

CALL FOR SCIENTIFIC SESSION PROPOSALS

Science Shaping Tomorrow

2025 AAAS ANNUAL MEETING

February 13-15

Boston, Massachusetts

CALL FOR SCIENTIFIC SESSION PROPOSALS

DEADLINE: MAY 6, 2024

Scientific Session proposals will not be accepted after the deadline.

THE CONFERENCE THEME

Science-informed policies and decision-making are critical to ensuring a healthy, prosperous, and equitable future. Relationships of trust between scientists and policymakers are foundational to science-informed decision-making. We must work towards an ecosystem where the expertise of scientists and engineers is put to work collaboratively with policymakers and communicators to better identify and address future challenges and opportunities. Whether climate change, public health, or the responsible use of artificial intelligence, science alone cannot solve the most pressing issues of our time. Only when scientists and policy-makers trust and collaborate with one another at the local, national, and global levels can the greatest challenges of our time be overcome.

The 2025 AAAS Annual Meeting will celebrate and strengthen the projects and collaborations among science, policy, and communication that already exist and promote the infusion of scientific and technical expertise into the public discourse and policymaking. We will highlight not only the responses to challenges and crises, but also marvel at what our future could be.

GENERAL INFORMATION

SCIENTIFIC SESSION FORMAT DESCRIPTION

The 60-Minute symposium format should be focused on topics and projects with broad appeal and relevancy. A panel is generally composed of three speakers giving 10-minute presentations followed by a 30-minute period for audience questions and

comments. Presenters have the options and are encouraged to craft more audience interaction into the session.

Experts from different facets of the science and technology community assemble to compare notes during discussions about groundbreaking multi-disciplinary research that advances knowledge and responds to the needs of society. Scientific Sessions are required to have one (1) organizer, three (3) speakers, and one (1) moderator. Speakers cannot all be from the same institution.

The 2024 Annual Meeting will be held in-person only.

Once the session proposal is accepted, in order to participate in the meeting, all panelists will need to sign a recording waiver.

Successful proposals are characterized by:

- Newsworthy and timely topics with broad relevance for the interdisciplinary AAAS audience.
- Representation of the diversity of science and society (including disciplinary field, gender, ethnicity, geographic location, and institution).
- Demonstration of ground-breaking research results and evidence of conclusions, or interesting new angles for approaching a topic.
- Proposals that cover policy are expected to primarily focus on the cutting-edge aspects of the scientific research driving policy in that particular subject, rather than focusing wholly on the issues beyond the science.
- Proposals focused on promoting specific projects or programs are discouraged, unless they significantly emphasize broader applicability.

AUDIENCE

Based on previous registration data, here is the overall profile for Annual Meeting attendees:

- The top work sector categories are 60% from the academic sector, 11% Government, and 9% Research. AAAS is very interested in receiving proposals that draw from the Industry sector.
- 85% have advanced degrees, with 50% holding PhDs
- 50% identified as Male, 45% as Female and 5% Non-binary/prefer not to answer
- The age groups are equally spread between the following groups: 25-34 years, 35 to 44 years, 45 to 54 years, 55 to 64 years, and 65 years or over.

SESSION SET UP

Each session room will be set with:

- One head table for 3 with table microphone(s)
- One podium with microphone and presentation laptop
- One projector and accompanying screen
- One audience microphone for audience questions and comments
- The audience will be set for a mixture of round tables and theater to encourage meaningful discussion.

Any additional equipment will be the responsibility of the organizer to secure.

February 17:	Scientific session, lightning talks and workshop proposal submission sites open.
April 8:	Proposal reviewer sign up site opens.
April 25:	Deadline for sign-up to be a scientific session proposal reviewer.
May 6:	Deadline for submitting scientific session and lightning talk proposals.
May 15:	Scientific and lightning talk proposal review opens.
May 30:	Scientific and lightning talk proposal review closes.
Late June and Early July:	Program Committee meets to select scientific sessions and lightning talk proposals.
Late July:	Session organizers receive accept, conditionally accept or decline notifications that include instructions about next steps.

COMMUNICATION

To receive notifications and updates, please ensure that the following email addresses will not be blocked: meetings@aaas.org, jmfreeman@aaas.org, jstevens@aaas.org, kklyberg@aaas.org, nmaylett@aaas.org, and aaas@confex.com.

NOTE ON LANGUAGE: For language choice, use American English spelling and translations. Spell out all abbreviations and acronyms.

**AAAS reserves the right to edit all submissions for publication, as they will be published in the online meeting program, pocket guide, and app. Modifications are sometimes made to improve clarity and encourage attendance.*

FIVE STEPS TO FOLLOW TO SUBMIT A SCIENTIFIC SESSION PROPOSAL

Read these instructions carefully first, then click the “submit” button in the sidebar. Incomplete proposals will be eliminated from consideration.

