Reviewing Convention Proposals
for
TESOL International Association

Updated April 2021

Welcome to this general training session for reviewers of TESOL International Association's convention proposals. Each year, our convention draws over 6,000 TESOL professionals to four days of professional development. But to get there, we rely on the expertise of our members to review and rate the thousands of proposals we receive. We can't thank you enough for your time and dedication in helping to select the presentations, panels and workshops that will benefit our colleagues from around the world.

Because of the nature of our review process, all reviewers are asked to complete two training modules: a general training and a strand-specific training. This webinar constitutes the general portion and should be completed by all reviewers, regardless of strand. Strand coordinators and assistant coordinators will provide you with information on the strand-specific training.

Overview

- The proposal review process
- Self-awareness and implicit bias
- The abstract management system
- The rubric
- Comments

tesol
international
association

In this general training, we will go over the review process, then examine how our personal and professional backgrounds may influence proposal review and how to use our awareness of our own biases to review fairly and identify proposals which may require additional review. We will review the rubric, the abstract system, and tips for writing comments.

Before We Begin

Familiarize yourself with instructions given to proposal writers and used in writing proposals:

Link for Call for Proposals Page
https://www.tesol.org/CallforProposals

tesol
international
association

Before we begin, you may find it helpful to have the documents we will refer to in this workshop handy. You can find them on the TESOL Call for Proposals webpage, which you can locate by going to https://www.tesol.org/CallforProposals

Documents to Review

- Rubric
- Strand descriptions
- Settings and contexts
- Session types
- Session focus
- Checklist for proposal writers
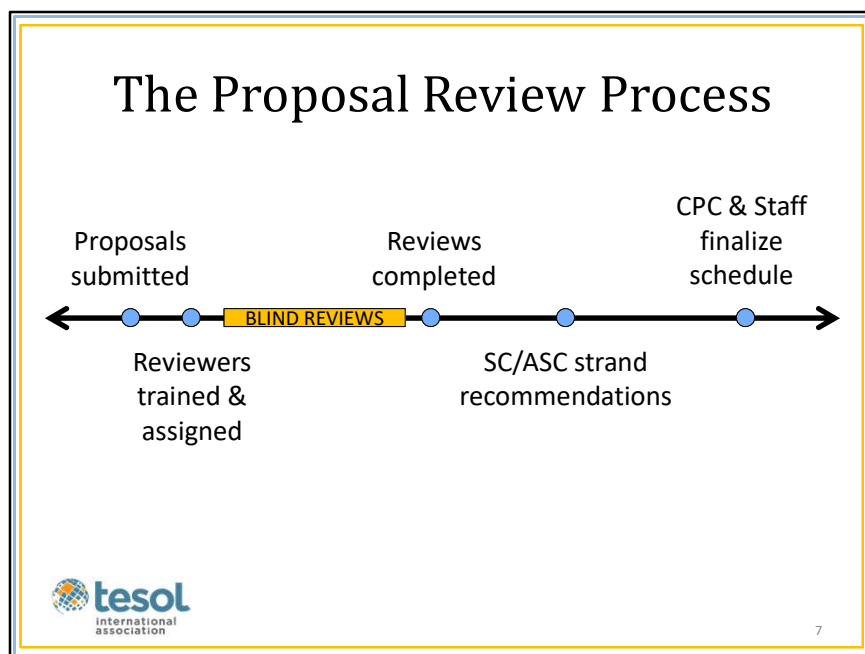
tesol
international
association

We will be referring to the rubric, strands, contexts, settings, session types, session focus, and the checklist for proposal writers.

Part 1: The Proposal Review Process

Let's begin with a quick overview of the proposal review process.

The Proposal Review Process

Proposals
submitted

Reviews
completed

CPC & Staff
finalize
schedule

BLIND REVIEWS

Reviewers
trained &
assigned

SC/ASC strand
recommendations

tesol
international
association

Once the submission deadline passes, each proposal is assigned to reviewers, who will read the proposals and rate them using the rubric. This portion of the process is blind - you should not be able to determine who has written a proposal. You will receive an email with the link to the abstract management system once proposals are assigned.

We do our best to assign reviewers with expertise in the area of the proposal, including the setting (such as adult education, primary school, international teaching assistants), the context (ESL, EFL, bilingual or multilingual education, and so forth), and the focus (research, pedagogy, conceptual, policy). However, with the number of proposals we receive and the number of reviewers we have, you may find that you are assigned a proposal in an area outside of your expertise. If this occurs, it is important that you alert your strand and assistant strand coordinators, so that the proposal can be reassigned.

Also, we ask that every reviewer review at least 10 proposals. We recommend planning 15 to 20 minutes per proposal, or about three hours over three weeks for a group of 10. If you find that you are assigned more proposals than you can review or that you are able to review additional proposals, please let your coordinators know as

soon as possible so that these can be reassigned.

You will have approximately three weeks to complete the reviews. Once all initial reviews have been completed, the strand and assistant strand coordinators examine highly rated proposals and make recommendations, keeping in mind program balance. Finally, the Conferences Professional Council and TESOL staff review these recommendations to finalize the list of accepted sessions.

When to Contact SC/ASC

- A proposal is outside of your area of expertise
- You are unable to complete the review of assigned proposals
- You are able to review additional proposals

tesol
international
association

8

Your strand and assistant strand coordinators are here to support you throughout the review process. Please make sure to contact them if you are assigned a proposal that is outside your expertise or if you would like fewer or more proposals to review.

