Conference presentations
SUBMISSION GUIDELINES AND CRITERIA

The following guidelines have been developed to assist you with submitting a conference presentation abstract proposal for the aes25 International Evaluation Conference.

Submission deadline: **12 March 2025**

Contents

Presentation type formats

2025 conference presentations are being delivered face-to-face in Canberra, Australia.

The following presentation formats apply to conference presentation proposals. Applicants are asked to choose the most suitable format in making their submission.

1. Short Paper

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.
Objective	To expand audience horizons about evaluation's possibilities by showing your innovative work, without covering all details or explaining in full.
Content	Short papers present either: • an innovative evaluation or aspect of an evaluation offering fresh insights, or • a new idea, approach, or insight relevant to evaluators. They are concise and focused, highlighting key findings, methods, and significance clearly within a limited time.

2. Long Paper

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.
Objective	Critical, in-depth engagement on a topic to provide information and insights, deep reflection and stimulate discussion using targeted and skilfully selected content on the topic. More in-depth information may cover core findings, methodology and significance.
Content	The session may focus on: - New or better ways to improve part of the evaluation process or - Identification of a new or emerging issue in the field of evaluation that is driving significant change or - Explain the rationale, process, benefits, and challenges of a new evaluation method or data approach or - a critique of an evaluation methodology or method, or - approaches to working with specific stakeholder groups or in specific contexts. Tip: If you have multiple experts on the same topic and the value of the presentation would come from conversations between these experts, please submit a panel session instead.

3. Panel

Presentation length	Maximum 35 minutes Total duration: 50 minutes
Format	The panel may feature: • up to three panellists (plus a moderator) who have challenged conventional evaluation methods or navigated complex terrains in innovative ways, bringing diverse perspectives, disciplines, or roles to respectfully explore a key theme; or • two experts with distinct, original, or opposing views engaging in a conversation on a specific topic. The final 15 minutes are allocated for audience questions.
Objective	Bring together a lively and thought-provoking discussion between insightful evaluators, commissioners, and stakeholders that challenge conventional thinking, led by a moderator to explore ideas beyond the usual perspectives.
Content	The format may cover: • identification of unconscious biases, beliefs and assumptions together bringing innovative ideas; or • debating a topic; or • exploring concepts or critically reflecting from multiple perspectives, or • evaluators, commissioners, program managers and service users reflecting on learnings from practice. Panel abstracts can include names and organisations of presenters.

4. Skill Building Session

Presentation length	50 minutes
Format	In a skill building session, the presenter delivers a demonstration or mini-workshop. Ideally, the session will enable attendees to practice a skill or use a concept or tool. In some cases, the session may be a demonstration of a concept or tool.
Objective	To rapidly build skills through teaching and applying a specific skill, concept or tool.
Content	*Skill building sessions need a clear learning objective. Skill building sessions can focus on:* • foundational evaluation skills and capabilities • advanced evaluation capabilities • new tools.
Abstract	*In your submission, identify:* • the learning objective for the session • why this skill, tool or concept is important • how you will teach the skill within the allocated time frame.

5. Exploration Session – NEW FOR 2025

Presentation length	50 minutes
Format	We invite you to nominate a topic that can shift thinking about what is possible and takes the audience 'beyond the bubble'. This format is suited to facilitators with a topic to debate, a big question to raise or an issue to address that will help develop dialogue among the evaluation community. The facilitators should genuinely be open to exploring issues and hearing alternative viewpoints, accepting that they do not have the answers and are seeking input from conference attendees. Facilitators should briefly introduce the topic, why it matters and set the parameters for discussion. Consider also how you will feed back the findings from the session to participants in the session and/or after the session.
Objective	To rapidly build knowledge through fostering attendees' engagement in rich discussions with each other. A quarter or conference attendees are intermediate to advanced practitioners who bring a broader and deeper repertoire of skills and knowledge. They are likely to be a key target group with the appetite to go 'beyond the bubble'.
Content	Have a clear objective of what you are hoping to achieve through the interactive nature of the session.
Abstract	In your submission, identify: - the topic and purpose for discussion - its relationship to the conference sub-themes (This type of session is inherently connected to the conference theme of 'beyond the bubble'). - how the exploration session will benefit participants and the evaluation community - how information will be fed back during and after the session. In your justification statement, note your experience in facilitating sessions of this format. On acceptance of a proposal for an exploratory session, the aes25 committee may wish to collaborate with the facilitators

to suggest amendments to increase alignment with other conference content.

Note: This session will be presented in a room set up in either cabaret or theatre format. Due to logistical constraints we are unable to accommodate requests for alternative room setups.

6. Ignite 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/.
Objective	Deliver rapid-fire, sharp insights into the theory and practice of evaluation, making compelling points that capture the audience's attention and push them beyond their usual perspectives.
Content	Ignite presentations cover up to three points strongly related to a central idea that every slide and every sentence supports. Ignite sessions may focus on: • telling the story of an aspect of evaluation or • sharing an entertaining or interesting story that explores new perspectives and challenges comfort zones • takes a fresh look at a tool or technique.

