

# Final Instructions for Organizers: Working with Confex

2016 Annual Meeting, Population Association of America  
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Please read these instructions carefully. This document repeats key elements of the Overview you received earlier and provides a description of how to use Confex as you conduct your work organizing your sessions.

## Organizer Duties

Session organizers and co-organizers are responsible for: (1) selecting four papers for their primary session, providing grades for papers that will be reviewed for poster sessions, and providing final outcome codes for all abstracts submitted to your session, (2) proposing additional (overflow) sessions provided that the session received sufficient papers of very high quality, (3) chairing the session or recruiting a different person to be chair and recruiting chairs for any approved overflow sessions, and (4) recruiting one or two discussants for your session and for any approved overflow session. These duties are described in more detail below.

## Key Deadlines for the Review Phase

September 25, 2015	Deadline for authors to submit papers online
October 2, 2015	Session organizers may begin entering decisions online
November 2, 2015	Deadline for session organizers to finish reviewing the submissions to their session and to propose overflow sessions
November 9, 2015	Authors are notified of papers accepted in standard sessions or forwarded for possible inclusion in overflow or poster sessions
November 19, 2015	Organizers are notified of overflow session decisions
December 11, 2015	Deadline for session organizers to obtain chairs and discussants for all sessions
December 18, 2015	Authors are notified of papers accepted into overflow or poster sessions

## Accessing the Confex Site as a Session Organizer

Starting on October 2 session organizers will be able to access the Confex system. Each organizer will receive a link by email and will use that link to access the abstracts submitted to his or her session and to record outcomes of the review. Storing the link in a place where it is easily accessible may be advisable. Use the Confex technical support website (see Contact, below) to request assistance if you have lost the link and need to have it resent to you.

## Accessing Information about Submissions

When you access the Confex site via the link (provided by email), you will have the options of downloading all submitted abstracts into a Word document, downloading an Excel spreadsheet with one row per submission (and critical details of the submission), or reading each abstract online, sequentially by using the “review submission” button. You can access these options via the menu on the far left of the screen. You may find it easiest to first read through abstracts offline using the Word document, and then use the Excel spreadsheet to record preliminary decisions and experiment with different groupings of papers.

By November 2 you will need to enter final decisions about each submission’s status into Confex (see Entering Decisions, below). As you enter decisions, you may use the option button on the left side of the Confex screen to request an updated Excel spreadsheet.

## Dual Submissions

Most authors designate both a first and second choice session. If your session is the author's first choice, you have priority in accepting the paper and you may do so without requesting permission from the other session organizer. If your session is the author's second choice, the other organizer needs to yield the paper to you before you are able to accept it.

You can determine whether your session is the submitter's first or second choice by looking at the details in the "Assigned Submissions" panel (upper left of screen), in the downloadable spreadsheet, in the downloadable Word document, or in the online review forms. The Confex system supports the "dual submission" structure by allowing a second choice organizer the ability to "request" the paper from the first choice organizer using the "Accept/Request" option.

## Conflicts of Interest

As a general rule, organizers should not review their own papers or papers from close collaborators or students. Please scan the submissions for your session early to identify any potential conflicts. If a collaborator or someone else with whom you have a real or perceived conflict of interest submits to your session, please "reject" the paper so that it can receive full consideration in the other session to which it was submitted or by the Program Committee. In addition, please answer "yes" to the question regarding whether the paper should be transferred because of a conflict of interest. For any questions or concerns about conflicts of interest, please email the Program Committee at [paa2016@ccpr.ucla.edu](mailto:paa2016@ccpr.ucla.edu).

## Assigned Submissions Panel

On the upper left of the Confex screen you will see a panel labelled "Assigned Submissions." Within this panel you will find a list of all the submissions to your session, and information about them. The information is organized as follows:

SUBMISSION NUMBER( ): PRESENTING AUTHOR; TITLE

The parentheses that appear after the submission number will contain either a 1 or a 2 (to denote whether your session is the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> choice of the submitter) or the letter **U** to designate that the paper is now unavailable to you.

Additionally, as you begin to designate papers as either "Accept/Request" or "Reject/Yield", this information will be added to the end of the line for the submission, as either "=Accepted" or "=Rejected".

## Entering Decisions

**Important Note:** Once you have assigned a paper to one of the two categories below, it is extremely difficult to change its status. Do not Accept/Request papers until you are sure that you want them, and do not Request/Yield papers until you are sure that you do not want them. You must complete the decision-making and data entry for all submissions by November 2.

When you have decided what you want to do with a paper, you must assign one of the following outcomes for each of the submissions:

Accept/ Request	Mark a paper as accepted/requested for your session or for an overflow session if you wish to use the paper.  If your session is the author's second choice, submitting an Accept/Request decision will send an email to the organizers of the "first choice" session requesting that they yield the paper to you.
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	If your session is the author's first choice, submitting an Accept/Request decision will immediately terminate programming access to that abstract by the author's second choice.
Reject/ Yield	<p>If you do not intend to use a paper in your session or proposed overflow sessions, choose "Reject/Yield" (either because you do not want the paper or because you are willing to relinquish it to another session organizer who does want the paper).</p> <p>You should also use this option if you cannot review the paper because of a conflict of interest.</p> <p>Submitting a Reject/Yield decision will immediately terminate your programming access to the abstract. You cannot reverse a Reject/Yield decision.</p>

There is an "Undecided" option which you can use as you work toward final decisions. If you click "Accept/Request" or "Reject/Yield" by mistake, please click "Undecided" before you click the "Submit" button to record the decision.

The online review form allows you to store notes without making an accept/reject decision. If you are unsure about a paper, you may use that note field to store a preliminary decision while leaving the paper in an "Undecided" status. Then you can return at any time prior to November 2 to submit your final decision.

