



ANS Guidance for Panel Session Chairs and Organizers

Purpose of this Guidance

The American Nuclear Society is committed to hosting meetings that advance knowledge and understanding. In doing so, we aim to include diverse voices and to ensure that our events are inclusive. All attendees are valued equally for their skills and abilities and each person is respected similarly for their unique perspectives and experiences. Please consider this as you put your best self forward in organizing and conducting panel sessions.

Session chairs and session organizers play an integral role in the development of technical content at the society's national meetings, and therefore the overall technical quality of the meeting. These summary guidelines are provided to assist panel session chairs and organizers. For panels, the session organizer generally also serves as the session chair.

What is a Panel Session?

A panel session is when a diverse group of experts are brought together to have a balanced discussion or debate on a current topic of interest or to inform the audience on recent updates within the nuclear community. The format is defined by the session chair to maximize the objectives of the session – to allow the audience interaction with the panel. The duration of the panel can vary within the allotted time periods for sessions.

Panel versus Paper Session

Panel sessions should bring together leading experts on the topic to interact freely with one another and the audience to exchange information and ideas. Usually, panels cover topics that are more recent or are the subject of current news, material that is more rooted in policy than technical details, or technical material that is not ripe for published papers but nevertheless important to discuss. Panel sessions should not turn into paper sessions without the papers. Informal settings with less-scripted discussions led by a moderator or facilitator are more interesting and allow more opportunities for audience participation and interaction.

A technical paper session can be a regular contributed session where authors submit papers following the call for papers or an invited paper session, where authors are officially invited by a signed letter from a session chair to submit a paper. Any paper not officially invited or a paper “stimulated” by a session organizer is a contributed paper. These paper sessions should contain no less than three papers and usually no more than five depending on the time available according to the program. Authors are then asked to present for up to fifteen minutes followed by five minutes for questions and answers. For the Annual and Winter Meetings, authors who present in a paper session are required to submit a summary to be published in the *Transactions of the American Nuclear Society* publication following the meeting.



Suggested Panel Format Options

Brief Presentation Format

- Session chair welcomes participants, provides ground rules for the session, presents a brief overview of the session topic, and introduces each panelist in order of their presentations.
- Each panelist gives their presentation. Note: The presentations should cover high-level points as opposed to highly detailed technical talks that would normally accompany a paper.
- Session Chair facilitates Q/As. The Q/A should occupy at least 1/3 the time of the session.
- Session Chair concludes session by thanking the panelists and the audience.

Discussion Format

- Session chair welcomes participants, provides ground rules for the session, presents a brief overview of the session topic, and introduces each panelist or the panelists take a few minutes to introduce themselves.
- Session chair moderates an interactive panel discussion with questions or comments from the audience as part of the exchange. The questions that are planned are shared with the panelists in advance so they may have time to prepare some remarks. Note: Panelists are not required to prepare presentation slides.
- Session Chair concludes session summarizing any overall themes emerging from the discussion and by thanking the panelists and the audience.

Note: The exact length of a panel session will be determined during the room scheduling meeting when the preliminary program is made based on room availability.

ANS Guidance for Panel Session Chairs and Organizers

Prior to the conference

Topic Submission Timeline

- Topics must be submitted and approved (outlined below) by divisions prior to submission of the topics for the Call for Papers.
- Topic submission to your Division Program Chair should include the title, session organizer/chair, sponsoring Division(s), and 100-word summary.
 - For the June meeting, submit topic by the previous July.
 - For the November meeting, submit topic by the previous January.



How is a Panel Session Approved?

- ANS Member conceives of an idea for a panel.
- Idea is socialized within the Division Program Committee, usually at the meeting held one year prior to the panel.
- Division brainstorms potential topics for either paper or panel sessions and works with the Division Program Chair to decide which sessions to submit for the Call for Papers.
- Once the topic is approved within the Division, the session organizer will begin to plan for the session and solicit speakers for the panel.
- The session summary, along with the slate of speakers, must be finalized for inclusion in the program prior to Room Scheduling Meeting.

