

Technical Session Organizer Roles & Responsibilities

SAE Technical Session Organizers are an integral part of coordinating SAE conferences. The success of individual sessions and their related conferences is heavily dependent upon the organizers. The primary goal of an SAE Technical Session Organizer should be to build the strongest, most influential session possible. Organizers have freedom to solicit papers, group and order the session as desired, schedule slots for discussions, and pursue other ideas that would add value to the session. Organizers should work closely with the SAE staff to address deadline issues or other hurdles to help in achieving this goal.

Communication is key to a successful technical session.

Individuals interested in organizing a technical session should contact the appropriate SAE staff or [standing committee](#) chair and provide the topic area of interest and a resume. The time commitment can vary based on the number of papers in each session and the number of co-organizers, if any. Most commitment is needed during the peer review process for review-ready manuscripts.

- Once an organizer is confirmed, SAE will email a confirmation with the deadline dates for the event.
- Along with SAE staff, organizers are responsible for ensuring that authors meet critical deadlines in the paper and session development process.
- MyTechZone is the on-line tool used by organizers, authors, reviewers and SAE staff to facilitate the technical paper review and publication process.
 - Orientation and training demonstrating the use of MyTechZone is conducted via WebEx.
 - Organizers should ensure that their session description in MyTechZone is clear and accurate to aid authors in submitting abstracts to the proper session.
- Organizers are expected to participate in regular conference calls for committee sponsoring the session to provide an update on the session status.
- Organizers are expected to comply with all the published meeting deadlines.
- Organizers are expected to maintain a professional manner in their interactions with authors and reviewers.
- Failure to meet these expectations impacts paper and session quality, and the willingness of authors to participate in SAE activities.
 - Any issues that arise with organizer performance should be brought to the committee chair's attention by authors, co-organizers, or SAE staff.
- In the case of multiple co-organizers for a particular session, the organizers should self-select a lead organizer to act as liaison with SAE staff.

Abstracts:

- For most events, a call for papers is done and posted to the SAE website to solicit abstracts.
 - Organizers can provide input for the call for papers to their SAE staff representative.
 - Organizers should also self-solicit papers that would be appropriate for their session.
 - Once the call for papers and the on-line submission process is closed, any additional abstracts should be submitted to their SAE staff representative for official logging.
- Upon receipt of each abstract, organizers should review the abstract and accept, refer to another session, or reject in MyTechZone.
 - For each acceptance, an automatic email is generated to the author inviting submission of the review ready manuscript.
 - Abstracts submitted that do not fit your session scope but may fit within another session within that meeting should be referred in MyTechZone.
 - Organizers should coordinate with SAE staff and other organizers to ensure that abstracts are properly aligned with the correct session.
 - Abstracts which are outside the scope of the conference or are not of acceptable quality or do not meet [SAE requirements](#) should be rejected.
 - Organizers must document the justification for the rejection in MyTechZone.
 - SAE staff will handle the communication with the authors for any rejections.

Review-Ready Manuscripts:

- Organizers are responsible for moderating technical paper reviews.
- For the review process, co-organizers may elect to split the session's papers between them.
 - Each paper should have a single "responsible" organizer identified for following that paper through the review and approval process.
- Once review ready manuscripts are submitted through MyTechZone, the responsible organizer must identify and invite reviewers.
 - Reviews must be completed by at least 3 qualified individuals for each manuscript.
 - The responsible organizer and any co-organizers can also serve as reviewers.
 - Note: *If an organizer is also an author or co-author of a paper, he / she may NOT be the responsible organizer for that paper and may NOT serve as a reviewer.*
- The responsible organizer is then responsible for monitoring progress, summarizing constructive reviewer feedback, and communicating results to the authors via MyTechZone.
- If revisions are requested and an author uploads a revised manuscript to MyTechZone, the organizer should resend to the reviewers and ensure that they update their comments and scores.
 - Organizers can approve minor revisions (*with no impact to scores or journal selection*) directly.
- Once the author has met all the requirements of the reviewers, the responsible organizer can officially accept the paper for publication via their approval tab in MyTechZone.
 - As a minimum, SAE requires three qualified reviews with at least two ratings of "Approved" or "Approved, if modified" BEFORE an organizer is permitted to make a decision on final acceptance for publication.
 - As a minimum, at least one qualified review with a rating of "Disapproved" is required BEFORE an organizer is permitted to make a decision to reject a paper for publication.
 - The organizer is ultimately responsible for consolidating the input from the reviewers and making the final determination on paper approval.
 - *In rare instances (e.g., rejection appeal by an author) the determination process may be escalated to the committee chair and SAE staff.*
 - For full details see the [Final Technical Paper Selection Process](#).
- Once the paper has been accepted for publication, depending on the long-term reference value and other applicable criteria, the organizer may recommend the paper for SAE Journals.
- Organizer recognition of reviewers' efforts (*letter, note of appreciation, etc.*) should be considered.

Chairing the Session On-Site:

- Organizer may choose to chair the session or identify other individuals to chair.
 - The organizer should also choose a co-chair.
 - The session chair(s) must be identified and assigned in MyTechZone.
- Approximately 2-3 weeks prior to the event, the organizer should remind the authors to upload their biographies and a draft of their PowerPoint presentation to MyTechZone for review.
 - Session chair should print or download the biographies for on-site speaker introductions.
- Organizer should review the PowerPoint presentations to ensure they meet SAE guidelines, avoid commercialism, and will fit the allotted presentation time (*also applies to "Oral Only" presentations*).
- During the session itself, the session chair should function as moderator:
 - Maintain published paper order and time slots.
 - Keep session running on schedule (*i.e. do not allow presenters to run over allotted time*).
 - Monitor questions and general etiquette.
- For most events, the session chair will be provided with oral evaluation rating cards to randomly pass out to audience members to rate the speakers.
 - The session chair or co-chair should be proactive in pursuing participation in the rating process to ensure as high a level of participation as possible.
 - After the session, the chair should collect and compile the evaluation cards and enter the ratings from the front side of the cards in MyTechZone via their Oral Eval tab and make their recommendations for Outstanding Speaker Awards.
- The session chair should provide peak session attendance to their SAE staff rep on-site.
- Along with any duties assigned by the session chair, the co-chair's responsibilities include:
 - Aiding with the distribution and collection of rating cards, e.g., from those who leave early.
 - Monitor and record peak attendance.
 - Control doors, lights, etc. as needed for noise and viewing of slides.
 - Ensure enforcement of SAE policies such as photography, video, cell phones, etc.