

Conferencing 101: Everything You Need to Know Before Your First Scientific Meeting

The Professional Development Committee of the American Association of Anatomists

Definitions: Sessions and Events

- **Keynote Session:** an invited talk to “kick off” the conference and introduce the meeting’s theme
- **Plenary Session:** a formal session addressed to all conference attendees
- **Platform:** shorter talks (~15 minutes) selected from submitted abstracts
- **Symposium:** longer talks (~30 minutes) from invited speakers
- **Hybrid Symposium:** a mix of platform and symposium-style talks
- **Round Table:** session allowing discussion/participation among attendees
- **Workshop:** discussion and activities; participants produce something and/or gain new skills
- **Poster Session:** authors present posters displaying work from submitted abstracts



What to Bring

- Dress is typically **business casual**
 - Speakers and poster presenters may wear more **business professional** attire (e.g., suits)
- Comfortable shoes—you’ll be on your feet between sessions and traveling to your hotel
- Business cards (if your institution doesn’t provide them it’s okay to design and print your own)
- Copies of your poster on 8.5 x 11” paper

Networking Dos and Don’ts

- **DO** keep a stash of business cards tucked behind your conference name tag so you can give them out quickly when opportunities arise.
- **DO** come prepared with an “*elevator talk*” (≤ 1 minute summary of your work and goals)
- **DON’T** be afraid to ask society committee volunteers and leadership to make introductions for you—they’re happy to help you network!
- **DON’T** hang out exclusively with people from your lab/institution—invite new people for coffee and meals and say “yes” to invitations



Conference Resources (available at [AAA](#) at [EB](#))

- **Professional Society Lounges:** great places to meet, network, or enjoy a cup of coffee!
- **Networking Lunches:** sign up to meet new people and hear career-related talks
- **First-time Attendee Orientation:** kick off the conference by enjoying breakfast with other first-time attendees
- **Career Help** (e.g., [EB Career Central](#)): attend small professional-development related talks and get one-on-one career advice from volunteer mentors
- **Buddy Programs:** first-time attendees are paired with experienced annual meeting attendees to get the insider’s perspective on having a great experience
- **Twitter Correspondence:** tweet [@anatomymeeting](#) using [#anatomy19](#) or [#ExpBio](#)

Pre-Plan Your Schedule!

- Screen the program in advance using the [conference app](#) or the [online schedule](#)
- Reduce stress by knowing what sessions you’ll attend before the conference is in full swing
- Knowing your schedule in advance allows you to plan meetings with other attendees
- Identify speakers you want to network with
- Schedule **breaks to recharge** and explore the city

