



International Union of History and Philosophy of Science and Technology

Division of History of Science and Technology

Minutes of Council meeting

held online on

**April 22 , 2026
10 am UTC**

Minutes

Present: Ana SIMÕES (President Elect), Hamish SPENCER (Second Vice-President), Thomás HADDAD (Secretary-General), Maarten BULLYNCK (Treasurer), Sam ROBINSON (Engagement Secretary), Milada SEKYRKOVÁ (Assistant Secretary-General); Assessors: David AUBIN, Gordon McOUAT, Don OPITZ, Mai SUGIMOTO

Excused: Janet BROWNE (President), Silvia FIGUEIRÔA (First Vice-President), Peeter MÜÜRSEPP (Assessor), Xingbo LUO (Assessor)

1. Opening business:

SPENCER opened the meeting welcoming all present. The minutes of the Council meeting held on 10 December 2025 were approved without objection.

The agenda for the present meeting was likewise approved.

Concerning the next regular Council meeting, it was agreed that a date would be found by email. The Secretary-General would aim for the first half of September. It was noted that the September meeting would need to give particular attention to grants and financial policies concerning DHST Commissions.

2. Paris Congress:

AUBIN reported on the work of the Local Organizing Committee (LOC). The LOC was now meeting monthly, examining possible venues in central Paris, and exploring the engagement of a professional event-organizing company. It had also begun discussions concerning the International Program Committee (IPC), particularly the appointment of its chair or chairs. A relatively long and still open list of possible candidates had been assembled, and the LOC expected to work toward a much shorter list at its meeting at the end of May.

The Council discussed the desirable structure of the IPC and the process for selecting its leadership. Particular emphasis was placed on the need for substantial experience in the field and proper briefing on the distinctive role played by Commissions and Sections in the Congress program. The experience of recent congresses and of the forthcoming ESHS-HSS Edinburgh meeting was discussed, including the advantages and disadvantages of single chairs and multiple co-chairs.

There was broad support for developing a model in which one person would serve as an identifiable corresponding chair and principal point of contact between the IPC, the LOC, and the DHST Council, while retaining sufficient flexibility for the eventual appointment of co-chairs, deputy chairs, or other close collaborators if appropriate. The Council considered an indicative IPC of approximately thirty members, with nominations shared among the LOC, the Council, and the chair or chairing group. This was understood as a working model rather than a fixed formula. Geographic, thematic, chronological, gender, and career-stage balance were identified as important principles in constituting the committee.

The LOC would work toward a shortlist of potential IPC chairs. The aim would be to have the structure and shortlist substantially developed by the Edinburgh meeting in July, with formal Council confirmation of appointments potentially taking place at the September Council meeting.

The Council discussed general principles for the Memorandum of Understanding between DHST and the Paris LOC, which is intended to be signed in July 2026. The Memorandum should address, among other matters, the appointment and composition of the IPC; the relationship between the IPC, Council, and LOC; the treatment of Commission-sponsored and other symposia; the plenary program; the General Assembly and Prize ceremony; registration-fee waivers and support for scholars requiring assistance; the Congress website and timetable; and commitments to regional, gender, and career-stage balance and to reducing the environmental impact of the Congress.

There was broad support for giving early-career scholars and the DHST Prize a prominent place near the beginning of the Congress rather than relegating the Prize ceremony to its conclusion. Members also favored a varied plenary program, with room for round tables, networking opportunities, and programming that gives the Congress a distinctively local character, rather than relying principally on conventional single-speaker plenary lectures.

HADDAD and AUBIN agreed to meet in early May to begin preparing the Memorandum. A draft or at least a substantive outline should be available by the end of May for discussion by the LOC. ROBINSON and BROWNE would also be closely involved in preparing the document, with all Council members invited to comment before signature.

3. 2027 DHST online event

McOUAT presented the proposal “The Things They Carried: Global Objects in Circulation,” conceived as the DHST midterm online event for 2027 and as an extension of earlier work on circulating knowledge and the associated virtual museum of scientific objects.

The proposal envisages an innovative extended digital event centred on objects in circulation and their movement between geographical and institutional contexts. Several possible formats remain under consideration, including curated object panels, contributions involving DHST national members and Commissions, and events organized around partner museums or collections in different regions. A structure involving planning, program, technology, and editorial groups was also proposed.