1. SET UP PROPOSAL

Past Annual Meeting programs are archived at <http://www.aaas.org/annual-meeting/archives> and can be a useful source of information.

Proposed Title (*Maximum of 80 characters including spaces*)

- Avoid jargon; keep in mind that session attendees may be non-specialists.
- Ensure that a keyword for your presentation is used in the first three words in the title.

SUBMITTER EMAIL ADDRESS

Please enter a valid email address where messages can be received and accessed year-round. The submitter will immediately receive an email confirming the initiation of a session proposal and provided a link for returning to and editing your submission. **Note that the session organizer will become the primary point of contact for the session rather than the submitter and will receive all notifications post-submission.**

CATEGORY SELECTION

Please select the Primary and Secondary Subject Category that best describe the overall nature of the proposal. This information is used to ensure that reviewers are assigned correctly and so that the Program Committee can generate broader scientific session tracks or sub-themes.

MEMBER AFFILIATION

Select up to three (3) AAAS Sections that are related to your proposal's disciplinary areas. After you have confirmed proposal submission, a link to your proposal will be sent to section officers for informational purposes. The list of AAAS Sections can be found [here](#).

SESSION DESCRIPTION (*Maximum of 1500 characters including spaces*)

- Provide a clear, succinct summary of your proposed scientific session **as it would appear in the meeting program.**
- Emphasize what the audience should take away from the session.
- Do **not** name speakers or the titles of their presentations in the synopsis.
- Avoid the use of report or book references, abbreviations, or technical jargon.

NEWSWORTHINESS

Highlight how the material would be newsworthy. Is it relevant to current events? Is the discovery new or unexpected? How could it impact the public's lives?

RELEVANCE TO THEME OR TO THE AUDIENCE (*Maximum of 500 characters including spaces*)

Describe how the proposed scientific session relates to the theme or to the AAAS Annual Meeting audience (up to 500 characters, including spaces). Please note, the Program Committee will consider proposals that are not directly related to the theme if they involve ground-breaking areas of research, new and exciting developments, or cross-cutting activities in support of science, technology, and education.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

AAAS requires clear disclosures from all presenters at its Annual Meeting regarding any affiliations, funding sources, or financial holdings that might raise questions of bias or be perceived to have potentially influenced presentation content.

Organizers will be asked to confirm that there are no known conflicts of interest for the panelists or list conflicts of interest. Panelists will also be asked to provide this information at a later date.

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

AAAS selection process leans towards proposals that bring together a variety of points of view on the material presented in the session. This includes scientific discipline, gender, race and ethnicity, institutions, and geographic locations.

Confirm that all of the following categories of diversity are represented by panelists in the proposed session:

- Scientific discipline
- Gender
- Race and ethnicity
- Institution
- Geographical area
- Career stage

2. KEYWORDS

To significantly assist in finding the appropriate peer reviewers for your proposal, please select between three (3) and five (5) keywords that best describe your proposal. To improve matching, there is now only one write-in option. The list of keywords can be found [here](#).

3. SECTIONS

Select up to three (3) AAAS Sections that are related to your proposal's disciplinary areas. After you have confirmed proposal submission, a link to your proposal will be sent to section officers for informational purposes. The full list of AAAS Sections is available [here](#).

4. ADD/EDIT PEOPLE

SCHEDULING NOTE:

When selecting your (1) moderator and three (3) speakers, please ensure they are available to participate at *any time* from Friday, February 16 through Saturday February 17, 2024. Once the scientific session schedule is announced in the fall of 2023, it will be considered final.

SUPPORT NOTE:

Scientific session presenters and organizers attend the AAAS Annual Meeting at their own expense using their own equipment or use resources secured by the organizers. By submitting a proposal, organizers and presenters agree to register and pay meeting registration fees if the proposal is accepted.

TRAVEL SUPPORT NOTE:

Organizers, speakers, and others participate in the program at their own expense or use funding secured by an organizer from a source that has been vetted by AAAS Meetings to avoid conflicts of interest. As a nonprofit organization, AAAS does not have the financial resources to fund travel expenses for the more than 1,000 program participants at each year's meeting. However, one of the 24 disciplinary sections of AAAS may choose to authorize travel support for speakers, organizers, and discussants from their modest budgets. Funding is limited and typically provides partial support.

EXPLANATION OF ROLES

Scientific Sessions are required to have three (3) speakers and one (1) moderator present in person. Each talk can only have one speaker. Speakers cannot all be from the same institution.

Speakers (3 required)

(3) Individuals who actively present their research and participate in-person at the Annual Meeting.

Organizer (1 required)

The organizer is the primary person responsible for shaping the topic, coordination, and recruitment of participants. **The organizer serves as the primary contact for all communications with AAAS Meetings staff and must ensure that participants receive all information relevant to their inclusion in the proposal and in the meeting if the proposal is accepted.** After proposal acceptance, the organizer is responsible for providing, in a timely manner, information regarding any changes in participants and reason for the change to AAAS for final approval. No changes will be made to the session unless communicated directly by the organizer. There should only be one (1) organizer per session.

