78th Annual AAFS Scientific Conference

February 9-13, 2026
New Orleans, LA

2026 Call for Proposals
Information and Guidelines

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for your interest in submitting a presentation proposal for the **78ᵗʰ Annual AAFS Scientific Conference** taking place February 9-13, 2026, in New Orleans, LA. The 2026 AAFS annual conference will focus on the responsible, ethical, and just use of technology in the forensic sciences and will be titled **"Back to Basics: The Fundamentals of Forensic Science."**

It is a two-pronged theme in which the focus is on the individual disciplines/science involved and, more importantly, the individual practitioners who are the foundation to the implementation of the science.

This topic seems timely and important as we continue to see more individuals being exonerated for a myriad of reasons, including faulty science, a lack of thorough investigation and analysis, and, in some instances, misrepresentation of facts and results.

Additionally, the focus on the basic fundamentals of the various disciplines within the forensic sciences and the application of the scientific method is critical to ensuring justice is carried out appropriately. Our allegiance as forensic scientists should be to the science itself and not a "side" or the recipient of the information developed. This starts with those who first respond to the scene and includes every scientific practitioner who is involved in the case at every stage.

Back to Basics means:

- A focus on the ethical application of the science/discipline
- Continued standards development and implementation
- Considering all opinions/hypothesis (scientific method)
- Remaining neutral, objective, and free from influence
- Staying true to the discipline and the science
- Back to basics does not mean forgoing the advancements in both technology and processes/procedures.

At the same time, we cannot ignore the fundamentals of the science of the various forensic disciplines and the human contributions, analysis, and reasoning involved. Forensic science encompasses many disciplines that are interdependent upon each other during the justice process. Each discipline is dependent upon the one before them to get it right, from the scene investigators to the medical professionals, to the laboratory analysts to the courtroom.

Application of the Science

Without a focus on the application of the individual science in an ethical manner, the entire system has the potential to fail. Failures can be a wrongful conviction of an innocent individual or the guilty not being held responsible for a crime they actually committed.

2026 AAFS Annual Conference Call for Proposals

Prioritizing the Practitioner

The second focus of the meeting theme is on the practitioners as individuals. These practitioners/scientists are the most important foundation of forensic science. The science does not work on its own, the practitioners put it into practice. They are the bedrock of our disciplines and the ultimate pursuit of justice. The workload is relentless, the demands are high, and the expectations can sometimes be overwhelming.

Each year, the AAFS annual conference offers attendees an unparalleled opportunity to engage with their peers showcasing and discussing the issues, development, and groundbreaking work shaping our industry, and we are excited to have you be a part of that in 2026.

I look forward to seeing you in Baltimore.

Sincerely,

Joanna Collins, MFS
2025-26 President
American Academy of Forensic Sciences

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Important Dates and Deadlines

May 21, 2025	Abstract Submissions Open
August 1, 2025	**Submission Deadline (except YFSF Posters)**
September 16, 2025	Final Selection Notifications – Workshops and Luncheon Sessions
October 1, 2025	YFSF Poster Submission Deadline
October 31, 2025	Final Selection Notifications – All Other Sessions/Presentations
December 31, 2025	Presenter Registration Deadline
January 9, 2026	Draft Presentations Due for Continuing Education Approval*
January 14, 2026	Hotel Booking Deadline
February 9-13, 2026	**78th Annual AAFS Scientific Conference**

For select abstracts/presentations; you will be notified if you need to submit for this.

Who Should Apply to Present at AAFS?

We invite professionals and academics in the fields of forensic science to submit proposals for scientific sessions at our upcoming conference. This is an excellent opportunity for researchers, practitioners, educators, and even up-and-coming professionals to share their latest findings, innovative methodologies, and case studies.

Whether you are developing new analytical techniques, exploring forensic biology, toxicology, or digital forensics, or applying forensic science in novel contexts, we encourage you to contribute to our diverse and dynamic program. Presenting at this conference will allow you to engage with other experts in the field, enhance your professional network, and contribute to the advancement of forensic science.

We welcome proposals that introduce new ideas, address current challenges, and promote interdisciplinary collaboration.

Author/Presenter Information

All authors, co-authors, presenters, and co-presenters for each proposed presentation or session are required to provide the following information:

- Name
- Title(s) and Organization(s)
- Brief Bio and Headshot (presenters/speakers only)
- AAFS Membership Number and Section (if applicable)
- Financial Disclosure and Conflict of Interest Forms

We strongly recommend the proposal submitter coordinate with the author/presenter team in advance to collect this information or have access to a computer to complete the required author/presenter information themselves. In cases where an author/presenter may be associated with multiple abstract submissions, please ensure a singular email address is provided for use on all abstracts.

Steps to Submitting Your Proposal

1. **Read through the requirements carefully** – Review this booklet to ensure you have all the information necessary to complete your abstract proposal application. This will help you avoid any delays in submitting or reviewing or rejection from incomplete details.
2. **Give yourself plenty of time** – Rushing to submit your presentation can lead to errors, omissions, and/or poor quality. Start early in preparing your submission to ensure you can provide a thorough, complete proposal, maximizing your chances for acceptance.
3. **Communicate with your team** – For abstracts with multiple authors and/or presenters, disclosure and author information are required for each person. Be sure they are aware of the requirements and that they will need to either provide you with all the necessary details or provide the information themselves during the submission process. ***Please note that only 6 authors can be added to an oral or poster abstract submission.***
4. **Prepare your abstract information** – The submission portal will take you step-by-step through all the required details needed to successfully submit your abstract; however, we do recommend you have the details prepared and saved already, such as in a Word® document, to avoid any issues.
5. **Log in to the abstract submission portal** – To access the abstract portal and start your submission, log in to your AAFS Account and click on the "Submit Your Abstract" button on your dashboard. It will automatically log you into the Cadmium Abstract Submission Portal.
6. **Start a new abstract proposal** – Once in the portal, select "Begin New Proposal" to start your first abstract submission. You will be asked for the basic information and to select the type of submission. The system will then provide you with each required step to complete your application.
7. **Complete all required tasks** – Depending on the type of proposal you selected, the system will automatically generate a list of "tasks" for you to complete. Click through each task to complete the necessary information or steps, then click "Complete" to finish the task and move to the next one. The system will save your work as you proceed through the task list.
8. **Complete your author/presenter information** – As mentioned previously, each author/presenter associated with your abstract will need to complete disclosure and author information requirements associated with your proposal. They can either authorize you to complete this on their behalf or you can send them a link where they can complete this information themselves.

   ==*IMPORTANT: Please consult with your co-authors/co-presenters to identify if they are or will be associated with more than one abstract from other submitters. If so, please ensure you have the same email address for them that is being used elsewhere. This will help connect their information and avoid duplication. It will also autocomplete their required steps after the information has been uploaded to the system the first time.*==

9. **Double check everything** – Review all the information provided for your abstract to ensure it is complete, correct, and thorough. Once the review process has begun, only limited updates/changes will be permitted.
10. **Click Submit** – Once you've completed all tasks for your abstract submission, make sure you click the green "Submit" button to finalize your abstract. Even if all tasks are completed, the system will not automatically mark your abstract as complete and submitted until you click "Submit."

Presentation Types

Oral Presentation

Oral sessions provide an opportunity for presentation and discussion of case reports, descriptive studies, review presentations, research, administrative issues, and investigative/diagnostic methods regarding topics and issues of importance to a primary discipline among the forensic sciences.

These are time-limited oral presentations of the pre-approved topic that impart knowledge or stimulate discussion. Requires adequate planning and a PowerPoint® presentation related to the approved topic.

Poster Presentation

A brief one-on-one presentation of the pre-approved topic that imparts knowledge or stimulates discussion. Requires adequate planning using a 4' x 8' tack board on which to visually display material(s) related to the approved topic. Poster sessions provide an opportunity for presentation and discussion of case reports, descriptive studies, review presentations, research, administrative issues, and investigative/diagnostic methods regarding topics and issues of importance to a primary discipline among the forensic sciences.

YFSF Poster Presentation

YFSF posters are designed to provide opportunities to forensic students and professionals who are new to their field to showcase their research or field work. YFSF poster presentations generally should not qualify for inclusion in the poster group of a specific AAFS section/discipline.

Luncheon Seminar

A 30- to 45-minute presentation of a fun and entertaining topic related to the forensic science field. Requires adequate planning and PowerPoint® presentation related to the approved topic. Luncheon seminars provide an opportunity for presentation and discussion of relevant historical and current topics of forensic science interest related to specific case investigations or general or specific investigative needs and procedures, methodologies, and testimony.

