

SESSION PROPOSAL GUIDANCE NOTES

Museums Association Annual Conference & Exhibition
7-8 November 2016, Glasgow

Session proposals are assessed by a conference panel, which is made up of museum professionals and MA staff.

Please remember that this is a draft proposal and all session organisers will be asked to work with MA conference panel members to shape the final session. You might be asked to merge your session with another session if the panel feels the subject matter overlaps.

Timescale

Deadline for submissions is 26 February 2016.

The session proposals will be assessed by the conference panel in mid-March. Session proposers will be told whether they have been successful or not by the end of March. Those who make successful proposals will have to have all their speakers/chairs confirmed by the end of April.

Themes

The conference panel has been discussing themes and topics for conference this year in Glasgow and emerging ideas include:

- A sense of place: telling the stories of people, communities and collections
- Being brave: taking risks and being courageous, ambitious, innovative, outspoken and creative

You can submit a proposal under one of these broad headings or come up with ideas of your own.

Proposed session name

This might have to be changed if your session proposal is accepted.

Outline of session

We are keen to encourage proposals that contain new thinking, innovative ideas and radical solutions. We want suggestions that are bold, provocative and thought-provoking.

The outline of your proposed session (max 200 words) should include the content of the session, the key issues raised, and who should attend the session and why.

You can include weblinks if relevant.

Session formats

Some common session formats are outlined below, but we are also keen to see proposals that offer new and unusual formats.

- Panel debate: consists of a chair/facilitator moderating discussion of two or more speakers. Works best with strong arguments and a controversial topic over which opinion in the audience and speakers is likely to be divided.
- In conversation: two or more speakers discuss an idea or theme.
- Workshop: following an introduction by one or more speakers, facilitators help delegates to work in pairs or groups so they can share experience and ideas.
- Provocations: One or more speakers give very short talks exploring hot-topic ideas or issues. 30 minutes maximum.

Room layout

There are two types of seating plans:

- Theatre-style
- Round-table

Please state which would work best for your session and we will do our best to accommodate you. It is possible that we might not be able to accommodate your requirements, so you might have to think how your session would work with a different type of room layout.

Session length

All slots are timetabled to last either 30, 45 or 60 minutes. You have to allow time for delegates to participate.

Speakers/chair

The speakers and chair do not have to be confirmed but it is vital to include the people you are thinking of approaching so the conference panel can judge the proposal properly.

Where possible please fill in fields for name, job title and organisation for speakers and chair.

Sessions with a range of speakers from different organisations are preferable.

We are keen to see sessions with speakers from outside the sector.

No session should have more than three speakers, plus a chair.

Chairs should not be speakers as well.

Chair training is offered by the MA.

Session proposals are more likely to be successful if:

- The subject is relevant, timely and important.
- The format encourages debate and active participation among delegates.
- The topic will be of interest to a wide range of delegates.

Session proposals are unlikely to be successful if:

- The topic is narrow and does not have broad appeal.
- All the speakers are from the same organisation.
- The session does not offer any new insights or ideas.
- There is no opportunity for delegates to participate, either through questions or facilitated discussions in groups.

Filming and photography

Some conference sessions are photographed, filmed and streamed online. By submitting a proposal form you are agreeing to the session and its contributors being broadcast in this way. Please note that any presentations should be copyright cleared for use by the MA online.

Chairs and speakers get a free place at conference on the day they are speaking. We do not pay travel or accommodation costs.

More information

Please feel free to contact Simon Stephens, the head of publications and events at the Museums Association, if you have any further questions about submitting a session proposal.

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