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## How to Attend, Speak or Present a Poster at an Academic Conference



[美] 史蒂夫·华乐丝 (Steve Wallace) 著

# 参加国际学术会议必须要做的那些事 给华人作者的特别忠告



北京大学出版社  
PEKING UNIVERSITY PRESS

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## How to Attend, Speak or Present a Poster at an Academic Conference

## 前 言

参加国际会议对科研事业的成功是必要的。但很多研究生都对参加国际会议充满了恐惧。大学课堂并不讲授国际会议生存技巧，这使得学生很难适应新的国家、新的语言和不熟悉的报告形式。

一般参加国际会议者需要做以下的事情：选择合适的会议，撰写并提交摘要，长途旅行去参加会议，出席会议，处理问答，设计和展示他们的海报。

有经验的参会者通常会寻找方法来提高他们的报告技巧，使他们的演讲更有趣。他们会充分利用各种机会来扩大和其他学者的交际圈，同能与影响他们著作或者文章发表的编辑和审稿人保持长期的联系。

最后，一些学者计划组织他们自己的会议，需要一些技巧来推广他们的会议，吸引演讲者，安排会议日程和社交活动，并用准确的英语介绍演讲嘉宾。

我写这本书的目的就是要帮助所有这三类参会者从他们的参会经历中得到最大收获。本书的特色是一些特定技巧和策略，这些技巧和策略将会让你在以后的国际会议中更自信。

我花了九年的时间与学生交流他们参会时的忧虑，来收集本书所用的材料。我采访了很多学者征求他们的意见和建议。在过去的六年中，我本人参加了24场工程、商业、技术和教育方面的

会议。

我希望这本书能为你参加国际会议提供帮助。我也希望书中的技巧能让你充满信心从而充分利用会议提供的各种机会。

史帝夫·华乐丝博士

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# **CHAPTER 1**

## **OVERVIEW OF CONFERENCES AND CONFERENCE PAPER FORMATS**

### **Introduction to Conferences**

An academic conference is a conference for researchers to present their research. Conferences are an important way for experts to exchange information and get to know each other.

### **Differences Between Conferences**

Every conference is different. Conferences can be made of different styles and formats. They are often a mixture of these things. They can have symposiums, workshops, roundtable discussions, or none. There could be questions and answer (Q & A) sessions or not.

### **Interactive Exchange**

Presentations are followed by discussions, where participants give their reactions. Exchanging ideas makes conferences different and

richer from other scholarly communication such as papers and books. Researchers and professionals develop friendships and relationships at academic conferences.

## Variety of Formats

Research is presented in a short presentation that is 10 to 30 minutes long, followed by a discussion. The research may be collected, revised, and published as conference proceedings. Often, conferences invite one or more keynote speakers, usually well-known scholars, whose presentations go from 15 minutes to an hour. Panel discussions, roundtable discussions on various issues, or workshops may be part of the conference.

In the sciences, presenters may use visual aids to show figures and diagrams of their research.

## Three Categories of Academic Conferences

Academic Conferences include the following three categories:

- Theme-based conferences organized around a topic.
- General conferences that feature sessions on a variety of topics. These conferences are often organized by regional, national, or international societies and are held regularly.
- Professional conferences or any large conference not limited to academics, but about academic issues.

## Submitting to a Conference

Presenters are usually asked to submit an abstract that is reviewed before their presentation is accepted. Some research areas ask presenters to submit a 10-15 page paper. This is peer reviewed by the program committee or by domain expert

reviewers. In some areas, conferences and workshops ask for submission of full papers instead of just abstracts, and the academic program committee peer reviews the full paper. This process can be similar to journal review.

## Single-Track or Multiple-Track

A large meeting is called a conference, while a smaller meeting is called a workshop. They can be single-track or multiple-track. Single-track has only one session at a time, while a multiple-track meeting has several parallel sessions with speakers in separate rooms speaking at the same time.

Social or entertainment activities may be offered at the conference. In a large conference, academic publishing houses may set up displays offering discounted books to discuss future publications. Societies or interest groups have business meetings at large conferences to interact with and recruit new people in the field.

## Proceedings

The proceedings are academic papers that are selected from an academic conference and published. They are printed as books, or in digital formats before or after the conference. Proceedings contain presenters' contributions from the conference. They are records of the research presented.

The papers are organized by an editorial team. Domain expert reviewers read the papers before they are accepted in the proceedings to maintain quality. This process is called reviewing. Depending on the conference's level, this process can take a year. The editors decide what material to put in the proceedings and write an introduction. Most paper revisions happen with the author's agreement, but editors have the right

to make changes without consent.

Because papers come from different researchers, proceedings are different from textbooks. Each paper is different from the other papers in the proceedings. There is no logic connecting one contribution to the next. In some cases, if the contributions are similar in quality and style, the editors may combine the proceedings into a textbook. Proceedings are published by the conference organizer, or through an academic publisher. Often, proceedings are made available through a Website.

## Abstract Management

Abstract management is accepting and preparing abstracts for presentation at an academic conference. Authors are invited to submit or can submit abstracts without invitation. The abstract states the hypothesis, tools used in research, data collected, and a summary or interpretation of the data.

