

# WE25: Call for Participation (CFP) for **BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

## **SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

*In October 2025, the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) will offer its [annual, international Women in Engineering \(WE\) conference](#). WE25 will take place in New Orleans, Louisiana, USA. We at SWE are committed to making this WE Annual conference – like all our programming – a safe, welcoming, and productive learning environment for all participants. Our goals in this **WE25 Call for Participation (CFP) for Breakout Sessions (Lectures, Panels, and Snap Sessions)** are: to ensure effective programming and speaking opportunities are provided, and to empower attendees to succeed at every stage of their professional development.*

### WE25 CFP TIMELINE

- CFP Opens: **Monday, January 13, 2025**
- CFP Closes: **Monday, March 10, 2025**
- CFP Results Sent: **Friday, May 23, 2025**
- Session Agreement Due & Schedule Availability Due: **Monday, June 16, 2025, *ONLY via Harvester portal***
- Backup Session Notifications Sent: **Wednesday, June 25, 2025**
- Backup Session Agreement Due: **Wednesday, July 9, 2025, *ONLY via Harvester portal***
- Session PowerPoint Due and Speaker Updates, Photos, and Bios Due: **Monday, October 6, 2025, *ONLY via Harvester portal***
- **WE25 in New Orleans, USA:  
Thursday, October 23 - Saturday, October 25, 2025**

### CONTENTS OF THIS CFP GUIDELINES DOCUMENT:

Intro; WE25 CFP Timeline	page 1
Scoring Rubric; Tips and Best Practices	page 2
<b>How to Submit a Breakout Session Proposal</b>	<b>page 3</b>
Speaker Notice; FAQs	page 9

## SCORING RUBRIC; TIPS & BEST PRACTICES

### SCORING RUBRIC

Breakout Sessions submitted to the WE25 CFP are scored as follows:

CFP SCORING RUBRIC	
TITLE – CONCISE & INTRIGUING	5 POINTS
DESCRIPTION – FOCUSED & CONCISE	5 POINTS
DESCRIPTION – RELEVANT & INTERESTING	5 POINTS
LEARNING OUTCOMES	5 POINTS
SPEAKER QUALIFICATIONS	5 POINTS
OVERALL CLARITY	3 POINTS
UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE	3 POINTS
RELEVANT TO SWE'S MISSION	3 POINTS
OVERALL RECOMMENDATION	5 POINTS
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>39 POINTS</b>

### TIPS & BEST PRACTICES

- **PREPARE YOUR SUBMISSION IN ADVANCE** – Read this guide in its entirety and collect all your session information and speaker information before beginning the submission process.
- **AVOID THE NUMBER ONE COMPLAINT** – The number one complaint from session attendees is that session content does not match the description and learning outcomes. Therefore, take time to finalize session content before submitting your proposal.
- **SWE PRIORITIZES DIVERSITY** – We encourage participation by speakers from backgrounds that are underrepresented in engineering and technology.
- **SEEKING INTERMEDIATE & ADVANCED TOPICS** - SWE is actively looking for and encourages you to submit intermediate and advanced level content.
- **MERGE SESSIONS** - It is common for SWE to receive multiple proposals on the same topic, so be sure your session has a unique perspective. If not, speakers may be asked to merge their session with another session with the same topic.
- **SUBMIT SESSION IN FINAL STATE** - Changes cannot be made once the CFP closes.
- **BIAS-FREE LANGUAGE** - Use [bias-free language](#) as articulated by the American Psychological Association; See the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association style, 7th edition, Chapter 5 for tips about how to reduce bias.
- **ASK FOR REVIEWERS** - Ask an experienced colleague to review your proposal before you submit it to ensure it is clear, concise, and enticing.
- **PRESENTER LIMITS** - To provide a diverse exposure to speakers, a speaker will only be selected for one session (panel discussions may present special cases).
- **NO SALES PITCHES** - Proposals are more likely to be selected if they do not include organization names because it flags the session as a “sales pitch.”

