



Conference Monkey

Conference Guidebook

All You Need To Know About Attending Conferences



ABOUT CONFERENCE MONKEY



Conference Monkey is the place to find academic conferences worldwide. The platform provides information about high-quality academic conferences in more than 60 different fields of study and more than 150 countries, while supporting conference organizers to promote their events to a top-notch audience.



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We provide you with all relevant information, including calls for papers, submission dates and registration deadlines.

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Promote your events, conferences and calls for papers to the highest quality audience.

Conference Monkey helps you to reach and recruit the best participants and speakers to attend your conference or workshop thanks to online announcements, email marketing and more.

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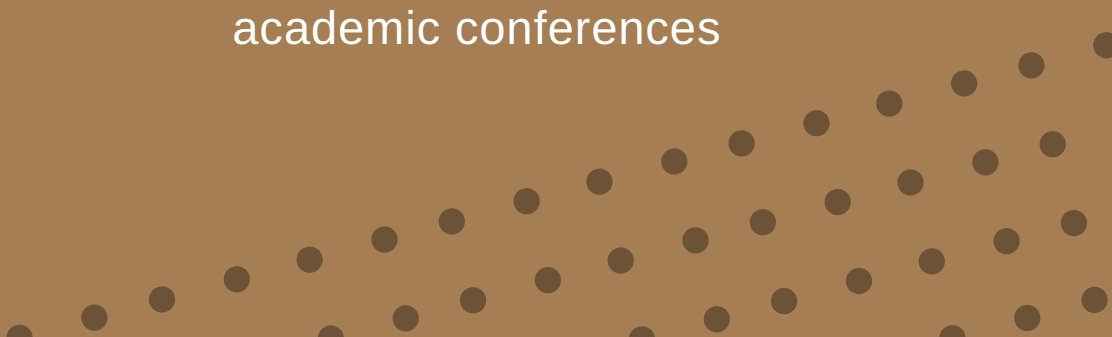
1. Applying to Conferences

- 05** 5 reasons why you should attend conferences
- 06** How to choose the right conference
- 09** How to write a successful motivation letter

2. Preparing for Conferences

- 13** 5 apps that every conference attendee needs to have
- 15** What to wear to academic conferences
- 17** How to wisely plan a budget for your conference trip

3. At Conferences

- 20** How to make the most of your conference trip
 - 23** 5 biggest mistakes conference attendees make
 - 24** Smart networking during academic conferences
- 

1. APPLYING TO CONFERENCES



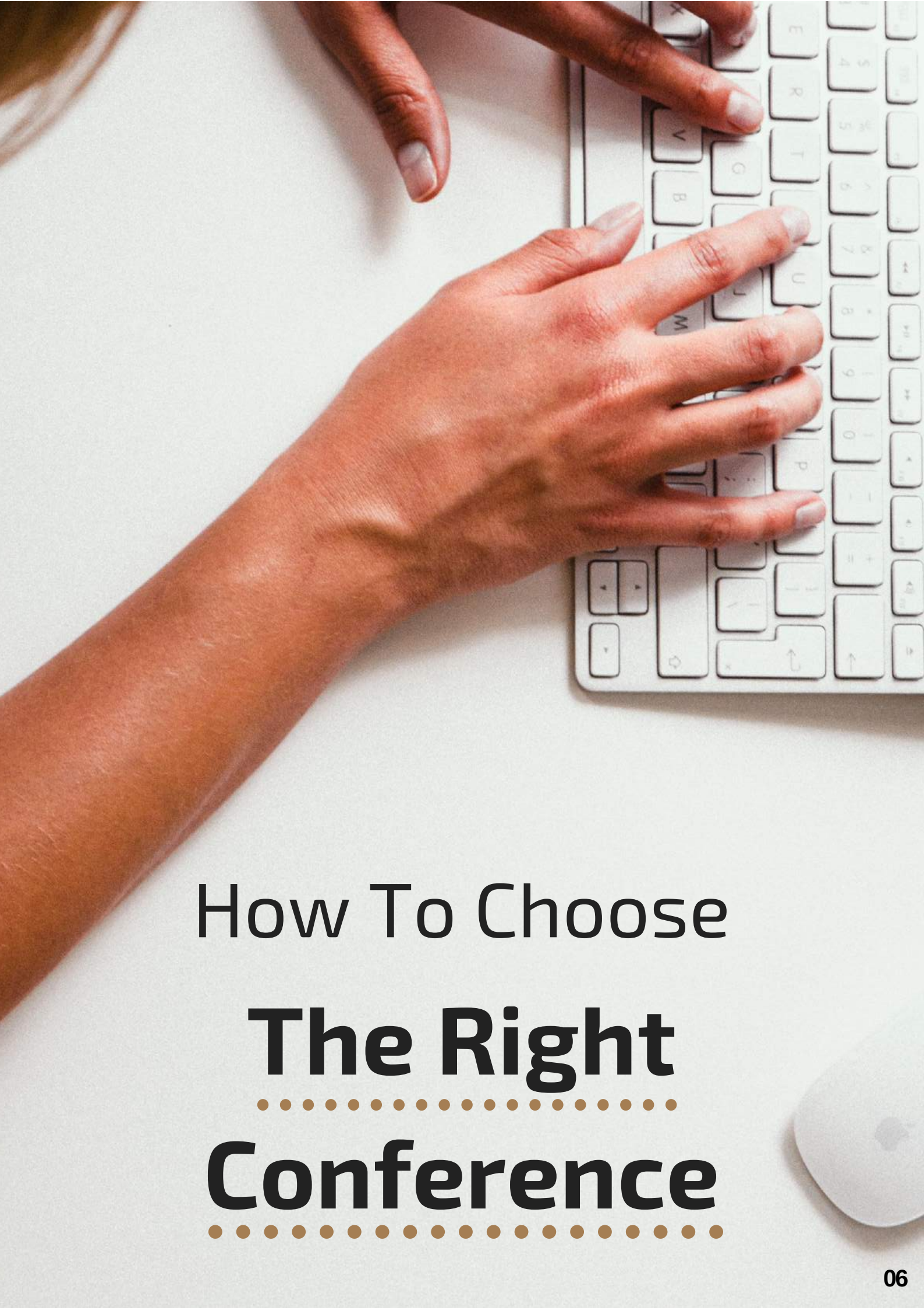
5 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD ATTEND CONFERENCES