Workshop

The workshop type is for a half- or full-day educational session that provides discipline-specific educational content to attendees. The requirements for submission of workshop proposals are more strenuous than oral or poster presentations. This session type requires both an AAFS member Chair and Co-Chair.

Case Break Presentation

Case Break presentations are specific to the conference theme, offering interesting case studies and related discussions. In aligning to the 2026 theme of the conference, this year's Case Break presentations should be based on topics in which the focus is on the individual disciplines/science involved and, more importantly, the individual practitioners who are the foundation to the implementation of the science.

Deep-Dive Breakout Session
Deep-Dive Breakouts are designed to showcase content and topics not typically included in the oral scientific session or poster session categories but are still of strong interest and importance to the forensic and greater professional communities. These should be designed to be highly engaging and interactive with the attendees.

Such content can include more professional development topics, technology use cases, and other more generalized material aimed at furthering personal and professional skills and knowledge. Deep-Dive Breakouts should still be primarily training/development-based in nature and should not be directly used as a sales or other promotional forum.

Last Word Society
The Last Word Society provides retrospective forensic analysis of historical events and education about the history and evolution of forensic sciences, as well as the modern methods and technologies used to re-examine past events of forensic science interest. Emphasis is placed on the evaluation of the original opinions and case outcomes and on the development of newer hypotheses based on the re-analysis. These are time-limited oral presentations of the pre-approved topic of relevance to the goals of the LWS session, which impart knowledge or stimulate discussion.

Review and Selection Process

Each year, AAFS receives over 1,000 presentation proposals for its annual conference. While we endeavor to include as much high-quality content as we are able, it simply is not possible to accept all submissions for the limited number of session slots. On average, we are only able to accept around 60% of proposals for presentation at the conference.

Among the considerations during the review:

- Scientific quality/impact of the proposal
- Relevance to current issues/trends within the forensic sciences, either as a whole or within specific disciplines
- Relevance to the conference theme
- Innovation of topic/content
- Balancing multiple abstracts on a singular topic to ensure thoroughness of information coverage while avoiding repetition of the same details

Each proposal is reviewed by a committee comprised of AAFS members representing the various sections of the Academy. The Academy uses a blind review process to ensure fairness and integrity when evaluating each submission.

No-Shows/Cancellations

When submitting your abstract, you should already be confident that you are willing and able to fulfill the obligations related to presenting at the AAFS Annual Scientific Conference. As mentioned earlier, there is high demand for the limited number of presentation slots each year, so it's important that you are respectful to your fellow colleagues and only submit your proposal if you are fully prepared to take on the required responsibilities associated with presenting. These include:

- Having financial arrangements in place to permit attendance
- Applying early for any necessary visa, passport, or other international travel arrangements
- Ensuring any research or data is either ready or will be ready in time for the conference
- Securing necessary approvals from your agency, company, or institution to allow for your participation

Due to increasing last-minute cancellations and presenter no-shows, AAFS has adopted a policy where any presenter who cancels within 60 days of the conference or is not present for their scheduled presentation time may be barred from submitting future conference abstracts for two years. Repeat offenders may be barred indefinitely.

AAFS reserves the right to request proof of financial and logistical ability to attend prior to acceptance of an abstract proposal.

By submitting an abstract proposal to the AAFS conference, you are confirming that if accepted, you are or will be fully able and willing to attend the event and to fulfill your responsibilities, barring any unforeseen circumstances.

Tips for Developing Effective Abstracts

When developing your abstract, we recommend following these helpful tips:

- The title, names of authors with respective degree(s), and addresses must be stated exactly as you wish them to appear in the *Program* and *Proceedings*. Ensure each author/presenter role is indicated correctly. ***NOTE: We will only publish up to <u>6</u> authors for oral/poster abstracts.***
- Ensure all authors (up to 6) are listed in appropriate order as you wish them to be listed in the *Program* and *Proceedings*, starting with primary/presenting authors.
- All copy is case sensitive, including title, in upper and lower case. Capitalize and punctuate exactly as you wish the abstract to appear. Do not type in all uppercase.
- Exercise care in preparing the abstract. If unsuitable for publication as received, the abstract will be returned to the author for correction, revision, or completion or may not be accepted for presentation.
- Ensure you cover the "Four Cs" of abstract writing:
  - **Complete** – it covers all major information.
  - **Concise** – it contains no excess wordiness or unnecessary information.
  - **Clear** – it is readable, well organized, and not too jargon-laden.
  - **Cohesive** – it flows smoothly between parts.

Example Abstract

Injury Pattern Analysis in Fatal Traffic Crash Investigation

Michael D. Freeman, PhD, DC, MPH*, Oregon Health and Science University School of Medicine, Salem, OR; and Clifford Nelson, MD, Medical Examiner Division, Oregon State Police, Portland, OR

After attending this presentation, attendees will understand some principles of crash investigation, the necessary elements for the application of Injury Pattern Analysis, characteristic injury patterns of certain types of crashes, and an example of a practical application of Injury Pattern Analysis This presentation will impact the forensic science community by serving as a key aspect of fatal crash investigation as it can augment traditional means of investigation in a systematized format via interdisciplinary communication and collaboration.

Reconstruction of a fatal crash can be augmented, in certain circumstances, by information gleaned from the postmortem evaluation. Further improvement of the scope and accuracy of an investigation can result from evaluation of the injuries of crash survivors, taking into account the conformity of individual vehicle interiors as well as the movement of the occupants during the crash.

The term "Injury Pattern Analysis (IPA)" is proposed as a description of a fatal crash investigation technique that utilizes accident investigation, and reconstruction techniques, occupant kinematics, postmortem records, hospital and healthcare provider acute injury records, and other evidence as an adjunct to the investigation of homicides resulting from fatal crashes.

This report will present a case study in IPA as an example of the practical application of the technique. It is recommended that medicolegal death investigators become familiar with the principles of IPA.

Keywords: **Crash, Fatal, Investigation**

Disclosure Requirements

Due to continuing education requirements and the AAFS's commitment to the highest standards and integrity of conference content, presentations and corresponding abstracts for the AAFS Annual Scientific Conference must be formulated to promote education and elevate accuracy, precision, and specificity in the forensic sciences.

Presentations or abstracts that promote a commercial product, company, entity, or service will not be allowed at AAFS annual conferences. Presentations by commercial entities shall be limited to the science and not to an advertisement or promotion of their product over that of a competitor. Any abstract or presentation that is perceived by a Section Program Chair or the Academy Conference Program Chair as a product endorsement will not be approved for presentation at the conference. **A presentation given at a conference that, in the opinion of the Section Program Chair or the Academy Conference Program Chair, is a product endorsement may result in the presenter and corresponding company being barred from making presentations at future AAFS conferences.**

Presentations and abstracts will be allowed to mention a product by name only in the context of describing a scientific methodology or the source of the sample. For example, specimens often have unique physical or chemical properties that are the key to their identification or analysis (e.g., Dacron® fibers, Glock® rifling, 3M® tapes, explosive formulations, coating materials, etc.). It is appropriate for those materials to be specifically identified, since they are relevant to the scientific results, or references to specific reagents or instrumentation validated for use in the analytical procedure being presented where the use of a different product may affect the outcome of the analysis (e.g., Identifiler™ Amplification Kit, Agilent® 5860 GC, HP-1 column, Olympus® BHP microscope, etc.).

Unless stated otherwise, all submitted content is subject to review by our continuing education accreditation partner, and any abstract that does not meet continuing education requirements may be subject to rejection or cancellation. Failure to complete all disclosure requirements, including for each presenter/author connected to an abstract proposal, may result in automatic denial of your abstract.

Commercial Interests
Commercial Interests are any proprietary entity producing goods or services, as well as any entity producing, marketing, re-selling, or distributing goods or services used on or consumed by patients, practitioners, or forensic professionals. Providers of clinical services directly to patients are not considered commercial interests.

Conflict of Interest
Circumstances create a conflict of interest when an individual has an opportunity to affect CME content about products or services of a commercial interest with which they have a financial relationship.

If you have questions related to disclosure requirements, we strongly encourage you to reach out to our team at education@aafs.org prior to submitting your abstract proposal.

