC suggest a revision for a fixed registration fee of US\$2,500~3,000 for all countries. No more resetting of the fee for hosts.
 - Host country decides the fee for Scientific Observer within US\$1500~2000. Most countries need a year to plan their operating budgets, it is best to announce the proposed fees for Scientific Observers and guests in July the year before (during the 3rd Jury meeting).
 - 2018–2019 is the year of Chemistry from Primary school to University. The 51st logo has been created.
- 2020 Turkey (power point file from Ugur (Konya, Turkey team), was presented by I-Jy)
 - Konya team is different from that in Ankara (2011).
 - Has strong support from the government. Adequate facilities in the University.
 - Will invite the organizing team (Turkey) to the SC meeting in July 2018.



- SC supported the proposal from Turkey and will Recommend to propose to International Jury as 2020 Host.

- 2021 Japan
 - Dates are finalized: 24 July to 2 August 2021. Closing ceremony on 1 August.
 - The logo is the same as the one in IChO 2010 in Tokyo. (The logo was copyrighted)

4. Detail discussion on IChO 2018

- Report from Czech Republic and Slovakia
- Go through the planned day-by-day schedule (See section 9)

5. Review expected participating countries for IChO 2018

- Go through the list of countries
 - Five countries missed the 49th IChO: Oman, Egypt, Liechtenstein, Kuwait, Nigeria
 - No replies received from Oman despite message from the Chair.
 - The other countries (4) stated above, except Oman, will be invited.
- Visa
 - EU visa rule applies.
 - Since the delegations could potentially stay in three countries (Austria, Slovakia, Czech) during their trip to the Olympiad, the official website should provide the corresponding possible visa applications.

6. Observing and new countries for IChO 2018

- Qatar (2nd year)
 - Will be invited
 - Absent last year due to political situation.
 - Continue as 2nd year observing country, *no students competing*.
- United Arab Emirates (2nd year)
 - Will be invited
 - Letters of support from the government has been received from the agency.
 - UAE promise to donate US\$2000 each year for 3 years.
- Luxembourg (2nd year)
 - Will be invited
- Sri Lanka (1st year)
 - Will be invited
- Ghana (1st year)
 - Will be invited
 - Letter of authorization from the Ghana Education Service has been received.
 - Further invitation depends on their proof of national competition.
- Trinidad and Tobago
 - Not invited unless the coordinator provides a letter of support from the government or national society.
- Mali
 - Will be invited if provide more information, especially on their national chemistry competition.
 - Letter of government approval to attend other Olympiad received.
 - Ask to complete the questionnaire again, update the SC.
- Myanmar (completed questionnaire from second coordinator)
 - Will not invited unless they provide government authorization.



Applied to all observing countries: the SC recommends that observing countries best to send the mentors who will bring students to IChO in the future to observe.

7. Financial support

- Total fund US\$ 8500 (\$2000 from Japan, \$2000 from Taiwan, \$2000 from UAE, and \$2500 from IUPAC)
 - Support from Japan ends in 2020.
 - Support from Taiwan for 5 years that ends in 2021.
 - US\$ 2000 pledged by UAE for 3 years that ends in 2020.
 - Send a letter to IUPAC suggesting that a speech/presence of IUPAC representative is not obligatory.
- Try to obtain more financial support
 - Cecilia to assist contacting Dow Chemical and ACS for potential support
 - Martin and Petr to push BASF to confirm support for sponsorship
- Application for financial support is similar to last year
 - Send out letters to all countries.
 - Application deadline is March 31, 2018
 - Anonymous email voting by SC members.
 - Announce the identity of the awarded countries at the jury meeting for transparency.

8. Discussion with the Scientific Committee

- **Discussion about the Practical Prep problems (SK)**
 - Authors were encouraged to be fair and flexible in marking and arbitration.
 - SC advised to have practical problems that do not require the use of fume hoods.
 - It is okay to use benches on the side of the lab.
 - If results from students testing the tasks are to be utilized for grading, SC recommended to use the results from experienced (expert) students for full marks, and results from general chemistry students to decide the 0-mark cutoff.
 - There will be a mock exam (July 17-18) attended by SC members (I-Jy, Peter, Ben, Fun Man, Gabor, JL, and Sasha).
 - After grading of the practical exam, the authors will prepare a datasheet to show the students' results distribution with full- and 0-mark lines.
- **Discussion about the Theoretical Prep problems (CZ)**
 - It is getting increasingly common in recent years that more subtopics are lumped into one field, such that in total, there are more than 6 fields. SC suggested to fully revise the Concepts and Skills section in the regulation.
 - Authors were encouraged to be fair and flexible in marking and arbitration.
 - If common incorrect answers are found when testing the problems in advance, authors may present them and agree with jury on partial credit given during the second Jury meeting.
 - When discussing the actual exam problems during the second jury meeting, reference to prep problems such as "This appeared in Question...." could be very helpful.

9. Detailed discussion on IChO 2018 Day-by-day schedule

Day 1

- Pick up is only for day 1 at the designated ports (VIE, BTS, Bratislava Central Station).
- The hosts aim to minimize the waiting time at the airport and hotel. The host will arrange separate buses for mentors and students.



