

HOW TO AVOID EDUCATIONAL SESSION PROPOSAL PITFALLS

A great proposal gets noticed! Below are considerations for creating a dynamic proposal for presentation at the ASHP Midyear Clinical Meeting and Exhibition.

WHY IS THIS EDUCATION SESSION NEEDED?

A practice gap is the difference between what currently happens in practice and what could happen based on current knowledge or standards. Clearly describe the problem your session will address and its root cause—this shows reviewers that your proposal meets a real learner need.

While knowledge gaps are easiest to close, ASHP prioritizes sessions that address **competence** (knowing how) or **performance** (doing) gaps. Focus on what participants will be able to do differently after the session.

Support your identified need with documentation such as expert opinions, current literature, regulatory requirements, or performance data. At least two credible sources must be cited, or the proposal will not meet acceptance criteria.

WHO IS THE TARGET AUDIENCE?

Identify exactly who your session is for and tailor the content accordingly. Avoid mixing basic and advanced content or combining unrelated demographics. For example, small and rural hospitals have different needs than large academic centers—address one group clearly unless true overlap exists.

WHAT LEVEL IS YOUR CONTENT?

Midyear attendees prefer **intermediate and advanced** sessions.

- **Intermediate:** builds on existing knowledge.
- **Advanced:** assumes familiarity and emphasizes application, interpretation, and debate.

Avoid including background or pathophysiology in advanced sessions—assume participants already know it. Offer new insights, emerging data, or thought-provoking interpretations instead.

WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES?

Learning objectives describe what learners will be able to do—not what speakers will do.

- Each must be **measurable** and **achievable** within the session.
- Avoid verbs like *understand* or *learn*.
- Choose verbs appropriate to the activity type (knowledge- or application-based).

HOW ARE YOU GOING TO TEACH YOUR AUDIENCE?

Adults learn best by doing. Incorporate activities that let participants practice skills and apply concepts during the session. Use creative formats such as case discussions, polling, problem-solving, or even gamified elements (e.g., *Jeopardy*, *Family Feud*).

Integrate active learning naturally throughout the session—don't save it for the end or announce it as a separate segment. Aim to re-engage learners every 10–12 minutes.

The goal is to close competence or performance gaps by giving participants opportunities to **practice** and **receive feedback** during the session.

WHO ARE YOUR SPEAKERS?

Select faculty who are nationally recognized experts with proven presentation skills. Diverse geographic representation strengthens the proposal and brings multiple practice perspectives. Network broadly to assemble the strongest team possible.

HOW LONG WILL YOUR SESSION BE?

Sessions of **60–90 minutes** are most popular. Plan realistic objectives that fit within the allotted time and allow for learning activities. Avoid overloading the agenda—depth is better than breadth.

KNOCK THEIR SOCKS OFF!

Strive for a memorable session that delivers practical, high-impact takeaways. Demonstrate your “wow factor” in the proposal by clearly articulating how the session will engage, challenge, and inspire participants—then make sure you can deliver it.

PRINCIPLES OF ADULT LEARNING

- **Relevance:** Link learning directly to real-world practice.
- **Experience:** Build on the learner's existing knowledge.
- **Self-Direction:** Adults choose sessions that meet their needs—respect that autonomy.
- **Expectations:** Align content depth and format with what the audience anticipates.
- **Alignment:** Ensure objectives, content, and assessment all match.
- **Active Learning:** Intermix interaction every few minutes.
- **Practice & Feedback:** Include opportunities to apply new skills and receive feedback.
- **Reinforcement:** Recognize and reward success; positive reinforcement drives engagement.