

## aes25 Session Chair Briefing Notes

These notes will help you understand your role as a **Session Chair** at the aes25 International Evaluation Conference.

Good chairing is vital to ensuring sessions run smoothly, stay on time, and provide a valuable learning experience. We truly appreciate your contribution.

---

### Before the day

- **Familiarise yourself with the aes25 app** - Log in and ensure your profile is up to date, add a photo and allow sharing of your information.
  - **Find the session you're chairing in the agenda** - Note the presentations, [presentation formats](#), names and running time.
  - **Check the presentation(s) in your session.** Confirm presenters and presentation type (listed in the abstract).
  - **Read the abstracts for each presentation.** Prepare a list of the speakers.
  - **Familiarise yourself with the room and its location** check the map to see where your room is located in the National Convention Centre.
- 

### Before Your Session

- **Arrive early** – at least **15 minutes before start time**. Confirm the room (always check the **agenda in the aes25 app** for updates).
  - **Meet the speakers** – introduce yourself, confirm their presentation order (listed in the app) and help them feel at ease.
  - **Check the technology** – each room has a lectern, presentation computer, screens, microphones and AV support. Speakers' slides are pre-loaded; you can access them by clicking the presenter's name on the session slide. Locate a roving technician if issues arise.
  - **Seating** – where possible, have speakers sit together in the front row. Sit closest to the lectern so you can move easily to open and close the session.
  - **Know the format** – sessions run for 60, 90 or 120 minutes and may include:
    - 1–4 presentations, or
    - 1 presentation plus Ignite presentations (up to 7 mini presentations).
  - **Confirm timing** – confirm how long each speaker will present and how questions will be handled. (Note that some of the panels will have a moderator who will manage the Q&A).
- 

### I. Opening the Session

1. **Acknowledge Country** ([see cultural protocols](#)).
2. **Welcome the audience** – give your name and affiliation.

3. **Introduce the session focus** – what theme or topic the presentations will cover.
4. **Housekeeping reminders** – phones on silent, format of presentation, timing of Q&A.

**Example:**

“Welcome to this session on using surveys as data collection tools. My name is Seuss I am, from the Research Centre for Green Eggs and Ham. We have two short paper presentations, with 15 minutes for questions after each presentation. I’ll help keep us on time. Please turn phones to silent.”

---

## **2. During the Session**

### **Introducing Speakers**

- Introduce each speaker and their affiliation (**presenters are listed in the abstract**) (**name, affiliation and presentation name listed in the session information**). Note, the session information will contain everyone who contributed to the presentation but only introduce the actual presenters.
- **Only listed presenters (in the abstract)** should present unless previously agreed.

### **Ignite Presentations**

- Introduce all Ignite speakers first, in order.
- Each Ignite talk is **5 minutes, 20 auto-advancing slides**.
- Allow a brief Q&A **after the full Ignite block**.

### **Managing Time**

- Use a visible or agreed-upon signal (e.g., pen tap) to warn presenters.
- If needed, politely but firmly step in, thank the speaker and move to the next.

### **Facilitating Discussion**

- Keep Q&A courteous, professional and brief.
  - Repeat questions into the microphone so everyone in the room can hear.
  - Encourage follow-up outside the session if time is short.
- 

## **3. Closing the Session**

- Ensure the session ends at the correct time.
  - Thank the speakers and the audience.
  - Remind attendees to **provide their feedback** in the aes25 app (session survey)
  - If a speaker is absent, **keep the scheduled order**; do not move presentations forward. Use gaps for short discussion only.
  - If there multiple presentations and people are moving in and out of the room, ask that the audience leave the room quickly and quietly.
-

#### 4. Audio Visual

- Each room includes:
    - Screen, lectern, presentation computer, microphones, AV system
  - If AV fails, prompt speakers to continue until it's resolved.
  - Find the roaming AV technician for support
  - Microphones will remain on (if available in your room). It is unnecessary to turn them off. In the unlikely event that any of the equipment fails, speakers are requested to continue with their presentations whilst the technician rectifies the problem. It may be necessary for you to prompt the speaker to continue, if this should occur. A technician will be available in order to assist with any audio-visual requirements.
- 

#### 5. Cultural Protocols

The conference begins with a **Welcome to Country**. As chair, you are expected to **open your session with an Acknowledgement of Country**.

**Canberra is located on the Country of the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples.**

---

#### 6. Presentation Formats

##### Short Paper Presentation

Session time: 30 minutes

**Presentation length:** maximum 15 minutes | **Total duration:** 25 minutes

**Format:** A formal presentation with time for questions from the audience at the end of the session.

##### Long Paper Presentation

Session time: 60 minutes

**Presentation length:** maximum 30 minutes | **Total duration:** 50 minutes

**Format:** A formal presentation (lecture) usually given by one person, with up to 30 minutes for questions from the audience at the end.

##### Panel Presentation

Session time: 60 minutes

**Presentation length:** maximum 35 minutes | **Total duration:** 50 minutes

**Format:** The panel may feature: up to three panelists (plus a moderator) The final 15 minutes are allocated for audience questions.

##### Skill Building Presentation

Session time: 60 minutes

**Total duration:** 50 minutes

**Format:** In a skill building session, the presenter delivers a demonstration or mini-workshop.

### **Exploration Presentation**

**Session time:** 60 minutes

**Presentation length:** 50 minutes

**Format:** A **highly interactive session** that **engages participants** in exploring a topic, issue or question through discussion, participatory activities or facilitated dialogue. **The focus is on inquiry and reflection rather than delivering a set presentation.** Presenters introduce the topic, outline its purpose, and **guide attendees through a structured exploration** that draws on their insights and experiences. Information or findings should be fed back to participants during and/or after the session.

### **Ignite Presentation**

Session time: 60 minutes (multiple presentations in one session)

**Presentation length:** maximum 5 minutes | **Total session duration:** 6 minutes

**Format:** Ignite presentations use 20 slides that auto-advance every 15 seconds. The result is a short, insightful and informative presentation, with no Q&A. For examples of the format see <http://www.ignitetalks.io/>.

### **Big Room Presentation**

Session time: 90 minutes

Duration: Flexible, interactive and generate wide discussion

**Format:** Big Room Sessions are held in the conference's largest venue - a theatre-style space set in cabaret format to encourage delegate interaction. These sessions are designed for big ideas and bold delivery, offering presenters the opportunity to engage a large audience through dynamic formats such as keynote-style presentations, interactive workshops, facilitated discussions, or creative hybrids. Presenters are encouraged to think beyond traditional formats and make full use of the stage, space and time available to inspire, challenge, and captivate attendees.

### **Contact & Support**

For questions or issues ask onsite staff and/or email [aes25@aes.asn.au](mailto:aes25@aes.asn.au)

Thank you for helping make the **aes25 International Evaluation Conference** a success!