

OCCUPATIONS & NATURE

CONNECTIONS AND TRANSACTIONS



NOVEMBER 6-8, 2025

MOODY GARDENS | GALVESTON, TX

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

2025 Conference of the Society for the Study of Occupation: USA (SSO:USA)
Conference Theme – Occupations and Nature: Connections and Transactions
(All Occupational Science topics are welcome)

November 6-8 , 2025
Moody Gardens
Galveston, Texas

Deadline for Abstracts: February 21, 2025

SSO:USA invites abstracts for the conference on the connections and interactions of nature and occupation. Just as nature-based contexts impact occupations that occur in various ecologies, human occupation has profound impacts on these and other ecosystems in the natural world. Abstracts may relate to the theme in various ways, such as discussion questions, interpretations or reflections.

Mission: The Society for the Study of Occupation (SSO: USA) is a dynamic research society dedicated to advancing occupational science and leveraging its findings for the betterment of humanity. Our mission is to foster the growth and dissemination of knowledge in the field, driving meaningful insights into the diverse ways in which individuals engage in occupations across the lifespan. By promoting interdisciplinary collaboration and supporting rigorous research, we aim to unlock the transformative power of occupation in promoting health, well-being, and social justice. <http://www.sso-usa.net/>

ABSTRACT SUBMISSIONS

We encourage all papers addressing substantive and methodological issues studying participation in daily activities or those activities that “occupy” our lives. Contributions from social and other sciences are welcomed. Additional points will be given for connecting the presented material to the conference theme “Occupations and Nature: Connections and Transactions”.

The abstract submission site will open on December 2, 2024. Please check for updates and the submission link at the [SSO:USA website](#). Abstracts must be submitted electronically by 11:59 PM PST on February 21, 2025. Late abstracts will not be accepted. Abstract submitters will receive notification via email regarding the status of their submission(s) in April 2025.

Submitters must provide the following information for all authors: name(s), credential(s), affiliation(s), and an 80-word author bio for inclusion in the conference app. Abstracts submitted without this information will not be published in the proceedings for this research conference. Additionally, the submitter must provide an email address that will be used for future communication, the type of submission (research paper, theoretical paper, panel, forum, research poster, or theoretical/scholarly poster), title, and all other required information in the appropriate fields on the submission webpage.

Abstracts should be **400 words or less**. The following elements of the proposal will not be counted toward the 400-word limit: up to five key references, three to five keywords, three learning outcomes, three discussion questions, a funding acknowledgement (if applicable), and a 40-word abstract synopsis for inclusion in the

conference app. Abstracts must be submitted in APA format. Equal time is provided for presentation and discussion at this research conference. Discussion questions should facilitate discourse on how the presentation content furthers knowledge of occupational science concepts.

An individual may be accepted for a maximum of two presentations as a primary author (first listed). If authors are limited to particular presentation dates or times because of institutional or religious limitations, they must indicate their presentation availability in the appropriate submission field. Abstracts undergo a blinded review process (see criteria below). Reviewers will be members of the SSO:USA.

FORMATS

Session Type	Session Format	Headings
RESEARCH PAPERS	A report of a completed or currently occurring study of occupation. 15 minutes presentation + 15 minutes discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title Statement of purpose Description of methods (participants, data collection, analysis) Report of results Implications related to occupational science Relevance to conference theme (if applicable) Discussion questions to further occupational science concepts and ideas
THEORETICAL PAPERS	An analytical commentary on a topic of relevance to occupational science. 15 minutes presentation + 15 minutes discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title Intent Argument Implications related to occupational science Conclusion Relevance to conference theme (if applicable) Discussion questions to further occupational science concepts and ideas
PANEL SESSIONS	60-minute panel sessions should include 2-3 brief research or theoretical papers on a shared topic and 20 minutes of discussion among panel members and audience. NOTE: Submission is made by the session organizer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title Topic Purpose/aims Methods Result or intent Implications related to occupational science Relevance to conference theme (if applicable) Discussion questions to further occupational science concepts and ideas
FORUM SESSIONS	An individual or a team may lead a 60-minute forum on research, pedagogy or another topic. The forum should include a 15-minute evocative presentation leading to a 45-minute dynamic exchange of ideas among participants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title Aims/intent Rationale Potential outcomes for participants Relevance to conference theme (if applicable) Discussion questions to further occupational science concepts and ideas