If you have requested a paper for your session but do not yet know whether or not it has been yielded to you, you should leave some papers in the "Undecided" category until you learn from the organizer of the first choice session whether he or she has accepted the paper that you want. Once you learn about the paper that you want most, enter the final decisions for the papers whose status was "Undecided."

For each of the papers that receive the Accept/Request designation, you will be asked whether you intend to use the paper in your session or a proposed overflow session that you will assemble and submit. Most organizers will designate either four papers as Accept/Request (to fill their session, without requesting an Overflow session), or eight papers as Accept/Request: four for their session and an additional four for a proposed Overflow session.

For each of the papers that receive the Reject/Yield designation, please assign a poster grade if the author wishes the paper to be considered for a poster. Last year, the Vice-President Elect received more than 2,100 poster submissions. The four-category rating is essential for effectively evaluating poster submissions, but sometimes session organizers give all posters the same rating. Please distribute your ratings across the four categories, drawing on the views you formed regarding the submission's scientific merit when you considered the submission for your session. Please use the "A" rating only for submissions that are so good that you regret that you could not accept them.

Poster A	You recommend the paper for a poster session with great enthusiasm.
Poster B	You recommend the paper for a poster session.
Poster C	You recommend the paper for a poster session with reservations.
Poster D	You do not recommend the paper for a poster session.

Poster ratings can be altered any time before November 2, but they must be finalized by then.

In addition to the basic Accept/Request versus Reject/Yield outcome, you will be asked to answer two other questions:

One question is about whether or not the paper is intended for an Overflow session. (Papers that you intend to submit for a proposed Overflow session should receive an Accept/Request as the final outcome).

The other question is about whether or not the paper should be transferred because you have a conflict of interest with the paper. If the answer is yes (transfer because of a conflict) the paper's final status should be Reject/Yield.

## Author Notification

All author notifications are handled centrally using a standard set of templates, so you do not need to take any action. If you communicate directly with the authors, you should be careful to tell those in the "Overflow Session" category that you have recommended their paper for inclusion in an additional session but must wait to see if the session is approved.

## Notes for Sessions with Two Organizers

If you are co-organizing your session with someone else, each of you has the ability to enter information and submit decisions. However, you should not enter and submit "Accept Request" or "Reject/Yield" decisions until both of you are in agreement about the paper's outcome. If you want to enter a note about a paper that your co-organizer can see, enter the note and make sure that the "Undecided" button is turned on when you hit the "Submit" button.

## Adding Chairs and Discussants

Once you have accepted four papers for your session, you will need to enter the names of the session chair and discussants. You can make these designations by using actions designated under the "Options" menu at the far left of the screen (under the "Assigned Reviews" box).

## Overflow Sessions

Although you may accept papers that you intend for a proposed overflow session, you should be aware that not all proposed overflow sessions can be accommodated. The program committee will provide information via an email on whether a proposal for an overflow session is expected as a function of the numbers of abstracts submitted to the session. A small number of sessions that received very large numbers of submissions will be asked to propose two overflow sessions.

It is vital for the quality of the program and for fairness to authors that you propose additional sessions if, and only if, you have sufficient high-quality papers that fit together. More overflow sessions are proposed than can be accommodated in the program. This year in particular the number of hotel meeting rooms will limit the overflow sessions that can be included in the program. Nevertheless the overflow sessions contribute significant breadth and depth to the annual meeting. The Program Co-Chairs will provide more information about overflow session proposals at the end of the submission period.

As noted under the section on "Entering Decisions," the way that you designate papers for a proposed Overflow session is by checking "yes" in answer to the question about whether the paper is intended for an overflow session. In addition, in order to provide the program committee with information about the proposed session, please send an email to [paa2016@popassoc.org](mailto:paa2016@popassoc.org) with "OVERFLOW DETAILS SESSION #" ← *FILL IN YOUR SESSION NUMBER* as the subject. In the text, include the title of the session that you would like to propose, and a suggestion for a chair and a discussant. The program committee will take this supplementary information into account as we review the papers proposed for the overflow session.

## Low-Submission Sessions

Some sessions may receive too few papers to support a high-quality session. The Program Co-Chairs will review session statistics to identify sessions with few submissions. After consulting with the organizer and co-organizer, these sessions may be combined with other sessions or cancelled.

## Notifications about Acceptance of Proposed Overflow Sessions

The Program Committee will decide on overflow sessions and notify you of their decisions no later than November 19. If your overflow session is approved, you do not need to notify the authors of these decisions because all notifications are handled centrally.

## Chairs and Discussants

All original and overflow sessions should have a chair and discussant. Session organizers are usually expected to chair their session, although they can designate a different person if desired. Session organizers will need to recruit a chair for each overflow session that is approved. Session organizers also need to recruit one or two discussants for each session. The period for initial entry of organizers and discussants for regular (non-overflow) sessions runs from October 2 to November 2. The “add chair/discussant” feature will then be closed for about two weeks. Organizers will be able to make changes to the chair and discussant roles between November 19 and December 11. The site will check to see if these people are already in the database, and will request their email address, affiliation, and country of residence otherwise. The deadline for organizers to secure the consent of chairs and discussants for all standard (original and overflow) sessions is December 11.

## Contact

For technical support: [help@popassoc.org](mailto:help@popassoc.org) or <https://paa.confex.com/paa/feedback.epl>

Urgent technical questions may be asked by phone at 401-334-0220 at (Mon-Fri 9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. ET).

When asked, please enter support code 1463

For questions about organizers' responsibilities: [paa2016@popassoc.org](mailto:paa2016@popassoc.org)