

Developing Competitive Scientific Session Proposals: The Importance of Endorsers

Hosted by the Scientific Program Committee

**April 21, 2021
12:00 Noon US Eastern Time**

Welcome!



Discussion Instructions

- If you would like to speak and are connected via phone, select the raise hand icon below the panelist list and we will unmute your phone line.
- If you do not have the chance to speak, submit questions and comments via the **Q&A** panel for later follow up.

Leadership Connection



Michael Aschner

2021–2022 Chair
Scientific Program Committee



Nisha Sipes Scientific Program Committee



Aaron Bowman Scientific Program Committee



Jennifer Rayner
2021-2022 Chair
Continuing Education Committee

SOT 2022 Annual Meeting

- March 27–31, 2022, San Diego, California.
- SOT is planning an in-person meeting.
- Session proposals should be prepared with the inclusion of the best speaker for the topics within the session.
- SOT will explore how to use the in-person content to enhance accessibility to the science that is presented in San Diego.



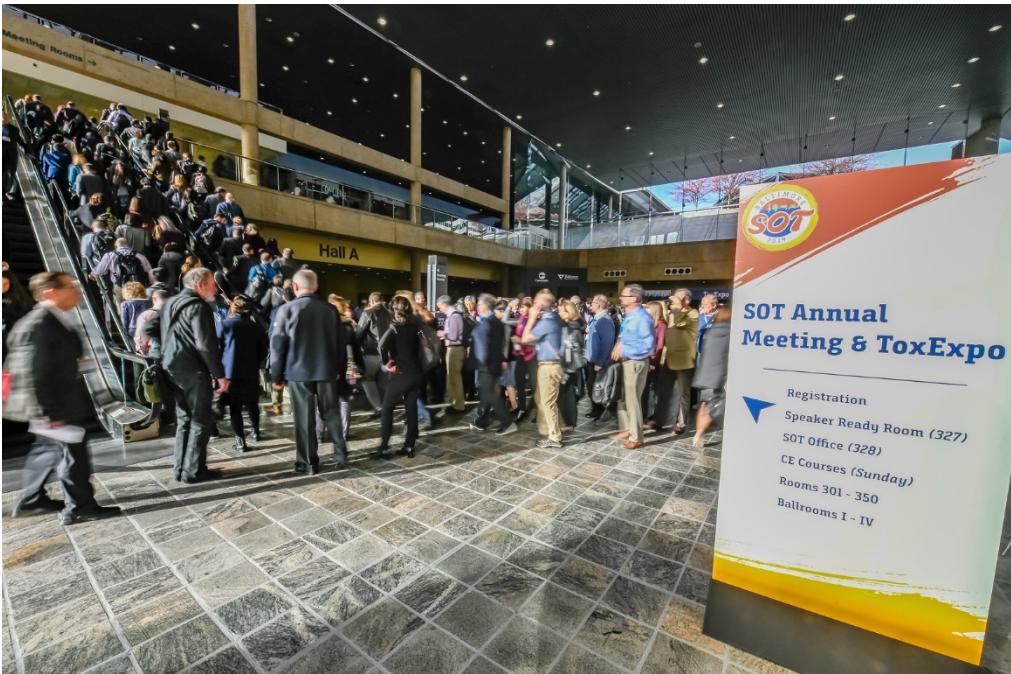
Annual Meeting Sessions

- Solicitation of Proposals
- Preparation of Proposals by Organizers (SS/SIG internal review, comment, submission, etc.)
- Proposal Review (Scientific Program and Continuing Education Committees)
- Best Practices Related to Accepted Proposals
- Continuing Education
- Preparation of Proposals (internal practices)



Annual Meeting Sessions

- Cutting-Edge Interdisciplinary Science and New Perspectives
- Depth of Analysis
- Emerging Fields and Their Application to the Field of Toxicology
- Active Involvement in Other Areas of Toxicology



