
AMIA 2020

Session/Workshop Proposal FAQ

The goal of the AMIA Conference is to present a broad-based program that speaks to a wide range of attendees with a balance of theory and practice, inviting new ideas and concepts that stimulate additional interest, involvement, and educational benefit. In keeping with ongoing membership discussions about diversity and inclusion, we urge proposers to use AMIA Conference sessions as an opportunity to include new voices and offer diverse viewpoints.

What are Streams?

Program Streams are curated programming of 3-5 sessions of 60 minutes each with a common theme that are featured on a single day. Two streams have been identified for the 2020 Conference: [Content as Data: Archival Approaches to Computational Analysis](#) and [Borders and Borderlands: Conversations and Documentation](#).

Can I submit my proposal for a Program Stream?

Yes. Most sessions in a stream are from proposals. You'll be asked on the Proposal Form if you are proposing your session/workshop for a stream or part of the general (non-stream) sessions.

If I submit my proposal for a Program Stream, what does that mean?

Curators of each Program Stream will review all proposals submitted for the stream and will consider the comments from the Peer Review Panel. The Stream Curators will accept or decline proposals for each Program Stream, independent of the Conference Committee.

If I submit my proposal for a Program Stream and it is not accepted, will it still be considered for the Conference program?

It is unlikely: streams devote a significant part of the total conference program to a single topic so it is unusual for additional sessions on the topic to be scheduled outside of the stream.

If my proposal is for the same topic as the Program Stream(s) and I submit for the General Sessions proposals, will it still be considered?

It is very unlikely: streams devote a significant part of the total conference program to a single topic so it is unusual for additional sessions on the topic to be scheduled outside of the stream.

There are other “areas of interest” listed on the proposal – does my session have to fit into one of these?

No. Although these areas have been identified as areas of emphasis for this year’s conference, all topics are welcome.

The Proposal

What makes for a good session topic?

Be focused – but not too focused. There are two extremes: either the topic is so broad and general that it doesn’t really say anything in particular, or it is so specific that there isn’t a broad audience for it.

What makes for a good proposal?

In the case of a proposal, usually the more specific, the better. Clarity in the description and abstract, specific speakers and topics all indicate that a lot of thought and planning have gone into the proposal – two of the biggest keys to a successful session.

What will Peer Reviewers look for in the proposal?

Peer Reviewers comment on the overall quality of the proposal and are also asked to consider the following:

- Is the topic timely? Does it reflect current discussions in the field?
- Is there new information being presented?
- Is there an effort to bring in new voices on the subject?

- How broad an audience does this topic speak to?
- Has the topic been discussed already or been repeated frequently?
- Is there a speaker outlined that is crucial to the success of the panel?
- If a single presenter, does the proposal outline a clear perspective?
- If a panel presentation, is a balanced point of view presented or are there other areas to be considered

What makes for a good title?

The more direct/explanatory you can make your title, the better. It is important that the title reflect the session content. For example, "Strategies for implementing sustainability into your organization" is a lot better than "Corporate Sustainability." **Remember: all titles must be 10 words or less.**

Do I need to have speakers confirmed when I submit my panel idea?

Yes, you need to have commitments from your speakers before submitting your proposal. The Peer Reviewers are considering the speakers you've outlined during their review. Please note: speakers may only present at the conference twice. If your presentation includes speakers that are essential to the presentation, please note that in your description.

How long is each panel/programming session?

All session slots are 60 minutes. If you are proposing a 25 minute paper or report, your presentation will be paired with another paper/report to fill a 60 minute slot if selected. Your presentation will still be 25 minutes, but will share that 60 minute session slot with another presenter, so the presentation cannot exceed 25 minutes.

What is the difference between the different types of sessions?

