



## Program Roles & Responsibilities

**Chairs:** Chairs organize and keep panels on track. They see the panel from cradle to grave, serving as a liaison to the Division/Related Group Chairs for any changes. Each panel format should have a chair.

**Authors:** Authors write a paper for presentation onsite as part of a full paper panel, iPoster session, 30-minute paper presentation, short course/workshop, and mini-conference.

**Presenters:** They present and discuss a topic, but do not have an authored paper associated with their role. Presenters can be found in roundtables, Author Meets Critics panels, cafés, short course/workshops, and mini-conferences.

**Discussants:** A discussant promotes further understanding of the papers and provides feedback to the authors. Discussants also can identify and briefly discuss the common theme(s) that runs through the papers, which are usually related to the meeting theme, the panel topic, and/or a particular sub-field of the discipline.

### Serving as a Panel Chair

#### *Before the Panel*

- Before the conference, check that all panelists have shared or uploaded their papers. If they have not, send a reminder.
- If there are panel discussants, make sure they receive the papers early enough so that they have time to read them carefully and prepare comments.
- Before the panel begins, let all panelists know the amount of time they will have to present their papers and how you will signal time remaining toward the end of their presentations (e.g., passing a slip of paper or using a hand signal at five minutes and two minutes away from the end). Plan for adequate time at the end (approximately a third or fourth of the total panel time) for questions and discussion.

#### *During the Presentations*

- Keep introductory remarks short. Brief comments on the theme of the panel and a quick introduction of the panelists (name and affiliation) will suffice.
- Papers should be presented in the order they are listed on the program, unless the panelists request a change or the chair or discussant recommends that a different order would better suit the ensuing discussion.
- Help the panelists keep their presentations to the allotted time and remember to signal time remaining toward the end of their presentations. In order to keep the panel on schedule and ensure everyone has sufficient time, be prepared to politely but firmly ask panelists to conclude, if they have gone over their allotted time.



## *Q and A*

- After the presentations, invite any discussants to share comments. See tips for discussants below.
- After the discussant comments, the discussant or the chair should open up the floor to questions from the audience. If there are no immediate questions, be prepared to ask one yourself. If an audience member is making lengthy comments that take the Q and A session off track, remind them to phrase their comment in the form of a question or to wrap up their remarks.
- If the majority of questions are focused on only one paper, try to refocus the audience on a common theme of the panel to expand the discussion.
- Wrap up the panel on schedule. A few minutes over time may be necessary to conclude a discussion, but do not let the panel go beyond that.

## **Serving as a Chair for Roundtables and Other Non-Paper-Based Sessions**

Roundtables and sessions such as research and outreach cafes offer a more flexible format than traditional panels and typically do not include specific papers for discussion. Many of the tips for panel chairs apply to chairs for these sessions. Additional points to consider include:

- Communicate with panelists beforehand about how long they will be expected to talk about a particular subject at hand and any specific areas of focus within the topic that you would like them to address.
- Allow plenty of time for questions. If time permits, you can allow roundtable members time to ask each other questions before opening it up to the audience at large.
- Prepare a few questions you can seed to the participants to assist with ongoing dialogue if needed.
- Especially where time is limited or where you want to promote broader participation among different roundtable members, direct audience questions to specific roundtable members rather than ask each member to answer the same question.
- Have a few stock phrases ready to interject into the discussion and steer it back on track if needed (“Turning to the topic of X...”).

## **Serving as a Discussant**

- Before the conference, read the papers closely. Take time to understand the main points of the paper and identify areas that merit remarks during the panel, such as original contributions provided by the paper or areas that may benefit from additional research.
- At the opening of your comments, very briefly summarize what you took to be the two or three most important points of the paper. There is no need to summarize a paper in its entirety.



- Evaluate the paper and provide feedback. Are there specific ways the author could improve the argument or research?
- Connect the papers to the broader theme of the panel and/or the meeting. How do the papers on this panel challenge and inform each other?
- Connect the papers to the broader body of knowledge on this topic. How do these papers fit into other research or the subfield broadly?
- At the close of your comments, suggest some questions for further research or discussion.

## **Tips for Paper Authors**

### *Before the Panel*

- Submit your paper well in advance to the chair, discussant and other presenters.
- Don't try to present your entire paper. To prepare, create an outline of your talk, with the main points you would like to emphasize. Condense your notes into a manageable amount of information. Remember that you have a limited amount of time.
- Practice. Time yourself. Practice again in front of an audience in your department or with your colleagues. Practice speaking in front of a mirror to help with maintaining eye contact.
- Any PowerPoint slides you prepare should complement, rather than replace, your talk. Limit slides to key points and to findings that benefit from visual display. Ensure each slide is easy to read and font size is large enough for audience members sitting in the back of a typical meeting room to read.
- If using PowerPoint, arrive to the conference room in advance to load your slides onto a common laptop, or to ensure you can hook your laptop up to the projection system in the room. All meeting rooms are set up with a projector system, but laptops are not provided for each room.
  - o If you are using a Mac, you may need to bring your own adapter plug to connect your laptop to common projector systems.

### *During the Presentation*

- Avoid reading directly from your notes. Making eye contact with the audience is crucial to a good presentation.
- Consider the audience. If you can't see everyone in the room, then they can't see you. Stand if necessary. If you have a soft voice, ask the audience whether they can hear you. If you tend to speak in a monotone, try to modulate your pitch throughout the presentation.



- Be enthusiastic and confident. No one has thought more about your paper than you. The audience will appreciate your interest and excitement.
- Stay within your allotted time. The panel chair should remind you when your time is running out, but also use a phone or watch to time and pace yourself during the presentation.
- If you find yourself running behind, it's fine to pause briefly to scan your notes and reorganize your thoughts. Find ways to condense your final remarks rather than simply start speaking more quickly. There is no need to apologize or explain why you're running out of time.
- At the end of your presentation, close by thanking the audience and welcoming questions and comments.

#### *After the Presentation*

- After the panel/roundtable ends, follow up with the chair, discussant, and other presenters, as a professional courtesy and especially if you are interested in receiving additional feedback or would like to pursue future collaboration.