
Guide for Technical Discipline Chairs

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Your expertise and talent are invaluable to the conference.

THANK YOU!

- **Early Planning, Start 1 – 1 ½ years out**

- Pick a topic with which you are familiar and have an interest.
- Actively recruit topics and papers at the event the year before yours (e.g. If planning for SciTech 2015, recruit at SciTech 2014).
 - Leverage the enthusiasm from the current conference as there is a high probability attendees will be returning to the following year.
 - Attendees can discuss ideas with their colleagues at the current conference.



- **Abstract Submission Phase**

- Make a list of people who are most knowledgeable on those topics and contact them to see if they are interested in:
 - Being a session chair or co-chair
 - Recommending a chair
 - Writing and presenting a paper
 - Recommending people to write and present papers
 - Co-authoring a paper
 - Co-authoring a paper with a student or young professional in a mentorship role
- Consider technical panel discussions
 - If this format is more suitable to your topic(s)
 - If you cannot fill a session with papers.
- Ensure you receive full extended abstracts

- **Post-Abstract Submission/Program Creation Phase**

- Review Process
 - Assign at least 3 reviewers to each abstract, being mindful of conflicts of interest.
 - Monitor reviewers' progress to ensure all reviews are ready by the review deadline.
 - Make decisions on all submissions.
- Build sessions
 - Check the room grid for session lengths; create full/fullest sessions possible by jointly sponsoring a session with another TC or expanding the idea of a session.
 - Presentation placement issues to consider
 - Determine which presenters may be "big draws" and sandwich students and young professionals between them.
 - While it may be convenient for an author to have multiple papers in one session, consider the impact on that session if that author is unable to attend at the last minute leaving one large hole in the session.
 - Determine which presenters may have difficulty traveling and place them last in session to prevent session holes which can result in loss of audience and/or session momentum.
 - Assign chairs
 - Recommend 2 chairs/session
 - Consider not assigning yourself any chairing duties so that you may fill in for any last-minute chair withdrawals at the conference.

Pay careful attention to all review and session milestones. It is critical that the program be completed on deadline to allow authors adequate time to secure all permissions, visas, and funding.

- **Post-Program Completion/Before Program Published Online**

- Review the online agenda
 - Ensure that you have no placeholders in paper sessions.
- Check the accuracy of the data for all of your sessions, but paper and non-paper.
- Deconflict—there are 2 phases:
 - Session Deconflict—Check both the spreadsheet sent by staff and the Planner tab for topic conflicts within your own discipline as well as others.
 - Personnel Deconflict—Correct all author and chair conflicts as needed.

- **Program Announced, Agenda Online**

- Provide review feedback to authors upon request.
- Monitor manuscript submission
 - AIAA Forums maintain a hard deadline. Authors who do not submit manuscripts by their deadlines will be withdrawn.
 - Encourage session chairs to maintain contact with authors. This helps ensure timely submissions and session attendance.
 - Be especially attentive the 2 weeks before and after the manuscript deadline:
 - Make decisions on individual author requests for deadline extensions.
 - Monitor overall session status, replacing session chairs as needed and consolidating sessions if appropriate/desirable.

- **At the Conference**

- Check session rooms and speaker briefings.
- Check session chair attendance. Find replacements if needed.
- Assist session chairs as needed.
- Remind session chairs to complete session chair reports.

Full technical sessions in the printed program reflect positively on both your discipline and the entire event, and also provide a good experience for attendees.

To achieve this, not only should you create the fullest sessions possible from the start, but you must also:

1. *Stay actively engaged throughout the manuscript submission period, most particularly during the weeks just prior to and immediately after the manuscript deadline.*
 - a. *Encourage session chairs to maintain contact with authors.*
 - b. *Consider and input individual manuscript deadline extensions.*
 - c. *Monitor withdrawals with posted report.*
2. *Follow the hard deadline procedures as outlined by AIAA staff. While it opens up more space in sessions, it reduces no-shows and gives you options for moving presentations out of sessions that have lost too many.*
3. *Consolidate sessions.*
 - a. *Use AIAA staff-provided reports to see which sessions are candidates for elimination by moving papers elsewhere, starting with all sessions with ≤ 3 presentations. The same reports show which sessions have open slots as well.*
 - b. *Some presentations may fit in a different discipline. Check other possible sessions and ask across disciplines for a slot for presentations or offer to take some if appropriate.*