

Allocation of JSM 2026 Invited Sessions to Sections Council of Sections Governing Board

2025-04-21

Executive Summary

This report describes the methods the COSGB used to develop a set of recommended invited (non-competitive) session allocations by ASA section for the 2026 JSM. The allocation depends on three general categories: proportion of ASA membership within the section (20% of the section's score), section JSM attendance (20% of the section's score), and JSM activities organized by the section (60% of the section's score). The COSGB approved the allocation of 70 invited sessions across 30 sections for the 2026 JSM, which represents no change in the total number of sessions or sections from the 2024-2025 JSMs. As in JSM 2024-2025, seven sections receive four invited sessions, seven sections receive three invited sessions, five sections receive two invited sessions, and the remaining 11 sections receive one invited session at JSM 2026. As compared to JSM 2025, one section moves from 2 to 3 sessions (HPSS), and two sections move from 1 to 2 sessions (SI and LIDS), while one section moves from 3 to 2 invited sessions (GRPH), and two sections move from 2 to 1 invited session (SPES and SSPA). Once data from JSM 2025 are available, a new allocation committee from COSGB will develop the allocation for JSMs 2027-2028, returning to allocating sessions in even-numbered years for the subsequent two-year period.

Background

Beginning in 2005, the ASA Board of Directors (BOD) assigned to the Council of Sections Governing Board (COSGB) responsibility for determining the allocation of non-competing invited session slots to individual Sections. In March 2012, the BOD assigned full responsibility for section-session allocation to the COSGB. The BOD expects a report on the allocations for its information. Historically, the COSGB allocates up to 70 invited sessions to sections for each Joint Statistical Meeting (JSM), and develops an allocation in even numbered years for the subsequent two-year period.

Every Joint Statistical Meeting (JSM) includes both invited session slots allocated to individual Sections and additional slots allocated to a competition among Sections, Interest Groups, Committees, and the Council of Chapters. The Board of Directors (BOD) under the 2014 JSM agreement, designated a total of 98 invited sessions in odd-numbered (IMS Business Meeting) years and 93 invited sessions in even-numbered (no IMS Business Meeting) years be allotted for the individual sections and the competition. A higher number of invited paper sessions are

included in odd-numbered years, since higher JSM attendance is expected due to the IMS business meetings.

In 2008 COSGB decided that in even numbered years a committee consisting of the 1st and 3rd year Board Representatives, the Past Chair, and the Chair-elect would analyze Section data and propose an allocation. JSM attendance, membership, and JSM session activity have been measures historically considered by this committee to determine the allocation. This comprehensive allocation was last conducted in 2017-2018 and had been put on hiatus in response to the coronavirus-19 pandemic owing to the pandemic's effect on JSM attendance and activities. This document outlines the method proposed by the COSGB committee and approved by the COSGB to allocate invited sessions for JSM 2026. The analysis will be updated in 2025/2026 for the 2027-2028 JSMs.

Allocation of JSM Non-competition Invited Sessions to Sections Process

1. Membership

The membership data used for the allocation are recorded as of November 18, 2025 (see Appendix A). Members with joint memberships to sections were counted once in each individual section.

2. JSM Attendance (AttendanceAvg)

This variable is the average of the last four JSM attendance counts by sections (2022-24). These counts were obtained from the meetings department at ASA. Attendance figures also include the members of the three joint sections in both its component sections. One new section joined the COS during 2022-24: STA in 2023. STA data for JSM attendance was used only in the years where it was in existence with no penalty for prior years; in effect, an average of less than three years was used in this cases. As with section membership, members of joint sections were counted as attending from each individual section at JSM.

3. Section Invited-Session Average (InvitedAvg)

This variable is the average of the number of invited sessions by section for the previous three JSMs (2022-2024). All counts of invited paper and panel sessions in the JSM program were obtained from the meetings department at ASA. Only sections serving as the primary session sponsor were counted. Sections that were not in existence in time for the JSM or at the time of the affecting corresponding invited session allocation exercise and were also voted in too late in the year (September 30) to be included in the following year's JSM invited program, had those years ignored in the average invited session count, effectively reducing the number of years being averaged. However, the 2024-25 Committee also felt that any

invited sessions earned in competition within these excluded years (e.g., through competition from any JSM pool), should be counted only if it would benefit the section's 3-year average.