# HOW TO SUBMIT A BREAKOUT SESSION PROPOSAL to the WE25 CFP

- ❖ Access the [online submission portal](#) to submit your session proposal. The sections and questions below closely mirror the application content within the submission portal.
- ❖ **Need portal help?** View the [short tutorial video](#) showing how to submit a proposal.
- ❖ **Need content help?** Take the [short micro-learning course](#) showing how to craft effective session descriptions and learning outcomes.
- ❖ **CFP submission deadline = Monday, March 10, 2025, 11:59pm US CT.**

Questions with an *asterisk (\*)* are required

## BASIC INFO (after login, in Submitter Dashboard, click "Click here to begin new proposal")

1. **\* TITLE** (5 points) – The title is evaluated on being concise and capturing interest (limit to 10 words).
2. **\* FORMAT** (0 points) - Select the Breakout Session format that provides the appropriate time and number of presenters, and the best learning experience to achieve the learning outcomes.
  - **LISTEN & LEARN LECTURE** (30-minute lecture plus 15-minute audience Q&A): Lectures are the standard conference session type where subject-matter experts present to attendees with minimal on-stage group discussions. Must have minimum 1 and maximum 2 speakers.
  - **ENGAGED EXCHANGE PANEL** (45-minute panel discussion plus 15-minute audience Q&A): This format is ideal for panel discussions. Panels provide opportunities to learn from multiple subject-matter experts. Must have 1 moderator + 2-4 speakers, i.e., 3-5 presenters total.
  - **SNAP SESSION** (15-minute presentation plus 5-minute audience Q&A): Snap Sessions are short and thought-provoking. SWE typically schedules 2-3 snap sessions in a row, arranged according to themes. Must have minimum 1 and maximum 2 speakers.

## SESSION SPECIFICATIONS Task

1. **\* TRACK** (0 points) - Select the track that most closely relates to the subject matter of your session.
  - 1. **LEADING SELF:** Leading others begins with leading ourselves. Leading Self sessions focus on one's behavior, skills, and attitudes as they relate to themselves. These key areas set the foundation for leadership beyond oneself. Examples include:
    - Self-reflection and assessment techniques to recognize strengths and opportunities for personal improvement
    - Best practices for developing and maintaining personal wellness
    - Strategies for creating a growth mindset
  - 2. **DEVELOPING OTHERS:** The development of others is an essential part of leadership. Sessions in this track link with the skills and behaviors of leaders who invest in the growth of colleagues, peers, and direct reports. Examples include:
    - Using coaching to empower individuals
    - Best practices in mentoring and sponsorship
    - Building a learning culture

- 3. **LEADING CHANGE:** Leaders are at the forefront of changemaking. Whether in the workplace, society, or even in informal settings. These sessions correlate with core leadership skills and behaviors involved with facilitating change. Examples include:
    - Communicating and advancing your organization’s mission and vision
    - Using a systems thinking approach
    - Creating buy-in with stakeholders
  - 4. **COMMUNICATION:** Leaders communicate in many different environments; however, the essence of communication remains similar across various platforms. Digital or in-person, these competencies are critical for leaders at all levels. Examples include:
    - Having difficult conversations and diffusing conflicts
    - Using active listening and providing feedback
    - Delivering effective and impactful presentations
  - 5. **BUSINESS ACUMEN:** The complexities of organizations require leaders who can navigate various aspects of business, from finances to people management. Sessions in this track hone the competencies needed to maintain viable organizations. Examples include:
    - Best practices in project management
    - Strategic Planning
    - Data Analytics and Business Intelligence
  - 6. **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING:** Commitment and skills related to DEI&B are essential in the modern leaders’ career. Concepts covered by sessions in this track include a variety of aspects related to the successful advancement of DEI&B in workplaces and professional relationships. Examples include:
    - Techniques to build and promote a culture that values DEI&B
    - Tools to be inclusive leaders and team members
    - Leveraging intersectionality in the workplace
  - 7. **SWE LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE:** This track pertains to content related to supporting development and pathways to volunteer leadership positions within SWE (e.g., Section Leader, Committee Chair, Trustee, Senator, Director, etc.). Additionally, this track covers sessions highlighting components of the SWE Governance structure. Examples include:
    - Ideas to support the next generation of engineers to become volunteer leaders
    - Strategies to expand participation in your section or affiliate
    - Best practices in volunteer management and satisfaction
  - 8. **TECHNICAL ASPECTS:** Sessions in this track cover the machines, processes, materials, technologies, and techniques used in diverse engineering specialties. Examples include:
    - Artificial Intelligence
    - Energy Transition and Sustainability
    - Best practices in product design and delivery
2. \* **LEADER LEVEL** (0 points) - Select the leader level which most closely aligns with the experience and background of the presenter(s) of this session. *Note: This question replaces the Learning Level question of SWE’s previous CFP application processes.*
- 1. **EMERGING:** An aspiring leader with limited or no SWE or other leadership experience (0-1 years of leadership experience). An emerging leader is in the process of learning about leadership but may not

have hands-on experience as a leader yet. Emerging leaders are quick to learn and take on support-level tasks to move initiatives forward.