The Council approved the proposal as the basis of the 2027 DHST midterm event and confirmed McOUAT as the Council member responsible for leading its further development.

The Council also agreed in principle that DHST should provide financial support. Approximately €2,000 was identified as a reasonable planning figure, subject to the normal budgetary process and the eventual needs of the project. McOUAT reported that external support would also be sought, notably through a Canadian SSHRC application, for which institutional and in-kind contributions could form part of the matching support. ROBINSON would explore possible contributions from BSHS and HSS.

Members stressed the importance of involving DHST Commissions, Sections, national members, historians of technology, museums, and collections. They also welcomed the possibility that the project could leave a lasting digital resource combining objects, recordings, and other materials rather than functioning solely as a one-off online conference. An extended format during the latter part of 2027, rather than a single continuous twenty-four-hour event, was discussed favorably, but the precise format and dates remain to be determined.

4. Extension of DHST Respectful Behavior Policy to Commissions

The Council considered how the DHST Respectful Behavior Policy (RBP) should apply to Commissions, Sections, and inter-union or inter-division bodies. It was acknowledged that previous communications had left too much ambiguity as to whether such bodies were expected to adopt the DHST policy, devise their own policies, or make use of the DHST Ombudsteam and Review Board.

The Council agreed that the existing DHST Respectful Behavior Policy should be treated as the minimum standard applicable throughout DHST. Commissions belonging solely to DHST should therefore be expected to adopt the DHST policy and procedures unless they already have arrangements that Council judges to be equivalent or stronger. The possibility of making the DHST Ombudsteam and Review Board available to such Commissions was supported in principle; if this created an excessive workload, the relevant infrastructure could subsequently be enlarged.

The situation of Sections and inter-union or inter-division Commissions requires additional consideration because they may already fall under comparable policies maintained by partner organizations. These bodies should therefore be asked to report

what arrangements are currently in force, after which any incompatibilities or procedural overlaps can be addressed individually.

A forthcoming engagement meeting with representatives of Commissions and Sections would be used both to explain this approach and to gather information about existing arrangements.

The Council further agreed that the place and scope of the Respectful Behavior Policy should eventually be stated much more clearly in the DHST Statutes. For the time being, however, the practical approach would be to universalize the present policy as the DHST minimum standard while resolving particular procedural issues as they arise.

5. Forecast of issues upcoming in 2026 (agenda-setting and planning for the year ahead, no deliberations needed)

The Secretary-General outlined several matters requiring Council attention during the remainder of the year.

The call for applications for the 2027 DHST Dissertation Prize would be open from 1 May to 1 August 2026, for dissertations completed or defended between 16 April 2024 and 15 April 2026. Council members were asked to disseminate the call widely and to be prepared to assess approximately two to four dissertations each. BROWNE would lead the assessment process.

An item for the September meeting will be the establishment of a clearer and more stable policy governing DHST grants to Commissions. Members agreed that such a policy should be as simple as possible while providing consistent rules concerning permissible uses of funds, changes to approved budgets, accumulated balances, reporting, and the degree of discretion available to Commissions.

The Council also intends to hold an engagement meeting with representatives of DHST national members. This should provide an opportunity both to communicate more clearly what DHST does with the support received from national members and to listen to their concerns and expectations concerning the Division's international role.

The need for a renewed communications strategy was discussed. Council favored concentrating resources on a modern and maintainable website and a limited, sustainable social-media presence, with LinkedIn mentioned as the most promising platform given its use by the International Science Council. The possibility of providing an honorarium to an early-career scholar to maintain the website and communications channels was supported. More concrete options, including likely workload and cost, should be prepared for September.

Finally, Council discussed the need for a substantial future review of the DHST Statutes. The existing Statutes contain ambiguities and internal inconsistencies and do not adequately express a number of principles and policies that have become important to the Division, including the Respectful Behavior Policy, the role of Commissions, financial and reporting responsibilities, and broader values such as openness, universality, international collaboration, and transparent and democratic procedures.

There was support in principle for establishing a statutes review subcommittee, with OPITZ willing to take a leading role. Its formal establishment and remit will return to Council at a subsequent meeting, most likely in September or December. Members agreed that any review should be deliberate and long-term, with the aim of preparing coherent proposals for eventual consideration by a General Assembly. The possible development of model principles or bylaws for DHST Commissions could form part of this work, while avoiding unnecessary micromanagement of their internal affairs.