

AIEA Thematic Forums: Best Practices and Resources

Congratulations on your selection as a host for an AIEA Thematic Forum. The information below includes helpful information from past Forum hosts and should be taken into consideration for Forum planning.

Fees:

AIEA suggests that Thematic Forum hosts charge a modest fee for participation in the forum in order to increase the likelihood of having more accurate numbers for planning. Generally, Forums charge a nominal registration fee within the \$50 range to cover additional costs of the meeting. A fee greater than \$100 would require significant justification in the application.

Note: The Forum should not be a revenue-generating opportunity for the institution. The expectation is that AIEA funding would help make it possible to hold such an event and cover costs only. Forum costs should be reasonable.

Participants:

Thematic Forums are intended to address strategic-level issues in comprehensive internationalization, so it is important to encourage SIO participants.

While it may be compelling to plan for a large group, many successful Forums with rich conversation and outcomes have had from 25-30 participants. The number of participants varies greatly and is often influenced by the robustness of the Forum organizer's marketing plan, the location of the Forum, the appeal of the Forum's theme, and whether it is scheduled in conjunction with other international education events of interest.

Registration Process:

AIEA does not handle forum registrations or payment processing. Host institutions are responsible for setting up a registration system and processing payments.

In the past, Forum organizers have used the following systems for registrations:

- In-house registration systems at the host institution
- Eventbrite (www.eventbrite.com)
- Wufoo (www.wufoo.com)
- Other similar registration software

Registration sites such as Eventbrite and Wufoo generally charge a small fee for each registration they process, and a 2-4% fee on all transactions.

Thematic Forum Promotion:

The Forum's host institution is responsible for promotion of the Thematic Forum, which is intended to bring together senior leaders in international higher education.

AIEA provides the following venues for promotion:

- **AIEA member-only listserv:** Forum organizers are encouraged to make use of this listserv to invite participation. AIEA does not post to the listserv on behalf of the Forum; organizers are responsible for this promotion.
- **AIEA Website:** Forums are listed on the website with a 300-word description, a one-page flyer, and learning outcomes for those attending.
- **Annual Conference Program:** Forums taking place after the Annual Conference will receive a complementary full-page black and white program ad in the conference program, as well as the opportunity to place handouts at various venues. The program ad that will be used is the flyer provided to AIEA for the website unless the Forum organizer submits a different file by December 1 prior to the conference.
- **AIEA Social Media:** AIEA creates limited social media postings around each upcoming Forum. If you would like to better leverage AIEA's LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook pages, please coordinate with the AIEA Secretariat (secretariat@aieaworld.org).
- **AIEA Regional Member Emails:** If requested by the Forum organizer, AIEA can provide a list of names and emails of members from the region where the Forum will take place.

Other suggestions for promotion include:

- State-level international association listservs or websites (if used, we encourage wording indicating that this event is for those leading comprehensive internationalization at their institutions)
- SECUSS-L listserv (if used, we encourage wording indicating that this event is for those leading comprehensive internationalization at their institutions)
- The NAFSA IEL Message Board. Please ensure compliance with their posting policy before using this avenue for promotion.
- Targeted emails to senior international officers or other IE leaders in your area. Word of mouth is often the most powerful way of increasing participants.
- Identifying other organizations that have an interest in the program topic for purposes of advertising.

Marketing materials should indicate that the forum is an "AIEA Thematic Forum" and include the AIEA logo. For more information on logo usage and policy, please see the AIEA Style Guide.

Forums that have had high levels of attendance often leverage other events that bring together international education leaders, such as scheduling the Forum directly prior to or following AIEA or other international education conferences.

Program Insights:

The most common piece of feedback from past Forum participants in regards to what could have been improved was incorporating more interaction among participants, such as small-group discussions or activities; more interactivity in large group sessions, and informal or formal networking opportunities. One past Forum organizer encouraged setting aside a substantial amount of time for open discussion.

Other suggestions from past Forums include:

- Incorporating student voices or perspectives through panels, presentations, or speakers.
- Developing a strategic marketing plan early in the process.
- Considering providing a list of attendees to all participants.
- Taking location into consideration – Forums convenient to a large airport or airline hubs are generally much better attended.