

Seminars

The seminars are at the heart of the British New Testament Society's work. They provide a forum for presentation and discussion of research by established scholars and research students. Over the years the number and themes of the seminars have varied. Some are relatively small (10–12), others can be much larger (40–50). It is crucial that there is a core group who attend and contribute to the seminar's work, to ensure its continuing viability.

Seminars normally have three 1.5 hour sessions during the conference each year, two on Friday morning and one on Saturday morning. Seminar chairs are free to organise these creatively, as best serves the theme of their seminar, including book reviews, presentation of papers, debates, etc. The opportunity for research students to present papers has been part of the BNTS ethos since the Society's foundation, and so normally at least one of each seminar's sessions should be open to proposals from research students.

Seminars are encouraged to hold joint sessions with other seminars where there is a connection between the two—seminar chairs normally discuss this with each other, often while together at the conference.

Seminar chairs normally serve a five-year term of office (to encourage rotation of chairs to involve more of our members), and are expected normally to be present at the conference during their term of office. The Society's Secretary monitors this term of office, and alerts serving chairs (and the committee) when their present five-year term is coming up. In exceptional circumstances, a seminar chair may ask for a short extension to their term of office by writing to the committee (through the Secretary), giving an explanation for the request (e.g. to facilitate 'staggering' the terms of office of the two co-chairs).

Each year, the Secretary writes to ask seminar chairs for a 'call for papers' for their seminar for the following year's conference. This call for papers is sent to the Society's email list and put on the Society's website (normally early in the calendar year) with a deadline for proposals. Seminar chairs must ensure that the Secretary receives the full information about the seminars (presenter, institution, title, abstract) by a deadline set each year. This deadline is to ensure that, when registration for the conference opens, all the information about the seminars is available on the Society's website, to enable members to choose their seminars in full knowledge of the programme. In the initial request for a 'call for papers', the Secretary will give the deadlines for each stage of the process for that year.

Process

New seminars are initiated through a three-part process:

1. the potential seminar chairs produce a proposal (for contents, see below) which they send to the Secretary (secretary@bnts.org.uk), who ensures that it is considered by the committee, normally at the committee meeting during the conference each year;
2. the committee considers the proposal in the light of the present spread of seminar areas and themes and the potential support for the new seminar, and may approve it, decline it, or seek further information from the proposers. If approved, the new seminar will normally be announced during the conference business meeting;

3. once approved, the chairs of the new seminar provide a one-paragraph explanation of the seminar's area/theme for the Society's website, and their email addresses to go on the website alongside the seminar details.

The proposal

Please include in your proposal:

- the seminar title, which should be succinct and clearly indicate the focus of the proposed seminar;
- the names of the proposed chair(s)—normally seminars have two co-chairs from different institutions or situations (e.g. one could be an independent scholar);
- a brief (up to 750 words) description of the proposed seminar's *primary contents/themes*, and the *rationale* for introducing it;
- clarification of any overlap with the work of current seminars (please check on the BNTS website for the explanations of each current seminar's work);
- the names of people who have indicated they would support the seminar;
- a sketch of what the seminar might cover in its first two years.

Questions?

If you have questions about this, or would like comments on a draft seminar proposal, please contact the Secretary (secretary@bnts.org.uk).

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