

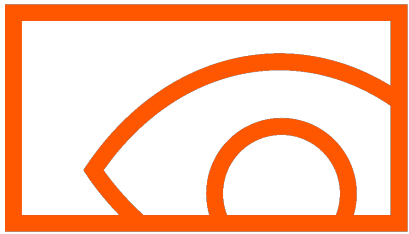
**EDINBURGH
TV FESTIVAL**

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SESSION SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

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THE PROGRAMME – WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

All our sessions have a very high level of editorial rigour. That's what makes them special and sets them apart. We're looking for a strong hook and a really clear sense of why this conversation is an essential one to have in August 2026: perhaps it's responding to current trends or developments in the industry; it might be inspired by a hit show from the past year, or maybe it's linked to wider cultural, social or political conversations.

Every year we receive many times more session idea submissions than we are able to programme. In 2026, more than ever, we will be focusing on quality over quantity and we will be particularly rigorous in our selection process.

Pitches should have a crystal clear idea of what the audience will get from the conversation and what the key areas of discussion will be.

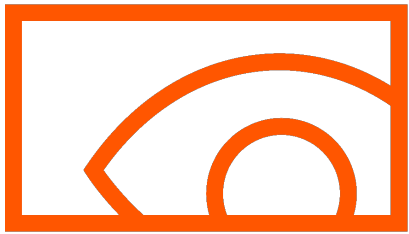
An idea doesn't have to be fully polished and, if selected, is likely to be fleshed out in discussion with the Festival's Head of Editorial.

It's fine for sessions to feature companies or brands, but we're not interested in anything that feels too promotional. This is an area better suited to our co-produced sponsored sessions. You can find out more about sponsored sessions by contacting our [Partnerships team](#).

The best Festival sessions that leave our audience informed, inspired and invigorated are:

- 1 – Original, unique and unexpected
- 2 – Authoritative, authentic and credible
- 3 – Emotional, with speakers who achieve a personal connection with the audience
- 4 – Participatory

An outstanding submission may have ALL of these qualities, or one or two in particular. The Festival Editorial team will be reviewing submissions with these qualities in mind – make sure your submission is clear in what it delivers.



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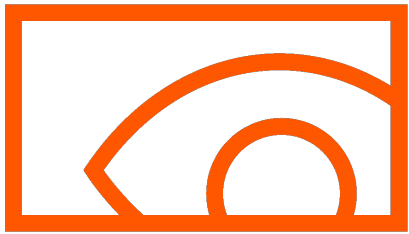
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WHAT WORKS

The Festival programme is packed to bursting and there is no room for filler. Every session needs to be a must-see for the target audience.

Based on extensive feedback and conversations with our delegates, we know that the best sessions include:

- 1 – Debate formats: on hard hitting, provocative industry issues with speakers tackling the hard stuff head on.
- 2 – Exciting launches, genuinely new information (not sales pitches)
- 3 – Future trends
- 4 – Inspirational stories from authentic voices
- 5 – Practical take aways: a real how-to session on craft, funding, career progression etc
- 6 – Pure joy – we all love telly and want a moment to celebrate the creativity alive in this industry



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STREAMS AND FORMATS

In 2026 the programme will cover a number of specific themes and topics and see the networking strand more fully integrated in the Festival Programme.

When you submit you will need to select which stream and format your idea is best suited to.

Streams:

Frontiers – topics that look at the future of television and the spaces where digital, tech and TV meet. This could also be a space for podcasts, gaming or exploring the creator economy.

Traditional TV genres – masterclasses, debates or informative deep dives on issues in factual, scripted, factual entertainment, documentary etc.

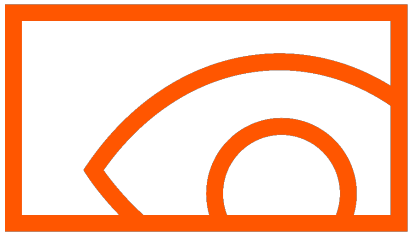
News and current affairs – topics that are about how news is reported or linked to the news agenda

Thought leadership – inspiring leaders talking about creativity and their work

Celebrating creativity and culture – anniversaries, masterclasses or In Conversation events aimed at celebrating the art and craft of television, and the shows and creators we all know and love

International perspectives – what can we learn from our colleagues outside the UK?

New Funding Models – what are the new, creative approaches to getting a project funded?



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Formats:

Edinburgh Does... – an Edinburgh staple! What show or popular format from the past year would you like to see brought to life at the Festival this year?

Fireside chat – an intimate one-on-one conversation with an executive, creative or thought leader

Keynote – a single speaker giving a lecture or presentation on a particular topic

Masterclass – a deep dive into a particular programme or topic, with a focus on craft

Peer to peer – two people in the same field in conversation with each other

Panel discussion or debate – a discussion about a particular topic or theme between three to four people, with a moderator.

Worldview – a fireside chat or panel with an international perspective.