Annual Meeting Session Types

Annual Meeting Session Type	Description	# of Speakers	Details
S	Symposia (165 or 90 minutes)	Cutting-edge science: new areas, concepts, or data in the forefront of toxicology. 4-5 speakers (165 minutes) 2-3 speakers (90 minutes)	Up to 3 nonmember speakers provided with full-funding support (165 min.); up to 2 (90 min.)
W	Workshop (165 or 90 minutes)	Informal, interactive presentations that highlight state-of-the-art knowledge in toxicology with an emphasis on discussion (panel discussion must be included) 4-5 speakers (165 minutes) 2-3 speakers (90 minutes)	Up to 3 nonmember speakers provided with full-funding support (165 min.); up to 2 (90 min.)
CE	Continuing Education Sunrise— 45 minutes AM and PM— 195 minutes Held on Sunday	Cover new, established knowledge in toxicology and related disciplines. Intended to introduce individuals to new techniques or provided continued development and understanding on specific topics 4–8 speakers depending on the content coverage	1 nonmember speaker provided with full-funding support
R	Roundtable (80 minutes)	Controversial subjects; moderated discussions, with 3–4 speakers providing a three to five-minute statement and the balance of the time for questions and discussion 3-4 speakers	Up to 2 nonmember speakers provided with full-funding support
HH	Historical Highlights (80 minutes)	Review of a historical topic with toxicology impact 3-4 speakers	Up to 2 nonmember speakers provided with full-funding support



Annual Meeting Session Types

Annual Meeting Session Type	Description	# of Speakers	Funding Support Available	
IS	Informational Session (usually 80 minutes)	General information and planned scientific activities not based on outcome of scientific research	3-4 speakers	Up to 2 nonmember speakers provided with full-funding support
EC	Education/Career Development (80 minutes)	Tools and resources for toxicologists that will enhance their professional or scientific development	3-4 speakers	Up to two nonmember speakers provided with full-funding support
RI	Regional Interest (165 or 90 minutes)	Central topics of relevance that describe public health and/or ecological problems of that region	4-5 speakers 2-3 speakers (90 minutes)	Up to 3 nonmember speakers provided with full-funding support (165 min.); up to 2 (90 min.)
PL	Platform (165 minutes)	Oral presentations that cover new areas, concepts, or data	Not more than 9 presentations in one platform session	Not applicable
PS	Poster (all day display; 1.75-hour session times)	Topic specific presentations that cover new areas, concepts, or data	Not more than 40 abstracts will be programmed	Not applicable



Competitive Nature of Proposals

(Statistics)

AM Year	# Submitted	# Accepted	Acceptance %
2015 (San Diego)	145	59	41
2016 (New Orleans)	130	57	44
2017 (Baltimore)	135	58	43
2018 (San Antonio)	126	61	48
2019 (Baltimore)	128	73	57
2020 (Anaheim)	114	73	64
2021 (Orlando)* *ultimately a virtual meeting	94	59	63

Space is limited for sessions therefore proposals are very competitive.

The number of proposals that can be accepted and sessioned each year is directly dependent on the location of the Annual Meeting and the rooms and their sizes that have been contracted. Contracts may be set up to 5 years in advance.



Full SOT Session Proposal Information

The link to the 2022 Proposal Site:

<https://www.toxicology.org/events/am/AM2022/proposal/submitting-proposals.asp>



Preparing Proposals

The Scientific Session and Continuing Education course submission period for the 2022 SOT Annual Meeting will begin on Friday, March 26, 2021, and will end on Monday, May 17, 2021.

The annual webinar for session and course endorsers will be held in April 2021. In the meantime, you may [view last year's webinar](#) for reference.

1. Choose a Session Type and Length

You do not have to be an SOT member to submit a proposal for consideration. However, an SOT member must be listed to serve as a Chair of the session, if accepted. You may serve as a Chair for only one accepted session per Annual Meeting and as Co-Chair for only one (other) accepted session per Annual Meeting.

Use the expandable boxes to view additional information and requirements for proposals of each session type.



A Good Proposal Has...

- Clearly Presented Focus/Message
- Session objectives stated clearly
- All speakers should be confirmed
- Integrated Overall Abstract
 - Speaker abstracts that either build upon each other, contrast respective views, or otherwise contribute to the overall theme of the proposal.
 - CE courses will have clear learning objectives and take-aways.
- *Primary Endorsement* by a SS/SIG/Committee with favorable ranking and/or insightful comments.
 - Additional endorsement by up to two more SSs/SIGs/Committees encouraged to facilitate interactions between component groups.
 - Consider endorsement by the Specialty Section Collaboration and Communication Group.



Proposal Quality

- Make sure the proposal is fully developed.
 - Proposals submitted with general topics, no proposed speakers, no detailed description of what each speaker will cover, and/or 1-3 general sentences about the topic for the proposal (or speaker) generally do not fare well.
- A quality proposal will not repeat a topic presented in a very recent SOT meeting (e.g. similar proposal on a same topic as 1 or 2 years ago not likely to be accepted).
- The proposal should stand out to each reviewer so that he or she can determine the significance of the topic, the relationship of each talk to the topic and the inter-relationship of the talks to one another.
 - SPC and CEC members are selected with an effort to have a broad expertise across toxicology specialties and to be equally representative of job sectors and gender.
 - Proposals are independently reviewed and scored by reviewers without knowing how the other members are scoring.