Speaker Solicitation

- Generally, panels consist of a session chair and four speakers, with a maximum of six. Aim to invite 4-6 people in the initial round.
- Keep in mind that multiple rounds of solicitations may need to be sent.
- See the ANS program specialist for a Request for Participation letter; see Division Chair for a Formal Invitation letter.
- Set the expectations for the format of the panel in your solicitation to the speakers.
- For the June meeting, panel participants should be selected by January and confirmed by the end of March.
- For the November meeting, panel participants should be selected by July and confirmed by the end of September.
- Submit names, emails and affiliations of panelists to your Program Chair who will enter them into the EPSR system.

Speaker Registration Fees

Solicited Speakers

Solicited speakers are required to pay for their meeting registration. Typically, panel participants will be 'solicited speakers' as opposed to formally invited speakers. Communicate early to panel speakers that they will be required to register for the conference (either the full or one-day registration fee). ANS staff will assist with the communications to the speakers through the submission system.

Formally Invited Speakers

Formally invited speakers are provided with a one-day compensation for their registration fee. These are provided to speakers who are considered essential to the make-up of the panel but are not able to fund the registration fee. Each Division is allotted 5 one-day comps or one full comp for speakers. Session Chairs need to receive permission from their Division Chair and Division Program Chair prior to offering the comp to the speaker and request the signed letter from their Division Chair with further instructions for the speaker's registration. Only attendees who have been formally invited by the Division Chair via signed invitation letter may qualify for a complimentary registration.

Speaker and Participant Selection

- Strive to recruit a range of participants who are best suited to address the panel topic, including women and underrepresented groups. This guideline should not be interpreted as a requirement or quota, and those invited should be qualified individuals chosen based on their potential contributions to the panel as opposed to their gender or background.
- Reach beyond the session chair's and organizer's own networks. Reach out to wider networks for ideas, suggestions, and introductions to speakers who could diversify your speaker line-up. Depending on the topic, it may be appropriate to seek representatives from academia, industry, and government sectors. Or, for example, ask the faculty member or manager who may typically be invited if they might recommend another faculty member or expert.
- Research and follow speaker lists compiled by other organizations and communities. For example, look outside the nuclear field if appropriate.
- Support the development of students and young members by including them when they have expertise to contribute. Seek recommendations from the Student Section leader or the YMG Chair.
- Select participants who can add valuable perspectives to the discussion and communicate to invitees who else has agreed to be on or has been invited to the panel.

Slide Presentations and Biographies

- Collect the speakers' slide presentations (if they are using slides) and biographies that will be used to introduce speakers in the weeks leading up the conference.
- Review final slide presentations received from all speakers, ensuring content is appropriate and is in context with session topic.
- If using Discussion Format panels, send your prepared questions to the panel members.

ANS Guidance for Panel Session Chairs and Organizers

At the conference

Registration Desk

- Check in with the registration desk to ensure that your panel members are registered and have arrived by the day of the panel.
- If you do not know the speakers personally, you are encouraged to engage with them at the conference prior to the panel session. This will help with introductions and alleviate the last-minute activity right before the panel begins.

Introductions

- Ask the speakers how they would like to be introduced noting their academic or professional credentials and relevant titles.
- Avoid introducing representatives of some groups (e.g., women, students or younger members, etc.) more informally than others, which can undermine their professional credibility.

Question and Answer Sessions

- Treat all those asking questions with the same degree of formality and respect.
- Try to ensure that a variety of people get to ask questions, especially when time is limited during the Q&A and the chair needs to prioritize who will be given a chance to speak. For example, ensure the person who may be less vocal but has had their hand raised gets an opportunity to ask their question.
- Try to give all panelists the same amount of time to respond to questions.
- When questions are asked of the whole panel, rotate who responds first.
- For example, clearly set expectations by stating, “Would each panelist please take one minute to respond to the question?”
- Be aware that implicit bias can influence your reaction to questions
- Try to engage substantively with all questions asked and avoid dismissing questions or perspectives.



Following the conference

- Send out “Thank You” emails to all participating speakers.
- Consider sending out a “wrap up” of the panel highlights along with the thank you note.
- Direct requests for slides to meetings@ans.org.
- Have the speakers sign a release form that you will provide to ANS staff if you plan to distribute presentations directly.