Presentation Type Details and Requirements

ORAL SCIENTIFIC PRESENTATIONS

Length	Presentation Days	CE Eligible?
Minimum: 15-20 minutes Maximum: 60 minutes	Thursday/Friday/Saturday	Yes

Presentation Description:

Oral sessions provide an opportunity for presentation and discussion of case reports, descriptive studies, review presentations, research, administrative issues, and investigative/diagnostic methods regarding topics and issues of importance to a primary discipline among the forensic sciences.

These are time-limited oral presentations of the pre-approved topic that impart knowledge or stimulate discussion. Requires adequate planning and a PowerPoint® presentation related to the approved topic.

Scheduling:

Accepted oral presentations are scheduled by each respective section during their scientific sessions on Thursday, Friday, and/or Saturday. Specific content grouping and scheduling is determined by each section's program chair and co-chair. *While considerations for schedule can be requested, ultimately you should be prepared to present on any of these three days depending on the final scheduling requirements/needs for the section and the conference.*

In some cases, an oral presentation proposal may be accepted as a poster presentation or a deep-dive breakout instead. Reasons for this may be scheduling limitations, experience level of the submitting author/presenter, or the program review team feeling the content is better suited for an alternate presentation format.

Presentation Support:

Oral session rooms are equipped with a screen and projector, microphone, and presentation remote. Additional equipment requests are considered on a case-by-case basis.

A visual presentation (PowerPoint®, Keynote, etc.) is REQUIRED for this format of presentation.

Key Required Information – Oral Presentation Proposal:

Learning Overview *(2-4 sentences)*	A brief description of what the attendees will learn from this presentation. This should be a definitive, measurable outcome for attendees.
Impact Statement *(2-3 sentences)*	A brief statement detailing how your presentation will impact the forensic science community in terms of: (1) competence/ability; (2) performance (competence put into "action"); or (3) patient/stakeholder outcomes (if applicable).
Abstract Text *(200-500 words)* **IMPORTANT:** Exercise care in preparing the abstract. If unsuitable for publication as received, the abstract will be returned to the author for correction, revision, or completion or may not be accepted for presentation.	Abstract summary for the paper or presentation. A successful abstract summary will state the paper's/presentation's hypothesis or proposition; include a brief synopsis of the content or a statement of the methods, whichever is pertinent; provide a summary of the results obtained (if applicable); and offer a general statement of conclusion where possible. A limited amount of text formatting will be permitted when entering your abstract text. References are required to be notated by number in the abstract text and cited in the references section at the end of the abstract.
References	A full list of references for your abstract. Please ensure they are noted within the abstract text as well as listed in numerical order matching the relevant areas of your abstract text.
Keywords *(3 Keywords required)*	Select 3 keywords to be used to reference your presentation or session in the Key Words index of the *Program*, conference app, and *Proceedings*. These keywords will help attendees in selecting presentations and sessions relevant to their interests and needs.

POSTER PRESENTATIONS/YFSF POSTER PRESENTATIONS

Length	Presentation Days	CE Eligible?
90 minutes	Wednesday/Thursday/Friday	Yes

Presentation Description:

Poster presentations offer a brief one-on-one presentation of the pre-approved topic that imparts knowledge or stimulates discussion. Requires adequate planning using a 4' x 8' tack board on which to visually display material(s) related to the approved topic. Poster sessions provide an opportunity for presentation and discussion of case reports, descriptive studies, review presentations, research, administrative issues, and investigative/diagnostic methods regarding topics and issues of importance to a primary discipline among the forensic sciences.

YFSF poster presentations are coordinated by our Young Forensic Scientists Forum and offer specific opportunities to forensic students and professionals who are new to their field to showcase their research or field work. YFSF poster presentations generally should not qualify for inclusion in the poster group of a specific AAFS section/discipline.

When creating your abstract proposal, you will be able to submit either as a standard poster presentation or a YFSF poster.

Scheduling:

Accepted poster presentations require the primary author/presenter to be present at the poster for a duration of 90 minutes during their assigned presentation time. During that time, conference attendees may ask questions or discuss the content of the presentation.

Presentation Support:

A 4' x 8' poster display board will be provided with a small supply of tacks. Additional materials required for the presentation will be the responsibility of the presenter.

Poster boards will be available to presenters generally 60-90 minutes prior to the start of the assigned presentation time to allow for setup and other preparation.

It is the responsibility of the presenter to print, install, and remove their poster materials.

Key Required Information – Poster Presentation Proposal:

Learning Overview *(2-4 sentences)*	A brief description of what the attendees will learn from this presentation. This should be a definitive, measurable outcome for attendees.
Impact Statement *(2-3 sentences)*	A brief statement detailing how your presentation will impact the forensic science community in terms of: (1) competence/ability; (2) performance (competence put into "action"); or (3) patient/stakeholder outcomes (if applicable).
Abstract Text *(200-500 words)* **IMPORTANT:** Exercise care in preparing the abstract. If unsuitable for publication as received, the abstract will be returned to the author for correction, revision, or completion or may not be accepted for presentation.	Abstract summary for the paper or presentation. A successful abstract summary will state the paper/presentation's hypothesis or proposition; include a brief synopsis of the content or a statement of the methods, whichever is pertinent; provide a summary of the results obtained (if applicable); and offer a general statement of conclusion where possible. A limited amount of text formatting will be permitted when entering your abstract text. References are required to be notated by number in the abstract text and cited in the references section at the end of the abstract.
References	A full list of references for your abstract. Please ensure they are noted within the abstract text as well as listed in numerical order matching the relevant areas of your abstract text.
Keywords *(3 Keywords required)*	Select 3 keywords to be used to reference your presentation or session in the Key Words index of the *Program*, conference app, and *Proceedings*. These keywords will help attendees in selecting presentations and sessions relevant to their interests and needs.

WORKSHOP SESSIONS

Length	Presentation Days	CE Eligible?
Half Day/Full Day	Monday/Tuesday	Varies

Presentation Description:

Workshops are a half- or full-day educational session that provide discipline-specific educational content to attendees. The requirements for submission of workshop proposals are more strenuous than oral or poster presentations. This session type requires both an AAFS member Chair and Co-Chair.

Scheduling:

Accepted workshop sessions are scheduled throughout the day on Monday and Tuesday of the conference, dependent upon room availability and balancing out topics.

All workshop proposals are required to provide a detailed agenda outlining the session content and presenter order.

Presentation Support:

Workshop session rooms are equipped with a screen and projector, microphone, and presentation remote. Additional equipment requests can be made during the proposal submission process and are considered as part of the financial review of the proposal overall.

A specific setup style (classroom, round table, etc.) may be requested as part of the submission process.

A visual presentation (PowerPoint®, Keynote, etc.) is REQUIRED for this format of presentation. In addition, all workshops are required to provide some type of digital material handouts to registered attendees.

Key Required Information – Workshop Session Proposal:

Workshop Chair and Co-Chair	Each workshop is required to have a Chair and Co-Chair who are active AAFS members in good standing. **Non-members are NOT eligible to be named Chair or Co-Chair for the session.**
Learning Overview/Educational Objectives *(2-4 sentences)*	A brief description of what the attendees will learn from this presentation. This should be a definitive, measurable outcome for attendees.
Impact Statement *(2-3 sentences)*	A brief statement detailing how your presentation will impact the forensic science community in terms of: (1) competence/ability; (2) performance (competence put into "action"); or (3) patient/stakeholder outcomes (if applicable).
Program Description *(200-500 words)*	A brief description of the session as it will be printed in the official conference *Program* guide and official *AAFS Proceedings*.
Keywords *(3 Keywords required)*	Select 3 keywords to be used to reference your presentation or session in the Key Words index of the Program, conference app, and *Proceedings*. These keywords will help attendees in selecting presentations and sessions relevant to their interests and needs.
Suggested Audience Knowledge Level	Recommended knowledge level for participants: - Basic - Intermediate - Advanced
Session Format and Agenda	A brief description of how the session will be organized and a general outline of the content to be presented. Format Options: - Hands-On Demonstration - Interactive Lecture - Roundtable Discussion - Other Format (please describe)

Financial Considerations/Cost Requests	The submitter will be walked through a series of questions related to potential costs for the session, including eligible speaker expenses, audiovisual needs, food and beverage requests, and others.
	Any potential expenses related to the workshop MUST be included in the proposal. Once a workshop has been accepted, no further expense requests will be accepted or reimbursed.

LUNCHEON SESSIONS

Length	Presentation Days	CE Eligible?
60 minutes	Monday - Friday	Yes

Presentation Description:

A 30- to 45-minute presentation of a fun and entertaining topic related to the forensic science field. Requires adequate planning and visual presentation related to the approved topic. Luncheon seminars provide an opportunity for presentation and discussion of relevant historical and current topics of forensic science interest related to specific case investigations or general or specific investigative needs and procedures, methodologies, and testimony.

