

WEAO Conference Technical Session Chair (Co-Chair) General Guideline

Thank you for volunteering your time to be a Technical Session Chair or Co-Chair at the Annual WEAO Technical Symposium & Exhibition.

This document is intended to provide you with guideline information and to assist you with understanding the duties and responsibilities that are expected of Session Chairs in addition to the role of simply moderating a technical session.

SESSION CHAIR LINKS:

Main Session Chair Web Page: <http://weao.org/session-chair-resource-page>

- On this page you will find the following:
 - Listing of Important Dates and Deadlines
 - Copies of Session Chair reference documents
 - Additional Links as follows:
- 1. Session Chair XCD Login Portal <http://www.xcdsystem.com/weao/chair>
 - This portal will allow you to login to your assigned Technical Session (or Sessions if you are assisting with more than one)
 - From here you will be able to see or access the following for each presenter in your session
 - Presenter Registration Status
 - Presenter Uploads (once uploaded) Including
 - Draft Technical Paper
 - Final Technical Paper
 - Speaker Bio
 - Speaker Copyright Release
 - PPT Presentation
 - NOTE: Session Chairs are **not** able upload documents on behalf of Presenters / Speakers, but you will be able to download files for the review process, or to confirm the correct files have been completed
- 2. Speaker Resource Page <http://weao.org/speaker-resource-page>
 - This is a link to the Speaker Resource Page on the WEAO web site which provides Presenters with download links for
 - copies of all Speaker Guidelines (General Information for Speakers, Technical Paper Guidelines, and Technical Presentation Guidelines)
 - a Template file for the Technical Paper for those who wish to utilize it.
 - additional Forms (Bio & Copyright Release)
 - Also included on the Speaker Resource Page are
 - A list of Important dates and Due Dates
 - A link to the Speaker Upload Portal

REQUIREMENT FOR SESSION CHAIR / CO-CHAIR CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

Session Chairs / Co-Chairs ***must*** be registered for the conference, either as a conference attendee (full or one-day), or as OPCEA exhibitor staff.

- Complimentary conference registration is ***not*** provided, and name-badge only attendance for the session you are chairing is also not allowed.
- To be considered registered as OPCEA exhibitor staff, you must be registered as actual booth staff with one of the exhibitors; *a tradeshow attendee only pass is ***not*** considered acceptable.*

This rule has been implemented at the WEAO Board of Directors level which cannot be over-ruled at any committee level, committee chair level, or by WEAO staff.

WEAO STAFF AND CONFERENCE TECHNICAL PROGRAM LEAD(S):

The WEAO Conference Committee Technical Program Lead(s) and WEAO staff are available to be a resource and assist or give clarification when needed. You can reach the Tech Program Leads jointly by email at techprogram@weacommittee.org.

You may also find yourself in the role of having to enforce guidelines / due dates etc. for individuals who are not adhering to guidelines or providing information needed. If you are in an uncomfortable position (i.e., the speaker in question is your client / customer) WEAO staff and Tech Program Leads can intervene if needed, just ask.

DUTIES & TASKS: PRE-CONFERENCE

As noted on Page 1, as session chair or co-chair volunteer for the WEAO Annual Conference, there are certain duties and responsibilities which you are expected to undertake, in addition to the role of simply moderating a technical session.

After the abstract selections are completed, you will be notified as to which session or sessions you will be chairing / co-chairing, as well as being provided with the details of the speakers assigned to your session.

You will then be expected to:

- Make initial introductory contact with your speakers after the initial acceptance / rejection / alternate notifications, and additional instructions are sent out by the WEAO admin staff or Conference Committee Tech Program Leads. **Please make sure you have a response from the speaker**, so you know that your emails and/or the XCD System emails are not being tagged as spam or junk.
 - o Initial Acceptance / Rejection Notifications were sent via XCD out Dec. 17th, 2024
 - o A subsequent email to Presenters will be issued from the Tech Program Leads via XCD the Week of February 09th. This will include:
 - A Link to a Speaker Resource Page
 - Re-confirmation of their Session information (date, time)
 - Notification to the Presenters of who their session chairs are along with contact e-mail information for their session chairs
 - A reminder that all speakers must be registered for the conference
- Undertake periodic communication with your speakers to ensure that they have submitted any required information & documentation according to the deadline schedule provided. This should include reminder messages ahead of deadlines. This may also include having to re-provide links to and/or copies of required documentation.
- **Review speaker submitted documentation, specifically the full paper / manuscript, and speaker presentation slides, for conformity with the WEAO guidelines.**
- Once you have approved the submitted documentation ensure that the speakers upload the approved documents to the XCD system.

DUTIES & TASKS: AT/DURING-CONFERENCE

- Meet with your speakers at the conference *prior to* your session to ensure that they have provided the latest updated version of their respective presentations.
 - o A speaker ready room is provided for such meetings and last-minute speaker preparation.
- Moderate your assigned technical session(s), including speaker introductions, speaker timekeeping, giving conference announcements / running announcement slides as may be directed, handing out speaker thank you gifts, and completing speaker reviews.
- See separate document: Session Chair – On Site / At Conference Guideline
 - o located on the Main Session Chair Web Page as noted on Page 1.

