

ASHT 2026 Annual Meeting and Pediatric Specialty Day Call for Sessions - Frequently Asked Questions

What types of sessions are welcome during the 2026 call for sessions?

This year, we will have one call for sessions for the Annual Meeting and the Pediatric Specialty Day. For the Annual Meeting, we welcome Pre-Conference Institutes (two-hour or four-hour), Instructional Concurrent Sessions (60-minutes) and Clinical Practice Posters. For the Pediatric Specialty Day, we welcome Symposia Sessions (15-minutes) and Instructional Concurrent Sessions (60-minutes).

- **Pre-Conference Institutes** are two-hour or four-hour courses that are intended to be a deeper dive into a topic. They often include interactive lab components, and the number of attendees may be capped. These courses are held Thursday morning before the main meeting starts. Attendees will need to pay an extra fee to attend the course as they offer additional contact hours.
- **Instructional Concurrent Sessions** are 60-minute instructional sessions. They can take a variety of formats, including a more traditional lecture by one or more presenters, a series of linked short talks, a panel or debate, etc. They may include an interactive component but cannot have a cap on the number of attendees. Speakers should try to allot 10 minutes of the session for Q&A.
- **Clinical Practice Posters** are non-research posters that can highlight a clinical innovation, a complex case, a knowledge translation or clinical implementation story, etc. All posters are digital and will be viewable on the online conference platform and at an on-site digital station for attendees to browse through independently. **Research-focused posters that include original data are better suited for the call for abstracts from the Research Division that will open in March.**
- **Pediatric Specialty Day - Symposia Sessions** are 15-minute sessions to discuss important clinical issues, evidence-based approaches, clinical innovations, complex cases, and emerging trends. These sessions may cover a very specific topic or a broader topic in pediatrics presented by one or two presenters. A 10 minute Q&A session will follow a group of presentations.
- **Pediatric Specialty Day - Instructional Concurrent Sessions** are 60-minute instructional sessions. They can take a variety of formats, including a series of linked short talks by one or more presenters, a panel or debate, etc. Active learning approaches with an interactive component are preferred over traditional lecture formats. Speakers should try to allot 10 minutes of the session for Q&A.

What is a Clinical Practice Poster?

A poster is an infographic or visual representation of educational content. It is a single page/image that can be created in PowerPoint, Canva or other widely available software. All posters will be **digital**, which means that they will be displayed on a TV screen and **presenters do not have to bring a physical poster to the meeting**. Attendees can browse through the posters independently on the ASHT On-Demand platform or at the on-site digital kiosks. The presenter(s) will also have the opportunity to upload an accompanying 3-5 minute recorded narration of the poster.

Some of the chosen clinical practice posters presenters will have the opportunity to present within a clinical posters instructional concurrent session. This session will include four poster presenters with time allotted for Q &A. Again, **research-focused posters that include original data are better suited for the call for abstracts from the Research Division that will open in March.**

You can select if you would like your Instructional Concurrent Session submission to be considered for a Clinical Practice Poster if it is not accepted as a 60-minute concurrent session. (Note that selecting this option does not influence whether your proposal will be considered for a concurrent session.) If your proposal for a 60-minute session is accepted as a poster, we will reach out to see if you need to modify your session description and learning objectives to align with the new session format.

What is this year's theme and specific priorities?

The 2026 theme – ***“Bridging the Gap: Collaborating and Amplifying Our Voices”*** – This year, we will emphasize how small daily actions collectively sustain and strengthen our field. Together, these efforts propel our profession forward honoring our tradition of shared wisdom while ensuring lasting resilience within both the broader healthcare landscape and our communities.

Specific priorities within this year's theme:

- **Advancing professional excellence and resilience** - Under this theme, we invite sessions that highlight strategies for maintaining high standards of care and adapting to the evolving landscape of healthcare. Topics may include cutting-edge treatment interventions, evidence-based practices and professional development opportunities that empower hand therapists to thrive. Emphasis should be placed on lifelong learning and resilience in an ever-changing field.
- **Cultivating the next generation of hand therapists** - This theme aims to foster mentorship and educational opportunities for emerging professionals in hand therapy. Proposals should focus on creating inclusive pathways for career development, mentorship programs and innovative educational strategies that inspire and prepare the next generation of therapists. Sessions can highlight successful initiatives, collaboration models and best practices for supporting young professionals in their journey.
- **Advocating for our value** - This theme highlights the actions we take to advance the value and visibility of our profession. Advocacy can seem daunting, yet we all advocate for our worth through everyday efforts that build toward lasting impact. Sessions may focus on value mindset and developing advocacy skills—whether through education, public and legislative outreach, or interprofessional collaboration that broadens our reach beyond traditional boundaries of care.
- **Multidisciplinary perspectives** - Under this theme, we encourage sessions that emphasize the integration of various disciplines that provide comprehensive care for our patients with upper extremity conditions. Collaboration is a key component of healthcare and sessions could focus on this dynamic and strategies to foster collaboration in our practice. This could include perspectives from physicians, psychologists, orthotists and prosthetists, engineers, artists, or holistic medical professionals, just to name a few.

Does my submission have to relate to the theme or specific priorities?

No, we welcome content in all areas relevant to hand and upper extremity practice, innovation, research, sustainability and education. However, please note that proposed sessions that closely link to the theme or specific priorities may be given higher priority for acceptance.

Who can submit a session proposal?