In particular, STA (founded 2023) did not receive an invited session allocation for 2022 or 2023 since they did not exist at the time of the Spring 2016 allocation exercise for JSM 2017-2018 and were voted in too late to be included in the JSM 2023 invited program by exception. STA also did not win any invited sessions in competition for JSM 2023, but won two competitive sessions in JSM 2024.

4. Topic Contributed Session Average (TCAvg)

This variable is the average number of TC paper sessions and TC panel sessions (combined) by section for the previous three JSMs (2022-2024). The counts of TC paper sessions were obtained from the meetings department at ASA. Only sections serving as the primary session sponsor were counted. Years in which sections were not created were ignored (i.e., not counted as zero) in the average, effectively reducing the number of years being averaged; however, the 2024-25 Committee decided that TC sessions in a section's first year of existence should be counted towards the 3-year average.

5. Contributed Session Average (CAvg/5)

This variable is the average number of contributed papers by section for the three previous JSMs (2022-2024) divided by 5. The counts of contributed papers were obtained from the meetings department at ASA. Only sections serving as the primary paper sponsor were counted. Years in which sections were not created were ignored (i.e., not counted as zero) in the average, effectively reducing the number of years being averaged; however, contributed sessions at JSM in the section's first year of existence will be counted.

6. Posters & Speed Talks (PSTAvg/5)

This variable is the average number of topic contributed posters, contributed posters, and speed talks at JSM in the previous three years (2022-2024) divided by five. Similar to the contributed session average, this variable is computed by tallying the number of individual works and not number of sessions. The number of TC/contributed posters and speed talks at JSM, affiliated by section, was obtained from the ASA meetings department. Invited posters were not counted since their selection was made by the JSM poster chair and JSM program committee, and individual sections have a minimal role. Topic Contributed posters and Contributed posters were both counted as all sections could fairly enter these media (please note – as of 2016, Topic Contributed poster sessions are rarely used, not capped, and are still open to all sections). As all posters for a given section appear at the same time

slot, only the primary section is used to determine section affiliation for TC posters and contributed posters. For speed talks, although they may appear in a session with other sections being represented, each individual speed talk is affiliated with a section and included in the total.

Years in which sections were not created were ignored (i.e., not counted as zero) in the average, effectively reducing the number of years being averaged; however, TC and contributed posters at JSM in the section's first year of existence will be counted.

Speed sessions were a pilot program at JSM 2013 and 2014, before becoming part of the regular program at JSM 2015. Starting in 2016, the Committee decided to include speed talks with weight equal to posters, as ASA is trying to encourage more activity in this medium as a means of meeting the demand of the overall program and as it is reported in the same category as TC and contributed posters.

Combining Variables

The 2010 Committee proposed a method of computing variables for Attendance, Membership, and Sessions, and then combined them in an overall score that was a weighted average of the three variables. After review, the 2024-25 Committee concurred with the 2010, 2012, 2014 and 2016 Committees' general approach. The following is a description of the computation of scores.

From the five variables relating to JSM section activities, the composite "Session_i" variable was created for each section by combining the average number of the five types of sessions and dividing by the total sum of the session variables for all 30 sections:

$$Session_i = \frac{InvtdAvg_i + TCAvg_i + \left(\frac{CAvg}{5}\right)_i + \left(\frac{PSTAvg}{5}\right)_i}{\sum_{i=1}^{30} \left\{ InvtdAvg_i + TCAvg_i + \left(\frac{CAvg}{5}\right)_i + \left(\frac{PSTAvg}{5}\right)_i \right\}}$$

