



Symposia Guidelines

Symposia Duration	90 minutes, including introductions, presentations, Q&A, etc.
Number of Participants	Maximum of five (5) participants: 1-2 moderators and up to 4 speakers
Symposia Proposal Deadline	Monday, November 20, 2023, 11:59 pm EST
Selection Announcements	Early January, 2024

Format

- Each symposium is 90 minutes in length, inclusive of introductions, presentations, discussion/Q&A, and other planned activities.
- Symposia formats can include presentations, panel Q&A, or other formats. We particularly welcome workshops that do not consist of solely one-way delivery of presentations but instead encourage active participation, involvement, and interaction from the audience.

Topic

- Successful submissions will have an over-arching theme, with each speaker contributing a unique perspective to the big picture.
- Sessions should address current/ongoing efforts or issues of high current relevance and should prioritize presentations with new findings or unpublished data along with future plans.
- The symposium should present new insights or findings that contribute to the existing body of neuroscience knowledge. As much as possible, symposia should avoid duplicating topics or ideas that have been extensively discussed in previous conferences.
- Symposia that foster interdisciplinary collaborations or bridge multiple areas of research are encouraged, as they bring new perspectives and facilitate the exchange of ideas across different domains.
- The BRAIN Initiative Conference attracts a diverse, multidisciplinary audience, including those with varying levels of expertise in neuroscience and non-researchers. Symposia and speakers should provide sufficient background information and context to ensure the topic is accessible to a broad range of attendees.

Participants

- Symposia organizers should have an affiliation or direct involvement with the U.S. BRAIN Initiative, whether federal or non-government. Organizers are not required to participate in the symposia as moderators or speakers.
- Symposia can include a maximum of 5 participants: 1-2 moderators and up to 4 speakers. Moderators can also be one of the designated speakers, but this option is limited to just one chairperson.
- Moderators and speakers do not need to be funded by or otherwise affiliated with the BRAIN Initiative. It is strongly preferred that none of the moderators or speakers have presented a talk at a BRAIN Initiative Conference within the last 3 years.
- Proposals must include both junior scientists (e.g., graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, [early-stage investigators](#)) and senior scientists as speakers and/or moderators. Organizers should ensure that all speakers, but especially junior scientists, are well-prepared to present their research to a broad, multidisciplinary audience.
- Supplemental travel funds may be available for speakers and chairs who are not funded by the BRAIN Initiative.
- While it is preferable that all symposium participants attend the event in person, where necessary, speakers may have the option of presenting their talk virtually instead. However, no more than 50% of speakers in any one session can present virtually, and those who are virtual must be able to attend the sessions live to respond to Q&A.
- At the time of proposal submission, all speakers must have already agreed to participate in the symposium.
- Individuals may be included in several proposals, but if accepted, they can participate in only one symposium or workshop. You must make sure that you have been informed about the other proposals in which your speakers and moderators are included.

Diverse Perspectives

- **Diversity Statement:** The National Institutes of Health, along with the other federal and non-federal organizations participating in the U.S. BRAIN Initiative, recognizes the benefits of a diverse workforce on scientific discovery, with a particular focus on enhancing the pool of individuals from backgrounds underrepresented in biomedical research. The NIH recognizes that the value of conferences is enhanced when persons from diverse backgrounds and perspectives are included in all aspects of conference/meeting planning and when attendees are assured of a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment free from discrimination, harassment, and other barriers that might prevent or inhibit one's participation. NIH encourages conference attendees to enhance diversity by increasing the participation of individuals from diverse backgrounds, including those from underrepresented groups, in planning, implementation and, ultimately, participation in the proposed conference. Per NIH Notice of Interest in

Diversity [NOT-OD-20-031](#), we seek to nurture appropriate representation of underrepresented groups, including individuals from nationally (U.S.) underrepresented racial and ethnic groups, individuals with disabilities, individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds, and women as invited speakers and poster presenters in relation to their participation in the annual BRAIN Initiative Conference.

- The BRAIN Initiative is firmly committed to fostering diversity, inclusivity, and accessibility in the research community. By supporting individuals, enhancing institutional partnerships, and fostering inclusive research environments, the BRAIN Initiative aspires to broaden participation in cutting-edge research, thereby spurring scientific excellence and innovation.
- Symposia submitters should strive to compose panels of speakers and moderators that are richly diverse in perspectives, including but not limited to academic discipline, personal background, career stage, geography, and institution type, and provide full opportunity and participation to individuals, groups, and institutions underrepresented in neuroscience (links to [BRAIN demographics](#), [PEDP main page](#), [notice on diversity](#)). Where appropriate, the inclusion of perspectives from human research participants is encouraged.
- Successful submissions will offer detailed responses when describing how the proposal incorporates diverse perspectives.

Submission Process

Download the [Symposium Submission Form](#) to your device before completing it. To submit the completed form, click the Submit Form button on page 3 or email it as an attachment to BRAINMEETING@ninds.nih.gov with the subject line: 10th Annual BRAIN Initiative Conference Symposium Proposal Submission.

- Proposals will only be accepted during the submission period:
Wednesday, October 11 – Monday, November 20, 2023.
- Proposals must be submitted via the online proposal submission form.
- At the time of your proposal submission, all speakers and chairpersons must have already agreed to participate in the symposium. Do not propose someone as speaker or chairperson without their consent.
- Once a proposal is submitted, the corresponding proponent will receive a receipt; no modification will be accepted after the deadline.
- Submissions should use clear and concise language, avoiding excessive jargon and technical terms that may be unfamiliar to non-experts. Additionally, the applications should provide sufficient background information and context to ensure the topic is accessible to a broad range of individuals.

Selection Process

- Incomplete proposals will NOT be considered by the Program Committee.
- Complete proposals will be judged by the Program Committee based on how well they meet the criteria specified in these guidelines. Broadly, these include:
 - **Impact:** Research Significance; Scientific Innovation; Timeliness
 - **Appeal:** Broad Accessibility; Novelty compared to prior meeting topics; Format & Audience Engagement
 - **Inclusion of Diverse Perspectives:** Discipline/Technical Perspective; Career Stage; Institutional & Geographic Diversity; Personal Background; Human Research Participants
- The Program Committee will not consider proposals whose topics overlap significantly with those from the last 3 years of BRAIN meetings unless there is evidence of strong scientific advances in a certain topic.
- Preference will be given to symposia that tackle a topic from various angles and aim to present different views and opinions rather than presenting the work of collaborating groups.
- The balance of diverse perspectives (see above) will be considered by the Program Committee when selecting successful proposals.
- Proposals may be accepted as they stand. However, to balance the overall meeting program, the Program Committee may conditionally accept a proposal provided that the organizers include modifications necessary to improve the proposal and/or to make it coherent with other selected symposia. The Program Committee may also recommend alternate speakers as a condition of acceptance.