The call for sessions is open to anyone who has content they would like to share with the hand therapy community. We welcome high-quality and innovative content from first-time submitters, including early-career therapists. A proposal can be submitted by an individual or by a group of presenters. If you are a researcher with research findings to disseminate, that is better suited for the call for abstracts organized by the Research Division in March.

I am interested in presenting at the ASHT Annual Meeting, but this is all new to me. Where do I begin?

We recognize that submitting a session proposal can be daunting, especially if it is your first time. The first step is coming up with an idea. Think of something innovative that you or your team is doing in daily practice. Consider what specialized expertise you have that others may not have. Ask your colleagues and mentees what they want to learn about. Search online for past meeting programs and review them to see what kinds of ideas have been previously accepted.

Once you have an idea, it is helpful to review the proposal template early on to understand the information you need to gather and consider. When crafting your submission, think about what would make you interested in attending such a course. Consider what session type best aligns with your content and learning objectives. Keep in mind that submitting a proposal for a Clinical Practice Poster can be a very manageable way to get started with your first submission.

It can be helpful to have others read through your proposal to ensure it is clear, focused and understandable. Collaborating with a more senior therapist and/or someone who has previously presented at the ASHT Annual Meeting can be helpful for your first proposal but is by no means necessary for a successful submission. **And – most importantly – if you have an idea, just go for it and submit! Remember that every single speaker you will see at the Annual Meeting was a first-time speaker at some point!**

I am submitting a session related to pediatrics. Should I submit it to the Annual Meeting or the Pediatric Specialty Day?

Think about who your primary audience is. If your intent is to advance practice for and foster innovation for intermediate to advanced hand therapists currently practicing in pediatric hand care, the Pediatric Specialty Day may be a better fit. If your intent is to provide instructional content related to pediatric hand therapy that is relevant for hand therapists with a broader range of pediatric experience, the Annual Meeting may be a better fit. Also, consider what session type aligns best with the content you want to deliver as there are some differences in the possible session types. If you are unsure about the fit, you may submit your proposal for consideration in both calls

Can I submit a session I have previously presented elsewhere?

Yes, we welcome content presented elsewhere that is relevant to our hand therapy community. We ask that you provide details about any past presentation(s) that are related to the current proposal in the submission.

What is the cost to submit a proposal during the call for sessions?

There is no fee to submit your proposal.

Do I have to finish my online submission in a single sitting?

No, you can return to your previously started submission in the online Score Card platform. However, please remember to submit your proposal prior to the deadline date. Proposals left in incomplete status after the deadline will not be considered.

How are sessions selected?

Sessions are reviewed and scored by members of the ASHT Annual Meeting Committee. Speakers' names are masked so that reviewers can focus on evaluating and ranking content. Each submission is scored on six criteria for a maximum score of 30 points. Each criterion is scored from 1 to 5, with 5 reflecting the highest score.

1. The session title and description are engaging, convey the presentation content and align with the educational interests of ASHT membership.
2. The learning objectives are clearly stated and feasible and align with the session description and audience level.
3. A minimum of two current references (within the past five years) are provided that support the session description.
4. Presenters appear to have an appropriate level of expertise for the topic.
5. The proposal topic aligns with the theme and specific priorities or aligns with another timely priority for the specialty.
6. Overall, the session proposal is coherent, cohesive and carefully planned. (*****Note that this includes planned instructional methods for Pre-Conference Institutes and Instructional Concurrent Sessions***)

There is no specific score minimum for session selection. Sessions that are rated the highest within each submission category are initially considered for acceptance, but we also aim for diversity of topics and speakers to ensure a well-balanced program. There are always many more highly-scored sessions than we are able to schedule due to space considerations.

When will I be notified if my session is accepted?

Notifications regarding acceptances or regrets will be sent in late-April 2026.

If my session proposal is not accepted, can I get access to feedback?

We do not automatically release the scores and comments. However, we are happy to share feedback to strengthen your submission, particularly if you are an early-career therapist or first-time presenter and you plan to resubmit your proposal to this meeting or another meeting in the future. Please reach out to Rachel Pigott at rachel.m.pigott@gmail.com to discuss. Please note that there is often high-quality content that cannot be scheduled simply due to space considerations.

If my session proposal is accepted, what happens next?

Congratulations on your acceptance! ASHT meeting staff will be in contact with more details. You will be provided with a template slide deck that you may use for your presentation. You will be responsible for submitting your speaker agreement, bio and headshot in July 2026 and your presentation slides, posters and/or handouts in September 2026. **You will also be responsible for registering for the meeting, including paying any registration fees.** For first-time presenters who would value guidance while preparing their presentations, ASHT Annual Meeting Committee members would be happy to assist. Presenters can reach out to Rachel Pigott at rachel.m.pigott@gmail.com for related guidance.

I still have a question that is not answered here. What should I do?

If this question is administrative in nature, you can direct it to Ryan McGlashen, ASHT Associate Meeting Manager, at meetings@asht.org.

If the question is about content, you can direct it to Rachel Pigott, 2026 Annual Meeting Committee Chair, at rachel.m.pigott@gmail.com.

If you have questions about Pediatric Specialty Day, you can contact the 2026 Pediatric Specialty Day Co-Chairs Jem Hopkins at jemhuszkins@gmail.com or Karen Ayala at karen.ayala8455@gmail.com.

**Thank you for considering submitting a proposal for the
Annual Meeting and Pediatric Specialty Day**