A membership variable was also created for each section by using the current membership (November, 2024) divided by the total sum of the current memberships for all 30 sections:

$$Membership_i = \frac{Membership_i}{\sum_{i=1}^{30} Membership_i}$$

A JSM attendance variable was created for each section by using the average attendance divided by the total sum of the average attendance for all 30 sections:

$$Attendance_i = \frac{AttendanceAvg_i}{\sum_{i=1}^{30} AttendanceAvg_i}$$

Each section was given a score, S_i , the weighted average of the composite session variable, membership and attendance. The weights used in this score were 0.60 for sessions, 0.20 for membership and 0.20 for attendance. The session variable was given a higher weight due to the importance of a section's activity at JSM. It is the view of the COSGB that by placing an incentive for a section to have active JSM participation it promotes the interests of the Council of Sections more broadly. Attendance and membership were equally weighted. Thus, S_i was calculated as:

$$S_i = (0.60)(Session_i) + (0.20)(Attendance_i) + (0.20)(Membership_i)$$

Each section's 2016 S_i score is listed in the table in Appendix C.

Conversion to Invited Session Counts

COSGB ensures that each section maintains a minimum of 1 invited session per the COS charter. Currently, COSGB caps the number of allocated invited sessions at four.

These scores were translated to invited session counts by the following process. The allocation process used the S_i scores to determine the allocation counts. When there was a natural "gap" or break in the section scores, the number of allocations dropped by one. Gaps chosen were as below. Each borderline was examined closely and special circumstances were discussed. The initial cutpoints were established as follows:

- Differentiation between 3 and 4 invited sessions: $S_i = 0.05$
- Differentiation between 2 and 3 invited sessions: $S_i = 0.03$
- Differentiation between 1 and 2 invited sessions: $S_i = 0.02$

After looking at the recent history of section-sponsored JSM activity and further discussion, the committee elected to move these cutpoints. The final three cutpoints to allocate the number of invited sessions for JSM 2026 were established at $S_i = 0.045$, 0.03, and 0.0208:

- Differentiation between 3 and 4 invited sessions: $S_i = 0.045$

- Differentiation between 2 and 3 invited sessions: $S_i = 0.03$
- Differentiation between 1 and 2 invited sessions: $S_i = 0.0208$

Exceptions: To prevent one section's (GRPH) allocation from being reduced by 2 sessions, the 2024-25 Committee made the following exception. GRPH (score=0.0205) was reduced from 3 to 2 sessions; MHS (score=0.0207) remained at 1 session. This decision was made to prevent large changes in a scoring interval that did not demonstrate a clear natural breakpoint.

Appendix C provides a graphical display of section scores. This allocation produced 70 invited sessions: 7 sections receiving 4 invited sessions, 7 sections receiving 3 invited sessions, 5 sections receiving 2 invited sessions, and 11 sections receiving 1 invited session. The proposed 2026 invited session allocations for each section are listed in Appendix B. All the 2026 section allocations remained the same as the 2024-25 allocations with the following exceptions:

1. Section on Statistical Graphics (GRPH) moved from 3 to 2 invited sessions
2. Section on Lifetime Data Analysis (LIDS) moved from 1 to 2 invited sessions
3. Health Policy Statistics Section (HPSS) moved from 2 to 3 invited sessions.
4. Section for Statistical Programmers and Analysts (SSPA) moved from 2 to 1 invited session.
5. Section on Physical and Engineering Sciences (SPES) moved from 2 to 1 invited session.
6. Section on Statistics in Imaging (SI) moved from 1 to 2 invited sessions.

Summary

Recapping, the proposed allocation for 2026 has 70 invited sessions allocated to 30 sections. All sections except GRPH, LIDS, HPSS, SPES, SI and SSPA will receive the same number of invited sessions for the 2026 JSM as they had for the 2023 and 2024 JSMs. GRPH, SPES, and SSPA will receive one fewer invited session; HPSS, SI, and LIDS would receive one additional session. This allocation leaves 23 invited sessions available in the competition pool for 2026. The allocation will be updated in 2026 for JSM 2027-2028.