Breadth of Topic and Speakers

- Make sure topic is relevant to toxicology.
- The SPC is sensitive to meeting the needs of the component groups but tries to balance the scope of the proposal with the potential audience.
- The CE Committee selects proposals with the highest educational impact with a focus on timely topics.
- Avoid topics that are too broad which may seem like a survey of the literature.
- Avoid having too many speakers from the same institution, job sector, etc. This helps provide diversity in perspective.
 - Diversity in perspective is most important for controversial topics but SPC understands this may not be appropriate for all topics



Member vs. Nonmember Speakers

- **Speaker Funding:**
 - SOT will fully fund (travel and meeting registration) up to **three** nonmembers in a 165-minute session (SYM, WKSP, RI), or up to **two** for an accepted 80-minute or 90-minute session.
 - SOT has many members; membership has broad expertise, and we should utilize it.
- **Utilize nonmember speakers if they are the best presenters for a specific talk.**
- **Exceptions:**
 - Topic is very novel.
 - SPC is trying to increase exposure to scientific topics not normally at the Annual Meeting, but that impact toxicology.
 - Apply for IAT (Innovations in Applied Toxicology) or ITS (Innovations in Toxicological Sciences) designation, which can allow for up to four nonmember speakers to receive full-funding. Complete information on IAT and ITS designation can be found on the website.



Nonmember Speaker Funding

- **Nonmember funding needs must be identified with submission.**
- SOT Members are not eligible for funding support, including Annual Meeting registration.
- Two levels—all nonmember speakers will receive complimentary registration to attend the meeting.
 - **Full-Funding**—registration, hotel (up to two nights), travel (lowest round trip economy), two days reimbursable expenses (meals up to \$50 per day, ground transportation, etc.).
Full-Funding requests apply to both North American (US, Canada, Mexico) speakers and overseas speakers.
 - **Registration Only**—nonmember speakers who receive registration only support are not eligible for reimbursement at the conclusion of the Annual Meeting. This type of funding is typically requested if three speakers (SYM, WKSP, RI), or two speakers (other session types), are already marked for full funding in the proposal, or if the nonmember speaker cannot accept full funding (e.g., speakers from Government agencies).



Endorsement

- **Primary endorser:** The component group (SS/SIG/Committee) which developed the proposal or recommended the session by ranking it highest during their review.
- **There must be at least one primary endorser.** Proposal submitters may indicate up to two additional endorsers.
- Sessions that cut across three or more specialty areas of toxicology: Consider selecting the Specialty Section Collaboration Group as an Endorser.
- The endorser ranks proposals against other proposals of the same session type (Symposia, Workshops, etc.).
- The endorser provides **comments** on the relative importance of the proposal to toxicology.
 - Absolutely used by SPC and CEC!
 - May be favorable, neutral, or critical (sometimes with recommendations)
- The endorsing groups are given approximately 10 days to review, rank, and comment on proposals requesting endorsement.



Soliciting Endorser Input

- Assess potential interest early (now!)
 - Provide endorsers with proposal and rationale as to why the proposal will be of interest.
 - Request feedback as to their level of interest; they will be ranking the proposal relative to other like proposals.
- All groups have different processes for reviewing and ranking proposals so don't expect each one to act the same way.
 - Many desire the ability for early review and the opportunity to provide feedback.



Session Proposal Deadline: Monday, May 17

- SPC and CEC expect close-to-final proposals
- *Complete* abstracts
 - Overall abstract: Should be a mix of science and promotion.
 - Individual presenter abstracts
- All speakers and co-chairs should be confirmed (so speakers are not “surprised”).
 - Be sure they understand the proposal must be approved by the SPC or CE prior to a final commitment
- Close-to-final proposals means less modifying during the resubmission period over the summer.