Part 2: Reviewing Proposals
in a
Culturally & Linguistically Diverse
Profession

tesol
international
association

As an international organization we are very aware of issues which may be taken for granted by more homogeneous groups but cannot be in ours. Even areas such as language use and the appropriateness of a topic for a professional convention are subject to filtering through our individual experiences. This section addresses issues which occur in reviewing proposals in a culturally and linguistically diverse profession.

Reflection

- What topics are appropriate for inclusion in the TESOL International Convention program?

- What are the characteristics of a well-written proposal?

- Would you rate proposals by women differently than proposals by men?

Each of us has many identities, both personal and professional, which influence the way we read and understand proposals. According to Covey, "Whatever is at the center of our lives will be the source of your wisdom, guidance, power and effective interaction." Please take a moment to consider these questions:
- What topics are appropriate for inclusion in the TESOL International Convention program?
- What are the characteristics of a well-written proposal?
- Would you rate proposals written by women differently from those written by men?
  All three questions illustrate biases that reviewers bring to the process.

Reflection 1

- What topics are appropriate for inclusion in the TESOL International Convention program?

tesol
international
association

11

The appropriateness of a topic is the focus of the first section of the proposal evaluation rubric. You may be able to clearly articulate your own concept of an appropriate topic. How does your response match the actual range of proposals at the convention? Let's take a look.

Sample Sessions

Here are just a very few examples from the approximately 1,000 sessions at the past TESOL Conventions.

On this slide, you see titles for sessions ranging from vocabulary and grammar to listening and technology, content-based instruction and special populations. All of these sessions further TESOL's strategic plan goal of leading in "the development and delivery of English language teaching expertise, research, and information that address current and emerging trends in the profession."

<table>
<tr>
<td>

What I Wish My Teachers Knew

. . . The complexity of issues surrounding **identity**, (like **gender spectrum**, **TCK**, **EAL**, **learning differences**), must be considered to improve learning environments.

</td>
<td>

Social Issues in the Classroom: Ideas from African Teachers

. . . strategies for incorporating **pressing social issues**, such as **gender**, **human rights**, and **economic inequality**, students practice their English and develop as **world citizens . . .**

</td>
</tr>
</table>

Humanizing the Refugee Experience: Story and Voice in Research

<table>
<tr>
<td>

An Exercise in Empathy: Sociodrama in the ESL Writing Classroom

. . . how they used this tool explore **homelessness . . .**

tesol
international
association

</td>
<td>

Voices from Within the Margins of TESOL

. . . their membership(s) in marginalized identity groups . . . vis-à-vis their **race**, **nationality**, **sexuality**, **gender or gender expression, nonnative speaker status, culture, disability,** or **religious affiliation.**

</td>
</tr>
</table>

14

TESOL's strategic plan also states that the Association empowers TESOL professionals "to be effective advocates for their students, their programs, themselves, and for one another." The past programs included many presentations on identity and social issues including race and ethnicity; gender, gender expression, and sexuality; learning differences; nonnative speaker status; culture; religious affiliation; economic status; disability; and human rights.

How did your response to the question on appropriate proposals match the 2019 sessions? Because the convention draws an international audience, the issues and perspectives you encounter in your own cultural and teaching context may differ significantly from those in a different context. Please keep in mind this broader perspective as you review proposals.

Proposal Topics

TESOL welcomes proposals on all topics relevant to the teaching and learning of English.

tesol
international
association

15

We welcome proposals on all topics relevant to the teaching and learning of English which will be of interest to attendees of the convention.

TESOL Values

Professionalism

Respect

Integrity

Lifelong Learning

tesol
international
association

As you review proposals, keep in mind TESOL's values for professionalism, respect, integrity, and lifelong learning . . .

Non-Discrimination Policy

"In principle and in practice, TESOL values and seeks diverse and inclusive participation within the field of English language teaching. TESOL promotes involvement and broad access to professional opportunities for all and works to eliminate any kind of discrimination including, but not limited to, language background, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, nationality, disability, appearance, or geographic location."

tesol
international
association

as well as the non-discrimination policy. We want to be inclusive, to represent multiple voices and perspectives in the field, and to be sure proposals adhere to these core values.

TESOL's Strategic Goals

- Global presence and connectivity

- Knowledge and expertise

- Voice and advocacy

As you review proposals, also keep in mind TESOL's strategic plan goals: to increase its global presence and connectivity among members, partners, and other stakeholders; to lead the development and delivery of English language teaching expertise, research, and information that address current and emerging trends in the profession, and to be the leading advocate for English language teaching professionals and learners worldwide.

More details on TESOL's values, non-discrimination policy and strategic goals can be found at www.tesol.org.

Reflection 2

- What are the characteristics of a well-written proposal?

The second reflection asked you to articulate the characteristics of a well-written proposal. Whatever your response, it likely reflects the expectations of the academic environment familiar to you. Would you automatically rate a proposal without citations lower than a proposal with them? What about a proposal with *the* repeatedly used before nouns where a native speaker wouldn't use an article?

English as an International Language

- Recognize linguistic variation

- Distinguish between dialectical variation and poorly-conceived or hastily-submitted proposals

tesol
international
association

20

For the 2021 Convention, TESOL received proposals from almost 70 countries and from many non-native English speakers. As reviewers, it is important to distinguish between variations in English as an international language and proposals which are poorly conceived or hastily submitted. Multiple typographical errors, for example, may indicate lack of preparation, while differences in spelling reflect language variation. This year, the proposal form also includes an optional field for citations. The proposal form does not specify a format, so differences here may simply reflect alternative academic practices. Rather than focusing form, look for clear descriptions of the content using the Checklist for Proposal Writers as a guide.