- 2. **DEVELOPING:** An experienced leader with at least some SWE or other leadership experience (2-4 years of leadership experience). A developing leader has learned some of the basics about leadership and has had some real-world opportunities to practice their leadership skills. Developing leaders are in the process of gaining experience and exposure to a variety of leadership styles and methods and are eager to support initiatives led by more senior leaders.
- 3. **PERFORMING:** Significant SWE or other leadership experience (5-9 years of leadership experience). A performing leader has demonstrated their effectiveness as a leader in a variety of settings and has had multiple opportunities to refine their leadership abilities in diverse environments. Performing leaders support initiatives led by leaders at more advanced leadership levels.
- 4. **TRANSFORMING:** Extensive SWE or other leadership experience (10+ years of leadership experience). A transforming leader has a proven track record of success as a leader, having had varied and diverse opportunities to lead others through a variety of settings and circumstances. Transforming leaders influence other individuals toward a common goal and impact organizational change in a positive direction.

3. **\* KEYWORD** (0 points) - Please choose one keyword from the list below that most closely represents the content of this session.

- academia
- advocacy
- AI (artificial intelligence)
- athletes / sports
- attraction / retention
- bias
- burnout
- career break / STEM re-entry
- career planning
- career transitions
- challenge / change
- cloud services / systems
- community colleges
- continuing education
- cross-cultural work
- data security
- digital twin
- disability
- effective communication
- emotional intelligence (EQ)
- entrepreneurship
- ERGs (employee resource groups)
- financial health
- first-gen experience
- generalists / broad skill sets
- global careers
- government
- grad students / programs
- health disparities
- healthcare technology
- hobbies
- immigrant experience
- imposter syndrome / confidence
- inclusivity
- internships / co-ops
- intersectionality
- introverts
- invisible labor
- late career / retiree
- layoff experience
- leadership
- legislation / public policy
- LGBTQ+ experience
- machine learning
- male allyship
- management
- mental health
- mentorship / sponsorship
- military
- motherhood / parenting
- neurodivergence / neurodiversity
- non-technical skills
- occupational health
- organizational development
- patents
- personal branding / self-representation
- product design / development / marketing
- productivity / time management
- professional development
- professional networking
- professional specialization
- project management
- psychological safety
- remote work
- representation / underrepresented identities
- resilience
- resume writing
- role models / early pioneers
- self-advocacy
- sick leave
- simulation

- small business
- specific technologies / technical solutions
- STEM curriculum development
- STEM subfield / discipline / industry
- strategic planning
- sustainability
- SWE leadership
- teamwork
- technical leadership
- VR (virtual reality)
- wellness
- work-life balance
- youth outreach
- Session content is not represented by any listed keyword.

4. **\* SESSION PRESENTED BEFORE** (0 points) - Have you (i.e., you personally, or a presenter lineup mostly similar to the lineup you are submitting here) presented this session (i.e., this precise session, or a session mostly similar to it) at any previous WE Local or WE Annual conferences? Select all that apply.

- WE Local 2025
- WE24
- WE Local 2024
- WE23
- WE Local 2023
- WE22
- WE Local 2022
- WE21
- WE Local 2021
- WE20
- I/we have NOT presented this or a similar session at any prior WE conference.

5. **\* FIRST-TIME WE PRESENTER** (0 points) - If this session is accepted, would this be the first time the presenter(s) is/are presenting at any of SWE's Women in Engineering (WE) conferences? Please answer Yes or No.

*Note: In order to answer Yes, all presenters on this session must be first-time WE presenters.*

6. **\* FUNDING ACKNOWLEDGEMENT** (0 points) - I understand that SWE does not provide any honoraria to Breakout Session presenters, nor any funding to support Breakout Session presenters' travel, lodging, and expenses. If this session is selected for presentation at WE25, all presenters on this session will be responsible for funding their own travel, lodging, and other conference-related expenses. SWE does, however, provide Breakout Session presenters a discount code for their conference registration.

## SESSION DESCRIPTION Task

1. **\* DESCRIPTION** (10 points) – In 150 words or less, describe:

- What the topic is and why it's important,
- The purpose of the session, and
- What will be included in the session.