COMMUNICATION & SCHEDULING:***Communication Chain:***

Primarily due to the high level of demand for WEAO Staff and conference committee volunteer resources, particularly as the conference approaches, we ask that you as the Session Chair(s) establish yourselves as the primary point of contact for your speakers. This helps spread the workload, so each session chair is coordinating with only their few session speakers (4-8 people) rather than the Tech Program Leads or staff having to handle all 96+/- speakers & reserves.

- Primarily communications to and from the authors and presenters will be handled through the session chairs.
- WEAO staff and Tech Program Leads *may* provide template email communications for you use at some of the scheduled dates.
- WEAO Staff and/or the Tech Program Leads may also when practicable or otherwise necessary, also send communication out directly to the authors and presenters via XCD.
 - o *Please note there is currently a limitation in the XCD system auto emailer that we are not able to CC the session chairs on emails issued to Presenters*, but we will issue an email notification to all chairs whenever a system email is being sent to the speakers direct from XCD.

Please only forward problems / issues which you are unable to resolve as a session chair on to the Tech Program Leads. You *do not* need to keep WEAO staff or the Tech Program Leads updated with or cc'd on routine information. So long as the XCD portal is being properly utilized, we will be able to view the status of submissions from the Admin side of the portal.

Schedule of Tasks / Communications:

Thurs. Dec. 04, 2025 (Completed)

- Abstract Selection Day
 - o Technical Program will be set
 - o Committee Chairs or Assigns to communicate to Session Chair Volunteers their respective session assignments including Session Name & Identifier / Session Time & Date and assigned papers / authors / speakers.

- **NOTE:** If any session chairs are not yet assignable as of this date, then Committee Chair or their Assign will be responsible for session chair functions for their respective tracks, until a chair or co-chairs are assigned. This applies to all further duties / tasks below as may be required.

Wed. Dec. 17, 2025 (Completed)

- Notification of Acceptance / Rejection
 - o This notification is sent out to the speakers directly from WEAO/Tech Program Leads (via XCD)
 - o They will be informed of their acceptance, and advised of session time / date, and provided with initial templates & general information for speakers
 - o They will also be advised that they will be hearing directly from their assigned session chairs at a later time, and that they should expect future communications to come from the session chairs.

Fri. Jan. 16, 2026 (Completed)

- Committee Technical Program Rep **DEADLINE** - Session Synopses Due
 - o Session chairs to create and send brief introduction / synopsis of their respective sessions into the Tech Program Leads. These will be used in advance conference advertising and Conference at A Glance.

Thurs. Feb. 05, 2026 - Committee Deadline (Partially Completed – still some chairs needed)

- All Session Chair names should be submitted by this time by the Committee Technical Program representative

Tues. Feb. 10th, 2026

- Email from Tech Program Leads to Authors with list of due dates, and access information for the Speaker Resource Page and Speaker Portal.

Mon. Feb. 16th, 2026

- **SESSION CHAIR DEADLINE** - Session Chair First Contact with Speakers
 - o Communication should provide / ask for:
 - Introduction to the Session Chairs / Co-Chairs
 - Links to Speaker Resource Page
 - **Firm Reminder** that speakers are required to register for the conference as an attendee (no there is no option for free attendance of a speaker)

Schedule of Tasks / Communications (cont'd):

- Deadline dates for all forms, manuscript, and presentations *including draft paper deadline date of March 02, 2026*
- Reconfirmation of proper contact information for speakers

Mon. Feb. 23rd, 2025

- Reminder Communication to Authors from Session Chairs – draft paper submission due in 1 week

Mon. Mar. 02nd, 2026

- **AUTHOR DEADLINE - *DRAFT* paper submissions due to session chair(s) for review and verification of proper formatting according to the guidelines**

Mon. Mar. 03rd, 2026

- Reminder communication to Session Chairs that review comments are due back to Authors in 4 days.

Mon. Mar. 09th, 2026

- **SESSION CHAIR DEADLINE** - return of draft review comments to authors / speakers
- Also, reminder communication to Authors that the following are due
 - final paper submissions, speaker bio, and copyright release – Mar. 20.
 - draft presentations – Mar. 27

Fri. Mar. 13th, 2026

- Reminder communication to Authors that the following are due in 1 week
 - Final paper submissions, speaker bio, and copyright release

Thurs. Mar. 19th, 2026

- Reminder communication to Authors that the following are due by end of day tomorrow
 - Final paper submissions, speaker bio, and copyright release

Fri. Mar. 20, 2026

- **AUTHOR DEADLINE - *FINAL* paper submissions due**
- Session Chairs to confirm authors have:
 - Uploaded final paper to the XCD portal
 - Uploaded copyright release to the XCD portal
 - Uploaded speaker bio form to the XCD portal
 - Provided initial draft copy of presentation slides to session chair(s) for review

Fri. Mar. 27th

- **AUTHOR DEADLINE – *DRAFT presentations due***

Schedule of Tasks / Communications (cont'd):**Wed. Apr. 01st**

- **SESSION CHAIR DEADLINE** – presentation review comments and requests for changes due back to authors / presenters

Mon. Apr 6th

- Week Prior communication of final instructions to presenters from Session Chairs
 - Reminder of Date/Time/Location of session
 - Provide / reminder of Speaker Ready Room information
 - Set up pre-session meeting in Ready Room (provide date & time) to meet your speakers in person and coordinate any last-minute presentation changes
 - **Provide Presenters with Session Chair site contact information (cell phone numbers and emails), and reconfirm speaker contact info for use on site at conference**

Sun. Apr 12th – Tues. Apr 14th
CONFERENCE DATES