Recognizing Regional Variation

- Recognize status often assigned to different varieties, including regional cultural variations
  - African American English
  - Caribbean English
- Distinguish variation from "mistakes"

tesol
international
association

21

It is important to recognize that different varieties of a language may be perceived as having higher or lower social status, but TESOL works to support the inclusivity of multiple varieties and variations of English. This includes regional cultural variations of English. For example, African American English and Caribbean English have specific grammar patterns that have evolved historically through interaction with a variety of African Languages, and through creativity and in direct opposition to standardized English, which has been used as a tool of oppression in some contexts.

Regional cultural variations are not "mistakes," rather they are variations.

As many of our members and colleagues are utilizing English as an additional language, and we value the voices of those in a variety of contexts, we want to be inclusive of opportunities to participate. Proposals by those writing in English as an additional language should not be penalized for occasional errors due to language proficiency, as long as the meaning is clear (i.e. Intermediate proficiency or above is a useful guideline.)

We want to eliminate barriers to participation of minority groups and those who are underrepresented. For this reason, we should not devalue contributions that are

written in English other than that which is standardized.

English as an Additional Language

- Focus on clarity of meaning

- Use intermediate proficiency or above as a guideline

tesol
international
association

As many of our members and colleagues are utilizing English as an additional language, and we value the voices of those in a variety of contexts, we want to be inclusive of opportunities to participate. Proposals by those writing in English as an additional language should not be penalized for occasional errors due to language proficiency, as long as the meaning is clear (i.e. Intermediate proficiency or above is a useful guideline.)

We want to eliminate barriers to participation of minority groups and those who are underrepresented. For this reason, we should not devalue contributions that are written in English other than that which is standardized.

Reflection 3

- Would you rate proposals by women differently than proposals by men?

Now we come to the third question, on rating differently proposals written by men and women. At first glance this question may seem superfluous. After all, the review process is blind. Reviewers don't know who is writing the proposal, so gender bias (not that we're biased) isn't an issue, is it?

Bias

"Despite blinded review, female applicants receive significantly lower scores, which cannot be explained by reviewer characteristics, proposal topics, or ex-ante measures of applicant quality. . . . Specifically, we find strong gender differences in the usage of broad and narrow words, suggesting that differing communication styles are a key driver of the gender score gap. Importantly, the text-based measures that predict higher reviewer scores do not also predict higher ex-post innovative performance.

Kolev, J., Fuentes-Medel, Y., & Murray, F. (2019, April 19). Is Blinded Review Enough? How Gendered Outcomes Arise Even Under Anonymous Evaluation. Retrieved from https://www.nber.org/papers/w25759?utm_campaign=ntwh&utm_medium=email&utm_source=ntwg16

tesol
international association

24

Actually, it may well be. A working paper published by the National Bureau of Economic Research in April 2019 found that female applicants for Gates Foundation grants received lower scores than males in blinded reviews. Why? The authors, Julian Kolev, Yuly Fuentes-Medel, and Fiona Murray posit that differences in communication style, specifically in what the authors refer to as broad and narrow words, accounts for the discrepancy. Critically, women's use of "narrow words" actually correlated with lower scores AND better research results. While this study is based on what the authors term a "unique setting," it provides a cautionary note for all of us about implicit bias.

Implicit Bias

- attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understandings, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner

tesol
international
association

25

This question on gender bias was intended to highlight the concept that all of us have unconscious attitudes and stereotypes which affect our understandings, actions, and decisions, including on the rating of proposals. What associations do you have about race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, language, and religious affiliation, to mention a few identities which may become evident in proposals that you read, or which may be the topics of proposals? By being as transparent as possible with ourselves, we can become better and fairer reviewers.

We all have biases. If you would like to become more aware of yours, please see the links below in this video or in the PDF version of this training. These include an introductory video clip from the PBS program POV, "Implicit Bias: Peanut Butter, Jelly, and Racism," which defines and explains unconscious bias.
https://florida.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/pov-biased-lpclips/who-me-biased/

Project Implicit is a collaboration among researchers who are investigating social cognition that is outside of conscious awareness and control. The 14 associated Implicit Association Tests gauge biases including based on race, age, and obesity.

The remaining links are to articles about the role of implicit bias in the classroom and at work and include suggestions for recognizing and reducing the impact of bias on students and colleagues.

The Cultural Proficiency Continuum

Cultural destructiveness   Cultural blindness   Cultural competence

Cultural incapacity   Cultural pre-competence   Cultural proficiency

Terrell, R. and Lindsey, R. (2009). *Culturally proficient leadership.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press

tesol
international
association

27
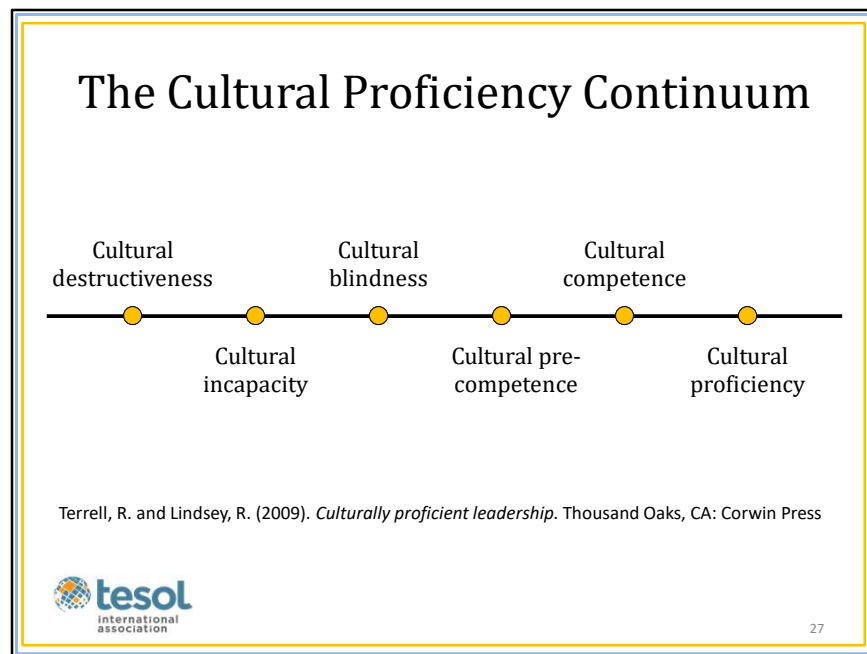
In *Culturally proficient leadership*, Terrell and Lindsey describe a continuum of cultural proficiency within the academic environment, from cultural destructiveness – leadership which seeks to eliminate others' cultures – at one end, to cultural proficiency, or leading as an advocate of serving the educational needs of cultural groups, at the other.