Respectfully Submitted,

Thomas E Love, Past Chair COSGB (2025)

Annie Qu, Chair COSGB (2025)

Jennifer Parker, Past 1st Year BOD Representative (2025)

Michelle Shardell, Past 3rd Year BOD Representative (2025)

Appendix A

Section Membership Counts (as of November, 2024)

SECTION (ABBREVIATION)	Membership
BE: Business and Economic Statistics Section	639
BIOM: Biometrics Section	1774
BIOP: Biopharmaceutical Section	2425
CNSL: Section on Statistical Consulting	1196
COMP: Section on Statistical Computing	1293
EDUC: Section on Statistics and Data Science Education	1715
ENVR: Section on Statistics and the Environment	710
EPI: Section on Statistics in Epidemiology	1108
GOVT: Government Statistics Section	603
GRPH: Section on Statistical Graphics	797
HPSS: Health Policy Statistics Section	1078
LIDS: Section on Lifetime Data Analysis	974
MDD: Section on Medical Devices and Diagnostics	412
MHS: Mental Health Statistics Section	774
MKTG: Section on Statistics in Marketing	540
NPAR: Section on Nonparametric Statistics	626
QP: Quality and Productivity Section	368
RISK: Section on Risk Analysis	411
SBSS: Section on Bayesian Statistical Science	1333
SDNS: Section on Statistics in Defense and National Security	348
SGG: Section on Statistics in Genomics and Genetics	881
SI: Section on Statistics in Imaging	479
SIS: Section on Statistics in Sports	494
SLDM: Section on Statistical Learning and Data Science	2976
SOC: Social Statistics Section	626
SPES: Section on Physical and Engineering Sciences	481
SRMS: Survey Research Methods Section	1187
SSPA: Section for Statistical Programmers and Analysts	1295
STA: Text Analysis Section	273
TSHS: Section on Teaching of Statistics in the Health Sciences	567

Appendix B

Allocation of Non-Competition Invited Session Slots to Individual Sections for JSM 2026

SECTION (ABBREVIATION)	2026 allocation	Allocation Change
BIOP: Biopharmaceutical Section	4	0
SLDM: Section on Statistical Learning and Data Science	4	0
BIOM: Biometrics Section	4	0
SBSS: Section on Bayesian Statistical Science	4	0
EPI: Section on Statistics in Epidemiology	4	0
SRMS: Survey Research Methods Section	4	0
COMP: Section on Statistical Computing	4	0
EDUC: Section on Statistics and Data Science Education	3	0
SGG: Section on Statistics in Genomics and Genetics	3	0
ENVR: Section on Statistics and the Environment	3	0
GOVT: Government Statistics Section	3	0
HPSS: Health Policy Statistics Section	3	+1
NPAR: Section on Nonparametric Statistics	3	0
BE: Business and Economic Statistics Section	3	0
SOC: Social Statistics Section	2	0
LIDS: Section on Lifetime Data Analysis	2	+1
CNSL: Section on Statistical Consulting	2	0
SI: Section on Statistics in Imaging	2	+1
MHS: Mental Health Statistics Section	1	0
GRPH: Section on Statistical Graphics	2	-1
SSPA: Section for Statistical Programmers and Analysts	1	-1
SPES: Section on Physical and Engineering Sciences	1	-1
TSHS: Section on Teaching of Statistics in the Health Sciences	1	0
MDD: Section on Medical Devices and Diagnostics	1	0
SIS: Section on Statistics in Sports	1	0
RISK: Section on Risk Analysis	1	0
QP: Quality and Productivity Section	1	0
SDNS: Section on Statistics in Defense and National Security	1	0
MKTG: Section on Statistics in Marketing	1	0
STA: Text Analysis Section	1	0

Appendix C

Invited Session Allocation Weighted Scores (S_i)