Scheduling:

Accepted luncheon sessions are scheduled from 12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. throughout the conference. The first 30 minutes are allocated for meal service, after which the programming portion may begin.

At least 10-15 minutes should be allocated at the end of the session for audience Q&A.

Presentation Support:

Luncheon session rooms are equipped with a screen and projector, microphone, and presentation remote. Additional equipment requests are considered on a case-by-case basis.

A visual presentation (PowerPoint®, Keynote, etc.) is REQUIRED for this format of presentation.

Key Required Information – Luncheon Session Proposal:

Learning Overview *(2-4 sentences)*	A brief description of what the attendees will learn from this presentation. This should be a definitive, measurable outcome for attendees.
Impact Statement *(2-3 sentences)*	A brief statement detailing how your presentation will impact the forensic science community in terms of: (1) competence/ability; (2) performance (competence put into "action"); or (3) patient/stakeholder outcomes (if applicable).
Program Description *(200-500 words)*	A brief description of the session as it will be printed in the official conference *Program* guide and official *AAFS Proceedings*.
Keywords *(3 Keywords required)*	Select 3 keywords to be used to reference your presentation or session in the Key Words index of the Program, conference app, and *Proceedings*. These keywords will help attendees in selecting presentations and sessions relevant to their interests and needs.

CASE BREAK PRESENTATIONS

Length	Presentation Days	CE Eligible?
30-60 minutes	Tuesday - Saturday	Yes

Presentation Description:

Case Break presentations are specific to the conference theme, offering interesting case studies and related discussions. In aligning to the 2026 theme of the conference, this year's Case Break presentations should be based on topics in which the focus is on the individual disciplines/science involved and, more importantly, the individual practitioners who are the foundation to the implementation of the science.

These sessions are open to all registered attendees and should lean more toward cross-disciplinary subject matter.

Scheduling:

Accepted case breaks will be scheduled during the specific times slots for this presentation type, typically morning sessions Tuesday through Saturday.

Presentation Support:

Case Break session rooms are equipped with a screen and projector, microphone, and presentation remote. Additional equipment requests are considered on a case-by-case basis.

A visual presentation (PowerPoint®, Keynote, etc.) is REQUIRED for this format of presentation.

Key Required Information – Case Break Presentation Proposal:

Learning Overview *(2-4 sentences)*	A brief description of what the attendees will learn from this presentation. This should be a definitive, measurable outcome for attendees.
Impact Statement *(2-3 sentences)*	A brief statement detailing how your presentation will impact the forensic science community in terms of: (1) competence/ability; (2) performance (competence put into "action"); or (3) patient/stakeholder outcomes (if applicable).
Abstract Text *(200-500 words)* **IMPORTANT:** Exercise care in preparing the abstract. If unsuitable for publication as received, the abstract will be returned to the author for correction, revision, or completion, or may not be accepted for presentation.	Abstract summary for the paper or presentation. A successful abstract summary will state the paper/presentation's hypothesis or proposition; include a brief synopsis of the content or a statement of the methods, whichever is pertinent; provide a summary of the results obtained (if applicable); and offer a general statement of conclusion where possible. A limited amount of text formatting will be permitted when entering your abstract text. References are required to be notated by number in the abstract text and cited in the references section at the end of the abstract.
References	A full list of references for your abstract. Please ensure they are noted within the abstract text as well as listed in numerical order matching the relevant areas of your abstract text.
Keywords *(3 Keywords required)*	Select 3 keywords to be used to reference your presentation or session in the Key Words index of the Program, conference app, and *Proceedings*. These keywords will help attendees in selecting presentations and sessions relevant to their interests and needs.

DEEP-DIVE BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Length	Presentation Days	CE Eligible?
60 min	Thursday/Friday	Varies

Presentation Description:

New this year, **Deep-Dive Breakouts** are designed to showcase content and topics not typically included in the oral scientific session or poster session categories but are still of strong interest and importance to the forensic and greater professional communities. These should be designed to be highly engaging and interactive with the attendees.

Such content can include more professional development topics, technology use cases, and other more generalized material aimed at furthering personal and professional skills and knowledge. **Deep-Dive Breakouts should still be primarily training/development-based in nature and should not be directly used as a sales or other promotional forum.**

CE eligibility will be determined on a case-by-case basis depending on the specific content of the approved session.

Scheduling:

Accepted Deep-Dive Breakouts will be scheduled for 60-minute time slots on Thursday and Friday. *While considerations for schedule can be requested, ultimately you should be prepared to present on either of these days depending on the final scheduling requirements/needs for the conference.*

Presentation Support:

Deep-Dive Breakout rooms are equipped with a screen and projector, microphone, and presentation remote. Additional equipment requests are considered on a case-by-case basis.

A visual presentation (PowerPoint®, Keynote, etc.) is not specifically required for this format of presentation, but you will be asked to detail your proposed session format and how you will engage with the attendees.

Required Information – Deep-Dive Breakout Proposal:

Learning Overview *(2-4 sentences)*	A brief description of what the attendees will learn from this presentation. This should be a definitive, measurable outcome for attendees.
Impact Statement *(2-3 sentences)*	A brief statement detailing how your presentation will impact the forensic science community in terms of: (1) competence/ability; (2) performance (competence put into "action"); or (3) patient/stakeholder outcomes (if applicable).
Program Description *(200-500 words)*	A brief description of the session as it will be printed in the official conference *Program* guide and official *AAFS Proceedings*.
Session Format and Agenda	A brief description of how the session will be organized and a general outline of the content to be presented. Format Options: • Collaborative Dialog/Facilitated Discussion • Salon/Roundtable/Open Discussion • Demonstration/Hands-On Demonstration • Interactive Lecture
Keywords *(3 Keywords required)*	Select 3 keywords to be used to reference your presentation or session in the Key Words index of the Program, conference app, and *Proceedings*. These keywords will help attendees in selecting presentations and sessions relevant to their interests and needs.

LAST WORD SOCIETY PRESENTATIONS

Length	Presentation Days	CE Eligible?
20-25 min	Thursday	Yes

Presentation Description:

The **Last Word Society** provides retrospective forensic analysis of historical events and education about the history and evolution of forensic sciences as well as the modern methods and technologies used to re-examine past events of forensic scient interest. Emphasis is placed on the evaluation of the original opinions and case outcomes and on the development of newer hypotheses based on the re-analysis. These are time-limited oral presentations of the pre-approved topic of relevance to the goals of the LWS session, which impart knowledge or stimulate discussion.

Scheduling:

Accepted presentations will be scheduled during the Last Word Society session on Thursday evening of the conference. Additionally, accepted LWS speakers will be asked to attend a special pre-session meeting to review presentation order and format.

Presentation Support:

The Last Word Society session room is equipped with a screen and projector, microphone, and presentation remote. Additional equipment requests are considered on a case-by-case basis.

A visual presentation (PowerPoint®, Keynote, etc.) is REQUIRED for this format of presentation.

Required Information – Last Word Society Proposal:

Learning Overview *(2-4 sentences)*	A brief description of what the attendees will learn from this presentation. This should be a definitive, measurable outcome for attendees.
Impact Statement *(2-3 sentences)*	A brief statement detailing how your presentation will impact the forensic science community in terms of: (1) competence/ability; (2) performance (competence put into "action"); or (3) patient/stakeholder outcomes (if applicable).
Abstract Text *(200-500 words)* **IMPORTANT:** Exercise care in preparing the abstract. If unsuitable for publication as received, the abstract will be returned to the author for correction, revision, or completion, or may not be accepted for presentation.	Abstract summary for the paper or presentation. A successful abstract summary will state the paper/presentation's hypothesis or proposition; include a brief synopsis of the content or a statement of the methods, whichever is pertinent; provide a summary of the results obtained (if applicable); and offer a general statement of conclusion where possible. A limited amount of text formatting will be permitted when entering your abstract text. References are required to be notated by number in the abstract text and cited in the references section at the end of the abstract.
References	A full list of references for your abstract. Please ensure they are noted within the abstract text as well as listed in numerical order matching the relevant areas of your abstract text.
Keywords *(3 Keywords required)*	Select 3 keywords to be used to reference your presentation or session in the Key Words index of the Program, conference app, and *Proceedings*. These keywords will help attendees in selecting presentations and sessions relevant to their interests and needs.

