Writing and Submitting Effective Conference Proposals
First Steps: Deciding on a Topic

- Read the Call for Proposals carefully. Familiarize yourself with the conference theme and the requirements of the Call for Proposals.
  
  http://conf.aucegypt.edu/Conferences/ConfHome.aspx?Conf=NileTESOL2012&Title=Call for papers

- Consider what would be of interest to conference attendees. The Nile TESOL Conference is fortunate to have a diverse group of participants who represent many different types of organizations, schools, and governmental agencies, serving learners of all ages. As long as the proposal is related to TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages), there is a wide range of acceptable topics for proposals.
Once you have a topic in mind, ask yourself the following questions:

- How is this topic related to the field of TESOL?
- Is this topic practical or theoretical?
- How is this topic related to the conference theme? (Not all accepted proposals are related to the conference theme, but proposals related to the conference theme are given higher ratings on the Proposal Evaluation Rubric.)
- Who is my intended audience?
- What general area of TESOL is it related to?
Now that you’ve decided on a topic, it’s time to write the proposal. The proposal consists of several parts:

- Your contact information
- Your biographical information
- The title of your proposed session
- The Interest Section thread to which your proposal is most relevant
- The type and duration of your proposed session
- The equipment you will need
- The summary and abstract for your proposed session
Because proposals are submitted online, it is best to plan and write your proposal BEFORE you go to the website to submit it.

Well-planned proposals have a better chance of being accepted.

- Keep in mind the conference theme.
- Refer to the Checklist for Writing and Submitting an Effective Conference Proposal.
- Use the Proposal Evaluation Rubric to gauge how well your proposed session matches the criteria that are considered important by the Organizing Committee.
Contact Information

- You should always provide up-to-date contact information, including an email address that you can check regularly.
- You should also be sure to provide your name the way you want it to appear in the conference program and on the certificate you will receive for presenting.
- In the Details of Presenters Section, provide the necessary information for ALL presenters, if you plan to present a session with one or more colleagues.
Biographical Information

• The information in this section will be used when you are being introduced at the beginning of your session.

• Most people typically include their affiliation (where they work), as well as any information that shows they have some experience or expertise that makes them qualified to speak on a particular topic.
Rania Jabr is a Senior English Language Instructor at the American University in Cairo. Her interests include teaching reading and writing, and materials development.

Dr. Phyllis Wachob is an Assistant Professor in the MA TEFL program at the American University in Cairo. She has presented and published extensively on teacher education and development.
The title is one of the elements on which your proposal will be evaluated. Ideally, titles should:

- attract the reader
- be informative
- accurately reflect the content of your session
- be concise—titles must have 9 words or fewer!

Don’t sacrifice accuracy for a catchy title.
Interest Section Threads

- Because the Conference Schedule will be organized by interest section threads, it is important that you choose the thread that is most relevant to your session.
- The threads represent the major interests and concerns of conference attendees.
Which Interest Section Thread Should You Choose?

- Young Learners
- Teacher Education
- Technology
- Assessment
- English for Academic Purposes
- English for Specific Purposes
- Administration
Type and Duration of Session

- Generally speaking, the type of session will determine the length.
- A presentation or talk based on research will usually warrant only 45 minutes.
- A workshop in which attendee participation is a part will usually require 90 minutes.
Equipment Needed for the Session

- Think carefully about how you will present your session. Will you use handouts? PowerPoint? Overhead transparencies? Sound files?
- It is important that you specify ANY equipment you might need. If you don’t, the Organizing Committee won’t be able to plan correctly—and you won’t have the equipment you need to give your presentation the way you planned.
The summary is one of the most important parts of your proposal—but not because it will be used by the Organizing Committee to evaluate your proposed session.

This is what conference attendees will use to decide whether or not they want to attend your session.
The Summary

- Summaries must be 50 or fewer words in length.
- A good summary will provide:
  - Brief details of what the session will be about
  - How the session will be organized
  - What the attendees will get out of attending the session
- A good summary will be:
  - Brief but informative
  - Written in correct English

Some experienced conference presenters prefer to write the summary AFTER writing the abstract.
Points to Keep in Mind for the Summary

- Remember that many of the conference attendees are English teachers who might be put off by mistakes in grammar, punctuation, etc.—even if the content is very strong! Don’t expect the Organizing Committee to proofread and edit your summary.