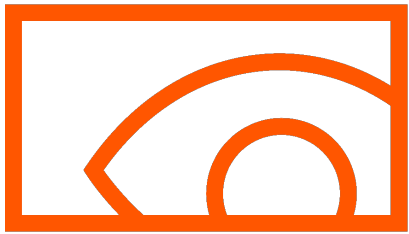
Round-Table – part of the Networking programme, Round Tables are hosted by up to 3 experts who lead a discussion on a given topic for 45 minutes.

Meet-Up – part of the Networking programme, Meet-Ups are themed, informal gatherings. Usually hosted by two people – eg a commissioner and producer working in the same genre – who kick off the conversation with a short introduction to a topic.

FESTIVAL CURATED CONTENT

As always, the Festival Editorial team will work with our Advisory Chair to curate a series of sessions designed to deliver for our audience, challenge thinking and the status quo, and champion underrepresented voices. These will include debates, expert panels and our Spotlight On... and Forum sessions.

We may contact you to participate in one of these if your submission lends itself to one of these formats. We would also welcome suggestions for participants in these sessions, so if you or someone you know has a particularly strong view on an industry issue, please complete the [Speaker Nomination form](#) to let us know.



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STEP BY STEP

1 – Brainstorm your session proposal

What is your story?

Take the time to think about the story you want to tell at the Festival, thinking about the following:

How will it move the industry forward?

What is the value for the audience in the room?

How and why will it inspire, engage and motivate?

What will people take away from it?

Why NOW?

2 – Who should be doing the telling?

The suggested speakers play a huge part in the success of a session proposal.

There are many types of speakers you could bring to the table, but relevance rather than fame or seniority is the key. They should also be people you have access to.

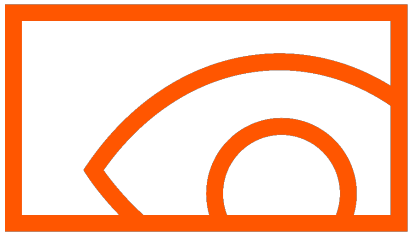
Moderators are as important as speakers, so think carefully about who is best placed to get the most out of your speakers.

Speaker tips:

Speaker numbers: we will not run panels with more than 4 speakers (plus moderator). Too many people on stage not only looks messy, but becomes very difficult to get the best out of your speakers. Everyone needs space in the session to get their views across.

Diversity: We know that diverse line ups make for the best mix of stories. If you are suggesting a panel of speakers, please try and reflect the industry at large.

Relevance over seniority: Our audience often want to hear from those in your organisation who have an interesting story, perspective, experience, not necessarily the most senior job title. Sometimes a line producer or freelancer will have a better way in to a story than a CEO.



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3 – HOW should this story be told?

Getting the format right is incredibly important and shouldn't be left as an afterthought. If your idea makes it into the Programme we will work with you to produce the best possible session, and may suggest a different format depending on the space allocated as different formats and delivery styles work better in different rooms, but we ask that you consider the format carefully as part of your submission so we can fully understand your vision for the session.

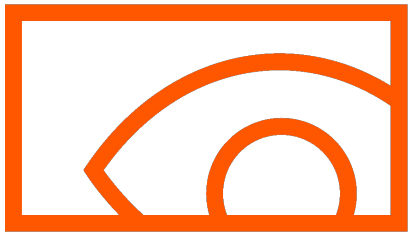
4 – Write and submit your proposal

Take some time to get familiar with the submission form. It's not very long, but your answers should be carefully thought out and planned. We are looking for considered submissions, and rushed proposals stand out for all the wrong reasons!

In the submission form you will be asked to put forward an idea for a session including:

- Session title (it doesn't have to be final, but should be polished)
- Session description (again, it doesn't have to be the final print copy, but should be clear and concise)
- Suggested stream and format
- Suggested speakers
- Detail your access to those speakers

NB: All sessions are subject to the Festival Editorial Team's approval. A session is only confirmed if all the content is agreed including topic, format, speakers etc. If a speaker drops out or the content changes, we reserve the right to revoke the offer of a programme slot.



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TIMELINE

Submission deadline: Midnight on Sunday 29 March

Evaluation period: Submissions will be assessed throughout March and April.

Feedback & Offers: If we are interested in your idea you may hear from the team between late March and early to mid-April.

Further contact/confirmation: We are likely to have contacted everyone with an idea we want to pursue by the end of April. It is possible we will come back to you later than that if more slots open up.

Due to the volume of submissions we expect to receive, we may not be able to contact you to discuss unsuccessful submissions. If you haven't heard from the team by the first week of May, it means your submission will not progress to the next stage.

CONTACTS

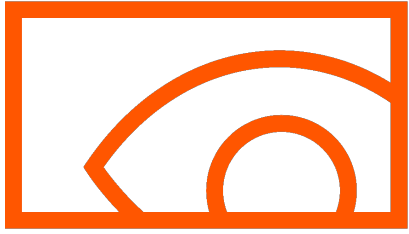
If you have more questions after reading these guidelines, please check our [FAQs](#) first.

For general questions about the Festival, buying passes etc please contact info@thetvfestival.com

For specific editorial programming questions please contact [Head of Editorial Niall Flanagan](#).

For specific networking programme questions please contact [Operations Director Bianca Newby](#).

ENDS



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