If we conceptualize culture broadly and include the various identities and communities within TESOL, it is easy to see that we may fall at different places along the spectrum, depending on the topic of a given proposal.

It is very possible to be competent – knowledgeable and inclusive of others – with regards to sexual orientation, but pre-competent – or simply knowing that we don't know – on how learning differences affect students- and blind, or unaware, on issues facing non-native English speakers within TESOL.

If we are honest with ourselves, we may even find that there are experiences and perspectives which make us uncomfortable or to which we are antagonistic.

For a more detailed discussion of the characteristics associated with cultural

competence, please see the link below this video or in the PDF.

The Continuum & Reviews

Ask strand coordinators to reassign proposals that are:

- outside your area of expertise, including cultural competence or proficiency.

- make you uncomfortable for any reason.

tesol
international
association

If you are assigned a proposal that is outside of your expertise, including your cultural competence or proficiency, or that makes you uncomfortable for any reason, simply ask your strand coordinators to reassign that proposal, so that it can be reviewed by someone with the appropriate background. You do not need to provide a detailed explanation of the reason for your request.

Identifying Proposals for Further Review

- Review proposals within your expertise using the rubric.

- Identify proposals for further review due to topic or approach.

tesol
international
association

One of the goals of the Convention is to allow attendees to explore new or alternative ways of thinking, doing, and being as TESOL professionals and to have conversations on issues which may, at times, be sensitive or controversial.

We believe we must explore not only academic controversies, but those which touch our lives and the lives of our students and our broader communities by discussing issues of identity, marginalization and privilege, language use, policies, and practices.

At the same time, we want to ensure that all presentations at the annual Convention are facilitated in a professional and skilled manner.

To this end, we ask that you review proposals within your areas of expertise using the rubric and identify those which merit additional review because of the potential sensitivity of the topic or approach.

Example 1

Proposal Title: "ESL Students' Responses to Racial Name-Calling"

tesol
international
association

Let's say you review a proposal with the title "ESL Students' Responses to Racial Name-Calling." The reference in the title to negative labeling of students indicates that this presentation includes content that should be reviewed closely to ensure that the session is presented with an awareness of the cultural and historical context of the terms. This proposal should be marked for further review.

Example 1

Proposal Title: "ESL Students' Responses to Racial Name-Calling"

Mark for further review

tesol
international association

Let's say you review a proposal with the title "ESL Students' Responses to Racial Name-Calling." The reference in the title to negative labeling of students indicates that this presentation includes content that should be reviewed closely to ensure that the session is presented with an awareness of the cultural and historical context of the terms. This proposal should be marked for further review.

Example 2

Proposal: Local refugee organization and school district collaboration

Focus -
- making community resources accessible

Focus -
- interventions for religious-based bullying

| No further review needed | Mark for further review |

tesol
international
association

In other cases, the proposal may need to be considered in its entirety to determine whether it requires further review.

In this example, a proposal describes a collaborative effort between a local refugee organization and a school district. If the proposal focuses on an effort to increase student access to community resources, it may not require an additional review. However, if the focus is on religious-based bullying refugee students are encountering, the proposal should be marked for further review.

Because decisions on the appropriateness of a proposal topic is rooted in reviewers' own personal and professional cultural contexts, it is not possible to provide a complete list of instances where additional review is merited. Strand coordinators can provide guidance on specific situations. However, here are some general guidelines.

Please mark the "Additional Review" box on the review form if a proposal examines issues surrounding identity, including but not limited to national, racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, linguistic, and religious identity.

Likewise, proposals that include generalizations, stereotypes, and "us" vs. "them" and othering language should be selected for further review, even if these are examined within a research or academic framework.

Proposals which show evidence of deficit thinking should also be marked for review.

Guidelines

- Any proposal which may appear insensitive or offensive

tesol
international
association

34

If a proposal approaches a topic in any manner which you, as a reviewer, find may be insensitive or even offensive, please check the "additional review" box.

When to Contact SC/ASC

- If you are uncomfortable with the topic or approach of a particular proposal
- If you recognize a bias which prevents you from reviewing a proposal fairly
- If a proposal is outside of your professional expertise

tesol
international association

As a reminder, if you are assigned a proposal which makes you uncomfortable because of your personal beliefs or if the proposal is outside of your professional expertise, please contact your SC or ASC to have the proposal reviewed by someone else.

Part 3: Using the Abstract System

Once proposals are assigned, you will need to log into the abstract management system to complete your reviews. This section of the training provides information on the system and the different parts of the proposal. You may want to refer to the materials in the 'Call for Proposals' for details and to see how proposal writers were guided when submitting their proposals.