Key Requirements and Policies

Professionalism Requirement

The American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS) is committed to fostering a professional, respectful, and collegial environment for the dissemination of scientific knowledge. All submitted materials—including abstracts, presentations, webinars, and related content—must reflect these values.

Submissions must be presented in a manner that uphold the highest standards of professionalism. Language or content that could reasonably be interpreted as defamatory or disrespectful toward individuals, agencies, institutions, companies, or products is not permitted. Constructive critique grounded in evidence is encouraged; however, ad hominem commentary or personal criticism is inconsistent with AAFS standards and will not be tolerated.

All content must be based on factual, verifiable information. Presenters are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of their materials and must exercise appropriate diligence, particularly when addressing sensitive or potentially controversial subject matter. Failure to adhere to these guidelines may result in the revision or withdrawal of a submission and may affect eligibility for future participation in AAFS programs.

Age Requirement

All authors, co-authors, and speakers/presenters must be at least 18 years of age at the time of the conference in February.

Intent to Participate

By submitting an abstract, presenters/authors certify they are willing and able to participate in the AAFS conference and, if accepted, will make every effort to ensure they are able to fulfill presentation responsibilities as assigned. Failure to adequately communicate the inability to present and/or no-shows may result in your abstract's removal from the *Proceedings*, preclusion from future submissions, or both.

Changes Subject to Approval

Changes to authors/presenters or substantive content changes to the abstract or presentation information are subject to the approval of the relevant program committee team members and/or AAFS Staff. In instances where significant changes or deviations from originally submitted abstracts occur, a re-review may be required to ensure the updated content still aligns with the goals and objectives of the conference programming.

Registration Requirements

Standard Presentations/Sessions (Oral, Poster, YFSF Poster, Last Word Society, Case Breaks, Deep-Dive)
All speakers and presenters are required to register for the annual conference. If your abstract is accepted for presentation, you will be required to pay the basic registration fee. No travel expenses will be covered.

Special Functions (Workshops, Luncheons, Special Sessions)
Non-member speakers and presenters for special function presentations will receive complimentary registration to the conference. AAFS member speakers and presenters for special function presentations are required to register and pay the basic registration fee. For special functions with an additional registration fee, all speakers (member and non-member) for that session will be automatically registered for the session at no charge.

Workshops Only: Non-member speaker travel expenses may be approved if included in your proposal submission as part of the workshop budget, subject to approval by AAFS Staff and Conference Leadership.

Multiple/Excessive Submissions

Multiple abstracts may not be submitted on the same topic by the same author(s) or institution(s). Violation of this policy may result in ALL submissions being rejected.

Submission Language

AAFS policy mandates that all materials and publications of the AAFS Conference are in English. As such, all submissions must be made in English. Abstracts submitted in other languages risk being automatically disqualified.

Frequently Asked Questions

General

- How do I submit an abstract for consideration?
  Abstracts are submitted through our abstract submission platform, Cadmium Scorecard. To access, log in to your AAFS Account Portal (https://accounts.aafs.org/sign-in/) and click the link for submitting an abstract on the right-hand side menu of your account page.

- May I submit more than one abstract for consideration?
  Absolutely. You may submit as many abstracts as you'd like in any of the available presentation categories.

- I've already submitted an abstract proposal, but I need to correct some information or update an author/speaker. Can I do that?
  Absolutely. Simply log back into the submission platform through the link on your AAFS account page, and you will be able to go back into any of your submissions to make corrections or updates. Please note that all submissions and updates MUST be completed by August 1, 2025. Access to the platform will be deactivated after that date.

- Can I withdraw a previously submitted abstract?
  Yes. Navigate to your abstract list and select the relevant abstract by clicking the title. Once you've been taken to the Task List page, click on the title of the abstract again, and change the "Abstract Status" dropdown to "Withdrawn."

Logging In

- Am I able to log into the submission system or submit an abstract without an AAFS website account?
  No. Your submission will be directly tied to your AAFS website account.

- What if I have multiple AAFS accounts or my profile is showing incorrect information (such as showing non-member if I'm a member)?
  If you are having difficulties accessing the correct account, please reach out to AAFS (membership@aafs.org) for us to assist.

Authors

- May I submit on behalf of other authors?
  *You may, but it is preferred that the **_primary presenting author_** of each session or workshop proposal submit for that proposal. For co-authors/co-presenters, you will be able to add in their information, or you will have the option to send them a special link for them to submit their own information needed to complete your proposal.*

- Do I need to include all authors?
  You may include up to 6 authors on an oral or poster abstract. Additional authors or contributors may be included on the printed poster or presentation materials under "additional acknowledgements."

My question isn't listed here. Who can I reach out to?
For additional questions or assistance, please contact education@aafs.org or call 719-636-1100 x116.

Award Considerations

The American Academy of Forensic Sciences and the Forensic Sciences Foundation offer several opportunities for abstracts and presentations to be considered for various awards. The following are the available awards applicable to abstract submissions with related criteria for eligibility. Should you feel your submission is eligible for one or more award opportunities, you can request consideration during the submission process.

FSF Emerging Forensic Scientist Award

Summary:
An award to encourage individuals who are beginning their careers in the forensic sciences to participate in the scientific activities of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS). The EFSA will be presented to the best presentation on any topic focusing on the reliability and validity of techniques, processes, or methods in a forensic area of the entrant's choice.

Eligibility:

- Entrants must be either an AAFS "Student Affiliate" or "Trainee Affiliate."
- All entrants must be within three (3) years of completion of formal training at the time the presentation is made.
- The entrant should be the sole presenter of the paper.

FSF Student Affiliate Scholarship

Summary:

An award to stimulate greater participation of the Student Affiliate (SA) members by funding a limited number of SA member registrations for the annual AAFS conference.

Eligibility:

- Both submitter and presenter must be an AAFS Student Affiliate Member.
- Eligibility is not dependent on the abstract's acceptance for the program.
- Oral and poster presentations are eligible for the scholarship.
- Academic faculty may be listed as a co-author but may not be the submitting author or a presenter. The scholarship will be presented to the first named author on the paper.
- If more than one Student Affiliate Member is listed as a co-author on the paper, only one $100 scholarship per paper will be given. The primary student author may choose to split the $100 by sharing a portion of the award with the other author; however, AAFS will only provide funds to the primary author.
- Only the Student Affiliate Member whose name appears on the paper will be allowed to make the presentation if it is selected for the scholarship.

FSF Student Travel Grant

Summary:

Grants to assist a limited number of students with travel expenses associated with attending an AAFS Annual Scientific Conference.

Eligibility:

- Prior Student Travel Grant award recipients are not eligible to reapply.
- The applicant must either be an AAFS member/affiliate or an AAFS applicant for membership. Applications for membership must be received and completed by the October 1 deadline.
- The applicant must have submitted an abstract by the August 1 deadline, either as a presenter or co-author for the annual conference he/she/they will be attending.
- The applicant must be a fourth-year undergraduate or graduate student at an accredited four-year college, university, or professional school whose accreditation is acceptable to the FSF Board of Trustees. Those who have completed their terminal degree and are now pursuing internship, residency, or fellowship positions are considered to be in the training phase and are therefore not eligible.
- The applicant must submit a letter of recommendation from his/her/their advisor or professor. This recommendation is separate from any membership application requirements.
- The applicant must submit a 400-600-word essay explaining how attendance at an AAFS conference will impact his/her/their career decision. The essay should include items such as forensic science specialty and other pertinent data related to his/her/their forensic science background and career objectives.
- The applicant must submit a *curriculum vitae* to include specifics regarding their involvement in forensic science and their current grade point average.

Anthropology - J. Lawrence Angel Award

Summary:

The J. Lawrence Angel Forensic Anthropology Student Paper Award is awarded each year to the Anthropology Section student or students who present the best paper at the annual conference.

Eligibility:

- Only students who are matriculated in an anthropology program at the time of the paper submission are eligible for the competition. In the case of multiple authors, all authors must satisfy this requirement.
- Students (including all co-authors of a paper) must hold membership in the Anthropology Section of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences at the time the scientific presentation is given. Students who do not hold membership at the time of abstract submission must submit an application for membership concurrently with their abstract submission.
- Papers or posters co-authored by faculty or other non-students are not eligible under any circumstances.

Anthropology - Ellis R. Kerley Research Award

Summary:

The purpose of The Ellis R. Kerley (ERK) Research Award is to recognize excellence in the continuing effort to research and develop methods in Forensic Anthropology.

