

Presenting or Performing at an Academic Conference or Event: What to expect and how best to present yourself

What is an Academic Conference?

An academic conference is an event where researchers in a particular field gather to present their findings and attend workshops.

Benefits of Presenting at an Academic Conference

- You can attend other people's research presentations and deepen your knowledge within your field.
- You can form professional relationships through networking at the conference that may help you find future research partners or get into graduate school
- Become more confident in your public speaking skills.

[9 benefits of academic conferences | conference2go](#)

How to Prepare for an Academic Conference

Check out the conference program

- Take time to plan your schedule thoughtfully. Consider what sessions you are interested in attending as well as determine when and where you will be presenting.

Practice your presentation

- Practice in front of a friend or your research partners. This will help you become more comfortable articulating your material.
- Always introduce yourself first.
- Presentations can last between 5 and 15 minutes.
- If you are presenting your poster, you should practice speaking for 2-3 minutes.
- Be flexible. Sometimes people may ask questions during or after your presentation. Answer them and try not to let the questions throw off your presentation. You do not need to memorize everything, just be comfortable and confident with the information. You should be good because you know your research best.

[Presenting Your Poster at a Conference: Tips and Tricks | Society for Personality and Social Psychology \(spsp.org\)](#)
[Preparing For Your First Research Conference | Office of Undergraduate Research \(uconn.edu\)](#)

Types of Academic Conferences

- Themed conferences - small conferences organized around a particular topic.
- General conferences - wider focused conferences with sessions on a wide variety of topics.
- Professional conferences - large conferences focused on academics but also academically related professional issues.

How to present at an Academic Conference

Academic presentation

- Introduce yourself
- Present your research and why it is important
- Describe how you conducted the research
- Explain what you found and what it means
- Conclude with a summary of your main points

Poster presentation

- Be able to explain your poster in 2-3 minutes.
- Face your audience and avoid reading directly off your poster.
- Allow people to ask questions and start a conversation

[Oral Presentation Tips | Office of Citizen Scholar Development: Undergraduate Research \(virginia.edu\)](#)

How to make the most of an Academic Conference

Prepare your elevator pitch

- Be prepared to explain and articulate what you do or what your research is about in simple terms.
- Be able to explain why what you do is important.
- Use examples and invite further conversation.

Introduce yourself to new people and ask questions about other people's research

- Engaging in other people's research will allow you to be more informed on current research.

Explore the workshops offered

- Some may be academic research focused while others may be related to professional development in your field.

[Tips to Prepare for Academic Conferences \(scholarculture.com\)](#)

[8 Benefits of Attending Conferences | Conference Monkey](#)

What to wear to an Academic Conference

Conferences are typically business casual. Search the conference website and check to see if they include a dress code for guidance.

Men:

- Dress nicer than you typically would for an office setting.
- Add a tie or a blazer to your everyday shirts and sweaters and opt for dress pants over jeans.
- Stick with classic colors such as navy, white, gray, black, and brown/beige.

Women:

- Blouses, cardigans, blazers, button-downs, dress pants, conservative dresses, and pencil or A-line skirts.
- Keep accessories minimal.

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- Wear a level of makeup that makes you feel comfortable. If you do not wear makeup, do not feel like you have to wear makeup to your conference, but if makeup is something you typically wear, go for it.
- Comfortable, yet professional shoes. Be aware of heel height for both the sake of professionalism and your comfort.

General things to avoid:

- Shorts or distressed clothing.
- Strong fragrances.
- Extremely loud or busy patterns.

[What to Wear to a Conference: The Definitive Guide | Crestline](#)