The abstracts are reviewed. They are accepted or rejected by the conference chair or committee. They are assigned to conference sessions. The abstracts may be presented as a presentation or a poster. Abstracts are often published before or after the event as conference proceedings, in academic journals or online. Sometimes submitting a full paper is required before conference acceptance.

## Colloquium

In academia, a colloquium is a single lecture given by a member of the academic community about his work to colleagues in the same or similar field. The audience asks questions and evaluates the research. Colloquia give researchers a chance to respond to criticism when developing new ideas through discovery responses to critical inquiries.

## Symposium

This refers to any conference using a discussion style format instead of a lecture format.

## Web Conferencing and Webinars

Web conferencing is used for live meetings or presentations conducted over the Internet. Each participant is at his own computer and connects to other participants over the Internet. This can be accomplished using a downloaded software program on each of the attendee's computers. Web conferencing can also be a Web-based application where the attendees use a Web address to enter the virtual conference.

## Conference Paper Types

The following are descriptions of conference presentations you may give as a graduate student. Presentation types change between disciplines. Students in the humanities typically read their papers aloud at conferences, while social scientists give summary presentations of longer works.

- **Paper with Respondent.** In this type of presentation, a speaker presents a 30-minute paper. A respondent gives a 15-minute response to the paper. The speaker then gives a 15-minute reply to the response.
- **Panel Presentation.** Panel sessions include 3-4 speakers, each talking for 15-20 minutes. Panels may also have a discussant who comments on the presentations individually and as a group.
- **Roundtable.** A roundtable has five or more speakers, each talking for 5-10 minutes.

- **Workshop.** These sessions can vary in length from 90 minutes to one full day. Workshop presenters give short presentations before involving the audience in an activity.
- **Poster, Poster Talk, Poster Presentation, Poster Discussion.** All of these involve a visual presentation. Some presenters display a 3- to 8-page paper that explains their project. Others post their hypothesis and an outline of their findings. The most interesting posters exhibit charts, graphs, photographs, or artwork. Posters can be displayed for the entire conference or for one day. Each poster creator gives a short talk on his or her project. Poster talks give the audience a chance to question the poster creator. Attendees circulate the room, questioning and collecting handouts from presenters. This type of presentation can also be called an interactive exhibit.
- **Paper session.** In this type of presentation, a single paper is presented by the author. The author may or may not take questions about the paper or their research.

## **CHAPTER 2**

# **ATTENDING AND PARTICIPATING IN CONFERENCES**

### **Why Go to a Conference?**

Attending a conference is a way of finding out what other researchers are doing and is part of the process of making your own work known. It is necessary to become a member of a research community in your field. It creates a deadline for getting work done and is an excuse to leave the office or classroom.

### **How to Benefit from a Conference**

You should attend conferences in your field even if you are not presenting. Some graduate students say they learn a lot more when they do not have the stress of presenting and can focus on the experience. Second, listening to speakers, viewing posters, and attending workshops are all useful and interesting; some of the best learning and career development opportunities come from outside these sessions.

## How to Select the Appropriate Conferences to Attend

Look at where others in your research domain present their work (look in acknowledgements in papers). Talk to others in the field. Talk to others who have attended the conferences you are thinking of attending.

## Before the Conference

### Review the Schedule

Read the conference schedule as soon as it is available. Do not wait until the event has started before planning your schedule. The big conferences have schedules the size of a telephone book and you cannot attend every session. Be careful when planning your schedule. Begin by focusing on the divisions and special interest groups (SIGs) connected to your research area. Review the breakfast talks and other invitational sessions, particularly those talking about current trends in your research area.

### Attend Editor's Sessions

Attend presentations made by journal editors. You will not only learn about the challenges they face, but they can provide you with information that makes it likely that you can get published in their journal. It does not hurt to have editors as friends. Remember, they need you as much as you need them.

## Students, Use Your Professors to Look for a Job

If you are looking for a job, find out what after-hours social events your professors plan to attend and ask if you can come along. Good professors will always be willing to do this for students. They know more



people than you do, and can help with introductions. You must have a short introduction prepared and professional CV with you. Even when you are on your own, use every social opportunity you get. You never know when people you meet for a drink or meal could be a peer reviewer for a journal article that you submit or a future colleague. Make time for socializing.

## Practice a Short Promotional Introduction

It is time to create your “elevator pitch”. This is a small speech used to sell yourself to whomever you are speaking with in 30 seconds to a minute. The point of this speech is that you can summarize yourself in a few clear and concise sentences. From this, you will be noticed. In creating your elevator speech, you need to use some pre-writing activities.

### The Elevator Pitch

An “elevator pitch” is a short, concise, direct, and to-the-point description of your ideas, research, professional history, academic history, and/or paper that touches on the core ideas of any or all of those areas in less than two minutes. The story about the origination of the “elevator pitch” is that it started as a sales pitch that a salesperson would give to a potential customer as they were waiting for or already on an elevator. The amount of time spent waiting for or riding on an elevator is about two minutes.

#### ● The Components of an Elevator Pitch

1. Concise
2. Clear
3. Powerful
4. Visual
5. Targeted
6. Goals