Eligibility:

- Candidates must be AAFS Trainee Affiliates, Associate Members, Members, or Fellows of the Anthropology Section.
- In the case of abstracts with multiple authors, the first (lead) author must satisfy the membership status requirement.

Digital & Multimedia Sciences – Outstanding Research Award

Summary:

The Outstanding Research Award is designed to recognize and encourage significant research contributions to the field of digital and multimedia forensic sciences.

Eligibility:

Must be a Fellow, Member, Associate Member, Trainee Affiliate, or Student Affiliate of the Digital & Multimedia Sciences Section who meets the criteria.

Digital & Multimedia Sciences – Outstanding Student Research

Summary:

The Outstanding Student Research Award is designed to recognize and encourage research contributions to the field of digital and multimedia forensic sciences by collegiate students (either undergraduate or graduate students).

Eligibility:

- Only students who matriculated in a digital or multimedia forensic sciences program or allied field at the time of the paper submission are eligible for the competition.
- Students (including all co-authors of a paper) must hold membership in the Digital & Multimedia Sciences Section of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences at the time the scientific presentation is given. Students who do not hold membership at the time of abstract submission must submit an application for membership concurrently with their abstract submission.
- The author(s) of the presentation must be a student(s) as defined above. Papers or posters co-authored by faculty or other non-students are not eligible under any circumstances.

Digital & Multimedia Sciences – Outstanding Case Study Award

Summary:

The Outstanding Case Study Award is designed to promote the sharing of knowledge and professional experience regarding the application of digital and multimedia forensic sciences to real-world cases.

Eligibility:

- The case study is highly relevant and interesting to the Digital & Multimedia Sciences Section members.
- The case study serves to educate digital and multimedia forensic investigators (or examiners or analysts) on state-of-the-art techniques, processes, and knowledge in the field of digital multimedia forensic science.
- The case study presented on paper and during the presentation reflects an in-depth, nuanced examination of the case.
- The case study must be presented at an Academy conference, be documented in the conference *Proceedings*, and both the abstract and the presentation must be exemplary.
- This award shall be open to any Fellow, Member, Associate Member, Trainee Affiliate, or Student Affiliate of the Digital & Multimedia Sciences Section who meets the criteria.

General Section – Robert C. Gaffney Achievement Award

Summary:

The Robert C. Gaffney Achievement Award is given to promote continual professional growth in the forensic sciences and technologies and to encourage new forensic science professionals in their occupational specialties.

Eligibility:

- Any Trainee Affiliate, Associate Member, or Member of the General Section (excluding Student Affiliates) is eligible for this award, provided he/she/they has been a registered participant within the AAFS for no more than four (4) years, and
- Member has, with an intent to compete for this award, proffered a paper at the General Section scientific session or poster session during the year in which they are being considered for the award.

Pathology/Biology – Best Biology Trainee Award

Summary:

This award is for the best applicant who presents original biological research pertaining to the forensic sciences.

Eligibility:

A student in the specialty of the biological sciences during the time the subject matter of the paper was under investigation. One (1) paper per applicant will be considered per year. The applicant or their mentor should be a member of the Pathology/Biology Section.

Pathology/Biology - Best Resident Paper Award

Summary:

Original forensic pathology research or original forensic pathology theory or technique can be presented. This analysis should not only include an interesting case study and review of the literature but should be original scientific research with the development of a hypothesis that is tested, resulting in a conclusion, or a survey of cases with conclusions that tangibly change the practice of forensic pathology or have public health implications.

Eligibility:

A resident or fellow in an accredited residency training program in the specialty of pathology or the subspecialty of forensic pathology during the time the subject matter of the paper was under investigation.

Pathology/Biology - Best Medical Student Paper Award

Summary:

The Pathology/Biology Section offers a Best Medical Student Paper award to eligible students of either a recognized medical school or osteopathic medicine. Consideration of the award requires submission of a completed manuscript and presentation at the annual AAFS Annual Scientific Conference. The award shall be for $500 cash.

Eligibility:

- The candidate must be a student in a recognized medical school or school of osteopathic medicine.
- A complete manuscript is required for the competition.
- Candidates are required to present the research at the Annual Scientific Conference of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences

Toxicology – Best Poster Award

Summary:

The goal of this award is to encourage students and less-experienced toxicologists to become members of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences and to participate in the AAFS Annual Scientific Conference.

Eligibility:

- Membership (at any level) in the Toxicology Section of the AAFS is required of the presenting author or at least one of the co-authors. If none of the authors are members at the time of abstract submission, a membership application for the presenting author must be submitted along with the abstract.
- The presenting author must be a student or have worked in the field of forensic toxicology for no more than ten (10) years at the time of submission.
- The abstract must be submitted by the deadline. Acceptance of the abstract will be determined by the Toxicology Section Program Chair.
- All poster presentations accepted by the Program Chair will be automatically considered for the award. The AAFS Office will provide the Awards and Scholarship Committee Chair with the list of applicants eligible for the award and the committee chair will determine the winner of the award.
- The presenting author must present the poster at the AAFS meeting.
- Research projects funded by the award sponsor(s) and current full-time employees of the award sponsor(s) are not eligible for this award.

YFSF – Outstanding Poster Award

Summary:

The YFSF Outstanding Poster Award is designed to recognize and encourage research contributions to the field of forensic sciences by young forensic scientists, individuals who have five years or less experience as a professional in the field.

Eligibility:

- The research must contribute to the existing body of knowledge in forensic science and/or propose new techniques or procedures that could obtain widespread acceptance.
- The presenting author must present the poster during the YFSF Poster Session at the AAFS conference.
- Only a single author, typically the lead or presenting author, will be eligible for the award and must be agreed upon by the group prior to submission.

APPENDIX A – Scientific Abstract Scoring Rubrics (Oral/Poster Presentations)

AAFS 2026 Conference
Scoring Rubric for Scientific Abstract Review

Criteria	Exemplary (9-10 points)	Outstanding (7-8 points)	Strong (5-6 points)	Adequate (3-4 points)	Weak (1-2 points)	Poor (0 points)
Introduction & Objective (research question/aim)	• The introduction strongly demonstrates that the literature has been adequately reviewed. • The introduction is a strong, clear, and thorough, yet concise, overview to the problem. • Based on the presented background and knowledge gap, a specific, clear, and testable research objective is stated.	• The introduction demonstrates that the literature has been reviewed. • The introduction is a clear, and somewhat thorough background to the problem. • Based on the presented background and knowledge gap, a clear and testable research objective is stated.	• The introduction partially demonstrates that the literature has been reviewed. • The introduction provides a clear, and somewhat thorough background to the problem. • Based on presented background and knowledge gap, a testable research objective is stated.	• The introduction very weakly demonstrates that the literature has been reviewed. • The introduction provides a background that is not informed by aims. • A clear, but untestable research objective is stated.	• The introduction does not demonstrate that the literature has been reviewed. • The introduction provides a background that is not informed by aims. • A vague, untestable research objective is stated.	• The introduction and research objective are not provided.
Materials and Methods	The methods provide a strong and clear explanation of the proposed experimental methods.	The methods provide a clear explanation of the proposed experimental methods.	The methods provide an adequate explanation of proposed experimental methods.	The methods provide an unorganized explanation of experimental methods.	The methods provide an unclear and unorganized explanation of experimental methods.	The methods are not provided.
Conclusion	The conclusion is fully supported by the study results.	The conclusion is mostly supported by the study results.	The conclusion is only partially supported by the study results.	The conclusion is weakly supported by the study results.	The conclusion is not supported by the study results.	The conclusion is missing.