Endorser Review Process/Timeline: 2022 Annual Meeting

- **Monday, May 17, 2021, 11:59 PM US Eastern time:** 2022 Annual Meeting Proposal submission deadline.
- **Wednesday, May 19 to Tuesday, June 1:** Endorsers (SS, SIG, SOT Committees) complete review of proposals online—entry of ranks and comments.
 - PDFs of the proposals requesting endorsement from that endorser and a list of all proposals will be sent to the groups' Presidential Chain/Committee Chairperson.
 - A SurveyMonkey link will be sent to the endorsing group Presidential Chain or Committee Chair, although **one person** from the endorsing group review committee should be designated to enter the formal details online.
 - SOT HQ will send complete instructions and guidelines on how to use the SurveyMonkey form.
 - All questions on the review form are required. *The form may be edited until it has been submitted.*
 - If you **do not endorse** a proposal that has identified your group as an endorser, please write "we do not endorse this proposal" in the final comment box on the review form. **Do not leave the comment box blank. The SPC values endorsing group comments on the merits of the proposal both in quality as well as the value to the endorsing group**



Specialty Section Guaranteed Accepted (GA) Sessions

- Specialty Sections will be able to select a single proposal which will be presented at the Annual Meeting on a rotating basis.
 - Review process, including SPC review and potential requests for modification, remains the same.
 - Proposal will be reviewed outside the routine ranking system and sessioned
- Three-year rotation schedule (10 per year)



Rotation Schedule for Confirmed Sessions

2021 (Orlando)	2022 (San Diego)	2023 (Nashville)
Biotechnology	Biological Modeling	Cardiovascular Toxicology
Clinical & Translational Tox.	Carcinogenesis	Ethical, Legal, Forensic & Social Issues
Computational Tox.	Comparative Tox, Pathology, and Veterinary	Immunotoxicology
Exposure	Dermal Tox	Inhalation & Respiratory
Mechanisms	Drug Discovery Tox	<i>In Vitro</i> and Alt. Methods
Nanoscience & Advanced Materials	Food Safety	Metals
Ocular Toxicology	Medical Device/Combination Product	Molecular & Systems Biology
Regulatory & Safety Evaluation	Mixtures	Neurotoxicology
Reproductive & Developmental Tox.	Occupational & Public Health	Stem Cells
Sustainable Chemicals through Contemporary Tox.	Risk Assessment	



The Annual Meeting Proposal Site

- <https://www.toxicology.org/events/am/AM2022/proposal/preparing-proposals.asp>
- Proposal submission guidelines and detailed instructions for the online SS/SIG/Committee proposal review.
 - Description of all session types.
 - FAQs
 - Information about abstract submission for poster and platform presentations.
 - The link to this webinar recording and the slides.
 - Sample symposium and workshop proposals



Questions

Send your questions or comments using the **Q&A** panel.

If you would like to speak select the raise hand icon below the panelist list and we will unmute your phone line.



If you do not have the chance to speak, submit questions and comments for later follow up.

How Do the Continuing Education and Scientific Program Committees WORK?



2022 Proposal Review Timeline—SPC

- **Monday, May 17, 11:59 PM US Eastern time:** Proposal submission deadline.
- **May 19–June 1:** Endorsers complete review of proposals online—entry of ranks and comments.
- **June 4–June 18:** SPC review of proposals and endorser ranks/scores/comments.
- **Late June:** SPC meeting to discuss review decisions, scores, ranks, comments, and tentatively accept, or not accept, all proposals.
- **Early July:** SPC communicates formal “tentative acceptance” or “non acceptance” to proposal submitters. Letters sent to session organizer with endorsing group President/Chair copied. Latter must communicate details with full review group.
- **By mid-July:** Accepted session organizers must comply with requests from SPC—full contact information for ALL nonmember speakers, any title or content changes, etc.
- **July 8–August 13:** Chairs for tentatively accepted sessions asked to revisit the proposal site to resubmit proposal, as suggested by the SPC liaison for the session. Changes may include title changes; abstract updating; speaker roster changes. *All proposals must be resubmitted in Oasis system – even if no changes suggested by SPC.*
- **Mid-September:** Scientific Program Committee reconvenes to review the modified Invited Speaker proposals for the tentatively accepted sessions.
- **Late September:** Final Acceptance (and non acceptance) notices sent to session chairs.



2022 Proposal Review Timeline—CE

- **Monday, May 17, 11:59 PM US Eastern time:** Proposal submission deadline.
- **May 19–June 1:** Endorsers complete review of proposals online—entry of ranks and comments.
- **June 4–June 18:** CE Committee reviews proposals and endorser ranks/scores/comments and provides their scores and feedback
- **Late June:** CEC meets to discuss review decisions, scores, ranks, comments, and tentatively accept, or not accept, all proposals.
 - CEC usually meets the same day in June
 - Proposals marked as “Workshop primary” and “CE secondary” are reviewed by both committees. A proposal marked Symposium or Workshop primary/CE secondary may be deferred to the CEC if the SPC passes on the proposal.
- **Late June:** CE Committee communicates formal “tentative acceptance” or “non acceptance” to course proposal submitters.
- **By late July:** Accepted course organizers submit final revisions, title changes, update overall abstracts, and confirm speakers.
- **August–December:** Accepted courses develop and submit their course content for production/distribution.