There are a number of different types of sessions, and the proposal form will ask you to indicate which type you are proposing. Here is a breakdown of session types:

- **Report or Paper Presentation.** Fully prepared papers/reports of 15-25 minutes each that may include a comment-and-discussion period. Presentations are scheduled for 25 minute slots. Be aware that the presentation time for a 25 minute session includes introductions and Q&A. Two 25 minute sessions are scheduled in each 60 minute time slot so it is critical that each presentation is fully contained within the 25 minutes allocated.
- **Panel Discussion.** A 60 minute session consisting of a panel of three to four individuals who discuss a variety of theories or perspectives on the given topic.
- **Incubator Session.** Open session of 60 minutes, consisting of two presentations of ten minutes each that describe project, research, or collaboration initiatives in their developing or formative stages, and including at least forty minutes for audience feedback and discussion.
- **Skillshare Session.** A 60 minute session of informal presentations on a general subject area, where participants share what they know. Proposals in this category must include a facilitator who will coordinate the session and any discussion.
- **Lightning Talks.** 9-10 lively and informative five-minute talks in a 60-minute session format. The session chair secures commitments from speakers and compiles all presentation slides to ensure timely speaker transitions. Proposals in this category may suggest recommended presenters, but commitments should be secured soon after the proposal is accepted. Lightning Talks should be on a focused topic.
- **Screening Session.** A 60-90 minute evening screening presentation. Screening sessions are held at the hotel, using the same digital presentation equipment as the daily sessions. The screening can be a single feature or a collection of

shorts/clips and should have a speaker(s) presentation for introduction and context. Indicate the run time of the screening in your description.

- **Alternative Format.** Suggest an alternative format or create your own. Alternative format sessions may take a variety of forms. Propose a moderated debate offering opposing points of view, or an “experiential” format involving simulation, role play, or games to convey key principles and learning objectives. We welcome your creative ideas about how your topic might best be addressed: the only caveat is that most rooms are set theatre style for the sessions. Proposals in this category must: 1) specify the format and session facilitator and 2) describe briefly how the format will enhance presentation of the material.

What is the difference between a session and a workshop?

Workshops are a half day or full day training usually designed to teach or refine skills. They are offered at a separate registration rate and must meet minimum attendance requirements. Typically, they are scheduled on the Tuesday or Wednesday preceding the Conference.

What is the difference between a DESCRIPTION and an ABSTRACT?

When you submit your proposal, you write up two different summaries of your presentation.

The reviewers of your proposal will base their evaluation on the 350-word session **description**. The main audience for the description are the Peer Reviewers and the Conference Committee members reviewing the proposals. The description gives you the chance to give the reviewers information about the topic, the speakers, and why the session is important to include in the program. Only the Peer Review Panel sees the session description.

The **abstract** is 150 words that will appear in the Conference program and online if your presentation is accepted. The main audience for this shorter summary is the Conference attendees who are trying to decide between multiple events on the program.

If my session is selected, does AMIA pay for my registration, travel, and lodging?

AMIA does not provide travel, lodging, or other financial compensation for panelists. If you are a non-member coming to the Conference to speak on a panel for the first time, we will offer you a complimentary one-day registration for the day you are speaking.

Is there funding available for my proposal?

There is some funding for proposals, though it is very limited. In the past, this has included shipping special equipment, offering handouts, renting a venue, and some travel funding (it is rarely enough to support full travel funding). Because funding is stretched to accommodate as many sessions as possible, the amount allocated to your proposal may not be the full amount you have requested.

It's important to be specific in the proposal if you are requesting funding: include the amount, its use, and the impact of the funding on the session.

What equipment can speakers expect to have at their sessions?

Each room will be equipped with a microphone, PowerPoint capability, and wireless Internet connection. We do not supply laptops.

How many people are expected to attend the 2020 AMIA Conference?

We are expecting between 600 and 650 people to attend.

Who can propose sessions and workshops?

Anyone can submit a proposal for a session or workshop. Proposals can come from members or non-members, suppliers, vendors, academics, researchers, archivists, and anyone working in the field.

As a vendor or supplier, can I submit a proposal?

Of course! While all sessions are non-commercial and cannot focus on a specific product or service, we have had truly excellent presentations and case studies from our vendor and supplier partners.

Are correct spelling, grammar and punctuation important?

They absolutely can impact how a reviewer perceives your proposal. You should take time to proofread your entry before hitting the 'submit' button.

