

Guidelines for Reviewing Proposals

Here's what NACADA offers its presenters to guide the writing of their proposals:

A good proposal should be well written and include a complete description with background information, an overview of the presentation, and a description of the format. If the program is reporting research, a description of methods, findings and recommendations are appropriate - an emphasis on research results and collected data is highly desirable. The program description should also include learning outcomes, the relationship of the program to the conference theme, methods of audience involvement (i.e., engaging in discussion, sharing effective practices, analyzing a case study), and the familiarity and background of the presenters with the subject matter of the program.

If appropriate, an effective proposal description

- mentions relevant theories and research
- includes an outline of the presentation
- describes intended learning outcomes for participants appropriate to the topic and type of presentation or paper

With the above in mind, as a reviewer you can ask questions relevant to the proposal, such as:

1. Are the objectives and learning outcomes clearly stated?
2. Is the subject matter "timely?"
3. Does the topic contribute to the advancement of the field of advising?
4. Does the presenter offer a creative approach?
5. How adaptable are the presenter's ideas to various settings? Does the framework seem limited to the researcher's own institutional context?
6. Would you be interested in attending this session? Why or why not?
7. Who is the audience for this session? Think in terms of the novice vs. more seasoned advisor. Is it geared towards advising in a specific area, institution, or interest group?
8. Does the writer convince you that they have the knowledge/expertise to present on such a topic?
9. Would you recommend a different format for the presentation, e.g., preconference workshop, poster session, etc.?
10. While this topic may have been covered before ("fatigue" factor), does this presentation offer a novel approach?
11. Are the proposal and abstract well written with no grammatical or typographical errors?
12. For Preconference Workshops – is there a clear take away? Would your boss be willing to pay extra for you to attend this session? Is there an interactive component – or is it simply a "long concurrent" session?
13. For Scholarly Papers – is it clear that the proposal will lead to a completed manuscript by the deadline? Would this paper introduce new arguments, theories, questions, or issues related to academic advising?

Please note that the presenters will see your comments from your review. Make sure your comments are positive and constructive. What feedback would you like to give to the presenter – especially if your recommendation was to reject the proposal?

For example: "This session seems very institution-specific and would be difficult to adapt to other settings" is better feedback than "too specific."