RESEARCH POSTERS*	A visual report of a study of occupation; appropriate for in-process studies, case studies, or completed research.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Title ● Statement of purpose ● Description of methods (participants, data collection, analysis) ● Report of results, if any ● Implications related to occupational science ● Relevance to conference theme (if applicable) ● Discussion questions to further occupational science concepts and ideas
THEORETICAL AND SCHOLARLY POSTERS*	A visual representation of an analytical commentary on a topic of relevance to occupational science. Appropriate for scoping reviews, pedagogy, theoretical inquiry, and other work that is outside of the standard research structure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Title ● Intent ● Argument ● Implications related to occupational science ● Conclusion ● Relevance to conference theme (if applicable) ● Discussion questions to further occupational science concepts and ideas

*Poster presenters will be required to attend the conference for the in-person poster session, in which they will describe their study and answer questions (1-2 hours).

CRITERIA FOR ABSTRACT REVIEW

At least three peer reviewers will rank each abstract on the criteria listed below in a blinded review process. Each abstract will be ranked from completely unresponsive to excellent response to criteria. For those papers responding to the conference theme, an additional criterion has been added titled Relevance to Conference Theme. Scores are weighted according to the table below, and definitions of criteria can also be found below.

Note: Student poster abstracts will undergo a separate selection process and thus will be ranked only amongst poster abstracts submitted by other students. First-author designation as a student is needed and considered as a necessary and sufficient indicator of a "student poster". SSO:USA welcomes the submission of abstracts in all formats from students of any educational level, but only student **poster** submissions will undergo a separate ranking.

Criteria Weight:	Research Paper and Poster	Theoretical Paper and Poster	Panel	Forum
Rigor / Trustworthiness ^{a, b}	5	5	3	n/a
Coherence ^{c, d}	3	3	3	n/a
Importance to OS ^e	3	3	5	n/a
Relevance to Conference Theme ^f	3	3	3	3
Discussion Potential ^g	n/a	n/a	n/a	5
Originality ^h	n/a	n/a	n/a	3

Definitions of Criteria:

- Rigor/Trustworthiness (for Research Papers, Posters, and Panels): Degree to which methods described in abstract are of high quality.
- Rigor/Trustworthiness (for Theoretical Papers, Posters, and Panels): Degree to which concepts and theories described in the submission are of high quality and well thought-out.

- c) Coherence (for Research Papers, Posters, and Panels): Degree to which abstract clearly describes study purpose, methods, and results.
- d) Coherence (for Theoretical Papers, Posters, and Panels): Degree to which abstract clearly describes the intent, argument, and conclusions.
- e) Importance to Occupational Science: Degree to which proposed presentation contributes to the study of occupation and to the mission of the SSO:USA.
- f) Relevance to Conference Theme: Degree to which abstract clearly articulates the presentation's relevance to the conference theme.
- g) Discussion Potential: Degree to which proposed forum is likely to evoke active discussion productive of new insights in relation to occupational science.
- h) Originality: Degree to which proposed forum offers new perspectives on topics in occupational science and contributes to the mission of the SSO:USA.

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

2025 Ruth Zemke Lecture in Occupational Science by Dr. Mary Lawlor, ScD, OTR/L, FAOTA:

In recognition of Dr. Ruth Zemke's mentorship, questing intellect, and ongoing efforts to foster an occupational science community of researchers, this lectureship was named in her honor. The lectureship is designed as a forum to present visionary, theoretical, and critical analyses of occupational science. Dr. Lawlor's lecture will be recorded and accessible to SSO:USA members on the [society's website](#) after the conference.

Conference Theme - Occupations and Nature: Connections and Transactions: The theme concerns connections and interactions of nature and occupation. Just as nature-based contexts impact occupations that occur in various ecologies, human occupation has profound impacts on these and other ecosystems/ the natural world. Sessions may relate to the theme in various ways, such as discussion questions, interpretations or reflections.

2024 Proceedings: Abstracts of presentations will be published in the 2025 SSO:USA Proceedings.

Occupational Balance: One of the unique features of SSO:USA conferences is the attention devoted to balance and the quality of participants' experiences. Researchers should leave an SSO:USA conference refreshed, stimulated, and energized to return to their work. Shared meals, conference break blocks, and a range of potential activities are opportunities for attendees to rejuvenate, network, and experience unique aspects of local arts and culture.