Does AMIA comp the registration for speakers?

No. But if a speaker is not an AMIA member and speaking for the first time, AMIA will offer a one day registration as a way of welcoming them to the annual conference and offering them an opportunity to participate.

The Proposal Selection Process

How many sessions are accepted?

About 32 hours of programming is accepted. Typically, the Committee receives more than double the number of proposals that can be accepted.

Who will be reviewing session proposals?

All proposals are peer-reviewed by a panel chosen from the AMIA membership, including representatives from each AMIA Committee, who possess a broad range of expertise. The Conference Committee uses the ratings from the Peer Review Panel to schedule the conference.

Do the categories I check matter?

Very much so. The Conference Committee uses the Peer Review Panel's notes to program the best balance of sessions and workshops. The categories you check will

help the Peer Reviewers consider their comments, and will help the Conference Committee in balancing the final program.

What does Peer Review consider?

Peer Reviewers comment on the overall quality of the proposal and consider these things:

- Is the topic timely? Does it reflect current discussions in the field?
- Is there new information being presented?
- Is there an effort to bring in new voices on the subject?
- How broad an audience does this topic speak to?
- Has the topic been discussed already or been repeated frequently?
- Is there a speaker outlined that is crucial to the success of the panel?
- If a single presenter, does the proposal outline a clear perspective?
- If a panel presentation, is a balanced point of view presented or are there other areas to be considered?

What happens after Peer Review?

After the panel has completed their assessment based on the outlined criteria, the Conference Committee begins their review. Then, relying on the comments from the Peer Reviewers, the Committee finalizes selections with the goal of creating a balanced program that speaks to a wide range of attendees.

How are sessions scheduled?

The Committee makes every effort to schedule sessions so that they don't overlap for similar audiences. That said, sometimes the scheduling needs of the chairs and speakers mean moving sessions around to fit and overlaps happen. This is one of the biggest challenges the Committee faces every year. If you have specific scheduling needs, please include them in the description of your session. This includes other potential sessions you know about that you do not want to overlap with yours.

Workshop Questions

The difference between workshops and sessions?

Workshops are half day or full day training usually designed to teach or refine skills. They are offered at a separate registration rate and must meet minimum attendance requirements. Typically, they are scheduled on the Tuesday or Wednesday preceding the Conference.

Another key difference is that workshops must be self-sustaining. A minimum number of attendees must sign up for a workshop in order for it to run. If a workshop is accepted, but the minimum number of registrants is not met by October 5th, the workshop will be cancelled.

Workshop costs – what can I include?

When you submit your workshop proposal, include all costs you anticipate for the workshop. This can include equipment, handouts, speaker funding, etc. If accepted, those costs will be used to determine the minimum number of attendees the workshop must have to be presented at the Conference.

How is the rate determined for a workshop?

Typically, a half day workshop is offered at \$50-75, with a full day at \$100-150. We will work with the workshop chairs to determine the final price based on the costs of the workshop. Using that final price, we can determine the minimum number of attendees.

How do you determine the minimum registration cutoff date for the workshops?

It is usually four weeks prior to the workshop date to allow attendees to finalize their travel plans in advance. It can shift a little due to holidays.

Session Proposal Timeline

Do I receive any kind of receipt letter when I submit a session?

Yes, after you submit your proposal online you will be sent a receipt letter within a few days indicating either that the proposal is complete or that additional information is needed.

When will I learn about the status of my proposal?

The Committee plans to make final decisions about session proposals by the end of June and will notify you of the outcome then.

Time Commitment

If my proposal is selected, what kind of preparation will I need to devote to my panel or presentation?

As a general rule, the more pre-event preparation you devote to your session, the better the session will be. Pre-event preparation means communicating with other speakers before the event to clarify the focus and structure of the session.

If my session proposal is accepted, how much work does this require?

The best panels and presentations are the ones where the organizer devotes time to organizing their session and discussions with their speakers.



What if I want to propose a poster?

Poster presentations will have a separate call for proposals. Please watch for the call or check back here for more information by early July.

PROPOSAL DEADLINE: APRIL 14, 2020