Criteria	Exemplary (9-10 points)	Outstanding (7-8 points)	Strong (5-6 points)	Adequate (3-4 points)	Weak (1-2 points)	Poor (0 points)
Results	• The results are clear and connected to the purpose of the study. • The results strictly follow the presentation of the methods. • The results provide findings without interpretation of the results.	• The results are clear and connected to the purpose of study. • The results mainly follow the presentation of the methods. • The results provide findings with some interpretation of the results.	• The results attempt to present findings but might be unclear OR some information is missing from the results. • The results follow the presentation of the methods.	• The results attempt to present findings but might be unclear AND some information is missing from the results. • Results loosely follow the presentation of the methods.	• The results do not present concrete data, they are unclear findings, and/or do not relate to the study purpose. • Results do not follow the presentation of the methods.	The results are missing (no data provided) or states in the future the results will be reported.
Significance/ Implication	The significance section presents rationale and the importance of proposed work in the form of a well-structured, logical argument.	The significance section presents rationale and importance of the proposed work in the form of a partially well-structured argument.	The significance section presents rationale and importance of the proposed work in the form of a structured argument.	The significance section weakly presents rationale and importance of the proposed work in the form of a structured argument.	The significance section shows some effort to present the rationale and significance of proposed work.	The rationale and the importance of the proposed work in the significance section are not articulated.
TOTAL SCORE (Max = 50 points)						

AAFS 2026 Conference
Scoring Rubric for Abstract Review
GENERAL SECTION ONLY

Criteria	Exemplary (9-10 points)	Outstanding (7-8 points)	Strong (5-6 points)	Adequate (3-4 points)	Weak (1-2 points)	Poor (0 points)
Introduction & Objective (research question/aim)	• The introduction strongly demonstrates that the literature/case has been properly reviewed. • The introduction is a strong, clear, and thorough, yet concise, overview to the problem/case study. • Based on the presented background and knowledge gap, a specific, clear, and testable research objective is stated/specific objective of the case study is stated.	• The introduction demonstrates that the literature has been reviewed. • The introduction is a clear, and somewhat thorough background to the problem/case study. • Based on the presented background and knowledge gap, a clear and testable research objective is stated/objective of the case study is stated.	• The introduction partially demonstrates that the literature has been reviewed. • The introduction provides a clear, and somewhat thorough background to the problem/case study. • Based on presented background and knowledge gap, a testable research objective is stated/outcome of the case is stated.	• The introduction very weakly demonstrates that the literature has been reviewed. • The introduction provides a background that is not informed by objectives or case study is general in nature. • A clear, but untestable research objective is stated/case study demonstrates a well-established principle.	• The introduction does not demonstrate that the literature has been reviewed. • The introduction provides a background that is not informed by objectives. • A vague, untestable research objective is stated. • Case study is vague without significant details.	• The introduction and research objectives are not provided. • There is no point to the case study or it is not related to forensic science.
Materials and Methods	The methods provide a strong and clear explanation of the proposed experimental methods or details of the case study.	The methods provide a clear explanation of the proposed experimental methods or details of the case study.	The methods provide an adequate explanation of proposed experimental methods or details of the case study.	The methods provide an unorganized explanation of experimental methods or details of the case study.	The methods provide an unclear and unorganized explanation of experimental methods or details of the case study.	The methods or details of the case study are not provided.

Criteria	Exemplary (9-10 points)	Outstanding (7-8 points)	Strong (5-6 points)	Adequate (3-4 points)	Weak (1-2 points)	Poor (0 points)
Conclusion	The conclusion is fully supported by the study results.	The conclusion is mostly supported by the study results.	The conclusion is only partially supported by the study results.	The conclusion is weakly supported by the study results.	The conclusion is not supported by the study results.	The conclusion is missing.
Results	• The results are clear and connected to the purpose of the study. • The results strictly follow the presentation of the methods/details of the case study. • The results provide findings without interpretation of the results.	• The results are clear and connected to the purpose of study. • The results mainly follow the presentation of the methods/details of the case study. • The results provide findings with some interpretation of the results.	• The results attempt to present findings but might be unclear OR some information is missing from the results. • The results follow the presentation of the methods/details of the case study.	• The results attempt to present findings but might be unclear AND some information is missing from the results. • Results loosely follow the presentation of the methods/details of the case study.	• The results do not present concrete data, they are unclear findings, and/or do not relate to the study purpose. • Results do not follow the presentation of the methods/details of the case study.	The results are missing (no data provided) or states in the future the results will be reported.
Significance/ Implication	The significance section presents rationale and the importance of proposed work in the form of a well-structured, logical argument/case presentation.	The significance section presents rationale and importance of the proposed work in the form of a partially well-structured argument/case presentation.	The significance section presents rationale and importance of the proposed work in the form of a structured argument/case presentation.	The significance section weakly presents rationale and importance of the proposed work in the form of a structured argument/case presentation.	The significance section shows some effort to present the rationale and significance of proposed work/case presentation.	The rationale and the importance of the proposed work in the significance section are not articulated.

TOTAL SCORE (Max = 50 points)

AAFS 2026 Conference
Scoring Rubric for Abstract Review
QUESTIONED DOCUMENTS ONLY

Criteria	Strong (7-10 points)	Adequate (3-6 points)	Weak (1-2 points)	Poor (0 points)
Introduction & Objective (research question/topic)	• The introduction demonstrates that the literature has been reviewed. • The introduction is a clear and thorough background to the topic. • Based on the presented background and knowledge gap, a clear and testable research objective is stated. • (Case Study) The introduction is a clear and thorough background to the case study.	• The introduction partially demonstrates that the literature has been reviewed. • The introduction provides a clear, and somewhat thorough background to the topic. • Based on presented background and knowledge gap, a testable research objective is stated. • (Case Study) The introduction provides clear, and somewhat thorough background to the case study.	• The introduction does not demonstrate that the literature has been reviewed. • The introduction provides a background that is not relevant to the objective. • A vague, untestable research objective is stated. • (Case Study) The introduction is vague.	• The introduction and research objective are not provided. • (Case Study) The introduction is not provided or is not relevant to Questioned Documents.
Materials and Methods	• The methods provide a clear explanation of the proposed experimental methods. • (Case Study) The methods provide a clear explanation of the materials/methods used.	• The methods provide an adequate explanation of proposed experimental methods. • (Case Study) The methods provide an adequate explanation of materials/methods used.	• The methods provide an unclear and/or unorganized explanation of experimental methods. • (Case Study) The methods are unclear and/or unorganized.	• The methods are not provided. • (Case Study) The methods are not provided.
Conclusion/ Interpretation	• The conclusion is supported by the study results. • (Case Study) The conclusion is clear.	• The conclusion is partially supported by the study results. • (Case Study) The conclusion is somewhat clear.	• The conclusion is weakly/not supported by the study results. • (Case Study) The conclusion is vague.	• The conclusion is not provided. • (Case Study) No conclusion is provided.

Criteria	Strong (7-10 points)	Adequate (3-6 points)	Weak (1-2 points)	Poor (0 points)
Conclusion/ Interpretation	• The conclusion is supported by the study results. • (Case Study) The conclusion is clear.	• The conclusion is partially supported by the study results. • (Case Study) The conclusion is somewhat clear.	• The conclusion is weakly/not supported by the study results. • (Case Study) The conclusion is vague.	• The conclusion is not provided. • (Case Study) No conclusion is provided.
Results	• The results are clear and connected to the purpose of study. • The results follow the presentation of the methods.	• The results attempt to present findings but might be unclear and/or some information is missing from the results. • The results loosely follow the presentation of the methods.	• The results do not present concrete data, they are unclear findings, and/or do not relate to the study purpose. • Results do not follow the presentation of the methods.	The results are not provided, or states will be reported in the future.
Significance/ Implication	The significance section presents rationale and importance of the proposed work in the form of a well- structured, logical argument.	The significance section presents rationale and importance of the proposed work	The significance section shows some effort to present the rationale and significance of proposed work.	The rationale and the importance of the proposed work are not articulated.
RESEARCH/PROJECT TOTAL SCORE (Max = 50 points) CASE STUDY TOTAL SCORE (Max = 30 points)				

AAFS 2026 Conference
Scoring Rubric for Abstract Review
PATHOLOGY/BIOLOGY ONLY – Case Reports

Criteria for case reports	Strong (7-10 points)	Adequate (3-6 points)	Weak/Poor (0-2 points)
Introduction & Objective (research question/topic)	The introduction is a clear and thorough background to the case study.	The introduction provides clear, and somewhat thorough background to the case study.	The introduction is vague and not adequate for the case study.
Case History or Methodology	The case history provides a clear explanation of the case details and/or methodology, and relevant background.	The case history provides an adequate explanation of the case details and/or methodology, and relevant background	The case history and/or methodology is unclear and/or disorganized.
Conclusion/ Interpretation	The conclusion is clear.	The conclusion is somewhat clear.	The conclusion is vague.
Contribution to forensic medicine /biology and novelty	This case report brings content never reported before and/or has significant implications for clinical medicine or forensic biology or new diagnostic techniques.	This case report brings contents possibly reported before but reinforces important concepts for forensic medicine and/or biology.	This case report brings content already reported and brings no new information for forensic medicine and/or biology.
Literature support	This case report is thoroughly researched and there are associated topics in literature.	This case report is somewhat researched and there are some associated topics in literature.	This case report is not researched.