Using the Abstract System

Welcome to the TESOL 2022 International Convention & English Language Expo Proposal Submission Site

The annual TESOL convention offers English language teaching professionals and scholars from around the globe the premier opportunity for professional development. Educators and scholars from more than 100 countries exchange ideas and practices, explore a wide range of topics and current trends, expand their professional networks, engage in mentoring on research and other projects, review the latest professional publications and resources, and learn about advocacy efforts in their community and around the world.

Come Inspired, Emerge Empowered.

Join the international TESOL community in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania USA, and experience what makes this association unique: Engage in dialogue with present and future practitioners, administrators, researchers, and advocacy leaders about language education and policy as you enrich your knowledge, networks, and professional experience.

To view the Submission Guidelines, please click here

Important Dates
- June 1, 2021, 5 PM (U.S. Eastern Daylight Time) - Proposal submission deadline (Convert to your local time.)
- August 31, 2021 - Initial accept/decline/alternate decisions emailed
- October-November 2021 - Accepted alternates notified; date and time for all accepted presentations emailed

Username

Password

Forgot your password?

Log In

Create an account

Can't log in? Contact TESOL@mirasmart.com

37

When your review assignments are ready, you will receive email notification from TESOL@mirasmart.com. The email will include a link to the abstract management system, your username and the deadline to complete your assignments. If you have difficulty logging in which cannot be resolved using forget your password link, please contact TESOL@mirasmart.com for assistance.

Using the Abstract System

Once you log into the system, you should see a Reviewer Home on the top. Your assigned proposals will be listed in this section. You will be assigned to review proposals from the same strand. The term "strand" refers to narrowly defined content areas of inquiry and practice and is used to facilitate the proposal submission and review process. As a reviewer, your concern is: does this proposal fit the designated strand? You may encounter strong proposal submissions that do not seem to align with the designated strand. In this case, please indicate this by checking the appropriate box at the top of the review section of the abstract system.

Using the Abstract System

Click on a view proposal to access information on that proposal. If preferred, you can select all assigned proposals and select Batch Download to save/print all proposals. When you are ready to rate each proposal, click on Enter Review for that proposal.

Using the Abstract System

A pop-up window will open when you select view proposal.
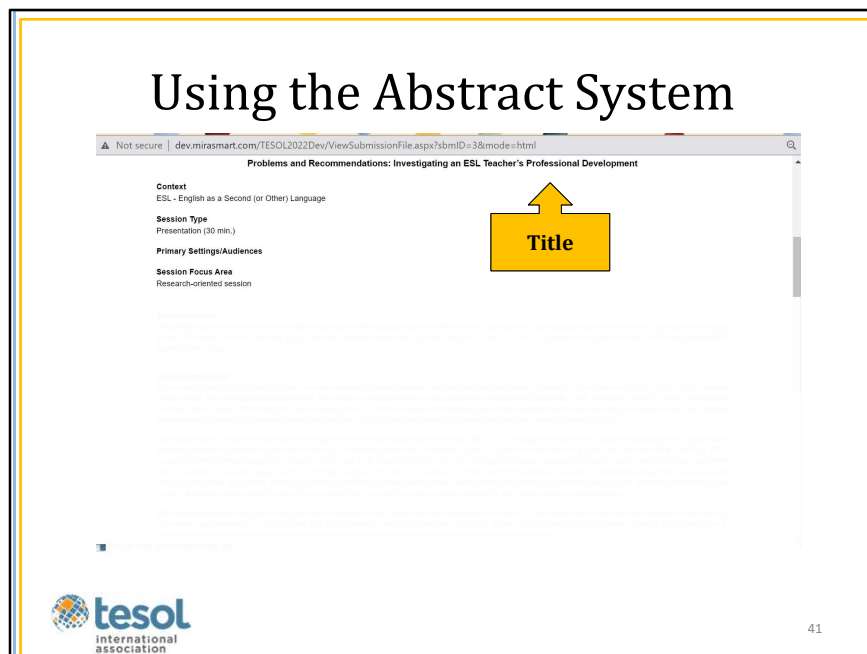
Now let's look at each of the elements listed in the section for proposals.

First, there is the title. Titles are a maximum of ten words, and may include approved acronyms, which can be found in the 'Call for Proposals'. Titles need to inform convention attendees and attract their attention, so, they should be descriptive, concise, and interesting. As a reviewer, consider the following questions: Does the title accurately communicate the session content as far as you can tell from the summary and description? Is the title engaging? Is it limited to ten or fewer words?

Using the Abstract System

Problems and Recommendations: Investigating an ESL Teacher's Professional Development

Context
ESL - English as a Second (or Other) Language

Context

Session Type
Presentation (30 min.)

Primary Settings/Audiences

Session Focus Area
Research-oriented session

tesol
international
association

Next is the proposal's context. The context choices are English as a Second (or other) language, a foreign language, or an international language, bilingual or multilingual education, and all contexts. The writer's selected context should be appropriate for the session in the summary and description.

Using the Abstract System

Problems and Recommendations: Investigating an ESL Teacher's Professional Development

Context
ESL - English as a Second (or Other) Language

Session Type
Presentation (30 min.)

→ **Session Type**

Primary Settings/Audiences

Session Focus Area
Research-oriented session

tesol
international
association

The Convention offers a variety of presentation formats, each with a time limit and expected numbers of presenters. This information is useful in evaluating whether the proposed session is appropriate for the type of session selected. Types of sessions are: Dialogue, Panel Discussion, Poster Session, Presentation, Teaching Tip, and Workshop. Again, more detailed information on each is available in the Call for Proposals.

Using the Abstract System

Problems and Recommendations: Investigating an ESL Teacher's Professional Development

Context
ESL - English as a Second (or Other) Language

Session Type
Presentation (30 min.)

