

Session Submission Guidelines

International Festival of Neuroscience (BNA2027) Belfast | 25–28 April 2025

The BNA2027 Programme Organising Committee invites submissions for **symposia** and **workshops** for the International Festival of Neuroscience. Please read the guidelines below carefully before submitting a proposal. For enquiries, contact louise.tratt@bna.org.uk.

Overview

- General information
 - Format for symposia
 - Format for workshops
 - Speaker selection
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 - Review and selection process
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General Information

Sessions should showcase **high-quality, timely neuroscience research** or address topics of broad relevance to the neuroscience community.

We particularly welcome proposals in the following areas:

- Neural Development, Plasticity, and Evolution
- Neurodegeneration and Ageing
- Neural Circuits and Systems Neuroscience
- Cognition and Behaviour
- Psychiatry, Psychology, and Mental Health
- Neurons, Glia, and Cell-Cell Communication
- Metabolism, Homeostasis, and Neuroendocrinology
- Computational Neuroscience, Data Science, and AI
- Neurotechnology and Methods
- Neuroscience Advocacy, Policy, and Public Engagement
- Other (e.g. history of neuroscience)

In reviewing submissions, the Programme Organising Committee will prioritise sessions that:

- Appeal to a broad BNA audience and attract new attendees
 - Encourage engagement from exhibitors
 - Present cross-sector perspectives (preclinical, clinical, industrial)
 - Include both established leaders and outstanding early career researchers (ECRs)
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Format for Symposia

- **Duration:** 100 minutes
- **Structure:**
Four talks (~20 minutes each) + 1 audience question per talk
OR
Three talks (~23 minutes each) + a panel Q&A session (~23 minutes)

Indicative timing:

- Chair introduction: 1–3 minutes
Four talks (including Q&A): 23 minutes each or three talks (~23 minutes each) + a panel Q&A session (~23 minutes)
- Chair closing remarks: 1–3 minutes

Requirements:

- Three of four speakers from **different institutions/organisations**
 - At least **one Early Career Researcher** (within 5 years of highest degree)
 - Two co-chairs (who may also be speakers), **one of whom must be an ECR**
 - Up to **50% of speakers may present online**, provided they attend live for Q&A
 - Non-speaking chairs are permitted but are **not eligible** for complimentary passes or travel support
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Format for Workshops

Workshops should address **topics of wide interest**, such as policy, careers, research culture, funding, grant writing, publishing, teaching, reproducibility, ethics, or skills development.

- **Duration:** 100 minutes
- **Format:** Flexible and interactive (e.g. presentations, panels, group discussions, worked examples, short courses)
- Workshops must include **interactive and participatory elements** and not rely solely on one-way presentations
- Organisers may provide materials to attendees in advance

Speaker Selection

To support a diverse and inclusive programme:

- Speakers must **not have presented at BNA2025** ([please refer to the BNA2025 programme](#))
- Individuals may contribute to **no more than two sessions** across the Festival
- Organisers may be asked to replace speakers involved in multiple submissions

The BNA is committed to **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)**. Proposals should demonstrate consideration of diversity across:

- Gender (no more than 60% of any one gender)
- Career stage (including at least one ECR)
- Geography
- Sector (academic, clinical, industry, charity)

Submitters must confirm that all proposed speakers have been informed of the submission, including Festival dates and location.

Speaker Travel and Expenses

- All speakers receive a **complimentary Festival pass for the day of their talk**.
- Speakers are entitled to a 30% discount on member fees for additional day passes.
- Organisers are encouraged to explore external sponsorship opportunities where possible.
- Speakers may apply to the BNA Speaker Reimbursement Fund, which has limited availability.
- **Partner submissions:**
Partner Organisations are responsible for speaker travel and accommodation costs.

Submission Process

All submissions must be made via the **online application portal**. Submissions by email or document will not be accepted.

You will need to provide:

- Submitter contact details
- Session title and short marketing description
- Keywords

- Speaker details (name, email, organisation, career stage, gender, ethnicity, talk title)
- Rationale for the session and its importance
- Sponsorship or funding information
- A statement outlining how EDI has been considered

 **CLICK HERE TO SUBMIT YOUR PROPOSAL**

Review and Selection Process

All proposals will be reviewed by the **BNA2027 Programme Organising Committee**, led by **Dr Dayne Beccano-Kelly** (Cardiff University), with Co-Chairs **Dr Dorothy Tse** (Edge Hill University) and **Dr Elaine Murray** (Ulster University).

The committee may contact submitters to discuss or refine proposals prior to final decisions.

- Outcomes will be communicated in **June 2026**
 - Session scheduling will follow shortly afterwards
 - Only the **lead proposer** will be notified and is responsible for informing all co-chairs and speakers
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Thank you for contributing to the International Festival of Neuroscience. Your submission helps us deliver a dynamic, inclusive, and engaging programme for the neuroscience community.