If applicable, indicate the primary AAAS Section affiliation of the session organizer.

Co-Organizer (optional)

Co-organizers may assist the organizer of a 60-minute session with lining up speakers and ensuring that deadlines are met by session participants. There is a maximum of **one (1) co-organizer** allowed in addition to the mandatory organizer.

Moderator (1 required)

An individual who participates as host, interviewer, and facilitator in the live session at the Annual Meeting. The moderator monitors the time, pace, and tone of the session and facilitates the Q&A part of the session. There should be only one (1) moderator per session.

Information an organizer will need to provide for a successful proposal:

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

You will be required to enter the following information for each individual:

- Name (confirm correct spelling)
- Email address (confirm address where messages can be received year-round)
- Identify whether individual is a member of AAAS

- Job Title
- Status (Confirmed or Invited)
- Affiliation (primary institution; confirm correct spelling)
- Complete mailing address
- Telephone number

AAAS needs this to:

- Confirm participation and registration for the meeting;
- Communicate with speakers who apply for travel assistance;
- Or send speakers information about AAAS Annual Meeting Newsroom requests.

In order to participate in Annual Meeting , all panelists will need to agree to a recording waiver.

PRESENTATION DESCRIPTIONS

For each speaker, include:

- A talk title (maximum 80 characters including spaces) describing the proposed content or perspective of the presentation. **Each talk title must be unique to that speaker.**
- A talk summary (maximum 500 characters including spaces) describing the proposed content or perspective of the presentation in a few sentences). **This is crucial to reviewers' understanding of why you are proposing a particular speaker.**
- Please do not submit CVs, biographical information, or formal abstracts for the presenters (beyond the short presentation description). While recognizing that some changes will occur, the committee reserves the right to reconsider sessions if there are speaker substitutions after acceptance of the original proposal.

STATUS: INVITED OR CONFIRMED:

“Invited” means that you have contacted the speaker, and your invitation is under consideration.

“Confirmed” means the speaker has responded to your invitation and confirmed both that they are available during the dates of the meeting and will participate if the proposal is accepted. After the program decisions are made, AAAS will send notifications to all speakers, whether invited or confirmed, to verify their status and request final confirmation.

Note that sessions with confirmed panelists are viewed as stronger than those where panelists have only been invited.

DISCIPLINARY SECTIONS CONSULTED? (*optional*)

Indicate if your proposal has been discussed with an AAAS Section. Consultation does not imply support or endorsement of a proposal. A list of sections and contacts are available at www.aaas.org/sections.

5. CONFIRMATION

Once you have entered the required information for Steps 1-4, review all the information you have submitted. If you need to make corrections, click on the appropriate step link in the left frame. Otherwise, click the “Submit” button at the bottom of the page. To log out, simply close your browser window. If you run into any problems, please email your questions or comments using the hyperlink for Technical Support that appears in the Scientific Session Control Panel.

Additional Note: Once a proposal has been accepted into the program, any change to the session topic or participants must be approved by AAAS.

PROPOSAL REVIEW CONSIDERATIONS: SCIENTIFIC SESSIONS

The following are considerations provided to reviewers. Organizers should carefully follow the instructions for submitting their proposals, which will be evaluated for completeness and clarity. Incomplete proposals (including missing descriptions for the presentations) will not be reviewed.

1. Evaluate the proposal in general:

- Is information adequate for evaluation?
- Does the proposal clearly describe the session?
- Is it well organized and coherent?

2. Evaluate the topic:

- Is the topic timely and newsworthy?
- Is the topic too narrow or technical for a multidisciplinary audience?

3. Evaluate the content:

- Does it offer a unique opportunity to AAAS attendees that would not be available in another venue?
- Will speakers present topics from which dynamic discussions can develop?
- Consider overall merit and the importance of including the proposed session in the program.

Speakers should refrain from simply “teaching” the audience basic science and **proposals focused on promoting specific projects or programs are discouraged unless they significantly emphasize broader applicability. Strong proposals include a demonstration of research results and evidence of conclusions**, rather than descriptions of projects or programs in earlier stages of development.

4. Evaluate the participants:

- Can they speak authoritatively on their topic?
- Is the panel composed of diverse organizations and institutions?
- Are the presentations integrated and coherent as a group?
- Does the panel present a balanced perspective?
- Are they all “invited” or “confirmed”?

5. Overall Judgement:

Finally, make an overall judgment about the relative merit of each proposal, expressed as a rank ordering of all the proposals you review, with 1 as the best, 2 the second best, and so on. This rank should be based on the previous four criteria, but it need not be from a mechanical arithmetic average of your communicated scores. Different criteria may figure more or less strongly in your judgment of each proposal, based on the particular nature of that proposal, and this can be reflected in your overall rankings.

QUESTIONS?

Email us at meetings@aaas.org.