Primary Settings/Audiences | **Setting/Audience**

Session Focus Area
Research-oriented session

tesol
international
association

44

Proposal writers may select up to two settings/audiences. As you read a proposal, keep in mind whether the setting or settings are appropriate for the proposal. The list of settings includes Early Childhood, primary school, secondary school, Academic English Programs, Adult Education, Graduate and Post-Graduate Academic and Professional Programs, International Teaching Assistantships, Intensive English Programs and Private Language Teaching Programs, and Tutoring. Please refer to the 'Call for Proposal' materials for more information on the different settings.

Using the Abstract System

Problems and Recommendations: Investigating an ESL Teacher's Professional Development

Context
ESL - English as a Second (or Other) Language

Session Type
Presentation (30 min.)

Primary Settings/Audiences

Session Focus Area
Research-oriented session

Focus

The session focus indicates whether a presentation is oriented towards practice, research, concepts, or policy. You will use this information when evaluating the effectiveness of the summary and description. Again, more information is located in the 'Call for Proposals' materials.

The next two areas are the session abstract and session description.

The **session abstract** appears in the program book to help convention attendees choose which sessions to attend. As you read the session summary, attempt to picture whether it would help attendees understand what the session would entail. Session abstracts are limited to 50 words.

Unlike the title and session abstract, which appear in the Convention Program Book, and apps, the session description is for the reviewers only. In 300 words or less, submitters must describe their proposed session, covering the elements in the rubric. Submitters were encouraged to use the Checklist for Submitters on the Call for Proposals page to ensure they had included information on which their proposal would be evaluated.

As you review, note that the session summary and description should align with the title and all the other elements comprising the proposal.

At the end of the proposal section (and not visible in the screenshot above) is an optional text field for citations. This area is provided so that submitters can provide citation information for sources referenced in the session description without, in effect, reducing the word limit. Citation format was not prescribed.

Part 4: Using the Rubric

tesol
international
association

49

Now that you know the format you will see proposals in, let's take a look at the rubric.

Using the Rubric

- 1 rubric for all proposals

TESOL is very fortunate to receive many outstanding proposals each year – many more, in fact, than can be accepted, due to limitations of time and space. To be fair to all submitters, it is critical that you use the standard rubric to rate each proposal. This rubric is the same for all strands and session types.

Using the Rubric

- 1 rubric for all proposals
- Flagging special situations
  - Additional review
  - Disqualification
  - Wrong strand
  - Recusal
  - Other situations

tesol
international
association

At the top of the rubric is an area to indicate special situations including potentially sensitive topics or content, disqualifications, submission to the wrong strand, and recusals. If a proposal requires additional review because it addresses potentially sensitive topics, check this box, then complete your review.

Other situations do not require you to crate the proposal. Because our initial process is blind, proposals may not identify the presenters or their institutions. Proposals may not promote commercial interests or be plagiarized and should not be submitted to multiple strands. If a proposal is disqualified for these reasons, mark the disqualification box and select the reason. The proposal does not need to be reviewed.

Each proposal is submitted to a specific strand by those with expertise in that content area. Occasionally, a submitter will select the wrong strand for a proposal. In this case, mark the box for the wrong strand. TESOL does not guarantee that proposals submitted to the wrong strand will be reassigned.

Finally, if you happen to be assigned to your own proposal or to a proposal where you know the submitters (and, therefore, are unable to rate blindly), mark the recusal

box.

These situations cover the majority of issues with reviews which have occurred in the past, but you may encounter a new or different situation. For example, you may have been assigned to review a presentation on preschoolers when you teach at a university and you have no background in the content of the presentation. In all such cases, please alert your SC or ASC as soon as possible for instructions on how to proceed.

Using the Rubric

- 1 rubric for all proposals
- Flagging special situations
- Evaluation criteria and rating scale

tesol
international
association

The rubric includes six criteria against which all proposals are rated on a 1 to 4 scale with 1 being the lowest score and 4 being the highest. The higher the score, the stronger the proposal. Please read each of the descriptors provided with the rating scale, then select the one which most closely describes the proposal.

Criterion 1: The Topic

The topic is important and appropriate to the field and the audience.
4 - The proposal addresses a groundbreaking or cutting-edge topic in TESOL.
3 - The proposal addresses an important topic in TESOL.
2 - The proposal addresses a topic of some importance or interest in TESOL
1 - The proposal does not address a topic of interest to TESOL professionals.

tesol
international
association

53

The first criterion is the importance of the proposal topic to TESOL and TESOLers. If the proposal addresses an issue of critical importance to our field and to the intended audience as identified by context and setting, it should be rated a 4. At the other extreme, a proposal that is not relevant to TESOLers would be rated a 1. Please remember to base your score on what is in the actual proposal rather than reading into it the writer's possible intentions.

Criterion 2: Grounding in Theory, Practice, Research, or Policy

The proposal is based on current theory, practice, research, and/or policy that is relevant to the presentation.

4 - The proposal fully integrates session content with current and relevant research, theory, practice, or policy, *e.g,* through the use of citations or terminology.

3 - The proposal supports session content with current and relevant research, theory, practice, or policy, *e.g,* through the use of citations or terminology.

2 - The proposal refers only tangentially to research, theory, practice, or policy, or those referred to may not be current.

1 - The proposal does not mention research, theory, practice or policy or those mentioned are unrelated to the field or the topic.

tesol
international
association

54

Every proposal should provide a rationale for the session content that is well-grounded in pedagogy, research, theory, and/or policy. A rating of 4 in this area indicates that the session content is strongly connected to appropriate theory, practice, research, or policy in the field as evidenced, for example, by the use of citations or terminology. A rating of 1 is given to proposals that either neglect to mention a rationale or use theories, practices, research, or policies that are not relevant to the field or to the topic.

