ASTC 2026 Annual Conference
Call for Proposals FAQ

When are proposals due?

Proposals must be submitted by Tuesday, December 23, 2025, 11:59 p.m. PT. The full call for proposals, the proposal questions for each session type, and the submission link are available at https://www.astc.org/astc-2026/call-for-proposals/

Do I have to be a member of ASTC to submit a proposal?

No, affiliation with an ASTC-member organization is not required to submit a session proposal nor to be a presenter. We welcome—and encourage—submissions from those at all career stages and in all job roles. We especially welcome first-time submissions and proposals from people who have not previously attended an ASTC conference.

Can I make edits to my proposal once it has been submitted?

You can log in and update your proposal at any time until the portal closes on Tuesday, December 23, 2025, at 11:59 pm PST.

How many presenters can I include?

- Concurrent sessions should have no more than 5 presenters, including the moderator
- Lightning sessions are limited to 1-2 presenters
- Posters should have at least one person attend the conference in person, but your proposal may include additional authors who will not be present
- Extended Sessions and Expeditions should include a diverse collection of 4-5 presenters and facilitators who offer a deep dive into a particular topic
- Experimental Experiences should include 1-2 presenters

We encourage you to make use of the ASTC General Forum and Communities of Practice (https://community.astc.org/) to connect with others who may be interested in collaborating with you on a session proposal.

If I have a topic that isn't related to a particular community of practice, would any of the conference session selection committee members be able to give suggestions for potential panelists?

If your proposal isn't related to a Community of Practice, you can post in the General Forum (https://community.astc.org/), search for relevant job titles on LinkedIn, and lean on your own networks. You could also consider submitting your proposal as a lightning talk. As a lightning

talk, the proposal reviewers will do the matchmaking for you by grouping your proposals with others that address similar topics.

For concurrent sessions, would all 4-5 presenters be from our organization or from different organizations?

We encourage collaboration and including multiple perspectives in your sessions, so including presenters from different organizations would be a good way to do that.

For the concurrent session, would the moderator be included in the 4-5 presenters?

Yes, the moderator would be included as one of the presenters.

What is the maximum number of sessions an individual can be on as a presenter at the conference?

Presenters can present in a maximum of two different sessions. You may be part of more than two proposals; if more than two proposals that you are a part of are accepted, ASTC will work with you to select which you will present in and find alternate presenter(s) as needed.

How much information do I need to provide on the questions about the agenda?

We understand some elements may change between now and the conference in September. While you don't need to provide a minute-by-minute agenda of the session, we do want to see that you have thought about what the session will look like, what will be discussed, how the session will flow, and what type of interactivity might be included.

Would submitting proposals for an Extended Session and Expedition and a Concurrent Session covering the same topic be considered "double dipping?" Or if I'm not sure which type of session I should choose, e.g., lightning or poster, should I submit the same idea for both?

Yes, you can submit a proposal about the same topic in more than one session type; however, you will need to complete a separate form for each session type. When the CPPC reviews the proposals, they will flag that it was submitted as both. If it's accepted, it will be accepted as only one session.

Are there any topics or approaches you feel are currently underrepresented and would be especially welcome? Marketing? HR? Operations? Philanthropy and donor relations?

We welcome proposals on all of those topics! The Call for Proposals document includes a list of topics that attendees have requested. You'll find the full document at
https://www.astc.org/astc-2026/call-for-proposals/

When will I be notified if my proposal has been accepted?

You will be updated on the status of your proposal by the end of April 2026.

How many proposals are usually selected?

There are typically about 90 concurrent and lightning sessions in the final conference program. The total number of sessions accepted varies year to year, but not all proposals are accepted—there is a competitive review process.

If my proposal is accepted, do I need to register and pay for conference registration? And is there any financial support for presenters?

All session moderators and presenters must register for the conference and pay for their registration. The Todd Happer Memorial Scholarship Fund enables current and emerging leaders at small or remote science centers and museums to attend the ASTC Annual Conference. Also, be sure to register by the August 4th early deadline to save on the cost, and there is also a one-day rate if you would like to attend only on the day of your session. For more information about the Todd Happer Memorial Scholarship, visit https://www.astc.org/astc-2026/registration/financial-support/

Will the committee provide feedback if a proposal is not accepted?

Because of the volume of proposals we receive, we're not able to provide specific feedback for all of them. However, comments are collected during the review process, so if your proposal is not accepted, you can email sessions@astc.org to see if there was any feedback provided that may help you with future proposals.

How many people attend the conference sessions?

On average, 50-75 people attend the concurrent and lightning sessions; however, some sessions have been attended by up to 150 people. Extended sessions and expeditions will have a smaller audience, with a minimum of 15 attendees. All conference attendees will have access to the posters in the exhibit hall. Audiences for the experimental experiences will vary depending on the session format and location.