SPC: The Deliberation

- Proposals and Endorser ranks and comments are sent to SPC and CE Committees within one week of Endorser review close.
- Committee members review the Annual Meeting proposal submissions
 - Provide a score: 1 (highest) through 5 (lowest).
 - Scores sent to SOT HQ and a mean for each proposal is calculated.



SPC: The Review Process

- **2-day meeting in late June:**
 - Worksheet provided with historical data and number of rooms available, as well as proposals listed based on mean score, divided into thirds.
 - Top third: most likely to be accepted; bottom third: most likely to be rejected; middle third: “on the bubble”
 - Discuss proposals:
 - More attention is focused on those on the bubble.
 - Competitive but duplicative proposals (decide).
 - Any on or below the bubble that an SPC member wants to champion for further consideration by the group.
 - SPC members recuse themselves during deliberations if a proposal list them as an organizer, speaker, or input solicited as SS/SIG officer.
 - Provide reasons for nonacceptance for all proposals not tentatively accepted



SPC: The Review Process (cont.)

- Provide any required input from SPC for tentatively-accepted proposals
 - Suggestions for broadening speaker sector, inclusion of specific perspective, fewer speakers from same institution, etc.
 - Assign SPC liaisons to all “tentatively accepted” proposals.
 - NOTE: Refusal to consider or adjust proposals based on SPC input may result in the proposal not receiving final acceptance in September. (This is why they are “**Tentatively Accepted**” when communicated in early July.) Work with your liaison!



Chairs and Speaker Funding

- **Membership**
 - The proposal guidelines require that the chairperson be a member of the SOT; the co-chair may be a member or non-member
 - Full-funding support is limited to no more than three nonmember speakers (unless IAT or ITS designation is accepted)
 - No funding support of any kind for SOT members



Reasons for Proposal Nonacceptance

- **Endorsement (Ranking/Comments)**
 - Endorser comments were not considered supportive enough to merit acceptance.
 - Lack of enthusiasm, as evidenced by comments and relative ranking.



Reasons for Proposal Nonacceptance

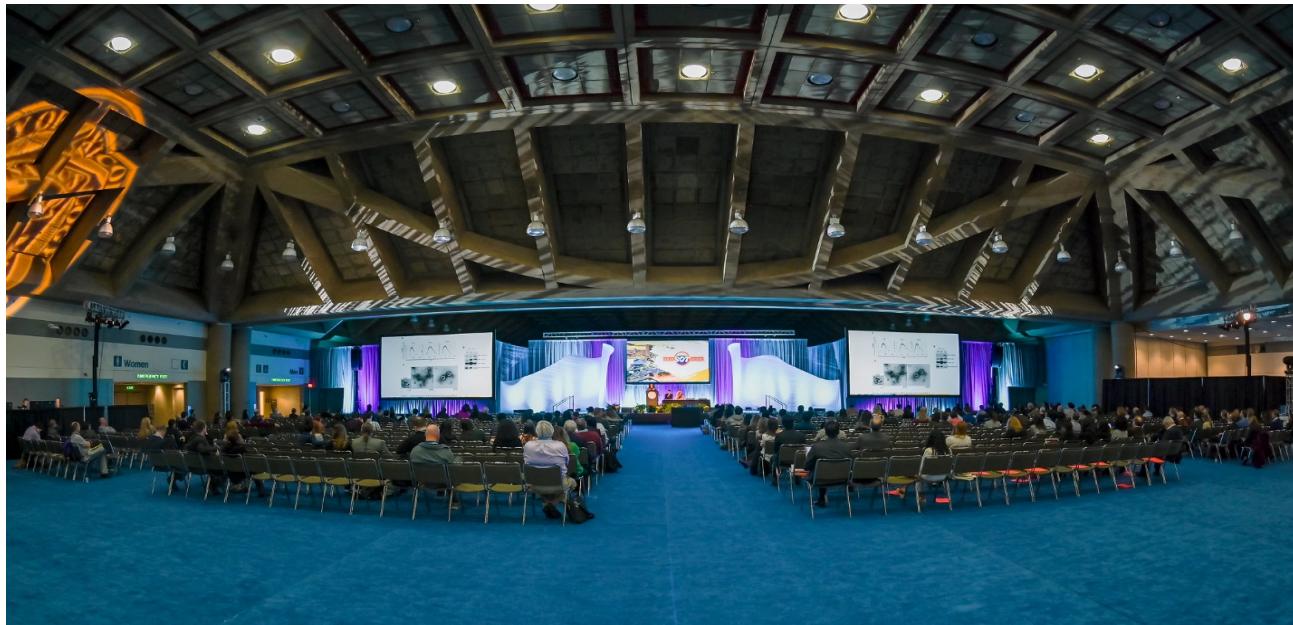
- **Quality of the proposal**
 - The focus of the subject material considered to be too narrow.
 - The extent of the coverage of the topic area needs to be improved.
 - The focus on methodology needs to be expanded.
 - The proposal was not fully developed. Additional information concerning the nature of the individual presentations is required.
 - The proposal addresses a topic that does not adequately focus on the toxicological sciences.