AAFS 2026 Conference
Scoring Rubric for Abstract Review
PATHOLOGY/BIOLOGY ONLY – Research Papers

Criteria for research papers	Strong (7-10 points)	Adequate (3-6 points)	Weak (0-2 points)
Introduction & Objective (research question/aim)	• The introduction strongly demonstrates that the literature has been reviewed. • The introduction is a clear and thorough overview to the topic. • Based on the presented background and knowledge gap, a clear and testable research objective is stated.	• The introduction partially demonstrates that the literature has been reviewed. • The introduction provides a clear, and somewhat thorough background to the topic. • Based on presented background and knowledge gap, a testable research objective is stated.	• The introduction does not demonstrate that the literature has been reviewed, or is not provided. • _The introduction provides a background that is not relevant to the objective. • A vague, untestable research objective is stated.
Materials and Methods	• The methods provide a strong and clear explanation of the proposed experimental methods.	• The methods provide an adequate explanation of proposed experimental methods.	• The methods provide an unclear and/or unorganized explanation of experimental methods, or are not provided.
Conclusion/ Interpretation	• The conclusion is fully supported by the study results.	• The conclusion is partially supported by the study results.	• The conclusion is weakly/not supported by the study results or is not provided.
Results	• The results are clear and connected to the purpose of study. • The results follow the presentation of the methods.	• The results attempt to present findings but might be unclear and/or some information is missing from the results. • The results loosely follow the presentation of the methods.	• The results do not present concrete data, they are unclear findings, and/or do not relate to the study purpose. • Results do not follow the presentation of the methods. • Results are not provided, or states will be reported in the future.
Significance/ Implication	The significance section presents rationale and importance of the proposed work in the form of a well-structured, logical argument.	The significance section presents some rationale and importance of the proposed work.	The significance section shows some effort to present the rationale and significance of proposed work, or are not articulated.

AAFS 2026 Conference
Scoring Rubric for Abstract Review
PATHOLOGY/BIOLOGY ONLY – OSAC-Related Submissions

Criteria for OSAC	Strong (7-10 points)	Adequate (3-6 points)	Weak/Poor (0-2 points)
Introduction & Objective	The introduction provides a clear and thorough background to the OSAC topic.	The introduction provides a clear, somewhat thorough background to the OSAC topic.	The introduction is vague and not adequate for the OSAC topic.
Standards Development Process	The presentation provides a clear and detailed explanation of the standards development process.	The presentation provides an adequate explanation of the standards development process.	The presentation is unclear and/or disorganized in explaining the standards development process.
Conclusion/ Interpretation	The conclusion is clear and well-supported by the data.	The conclusion is somewhat clear and partially supported by the data.	The conclusion is vague and lacks sufficient support from the data.
Contribution to Forensic Science (Path/Bio)	The presentation brings new insights or significant implications for forensic science standards.	The presentation reinforces important concepts for forensic science standards.	The presentation brings no new information and lacks significant implications for forensic science standards.
Impact Statement	The presentation will significantly impact the forensic science community by creating greater awareness of standards development and implementation.	The presentation will somewhat impact the forensic science community by discussing standards development and implementation.	The presentation will have minimal impact on the forensic science community and lacks detailed discussion on standards development and implementation.

AAFS 2026 Conference
Scoring Rubric for Abstract Review
TOXICOLOGY ONLY

Criteria	Outstanding (4-5 points)	Adequate (2-3 points)	Weak (0-1 point)
Introduction & Objective (research question/aim)	• The introduction demonstrates that the literature has been reviewed. • The introduction is a clear, and thorough background to the problem. • Based on the presented background and knowledge gap, a clear and testable research objective is stated.	• The introduction partially demonstrates that the literature has been reviewed. • The introduction provides a clear, and somewhat thorough background to the problem. • Based on presented background and knowledge gap, a testable research objective is stated.	• The introduction does not demonstrate that the literature has been reviewed. • The introduction provides a background that is not informed by aims. • A vague, untestable research objective is stated.
Materials and Methods	The methods provide a strong and clear explanation of the proposed experimental methods.	The methods provide an adequate explanation of proposed experimental methods.	The methods provide an unclear and unorganized explanation of experimental methods.
Conclusion	The conclusion is fully supported by the study results.	The conclusion is mostly supported by the study results.	The conclusion is weakly or not supported by the study results.
Results	• The results are clear and connected to the purpose of study. • The results follow the presentation of the methods. • The results provide findings without interpretation of the results.	• The results attempt to present findings but might be unclear OR some information is missing from the results. • The results follow the presentation of the methods.	• The results do not present concrete data, they are unclear findings, and/or do not relate to the study purpose. • Results do not follow the presentation of the methods.
Significance/ Implication	The significance section presents rationale and importance of the proposed work in the form of a well-structured, logical argument.	The significance section presents rationale and importance of the proposed work in the form of a structured argument.	The rationale and the importance of the proposed work in the significance section are not well articulated.
TOTAL SCORE (Max = 25 points)			

APPENDIX B – Special Function Submission Scoring Rubric

The following rubric will be used to score special function submissions (i.e., workshops, luncheon sessions, deep dives, etc.)

	5	4	3	2	1	Total
Audience Level			Wide variety of audience – will apply to multiple sections, across knowledge levels, and interest	Mid variety of audience – will apply to one or two sections, across knowledge levels, and interest	Low variety of audience – will apply to a single section, with a specific knowledge level, and interest	
Cost of Workshop			Little to no cost	Some cost	High cost	
Relevance to Conference Theme	Directly aligns with the conference theme and objectives	Mostly aligns, with minor deviations	Some alignment, but lacks clear connection	Limited alignment	No alignment	
Scientific Merit	Highly innovative and scientifically sound	Scientifically sound, with minor gaps	Adequate, but lacks innovation or depth	Superficial or somewhat flawed	Scientifically unsound	
Clarity and Organization	Well-organized and clearly presented	Clear and organized, with minor issues	Adequate, but could be better organized	Somewhat unclear or disorganized	Confusing or poorly organized	
Potential Impact	High potential for significant impact in the field	Good potential, with minor limitations	Adequate potential, but limited impact	Minimal potential impact	No potential impact	
Feasibility	Highly feasible with clear implementation plan.	Feasible, with minor issues in the plan	Adequate feasibility, but lacks detailed plan	Some feasibility concerns	Not feasible	
Total						

Notes about Submission

1. Audience level
   a. Wide variety of audience – will apply to multiple sections, across knowledge levels, and interest
   b. Mid variety of audience – will apply to one or two sections, across knowledge levels, and interest
   c. Low variety of audience – will apply to a single section, with a specific knowledge level, and interest
2. Cost of workshop *[workshop submissions only]*
   a. Little or no cost
   b. Mid cost
   c. Hight cost

Criteria

1. Relevance to Conference Theme
   a. Excellent (5 points): Directly aligns with the conference theme and objectives.
   b. Good (4 points): Mostly aligns, with minor deviations.
   c. Average (3 points): Some alignment, but lacks clear connection.
   d. Below Average (2 points): Limited alignment.
   e. Poor (1 point): No alignment.
2. Scientific Merit
   a. Excellent (5 points): Highly innovative and scientifically sound.
   b. Good (4 points): Scientifically sound, with minor gaps.
   c. Average (3 points): Adequate, but lacks innovation or depth.
   d. Below Average (2 points): Superficial or somewhat flawed.
   e. Poor (1 point): Scientifically unsound.
3. Clarity and Organization
   a. Excellent (5 points): Well-organized and clearly presented.
   b. Good (4 points): Clear and organized, with minor issues.
   c. Average (3 points): Adequate, but could be better organized.
   d. Below Average (2 points): Somewhat unclear or disorganized.
   e. Poor (1 point): Confusing or poorly organized.

4. Potential Impact
    a. Excellent (5 points): High potential for significant impact in the field.
    b. Good (4 points): Good potential, with minor limitations.
    c. Average (3 points): Adequate potential, but limited impact.
    d. Below Average (2 points): Minimal potential impact.
    e. Poor (1 point): No potential impact.
5. Feasibility
    a. Excellent (5 points): Highly feasible with clear implementation plan.
    b. Good (4 points): Feasible, with minor issues in the plan.
    c. Average (3 points): Adequate feasibility, but lacks detailed plan.
    d. Below Average (2 points): Some feasibility concerns.
    e. Poor (1 point): Not feasible.

Comments

- Strengths: ___
- Areas for Improvement: _
- Additional Notes: __