

Checklist for Proposal Writers

Focus 1. Currency, Importance, and Appropriateness of Topic to the Field and Audience

✓ Does your proposal specifically highlight the (1) currency, (2) importance, and (3) appropriateness of your session?

You should be able to answer the “so what?” question about your session. In other words,

- What makes your session different and worthwhile?
- Why is your session important?
- Why would convention attendees choose to attend your session?
- How is it related to the field and/or appropriate for a wide range of TESOL attendees, including pre- and in-service/current teachers, teacher educators, teacher-scholars, and program administrators?

Focus 2. Pedagogy, Research, Theory and/or Policy Rationale Basis

✓ Does the rationale of your proposal make explicit reference to relevant pedagogy, research, theory, and/or policy?

Every session should be well-grounded in pedagogy, research, theory, and/or policy. In other words,

- What is the theoretical basis, practical background, and/or policy framework for your presentation?
- In what ways is your session connected to the existing current practices, issues, or literature?
- Did you include relevant terminology, ideas, statistics, debates, and/or citations to show your knowledge of your topic? (If using citations, use in-text citations. A full reference list is not required.)
- Did you indicate the point of departure for your session? What is the gap, motivation, need in the literature, research, practice, or policy? Who is impacted? Why? (The gap does not need to be established via citations. You can establish a gap or need through a discussion of why we need to change or augment current policy/practice, how our current approaches may be limited, which area(s) have not yet been adequately addressed, and how your new approach addresses those limitations.)
- Have you shown that your session is unique or a new application that has not been addressed already in previous research or presentations?
- Does it synthesize citations and/or terminology to achieve one of the following: indicate a gap, challenge a broadly held assumption, raise a question, or extend current knowledge and practice?

Focus 3. Description of Session Content and Plan

✓ Does your proposal indicate a coherent description of the session content and plan?

Be sure to give specific details about your session. In other words, there should be a clear link between what you plan to say and how you plan to support it during the session to achieve your session goals and objectives.

For practice- or pedagogy-oriented sessions

- Did you present a clear description of the teaching tasks, strategies, and/or technique(s) to be introduced in the session?
- Did you show how the tasks or techniques address the teaching gap, need, or goal?
- Did you outline the different sections of your session — and how they are sequenced?

For research-oriented sessions

- Did you present a clear description of your research design (e.g., research questions, participants, data collection, and analysis procedures)?
- Is there a close link between your research design and your research questions?
- Did you clearly indicate the overall findings of your research?
- Did you outline the different sections of your session — and how they are sequenced?

For conceptually-oriented sessions

- Did you present an argument that synthesizes existing practice, theory, and/or research?
- Did you present a novel interpretation of a theoretical perspective, claim, or idea? In other words, does your argument go beyond restating others' ideas to presenting original interpretations, reinterpretations, insights, or applications?
- Did you outline the different sections of your session — and how they are sequenced?

For policy-oriented sessions

- Did you present a clear description and assessment of the policy under scrutiny?
- Did you present a clear description of the method, evidence, and justification for action?
- Did you present a discussion with suggestions for a call to action or reform of the results of action you are proposing (if any)?
- Did you outline the different sections of your session — and how they are sequenced?

Focus 4. Outcomes and Implications for Educational Settings

✓ Did you clearly identify the objectives and outcomes for participants and for educational settings?

The TESOL audience includes pre- or in-service/current teachers, teacher educators, teacher-scholars, and program administrators. Your proposal should state objectives and outcomes for your target audience. In other words,

- Did you discuss your future plan of action, proposed solution, and procedures for the next steps? Are these relevant, appropriate, and achievable?
- What practical applications or implications (in terms of pedagogy, practice, and/or policy) does it provide for the potential audience?
- Did you specify what you hope the audience will take away from your session?

- How would this session impact and/or benefit the TESOL field and professionals?

Focus 5. Appropriateness of Length, Content, and Delivery Methods

✓ Does your proposal indicate appropriate length, content, and delivery methods for your session?

Your proposal should be appropriate in terms of length, content, and delivery methods. In other words,

- Did you choose the right context, setting, focus, type, and strand?
- Did you establish a logical connection between your delivery methods and your choices of length and content? (For example, if you are proposing a workshop, have you included clear descriptions of participant activities? If you are doing a panel, have you shown how each presenter will contribute to the discussion of your larger topic? If you are proposing a 45-minute presentation, have you worked out a schedule that allows you to cover content and leave time for Q&A?)
- Did you consider the time constraints of your session and adjust your session objectives and participant outcomes accordingly?

Focus 6. Overall Clarity of Proposal as Indicator of Presentation Quality

✓ Is it a well-written proposal in terms of writing style, content, and scope?

Can you answer “yes” to all of these questions?

- Is it a well-written proposal in terms of style, content, and scope?
- Did you provide clear connections between the ideas presented?
- Did you proofread your proposal?
- Does the final version reflect the quality of your session?
- Did you double-check the word count?

✓ More suggestions on how to ensure your proposal is clear

- Consider having an outside reader see if it is easy to find all the elements referenced in each of the questions outlined above.
- Note that the field of TESOL acknowledges a range of Englishes as part of “professional quality” writing. Considering this, please ensure that you follow the standards and conventions of the professional community since raters have to make judgments about the potential quality of the presentation based on the quality of writing in the proposal.