

Reference Guide for Educational Sessions & Tours

Each year, AIA invites the AEC industry to submit proposals for educational sessions and architectural tours at the AIA Conference on Architecture & Design. We're seeking a diverse range of voices from all career stages to lead our educational sessions. To help you craft a strong submission, we've prepared this reference guide.

Submit your proposal for one or more sessions by October 23, 2024. Decision letters will be sent out mid-December.

What makes a good educational session proposal?

Proposals should be specific and impactful, align with [AIA priorities](#), and offer engaging, valuable learning experiences. We're looking for sessions that address emerging trends, offer unique content, and cater to various knowledge and career levels.

Please, no passive lectures, recycled presentations, or entry-level sessions. Sessions may not promote specific products, vendors, or services.

Need inspiration? [Check out the AIA24 program](#).

Educational Themes & Topic Areas

Trends & Technology

Theme: Exploring the revolutionary ideas, research, and technologies reshaping architecture like smart tech, virtual and augmented reality, and biophilia.

Topics:

- Artificial intelligence: Addressing the innovative ways architecture professionals are using AI in practice.
- New materials & processes: Exploring innovations in materials and building technologies including prefabrication and modular projects.
- Research: Developing empirically-based architectural research for transferable conclusions.
- Technology trends: Exploring current tech disruptions in architecture like augmented reality, virtual reality, smart materials, innovative project delivery, design optimization, risk management, and predictive analytics.

Career Advancement & Leadership

Theme: Focus on enriching careers through skill development and inclusive practices.

Topics:

- Emerging professionals: Developing critical skills to prepare the next generation of architects for practice.
- Advocacy: Engaging with local, state, and federal governments to benefit the profession and communities they serve.
- Non-traditional career paths: Using your architecture degree for a successful alternative career.
- Mentorship: Developing K-12 architecture programs, pipeline development, licensure support, getting promoted, and mentor/mentee case studies.
- Getting licensed: Transitioning from the university studio to the firm studio, completing the AXP, AIA CE opportunities for AXP experience, preparing for the ARE.
- Community engagement: Enhancing presentation skills, showcasing the value of design and architecture in your community, pro-bono project case studies, architects in community leadership roles.
- Leadership development: Empowering architects of all experience levels to build leadership skills, drive business success, and grow professionally.

Business & Firm Prosperity

Theme: Tools and insights for achieving operational success, profitability, and global practice expansion, including a focus on developing leadership skills to guide firms and the profession. Preference will be given to proposals that include both architecture professionals and subject matter experts (SMEs) from relevant fields such as finance, organizational behavior, accounting, economics, and marketing.

Topics:

- Winning work: Developing growth strategies, new markets, and new relationships to strengthen firm billings and keep the pipeline full.
- Business of architecture: Continuously improving architectural firms' efficiency, practices, and profitability.
- Equity & inclusion in practice: Supporting equity and inclusion in business thinking to grow and prosper.
- Global practice: Expanding architecture practice abroad while respecting diverse local contexts.
- Marketing & social media: Understanding the importance of marketing and social media to building brand identity and driving business growth.
- Firm transitions: Developing emerging leaders and planning for leadership transitions and succession planning.
- Multidisciplinary collaboration: Working across industries during all project phases from preconstruction to completion.

Workplace Culture

Theme: Creating resilient, equitable, inclusive workplaces that attract, retain, and engage a diverse workforce.

Topics:

- Intersectionality and intersectional feminism: Explore the many dimensions of identity and understanding the role of intersectionality as a legal and social framework in the workplace.
- Intercultural competency: Diverse workplaces require healthy communication and strategies that promote plurality to ensure psychological safety.

- Talent recruitment, retention, and management: Promote best practices in recruitment and managing a resilient and diverse workforce.
- Accessibility, belonging, and inclusion in practice: Promote best practices in creating and maintaining an accessible and inclusive workplace.
- Firm culture: Cultivating the shared values, beliefs, attitudes, and assumptions that define the character and personality of an organization.

Design Excellence

Theme: Architectural responses to environmental challenges, emphasizing sustainable and energy-efficient equitable practices.

Topics:

- Design innovation: Creating solutions mindful of aesthetics, ecology, social, and health implications.
- Embodied carbon: Understanding greenhouse gas emissions in the building supply chain.
- Materials: Prioritizing informed material selection for sustainable, equitable, and health-conscious projects.
- Net zero energy: Designing structures to offset their own energy consumption throughout their lifecycle.
- Operational carbon: Designing to reduce energy use, relying on renewable sources.
- Resilience: Addressing risks of aging infrastructure, natural disasters, and climate change.
- Urban & rural planning: Promoting walkability, human-scale, community connection, and resource conservation in design.
- Building reuse: Addressing innovative approaches to building reuse, which account for approximately half of firm billings and are a key element in fighting climate change.
- Community engagement: Promoting inclusion and social equity, particularly in vulnerable communities

What makes a good educational tour proposal?

Proposed tours should showcase interesting and significant sites that provide valuable learning opportunities while showcasing historic and contemporary Boston architecture and renowned architectural landmarks. Submissions may include buildings, commercial & residential projects, neighborhoods, community projects, and other spaces. Tours must depart from and return to the Boston Conference and Exhibition Center.