Criterion 3: Outcomes

The proposal specifies participant outcomes that are relevant to TESOL professionals.

4 - Participant outcomes are clear and specific.

3 - Participant outcomes are mostly clear and specific.

2 - Participant outcomes are unclear or very general.

1 - Participant outcomes are not provided, or the outcomes are not relevant to the session or TESOL professionals.

tesol
international
association

55

The third criterion asks you to evaluate whether a proposal clearly identifies objectives and outcomes for participants and educational settings. It may be useful to consider the following questions: Does the proposal discuss a future plan of action, proposed solution, and procedures for next steps? What practical applications or implications does the session content have for the potential audience? and How would this session impact or benefit the TESOL field and professionals?

A 4 rating in this area means that the proposal has very clear, specific, and highly relevant outcomes and implications. A rating of 1, on the other hand, indicates that the proposal does not provide participant outcomes and practical implications for the audience.

Criterion 4: Session Overview

The proposal provides a clear, coherent overview of the session plan. It includes details important to the session type:

Dialogue - The proposal clearly describes how the audience will participate.

Panel - The proposal includes a clear synopsis of the issue(s) to be discussed and the plan for each presentation.

Poster Session - The proposal clearly describes the visual display.

Presentation - The proposal clearly states opportunities for audience participation.

Teaching Tip - The proposal includes a clear synopsis describing the teaching tip.

Workshop - The proposal clearly describes the interactive nature of the workshop.

tesol
international
association

56

The next area asks reviewers to examine whether there is a clear link between the content of the session and how it will be presented. These will vary depending on the session type and focus. Please note that the details for the session types occupy a lot of visual space, but that the criterion, at the top, states that "the proposal provides a clear, coherent overview of the session plan." In addition to the session types which are listed, the session focus is important in rating this area.

Content & Session Focus

- Practice- or pedagogy-oriented

57

As you make your assessment, you should consider the focus of the session: Is it practice- or pedagogy-oriented? In this case, does the proposal present a clear description of the teaching tasks, strategies, and/or techniques to be introduced in the session? Does the proposal show how the tasks or techniques address a teaching gap, need, or goal? and Does the proposal outline how the content will be presented?

Content & Session Focus

- Practice- or pedagogy-oriented
- Research-oriented

tesol
international
association

58

Is the session research-oriented? If so, does the proposal present a clear description of the research design? Does there appear to be a clear link between the research design and research questions? Does the proposal clearly indicate the overall findings of the research? and Does the proposal outline how the content will be presented?

Content & Session Focus

- Practice- or pedagogy-oriented
- Research-oriented
- Conceptually-oriented

tesol
international
association

For conceptually-oriented sessions, you will want to consider whether the proposal presents an argument that synthesizes existing practice, theory, and/or research, whether it presents a novel interpretation of a theoretical perspective, claim, or idea, and whether it outlines how the content will be presented.

Content & Session Focus

- Practice- or pedagogy-oriented
- Research-oriented
- Conceptually-oriented
- Policy-oriented

tesol
international
association

60

Finally, if a proposal is for a policy-oriented session, you will want to consider the following questions: Does the proposal present a clear description and assessment of the policy under scrutiny? Does the proposal present a clear description of the method, evidence, and justification for action? Does the proposal present a discussion with suggestions for a call to action or reform? and Does the proposal outline how the content will be presented?

Determine the Rating

4 - The proposal describes the session, including how it will achieve the stated objectives, clearly, coherently, and in detail.

3 - The proposal describes the session, including how it will achieve the stated objectives, clearly and coherently.

2 - The proposal lacks coherence or only loosely describes the session and how it will achieve the stated objectives.

1 - The proposal does not describe the session or how it will achieve the stated objectives.

tesol
international
association

61

After considering the description of the session in terms of focus and type, determine the rating using the four descriptors.

Criterion 5: Appropriateness

The session type is appropriate for the plan, goals, and delivery methods stated in the proposal.

4 - The session type is clearly appropriate.

3 - The session type is mostly appropriate.

2 - The session type is somewhat inappropriate.

1 - The session type is inappropriate.

tesol
international
association

The fifth criterion asks reviewers to evaluate whether the session type chosen by proposal writers is appropriate for the proposal.

A rating of 4 indicates the proposal is clearly appropriate with regards to the session length, content, and delivery method. A 1 indicates that the proposal is inappropriate in terms of length, content, and delivery methods. A session with a poor rating in this area might include too much content for the allotted time or focus on a delivery method at odds with the session type, such as a presentation format for a workshop.

Criterion 6: Overall Recommendation

Overall Recommendation

4 - This proposal is clear and well-written, suggesting the presentation will be of professional quality. I strongly recommend this session.

3- This proposal is clear, suggesting the presentation will be of good quality. I recommend this session.

2 - This proposal is somewhat clear, suggesting the presentation may be of weak quality. I might recommend this session.

1 - This proposal is vague and/or poorly edited, suggesting the presentation may be of poor quality. I do not recommend this session.

tesol
international
association

63

Finally, we come to the overall recommendation for the proposal. In this area, you are asked to examine the overall writing style, content, and scope of a proposal as indicators of the likely quality of the presentation. Questions to consider when looking at this area are: Is it a well-written proposal in terms of style, content, and scope? Does the writer provide clear connections between the ideas presented? Did the writer proofread their submission?

Reviewers may want to consider writing mechanics and style and how the proposal is crafted. Is this a thoughtful, cohesive, well-written narrative with enough information to help the reviewer determine that the presentation is going to be of good quality?