- Remember that many sessions take place at the same time. Attendees often have to make a choice from several sessions of interest. Don’t disappoint them by providing a summary that doesn’t match what you are actually going to do!
The purpose of this presentation is to provide attendees with a brief overview on motivation, its different definitions, and the sources and factors affecting it. It will also highlight some strategies, which are both useful and practical, that teachers and students can use to maintain a high level of motivation.
This presentation reports on the results of a study on content-based projects for enhancing EFL writing. The talk addresses the topics covered, project outcomes, and the successes and challenges that both the teacher and students encountered while completing these projects. Recommendations for better implementation of such projects will be discussed.
The abstract is what the Organizing Committee will use to decide whether or not to accept your proposal. The following elements will be considered:

- Clarity of the ideas and language
- Quality of the ideas
- Relation of the proposal content to theory, research, knowledge, or practice in the field of TESOL

An abstract should not exceed 250 words in length.
Each conference proposal will be read by at least two members of the Organizing Committee, who will use the Conference Proposal Evaluation Rubric to make a decision as to whether or not your proposal should be accepted.

The Rubric is used to evaluate proposals according to specific criteria. The highest possible score is 25 and the lowest is 5.

Proposals with mostly 4s and 5s are likely to be accepted.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Criteria</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Questionable</th>
<th>Poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Proposal Title</td>
<td>The title is successful in attracting the reader and succinctly describes the session.</td>
<td>The title is likely to gain the interest of the reader and clearly describes the session.</td>
<td>The title does not attract the reader but generally describes what the session will be about.</td>
<td>The title does not attract the reader and only cursorily indicates what the session will be about.</td>
<td>The title indicates a minimal attempt to attract the reader and misleads or indicates little about what the session might entail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Relevance of Topic to Conference Theme</td>
<td>The topic of the proposal is directly relevant to current issues outlined by the conference theme.</td>
<td>The topic of the proposal is for the most part timely and relevant to the conference theme.</td>
<td>The proposal focuses on current issues OR is directly relevant to the conference theme but not both.</td>
<td>The proposal focuses on out-of-date materials and/or practice and is only indirectly relevant to the conference theme.</td>
<td>The topic has no detectible relevance to either current issues or the conference theme.</td>
</tr>
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<td>3. Significance of Proposal Content to the Field</td>
<td>The proposal is solidly based on current research, knowledge, and/or practice in the field.</td>
<td>The proposal seems to be based on current research and practice in the field.</td>
<td>The proposal alludes to but may not be solidly based on current research and practice in the field.</td>
<td>The proposal refers only to historically established and/or extraneous issues or practices in the field.</td>
<td>The proposal refers to no research, practices or contributions in the field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Clarity of Proposal Abstract</td>
<td>The proposal abstract is clearly and succinctly written in excellent English and provides a clear statement of the message/objective(s)/format of the session.</td>
<td>The proposal abstract is clearly written in good English and provides an adequate statement of the message/objective(s)/format of the session.</td>
<td>The proposal abstract is adequately written in acceptable English and provides some information about the session’s message/objective(s)/format.</td>
<td>The language of the proposal abstract is somewhat problematic or the abstract provides little information about the session’s message/objective(s)/format.</td>
<td>The information about the session’s message/objective(s)/format is unclear because the proposal abstract has severe language problems or is missing relevant information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Contribution to the Convention and/or to the Field</td>
<td>The session will make significant, memorable contributions to the convention and effective educational practices.</td>
<td>The session will contribute positively to the convention and to effective educational practices.</td>
<td>The session will offer some contribution to the convention and to effective educational practices.</td>
<td>Convention attendees may question the validity of the inclusion of this session.</td>
<td>Convention attendees will most likely regret their decision to attend this session.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL SCORE = 25**

**BRIEF Overall Comments:**
Important Reminder

Once you have made sure your proposal meets the guidelines ... leave yourself time to submit your proposal by the deadline!

In the past, Nile TESOL has had to reject very promising proposals because they were not submitted by the deadline. Don’t let this happen to you!
Some Final Points

Submitting a conference proposal can be a daunting task, especially if you have never done it before. Don’t be afraid to ask friends or colleagues—especially those who have presented at conferences before—to help you refine your proposal.

Nile TESOL is a dynamic organization whose members come from many different backgrounds and hold many different interests and experiences. We warmly welcome new members and new presenters who want to make a contribution to the field of TESOL in Egypt!
GOOD LUCK!

We look forward to seeing you in 2012, whether as a presenter or an attendee.