A strong tour proposal will include one or more of the following:

- Clear learning objectives and a description that tells prospective attendees what the tour is about, and what they will gain from attending.
- Well-organized logistics and scheduling information detailing the tour's format, capacity, and duration.
- CE credit details that clearly state the number and type of credits offered.
- A diverse and relevant site(s).

Timeline

Dates are subject to change.

Task	Deadline
Proposal submission portal opens	September 18
Proposal submission portal closes	October 23
Proposals peer review	October 21–November 30
Notification of session acceptance	mid-December
Program curation	January 2025
Registration opens	February 2025
AIA25 in Boston, MA	June 4–7, 2025

Submission process: Required fields

Title

Clear, direct, short titles work best. Try to avoid using colons, especially multiple colons. (Max. 10 words)

Session type

30-minute micro-seminar presentation: A micro-presentation tailored to share practices, expertise, and valuable experiences.

- Length: 30-minutes; 25 minutes for presentation, 5 minutes for audience Q&A
- Presenters/facilitators: One
- Learning objectives: Must include four

60-minute seminar presentation: A presentation that incorporates active learning and participation and may use various media (e.g., video, polling) to facilitate learning.

- Length: 60 minutes
- Presenters/Facilitators: One or two
- Learning objectives: Must include four

75-minute panel seminar presentation: A deeper dive, advanced-level presentation and discussion on a specific topic. Include details on how you'll structure the discussion/presentation and facilitate learning interactions.

- Length: 90 minutes
- Presenters/facilitators: Maximum of four (e.g., up to three speakers and one moderator)
- Learning objectives: Must include four

Workshop: In-person sessions emphasizing the development and practical application of knowledge and skills. Attendees will learn “how-to” and/or “practice” in a workshop-style environment that includes small group exercises.

- Length: Either 2 hours, 4 hours, or a full day and may be repeated during the conference
- Presenters/facilitators: Up to four
- Learning objectives: Must include four

Architecture tour: Led by AEC professionals with detailed project knowledge, an architecture tour offers CE credit and explores interesting and significant sites in Boston.

- Length: Tour lengths vary but should not exceed 4 hours. (As an example, tours could be 2 hours, 2.5 hours, 3 hours, or 4 hours long and may be repeated during the conference)
- Presenters/facilitators: Must include a tour organizer and leader
- Learning objectives: Must include four

Problem statement

Describe the challenge or issue your session will address and how knowledge and/or application of your solution will benefit architects and the profession. (Max. 200 words or 1,000 characters; not required for tour proposals)

Topic area: Your proposal’s primary focus

Select the primary topic area your proposed session will address.

Please explain how your proposed session qualifies for Health, Safety, and Welfare (HSW) Credits

Specifically, describe how the content of your session will directly impact the public’s health, safety, or welfare. Provide examples or scenarios where the information presented could be applied in practice to enhance HSW outcomes in the field of architecture.

Session format

Specify the type of interaction and engagement offered in your session’s content.

Session description

Provide a clear description that highlights unique attributes, points of value, and expected learning outcomes. Descriptions for accepted sessions will appear in the online schedule. (100 words max.)

Content level

Identify the content level for your proposed session.

Target audience

Identify the target audience for your proposed session.

Session history

Let us know if this is a new session or if it has been delivered previously.

Post-conference value

Describe how your proposed session will impact attendees and takeaways for business, practice, industry, etc.

Learner objectives

What will attendees know or be able to do after attending your session? Please use active verbs and words that are clear and measurable.

Speakers & tour leaders

All session speakers, tour organizers, and tour leaders must be secured at the time of your submission. Please do not use "TBD." Changes in speakers for accepted programs must be approved by conference staff.

Supporting materials

You may upload optional supporting materials (five pages max.) to help the review committee better understand your proposed session including a sample presentation deck, white paper, supporting photos or images, etc. Do not use this upload area to submit additional speakers.

Review process

All proposals are peer reviewed by subject matter experts.

Speaker & tour leader benefits

Confirmed AIA25 speakers and tour leaders will receive a discount on registration rates. Additionally, all speakers benefit professionally from resume building, visibility, appearance in news articles, and publicity as a subject matter expert.

Policies

AIA invites anyone to submit a proposal and present at the AIA Conference on Architecture & Design. All confirmed speakers must register and attend the conference. AIA does not reimburse travel expenses.

If your proposal is accepted, it will be edited to fit AIA style guidelines. AIA retains the right to connect speakers or request adjustments to your proposal, including the possibility of combining it with another proposal.

AIA educational sessions are noncommercial. Sessions may not promote specific products, vendors, or services.

If your proposal is accepted, you retain the copyright and all rights attendant to such copyright in your materials; however, you grant AIA permission to use your presentation and the materials you use in your presentation solely for purposes of making your presentation (in part or in whole or in different formats) available as part of AIA's conference materials and/or in AIA educational offerings, consistent with AIA's mission and purpose.

Questions?

Please contact us at education@conferenceonarchitecture.com.