

Tips for Writing a Conference Proposal

Adapted from Cecilia Shelton, LaKela Atkinson, and Brandon Hardy's "IWCA 2018 Proposal Tips"

Session Formats

For NCWCA 2023, concurrent sessions will be 60 minutes. You are welcome to propose any of the following types of sessions:

- **Engaged Learning Experience:** Modeled after the CCCCs Engaged Learning Experience, these sessions are intended to create space for engaging in shared knowledge making and collaborative problem-solving. Proposals should identify a goal, outcome, or guiding question and outline the activities and/or discussions that participants will engage in during the session.
- **Individual Presentation:** Individual presentations are 10-15 minutes in length and are focused on a specific topic or question. Individual presentations will be grouped into a panel by the conference committee; panels will allow time for Q&A.
- **Panel Presentation:** Panel presentations consist of 3-4 individual presenters, each speaking for 10-15 minutes with time for Q&A at the end of the session. Presentations should be tied together by a common theme or guiding question.
- **Roundtable Discussion:** Roundtable discussions typically begin with 10-15 minutes of context and/or introductory framing led by the facilitator(s), followed by a discussion among attendees. Proposals should identify an overarching question or goal for the discussion.

Writing an Abstract/Program Description

The program abstract/description is short but very important because it is how attendees learn about your session. Most presenters find it useful to write the main proposal first before choosing the most relevant content for the program description. When developing the abstract/description, make sure to "sell" your session by telling conference attendees what your session is about, how your work contributes to the field, and what participants will learn about or take away from the session.

Writing the Proposal

Your proposal submission helps conference organizers to determine whether or not your presentation will be selected for the conference program. Successful proposals have some details in common, so work to build these features into your proposal to increase your chances of being accepted. Consider using the following tips as a checklist rather than as a template. There's no need to try to accomplish one tip per sentence; instead, try to cover all these bases as you propose your work:

- Adhere completely to all submission guidelines, such as including all requested information and complying with length restrictions or word counts.

- Offer a clear description of the subject and scope of the content being proposed. Both should be tied to scholarship in the field and the conference theme (if possible).
- Couch your work in the theories and research of the field by putting your work in conversation with other scholars' work.
- Forecast the structure of your presentation by including a brief, but descriptive outline of what you'll cover.
- Describe the perspective of your work. What do reviewers need to know about you, your institution, or your orientation to your work that helps them situate it in the field?
- Identify what participants or attendees of your presentation might learn or what they can take away from the session.

Review Criteria and Description

Each proposal submission will be judged using the following criteria:

- Topic/subject connects to, supports, or extends the conference theme, although proposals don't necessarily have to address the theme explicitly.
- The session would appeal to a large number of attendees who will consider this topic valuable.
- The proposal is grounded in recent or historical scholarship, and the goals for the sessions are clearly stated with a defined outcome or purpose.
- The proposed session addresses a topic of significance in the writing center field and is appropriate for the conference.

Check your materials against these criteria while developing your proposal and before submitting everything to ensure the best chance of acceptance. And good luck with your proposal!