Remember that not everyone works in the same industry. Do not assume that the reader is familiar with all technical terms, acronyms, etc. The Session Description is evaluated based on: (5 points) Being focused and concise, and (5 points) Being relevant and interesting.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES Task

1-3. **\* LEARNING OUTCOMES** (5 points) – Learning outcomes are measurable statements that describe what **attendees** should be able to do after participating in your session (not what presenter(s) will do in the session). Each session is evaluated based on the learning outcomes being clearly stated and achievable with instruction. [Further information on how to write effective learning outcomes.](#)

Each learning outcome must **begin with a verb**. Examples of well-written learning outcomes include: “**Identify** the basic principles of data science” or “**Describe** useful conflict resolution techniques.” Use a verb from the table below to start each of your learning outcomes. For each presenter, enter the information listed below.

- ***Listen & Learn Lectures*** and ***Engaged Exchange Panels*** must provide 3 Learning Outcomes.

- o **Snap Sessions** must provide 2-3 Learning Outcomes.

Bloom's Taxonomy Action Verbs											
KNOWLEDGE		COMPREHENSION		APPLICATION		ANALYSIS		SYNTHESIS		EVALUATION	
Define	List	Classify	Explain	Apply	Modify	Analyze	Compare	Categorize	Develop	Assess	Evaluate
Describe	Name	Describe	Express	Change	Practice	Appraise	Contrast	Compose	Devise	Compare	Interpret
Duplicate	Outline	Discuss	Predict	Demonstrate	Prepare	Calculate	Examine	Create	Plan	Conclude	Relate
Identify	Recognize	Estimate	Review	Illustrate	Solve	Categorize	Outline	Design	Summarize	Contrast	Predict

## SESSION-SPECIFIC SPEAKER BIOS Task

1-5. \* **SESSION-SPECIFIC SPEAKER BIOS** (5 points) – **For each presenter** on this session, enter a bio (maximum 150 words) illustrating **their qualifications to present on this topic**. Bios must:

- Be written in third person, using complete sentences;
- Include presenter first and last names; and
- Demonstrate presenter qualifications on the session topic.

For example, "Jane Doe is CEO of Such N Such Company. She brings over 20 years of experience on sustainability and clean energy transition..."

## VIDEO PITCH > FILE UPLOAD Task -OR- LINK INPUT Task

1. **VIDEO PITCH, OPTIONAL** (0 points) - Submit a video pitch (maximum 90 seconds) that illustrates (1) why the topic is of interest to attendees, and (2) the speakers' comfort with public speaking. SWE recommends using Zoom, Teams, Google Meeting, or Webex to record the video. Alternatively, you may submit a sample video excerpt (maximum 90 seconds) from a past speaking event if the speaker lineup was highly similar to the speaker lineup you are proposing here.

To submit a video file:	To submit a streaming video link:	To submit neither:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Click into the VIDEO - FILE UPLOAD task. Upload your 90-second video file. Click Continue to complete the task.</li> <li>• Click into the VIDEO - LINK INPUT task. Leave the text entry field blank, then click Continue to complete the task.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Click into the VIDEO - FILE UPLOAD task. Check the box marked "Opt out of uploading files," then click Continue to complete the task.</li> <li>• Click into the VIDEO - LINK INPUT task. Enter your video link in the text entry field, then click Continue to complete the task.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Click into the VIDEO - FILE UPLOAD task. Check the box marked "Opt out of uploading files." Click Continue to complete the task.</li> <li>• Click into the VIDEO - LINK INPUT task. Leave the text entry field blank, then click Continue to complete the task.</li> </ul>

## SPEAKER INFORMATION Task

1-10. \* **SPEAKER INFORMATION** - For each presenter, enter the information listed below.

- o **Listen & Learn Lectures** and **Snap Sessions** must have 1 or 2 Speakers.
- o **Engaged Exchange Panels** must have 1 Moderator + 2-4 Speakers, i.e., 3-5 Presenters total.
- o **All sessions** may optionally list up to 5 Auxiliary Contacts, i.e., additional persons/email addresses who will be notified whether this session is accepted for presentation at WE25. We **strongly** advise utilizing at least one Auxiliary Contact slot, lest crucial communications about this proposal get lost in Spam.
- o **Important:** If this session is accepted for presentation at WE25, the numerically first person in your Speaker List will act as the point person, i.e., the one who must complete several crucial session-info tasks (Session

*Agreement, Schedule Availability, and PowerPoint Upload). Use the up/down arrows in the Speaker Information Task to ensure that a reliable point person is listed first. If this session is accepted for presentation at WE25, you will have the opportunity to change your presenter order later.*