7. Big Room Session

Presentation length	50 minutes
Format	Big Room Sessions were a new offering in 2024. They offer an exciting opportunity to take the stage in the conference's largest venue—a grand theatre designed for plenary keynotes and large-scale presentations. We are open to suggestions for different structures or formats, noting that as it is set up in cabaret format (allowing for audience interaction) with a stage there is scope for workshop-style activities that require open space. This space is perfect for impactful presentations that captivate a wide audience and make use of this space.
Objective	Your stage, your vision, utilise the space, attract a large audience and generate discussion on topics or themes that are of wide appeal to the conference audience there's plenty of room to reimagine how you engage, inspire, and inform.
Content	There is no fixed requirement in terms of content – we are open to innovative ideas or suggestions. Due to the size of the space, you should propose ideas for content that will appeal widely, but also be suitable for lengths of time that are longer than some other formats. You may cover a variety of themes – our intent is not to limit ideas or proposals – we encourage you to think big and bold! *Note: The Big Room Session proposals will be reviewed by the conference committee against the review criteria.*

Abstract proposal requirements

	Conference presentation	Ignite presentation
Title	The title should be as brief as possible but long enough to clearly indicate the nature of the presentation (maximum 20 words). Only capitalise the first letter of the title and any proper nouns. Avoid abbreviations and acronyms. The title will be used for publication in the program.	The title should be as brief as possible but long enough to clearly indicate the nature of the Ignite (maximum 20 words). Only capitalise the first letter of the title and any proper nouns. Avoid abbreviations and acronyms. The title will be used for publication in the program.
Abstract	Maximum 300 words Presentations abstracts are a summary of the content of your session and will appear in the conference online program. Abstracts should be written in a concise and appealing way that provides a 'pitch' for why people should come to your session. Your abstract should clearly: • explain what your topic is • explain the objective of the session and the importance of the topic • outline the core argument and the key (e.g. three) points or messages that will be shared in the session • outline the design of the session to meet the objectives of the session type. When completing the online form you will also be asked to identify your target audience (foundational, intermediate, advanced, with the ability to select up to 2 audiences).	Maximum 100 words Abstracts for Ignite sessions only need to describe the topic and up to 3 key points that will be made.

	Conference presentation	Ignite presentation
Justification statement	Maximum 300 words All proposals require a justification statement. This is your opportunity to persuade reviewers that your session is worthy of a place on the program. Please read and address the selection criteria. The justification statement outlines: • Why you have chosen the particular style of session to achieve your objective • Why the objective of the session is beneficial for attendees • The session's contribution to the conference theme, one or more sub-themes • How the topic and session contributes to building or strengthening the field of evaluation (e.g. implications for evaluation theory and/or practice) • Outlines the presenters' experience in facilitating sessions of this format.	Not required. Please type N/A in the field.

Assessment criteria

In preparing your proposal's Justification Statement please ensure you address the following criteria for assessment:

Criteria A *Relevance /Importance to AES Audience*	The proposal should address topics that are of importance to a broad audience of AES members interested in discussing evaluation theory and practice and, if accepted, be likely to attract an audience.
Criteria B *Relevance /Importance to overall conference theme and to one or more of the sub-themes*	The proposal **MUST** align with the conference theme and one of the sub-themes – the relevance and contribution to the theme and sub-themes needs to be explicit and clear in the proposal. One or more sub-themes will be identified when submitting and used to stream the presentations.
Criteria C *Technical quality*	A proposal should meet high standards of technical quality in terms of methodological, conceptual and logical rigor.
Criteria D *Contribution to evaluation methods, theories, policies and practices*	Proposals presenting the results, findings, and circumstances of a specific evaluation should describe the ways in which it it contributes to g the broader evaluation knowledge-base or to skill building.
Criteria E *Meets presentation format*	Meets the requirements of the presentation format.

With the exception of Ignite and Big Room sessions, all conference abstract proposals are double-blind peer reviewed.

NOTE: No individual may present in more than three conference sessions, including as a co-presenter.

Ignite sessions have a separate review process. Presenters are asked to submit a title for their talk and a 100 word 'pitch'. The proposal will be reviewed against the criteria "Relevance to AES audience".

Note: The written 'pitch' does not require a justification statement.

Tips

When preparing your abstract refer to the assessment criteria.

To aid readability and comprehension please also ensure abstracts:
- do not include acronyms, unless they are very well known internationally.
- do not include jargon terms or words that will not be understood by many people.
- are well written, do not have spelling or grammatical errors.

All abstracts will be edited to conform to the Australian Style Guide and Macquarie Dictionary. If you have access to those resources, please comply with the conventions. Use the Australian or UK English version of spell check.

If accepted, presenting authors may be asked to edit the abstract before inclusion in the conference program.

Supporting resources

The format will guide the structure of your proposal and presentation. Here's a short selection of resources to support you in developing your session.

- AEA's Potent Presentation Initiative – resources to support conference presentation messaging, design and delivery

- P21 Messaging Model handout. If following this, short papers of 20 minutes would be structured as: background (1 minute), bottom line (4 minutes), explanation (10 minutes), so what? (3 minutes), call to action (2 minutes). Double time estimates for long papers of 40 minutes.

- How to plan a lively panel discussion

- Best practices for engaging and dynamic sessions

- What are panel discussions and how to plan them effectively?

- Liz Smith's tips on Ignite presentations

- Giving Ignite presentations

- How to give a great Ignite talk

aes25.aes.asn.au/call-for-proposals