Reasons for Proposal Nonacceptance

- Other Issues

- The SPC felt that this was a good proposal, but that the topic was too similar to one held at a recent SOT Annual Meeting.
- The SPC felt it was a good proposal but was unable to include it in this year's program due to the significant number of good proposals and space limitations.
- **Generally, the SPC encourages resubmission, but this does not guarantee acceptance the following year.**



Double or Triple-Booked Chairs and Presenters

- **SOT Annual Meeting Chair and Co-Chair Policy:**
 - One individual may not serve as Chair for more than one session per Annual Meeting or as Co-Chair for more than one session per Annual Meeting.
 - Same individual can serve as Chair of one session and Co-Chair of another session.
 - This is in response to many of the same members appearing as Chairs and/or Co-Chairs for different sessions. There is a concern about over-extended session participants during the Annual Meeting.
 - Presenters should also be limited to no more than one Monday through Thursday scientific session (not including CE). This policy is in place to ensure diversity regarding presenters at the Annual Meeting.



The Review for Final Acceptance

- SPC members review individual abstracts against objectives stated in the overview for “tentatively accepted” proposals for which they were assigned as liaison.
 - Only the assigned committee member reviews the overview and individual abstracts for the tentatively accepted session.
- SPC members participate in a teleconference in September to confirm “Final Acceptance” of sessions, any nonacceptances, voluntary withdrawals/replacements.
- Face-to-Face meeting in early November to finalize schedule with the inclusion of Poster and Platform sessions.
 - Significant effort made to eliminate/minimize overlap.
- Possible presenter conflicts are evaluated and rectified, and the Scientific Program agenda is completed in December.



Poster and Platform Abstracts

- SPC strongly encourages submitters to select the appropriate presentation type when submitting abstracts during the final submission phase.
 - Poster Only – presenter will only be considered for a poster session.
 - Platform or Poster – presenter will be considered for both presentation types. By selecting this presentation type, the Scientific Program Committee can develop dynamic platform sessions.



Reasons for Abstract Nonacceptance

- The abstract reports no new data, knowledge, interpretations or applications.
 - The abstract may describe a proposal or work in progress, with no results to report at this time. This abstract may be resubmitted for a future meeting once results become available.
- The abstract is poorly written.
- The abstract presents a review of published literature and does not report new scientific interpretations or applications.
- The abstract fails to indicate the substance investigated in the study.
- The abstract promotes a commercial product of potential interest to scientific community. The Scientific Program Committee believes that presentation of this information would be more appropriate at the Exhibitor's booth.



Reasons for Abstract Nonacceptance

- The abstract is one of several emanating from a single study and cannot form a separate presentation.
- The experimental design and/or interpretations are flawed or biased.
- The work as presented is fundamentally sound but it is unclear in its connection and relevance to toxicology.
- The abstract raises ethical questions that need to be resolved or clarified before it can be accepted.



2022 Session Proposal and Abstract Review Key Points

- The Session Proposal site will house today's webinar:

<https://www.toxicology.org/events/am/AM2022/proposal/preparing-proposals.asp>

- Be sure to review the section “FAQs: Session Programming and Scheduling (“Why is that session then?”), for more insight on how SPC puts together the Scientific Program each year.
- *All scientific session and CE proposals must be received by May 17.*
- Poster and platform abstract site open August 15 to October 15, 2021.

Questions

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Thank You for Attending!