One of our challenges in TESOL is that we want to include all of the members of the organization and make sure that everyone has equal access to submit a proposal to the convention. Syntax from another variety of World Englishes or a non-native author should NOT be a drawback, but sloppiness should be.

Using the Rubric

- 1 rubric for all proposals
- Flagging special situations
- Evaluation criteria and rating scale

tesol
international
association

Please keep in mind this general information as you complete the strand-specific training for reviewers, including practice ratings.

When to Contact SC/ASC

- Any questions about the rubric or its application

tesol
international
association

65

Inevitably, questions may arise about the rubric or ratings. Instead of taking a guess, please reach out to your SC or ASC. Receiving a fair review of a proposal can be important to a colleague's professional career. Learning about questions and issues that arise also help TESOL improve its review process.

Part 5: Writing Helpful Comments

As you complete your review, you will find two text fields for comments. One, for the proposal submitter, is required. The other, for coordinators and TESOL staff, is optional and may include questions you have about the proposal.

Your strand-specific training may include additional information on commenting to submitters. In this general training, we will focus on a few tips and concerns.

Writing Helpful Comments

- The goal of providing feedback is to help submitters better understand the review process and encourage future submissions.

tesol
international
association

67

The goal of providing feedback is to help submitters better understand the review process and encourage future submissions. There are several things to keep in mind.

Writing Helpful Comments

- Collegial tone

First, please remember that you are responding to a professional colleague. Keep the tone collegial and use language appropriate in professional communications. Consider how you would feel if you received the comment from an anonymous peer and edit appropriately.

Writing Helpful Comments

- Collegial tone
- Specific, concrete, and tied to rubric

tesol
international
association

Next, provide specific and concrete feedback that is tied to the rubric. Writing "This is a great proposal!" is none of these three. Writing "The step-by-step plan provided in the session description was helpful in envisioning the session" is. "I had a hard time understanding this proposal" isn't helpful, but pinpointing the difficulty and suggesting a solution is – "I found a number of typographical errors which distracted me from focusing on the content of the proposal. It might be helpful to ask a colleague to proofread future submissions."

Writing Helpful Comments

- Collegial tone
- Specific, concrete, and tied to rubric
- Avoid assumptions

tesol
international
association

70

Please avoid making assumptions about the writer, including training in proposal writing and language background. Comments such as "You should attend a session on writing proposals" or "Have a native English speaker read your proposals before submitting" are not appropriate.

Writing Helpful Comments

- Collegial tone
- Specific, concrete, and tied to rubric
- Avoid assumptions
- "I" statements, not "you" statements

tesol
international
association

71

In fact, when writing about an issue, use "I" statements, rather than "you" statements.

Writing Helpful Comments

- Collegial tone
- Specific, concrete, and tied to rubric
- Avoid assumptions
- "I" statements, not "you" statements
- Make no promises

tesol
international
association

Sometimes, after reading an outstanding proposal, we want to make the writer aware of our enthusiasm. Please remember that scores are one factor in proposal acceptance and that your ratings may not match those of other raters. For these reasons, please do not assume that a proposal will be accepted or rejected. More information on factors affecting acceptance can be found on the Call for Proposals page.

Writing Helpful Comments

- No length requirement

tesol
international
association

73

Finally, we value your time and dedication to TESOL. While feedback helps proposal writers, we know it takes time for reviewers to write. There is no expectation that your comments address every aspect of a proposal. We do ask that comments follow the guidelines in this training and any further instructions from strand coordinators.
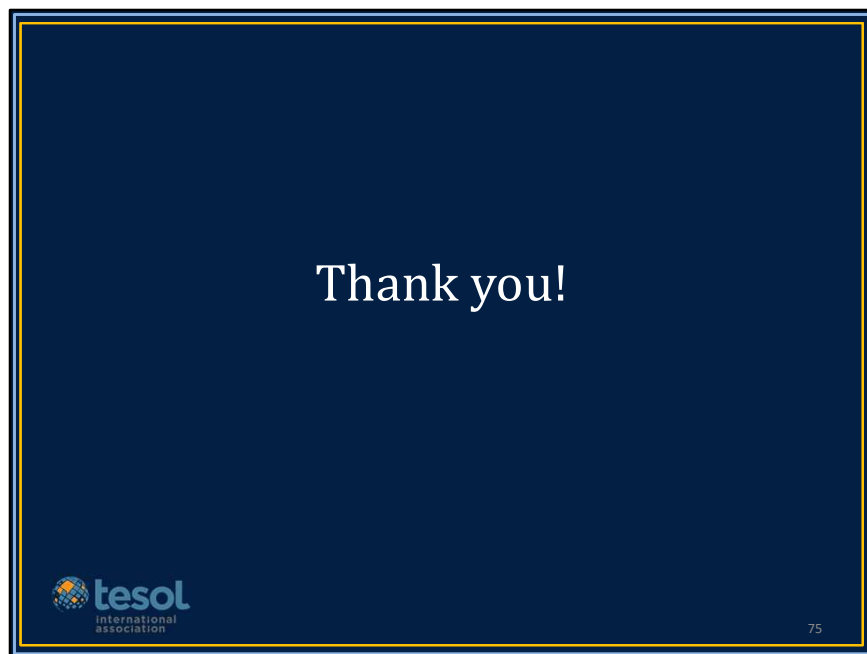
When to Contact SC/ASC

- Any questions about comments

tesol
international
association

74

Your strand coordinators are your resource throughout the review process. Please ask if you have any questions or concerns about commenting on proposals.

Thank you!

Thank you for taking the time to complete this general reviewer training! Please remember to also complete the strand-specific training provided by your coordinators.