- \* First and last name
- \* Email address
- \* Role in this Session: Speaker / Moderator / Auxiliary Contact
- \* Phone number
- \* City and country
- \* Title/position
- \* Company/organization
- \* Gender (select from list; includes Prefer Not To Answer option)
- \* Racial or cultural group (select from list; includes Prefer Not To Answer option)
- \* Member of the LGBTQ+ community? (Yes / No / Prefer Not To Answer)
- \* Years of experience on session topic: 1-5 / 6-10 / 11-15 / 16-20 / 20+
- \* Public speaking level: Novice / Advanced Beginner / Competent / Proficient / Expert
- \* Any accessibility requirements?
- \* Is this speaker a SWE Member? Yes / No
- \* Is this speaker a member of any [SWE Affinity Groups?](#) Check all that apply.
- \* Speaker photo (can be a placeholder image for Auxiliary Contacts)
- \* Bio (150 words) - This should be a **generalized professional bio**. It should include the speaker's first and last name and should be written in third person, using complete sentences. If this session is accepted for presentation at WE25, this bio will port over to the accepted session portal, where you will have an opportunity to edit this bio later, if desired.

## FINALIZE YOUR SUBMISSION using the SUBMIT button

**\* VERY IMPORTANT:** To submit your session, be sure to click **Submit**. Merely clicking Save Submission will freeze the submission in "Active" or Incomplete status, meaning it will not be reviewed and will not be eligible for presentation at WE25.

**How do I know the submission went through?** Immediately after submission, you as submitter will receive a confirmation email, and the system will invite you to enter optional feedback on your submission experience via a blue, handwritten-style graphic on the upper right of the submission dashboard. And, at any time after submitting, you will be able to **see the correctly submitted proposal in your Dashboard, under the Proposals section, showing "Status: Complete (Submitted mm/dd/yyyy, hh:mm)."**

## OPTIONAL EDITS + HOW TO WITHDRAW A PROPOSAL

It is possible to edit in-progress or submitted sessions any time up until the submission deadline. While logged in to Cadmium, click into your existing proposal submission. Near the top, there is a bar that says Home / Proposal / Task List.

- Click Proposal to **edit** your Title or Session Format (Lecture / Panel / Snap).
- Click Task List to **edit** any of your session content.
- Click Proposal, then in the Proposal Status Dropdown menu, select Withdrawn, and finally click the Update Proposal button, in order to **withdraw** your session.

# SPEAKER NOTICE & FAQs

## NOTICE FOR ALL SPEAKERS

- All WE25 Breakout Session speakers are volunteers who provide their expertise and time at no cost to SWE.
- Accepted speakers will be provided with a discount code for registration.
- For any general questions about the WE25 conference, contact SWE at [conferencemanager@swe.org](mailto:conferencemanager@swe.org). For specific questions on submitting a Breakout Session proposal to the Cadmium portal, contact [cfp@swe.org](mailto:cfp@swe.org).

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### 1. Can I submit more than one proposal?

Yes. To provide opportunities to as many people as possible, SWE tends not to accept more than one session per person. However, submitting multiple proposals may increase your chances of being selected, especially if submitting together with other speakers.

### 2. Does WE Annual accept speakers who do not identify as women?

Yes. We accept submissions from all gender identities and encourage submissions from groups that are underrepresented in engineering and technology.

### 3. Can an author submit the same proposal under different tracks?

No. If the proposal is better suited for a different track, the reviewers will notate that recommendation during the review process. Submissions with duplicate titles and descriptions will not be considered.

### 4. Do speakers need to be SWE members?

Speakers do not need to be SWE members to submit a proposal or speak at the conference.

### 5. How do I participate in the Poster Competition?

The Poster Competition process is entirely separate from the CFP Breakout Session process. Please visit [WE Local Posters](#) to get a sense of Poster content and the Poster process at WE Conferences.

### 6. How do I submit a Keynote presentation proposal?

The Keynote selection process is entirely separate from the CFP Breakout Session process, and usually occurs at least one year before the conference. Please visit [WE Local Keynotes](#) to get a sense of Keynote presentations and the Keynote process at WE Conferences.

### 7. Does SWE offer an honorarium to speakers who are selected through the CFP submission process?

No. Speakers selected through the CFP submission process must self-fund their travel, lodging, and all other expenses. SWE does not reimburse costs or offer any stipends or CFP speaker fees. However, SWE does provide a ***discount code to all speakers selected through the WE25 CFP, which allows discounted registration*** for WE25.