SECTION (ABBREVIATION)	Score	Rank
BIOP: Biopharmaceutical Section	0.0990	1
SLDM: Section on Statistical Learning and Data Science	0.0875	2
BIOM: Biometrics Section	0.0795	3
SBSS: Section on Bayesian Statistical Science	0.0565	4
EPI: Section on Statistics in Epidemiology	0.0552	5
SRMS: Survey Research Methods Section	0.0513	6
COMP: Section on Statistical Computing	0.0456	7
EDUC: Section on Statistics and Data Science Education	0.0421	8
SGG: Section on Statistics in Genomics and Genetics	0.04143	9
ENVR: Section on Statistics and the Environment	0.04137	10
GOVT: Government Statistics Section	0.0332	11
HPSS: Health Policy Statistics Section	0.0325	12
NPAR: Section on Nonparametric Statistics	0.0320	13
BE: Business and Economic Statistics Section	0.0303	14
SOC: Social Statistics Section	0.0263	15
LIDS: Section on Lifetime Data Analysis	0.0245	16
CNSL: Section on Statistical Consulting	0.0240	17
SI: Section on Statistics in Imaging	0.0235	18
MHS: Mental Health Statistics Section	0.0207	19
GRPH: Section on Statistical Graphics	0.0205	20
SSPA: Section for Statistical Programmers and Analysts	0.0187	21
SPES: Section on Physical and Engineering Sciences	0.0182	22
TSHS: Section on Teaching of Statistics in the Health Sciences	0.0145	23
MDD: Section on Medical Devices and Diagnostics	0.0144	24
SIS: Section on Statistics in Sports	0.0137	25
RISK: Section on Risk Analysis	0.0135	26
QP: Quality and Productivity Section	0.0127	27
SDNS: Section on Statistics in Defense and National Security	0.010133	28
MKTG: Section on Statistics in Marketing	0.010131	29
STA: Text Analysis Section	0.0071	30

Appendix D

History of Committee Issues Discussed: Additional Topics for Future Allocations

2025-2026 Committee

The committee proposed and was approved to complete this process again in the fall of 2025/winter 2026 to evaluate JSM 2027 and 2028 for three reasons:

- 1) Get back on track with a timeline consistent in our bylaws,
- 2) Maintenance of institutional memory
- 3) Re-assess MHS and GRPH with more data regarding meeting attendance.

History of Committee Issues Discussed

2010 and 2012 Committees

In 2010 and 2012 allocation committee and COSGB meetings about the invited session allocations, there was much discussion about what variables to consider as well as what analysis techniques were most appropriate. COSGB had in past years agreed that JSM-related activities (i.e., sessions) should be the leading factor in the invited session allocation process. It provided sections with motivation to increase JSM program participation, unlike membership size or JSM attendance.

At the COS representative meetings at JSM in 2009, Council representatives discussed what variables should be considered in the invited session allocation process. The general consensus was that JSM activities such as invited, topic contributed, and contributed sessions and number of posters should be the most important criteria.

Across all these discussions about the allocation process, a number of issues were considered. The following are topics discussed during the 2010 allocation process:

1. Use membership only as the allocation criterion.
2. JSM attendance and section membership have historically been highly correlated. Consider using one or the other in the allocation.
3. Setting the upper limit of guaranteed sessions to 5 or 6. This could cause problems with the rules about how many sessions could be pulled from the competition pool.
4. Adjust a section's allocation to no more than one session (increase or decrease) at each allocation analysis.
5. Consider a growth factor for new sections.
6. Consider different weights on the criteria variables to generate a "score" for each section.

7. How do we translate the section “score” to an allocation count? Do we allocate proportionally within the range of sessions (i.e., 1 to 4) or do we allocate by equal size groups ($\frac{1}{4}$ of the sections get 1 session, $\frac{1}{4}$ of the sections get 2 sessions, etc.). If we allocate proportionally we need to decide on the total number of invited sessions we want to allocate.
8. Consider using 2 years of JSM data instead of 4 years.
9. Consider using sums of JSM yearly data instead of averages.
10. Consider using ranks or raw data.
11. In creating the composite sessions value should the different types of sessions receive different weights (i.e., invited sessions be weighted more than posters)?
12. Posters were converted to a “session” by dividing the counts by 5. Should another number be used?
13. Should we consider the historical number of allocated invited sessions by section invited sessions by section in our new allocation?
14. Is there a way to use residuals from year-to-year in the allocation?
15. The allocation analysis is done every two years by the COSGB and allocations recommended for the following two JSM years. Should the allocation numbers be the same for the following two JSM years or allowed to be different?
16. A review of membership counts across several months in 2009 by the 2010 Committee showed only slight fluctuations in numbers.