- If countries are travelling round trip, i.e. arrive at Prague, they will have to make their own arrangements to reach pick-up ports.
- Students should submit passport/health insurance to guide for photocopy (photo taking by guide, and sent to the organizer)
- Organizers should inform mentors of the assigned codes for each student, e.g. SVK-1, to avoid mistakes.

Day 2

- Mentors walk from the hotel to the Old Market Hall for opening ceremony.
- 1-hour bus ride to Cerveny Kamen castle (evening reception)
- Bus return (mentors—first come, first serve; students—designated bus)
- Mentors are responsible for being on time for the bus. No extra transportation will be provided after the announced deadline.

Day 3

Mentors:

- Check out from hotel, hand in luggage then proceed for lab inspection
- The luggage will be transported separately, with no access to luggage until arrival in Prague
- Practical task will be given when hand in signed checklist. There is a waiting room for mentors who finish lab inspection earlier than bus transport.
- Optional meeting with authors on the train (~4-hour journey)
- Suggestion made that it may be better to have luggage in one place instead of sending to rooms in the Prague hotel.

Day 4

Mentors:

- Translation of practical exam
- Evening: Cruise on the Vltava river with music and dinner. No dinner in the hotel, depart by 7:30 pm from hotel.
- The ticket to the cruise would be issued only after the delegations have submitted their paper
- If countries need extra time to translate and are skipping the cruise ride, the organizer will inform them privately the final deadline for paper submission.

Students:

- Safety training/ instruction should be done in small groups: no more than 50 per group.
- Sports activities for leisure by groups (optional)
- Proposed to have a cinema (movie) instead of Disco (swap with day 5)

Day 5

Students:

- Guides to wake up students.
- Practical exam: consider to start at 8.30am
- Disco instead of cinema (swap with day 4)

Day 6

Mentors:

- Translation
- Evening: party, open BBQ



- Similar time frame for translation as Day 4.

Students:

- Other locations for Barbecue, other than Zoo?
- Remind students to bring swimming gear

Day 7

Students:

- Students leave luggage outside their corridor before theoretical exam (no access to luggage until arrival in Prague)
- This is a very long day for students, please have logistics planned well. Luggage handling in Prague may adopt the same method as mentors.

Day 8

Mentors:

- Distribute theory results early in the day.
- Grading (follow previous years' practice – mentors indicate which student/questions to consult authors)
- Distribute students' **practical results** ONLY after 3rd jury meeting.
- Evening: 3rd jury meeting

Day 9

Mentors:

- Arbitration as needed.
- Evening: 4th Jury meeting
- Guest lectures to commemorate the golden jubilee of IChO

Day 10

- Free time (AM)
- Afternoon: Closing ceremony
- Have professional photographer and ask mentors not to leave seats for photos.
- Awards in groups to save time. Wait until the whole group is on stage to issue medals
- Farewell party at Obcanska Plovarna

Day 11

- Departures. Host only responsible for transport to PRA airport and Prague main train station.
- As with arrivals, if countries are travelling round trip, i.e. flight out from Bratislava, they will have to make their own arrangements.

10. General Business

- The detailed results could be published online immediately after closing ceremony for checks.
- Hosts to include a line during the participant registrations for students/mentors/observers (checkbox): we hereby declare we agree to the following terms. The terms include having your photographs, final scores published openly and accessible to the public.
- Website of the next IChO should be launched on the last day of the current IChO so that the public has knowledge of the next Olympiad (even if only a minimalist version including at least location (city/country) and dates).
- The public are advised to visit the current IChO website for the most up-to-date information
- The IChO Information Centre should link to the statistics in the new webpage soon, SC website and the current official website.



- Ben and Fun Man will initiate IChO Facebook and Instagram.
- Guidelines for Organizer – maybe augmented every year.

- Suggestions to revise regulations

Urgent parts, should be send out ASAP and hope to pass this July, to take effect in 2019.

1. Increase of registration fees. Considering the inflation.
2. The total number of awards.
3. Automatic cut-off of medals. For gold, e.g. at the largest gap in the top 10-11%. For silver, the next (20% - 21%)'s largest gap. The same procedure follows for bronze (30% - 31%) and honorable mention (cut at 70% -71%).

Long term consideration

1. Revision of the advanced topics: Due to evolution of the competition, at present, some of the fields that are classified as advanced topics would be shifted to required knowledge by participants.
2. External review of prep problems. To check the number of advance topics and the proportions of the fields of chemistry.
3. Organizer must accommodate and work with the external reviewers when finalizing prep. questions. Reviewers can be chosen from the SC members in the nearby region.

The committee formally thanked the organizers of the 50th IChO for their hospitality and the tremendous efforts they are taking to ensure a successful competition in 2018.

Glossaries:

UNIBA – Comenius University Bratislava, FNS Faculty of Natural Sciences

UCT – University of Chemistry and Technology Prague

SC – Steering Committee

Minutes created by: Fung, Fun Man

Edited & vetted by: I-Jy, JL, Gabor, and Cecilia

Finalized by: I-Jy Chang