2012 Committee

During the 2012 allocation process, the allocation committee reviewed the 2010 discussion items, and considered the following additional topics:

1. Distributing the full set of scores to each section. (Releasing all scores may lead to undesirable behavior on the part of individual sections to increase their invited session allocation from year to year.)
2. Conduct the analysis each year to see if the allocation should change from the first to the second year of each two year allocation cycle. (This would require more committee effort, and probably lead to little substantial change in the allocations.)
3. When a section loses an invited session, consider decreasing by only one in the second year to give the section an opportunity to plan to compete for additional invited sessions in the second year.
4. We are running out of invited sessions to allocate. (Three sections have been added in the last four years, resulting three invited sessions be moved from competing to section allocations. There are only four sessions remaining that could be moved from competition to section allocation under the current policy.)
5. What should COSGB do if more than four new sections are approved before the next review in 2014?

6. Urge the COSGB to have a discussion item at the JSM 2012 Council of Sections meeting concerning how to handle the growing number of sections and shrinking number of invited sessions available to allocate to sections.
7. Use 2 years of JSM data instead of 4. (This approach may unnecessarily penalize poor performance by a section program chair, or a reduction in the number of sessions developed at a JSM site to which some members had greater difficulty attending (e.g., in a foreign country, Las Vegas).)

2014 Committee

During the 2014 allocation process, the allocation committee reviewed the 2010 and 2012 discussion items, and contributed the following additional topics for consideration.

1. At future JSMs make the invited session allocation a standing item at the Sunday COS meeting.
2. The 2014 Committee considered whether another method should be used to represent membership counts (e.g., average over several months), but decided that the 2010 Committee approach of considering membership at a specific point in time was still satisfactory.

2016 Committee

During the 2016 allocation process, the allocation committee reviewed the 2010-2014 discussion items, and contributed the following additional topics for consideration:

1. Cap on topic contributed sessions and discussion of responsibility for allocation (COM or COSGB)
2. Inclusion of speed sessions in the session activity factor and beginning year. Identification that ASA Meetings Department provides these totals along with the poster counts.
3. Sponsorship and co-sponsorship of speed and poster sessions and impact on section session counts
4. Addition of new invited sessions into the JSM per the new 2015 JSM agreement
5. Timing of the first year in which new sections should have their topic contributed sessions counted in the 4-year rolling average (due to early submission deadline)
6. Timing of the first year in which new sections should have their contributed sessions counted in the 4-year rolling average (due to time to promote their section before the next JSM)
7. Distinguishing between invited and contributed posters and their inclusion in the session activity factor. Documentation that invited poster count should not be added into poster counts

8. Identification that topic contributed posters (since 2012) should be counted and are included in the poster counts given to COSGB
9. Clarification that invited panel sessions should be included in the invited session counts and that ASA office includes these sessions in the totals given to COSGB.
10. Identification that topic contributed panel session should be included in the TC session counts and that ASA office includes these sessions in the totals given to COSGB.
11. Identification that COS allocation pool from JSM agreement includes allocated and competition slots, where competition slots include IGs, COC, and Committee on Committees, even though the latter two bodies are not part of the COS.
12. Recognition that for sections arising from interest groups (now a requirement per 2015 COS charter change), that the exception issue of counting sessions as an interest group needs to be regularly evaluated to see if those counts will benefit the section.
13. Whether the maximum number of allocated invited sessions should be raised from 4 to 5
14. Whether the BOD directive of not moving more than 3 invited sessions in/out of competition applied this year given the addition of total number of invited sessions per the new JSM agreement. (This was a moot point in the final allocation, however).
15. Re-confirmation that the correlation between JSM attendance and membership is still very high at 0.96, and that both variables will still remain in the allocation formula with equal weights.

There were no Committees for 2018, 2020, 2022, and 2024