1. Networking with other academics
2. Learning about the latest research in your field
3. Getting feedback on your experiments or theories
4. Career Building:
Opportunities for job interviews / Improving your CV
5. Publicising your work



Conference Monkey

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How To Choose
The Right
.....
Conference
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Check



With so many great conferences being held every year, it can be hard to decide which you should attend. Most researchers have a limited budget for conference travel, so it's important to pick your conferences wisely. But how do you know which conference is right for you and for your career? Here are five factors to consider when choosing a conference to attend.

National or international?

National conferences are aimed at researchers from a particular discipline within their home country, while **international conferences** are for researchers from all over the world. International conferences tend to be larger and may carry more weight in terms of reputation, so if you're looking for the biggest boost to your career then you should attend an international conference. However, there are also good reasons for attending a national conference: they are generally cheaper in terms of travel and attendance costs, so are better if you are on a tight budget. Also, if English is not your first language and you are not very comfortable with it, you might want to consider a national conference.

Large or small?

Large conferences give you the chance to meet vast numbers of people and to create a very large network, but only if you are diligent about taking note of names and contact details and then following up with people afterwards. Large conferences are also more likely to attract big names in your field, so if you want to make contact with famous researchers then they are a good option. There are advantages to a smaller conference, however. With fewer people attending, it will be easier to get to know them and the socializing is likely to be more casual. Also, you usually have a greater chance of being accepted to present a poster or to give a talk at a smaller conference, and having a talk on your CV is always impressive, even at a small conference.



Specialist or general?

Conferences may be focused on a very specific topic, or they may be more general. At general conferences, any topic within the relevant subject would be appropriate for presentation or discussion, whereas at a specialist conference, the presentations and discussion will revolve around a particular issue within the field. In some cases, you may find a general conference which has a theme for the year. The better your work fits to the conference theme, the more likely you are to be accepted to present, so if you can find a conference in your particular topic then that is usually preferable. However, general conferences can also be very useful to keep you informed about the latest developments being made in all areas of your subjects.



Single discipline or interdisciplinary?

In addition to the specialist or general factor, conferences may be single discipline or multidisciplinary. For example, a specialist conference could be held on European economic policies for international aid, while a general conference could be about the whole topic of international development. In this case, a single discipline conference could look at these topics in terms of economics, while an interdisciplinary conference could include sociologists, historians, and politics researchers too. Single discipline conferences will be full of familiar names, faces, and topics if you have been working in the field, and can be helpful when you need input from other researchers with similar backgrounds to you. An interdisciplinary conference, on the other hand, will expose you to a broad range of methodologies and approaches which you might not have been aware of previously.



Just the conference or extra events?

Finally, consider that most conferences run for between two and five days. However, there may also be additional events before or after the official conference days, such as **workshops or training**. If you are interested in expanding your skills, for example by attending a workshop on data analysis, then you can look to see if there are additional events around the conference that could be beneficial to you.

HOW TO WRITE A SUCCESSFUL MOTIVATION LETTER



1. START WITH THE BASICS: YOUR NAME, INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATION, AND A VERY BRIEF CAREER RECAP

You should open your letter of motivation by introducing yourself and giving basic information on your current role and the current topic of your research. You may want to include a sentence in which you mention the positions you have held previously, or any grants which you have been recently awarded. However, the majority of your letter should be about your research rather than about yourself, so keep this section short and to the point.

2. GIVE A BASIC DESCRIPTION OF YOUR RESEARCH

You don't need to describe the exact details of your research, such as the experimental methods used or the results which you have gathered so far, as this information should be contained in your abstract. But you should give a simple summation of which sub-field you work in and what your research is about. Keep this general, as the people reading it may not be experts in your area. Imagine you were describing your work to a friend who works outside of academia, and write a few sentences about your research in this style.

3. FIT YOUR TOPIC TO THE CONFERENCE THEME

As well as a general topic or subject which they cover, many conferences will have a theme which is different each year. The theme will typically reflect a large or important issue in the field which has been prominent over the year. If you can find a way to fit your research into the conference theme, this will greatly improve **your chance of being accepted**. The fit doesn't have to be perfect, but the themes are usually designed to be flexible, so put a sentence into your abstract about how your findings do or will impact on the theme and you'll make your presentation more relevant for the conference organisers and the audience.



4. BE SPECIFIC ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF YOUR RESEARCH

You probably know that you should describe all the ways that your research could have an impact on the field, in order to persuade the conference organisers that the attendees would benefit from hearing about your work. However, you should avoid the common mistake of describing the benefits of your work in generic terms. For example, “This work will help to develop a more complete understanding of [this particular sub-field]” is too vague and is not convincing.

Instead, be specific about the benefits of your work, for example “This work will add the perspective of [a particular group] which is currently missing from analyses in [this particular subfield].” Also make sure to note why your research is timely and of relevance at this time in particular. For example, “Following the publication of [major work] last year,” or “With the [major world event] approaching next year, this research adds [a new perspective/important data/a new theoretical framework or idea] which is important at this time because...”

5. DESCRIBE HOW YOUR RESEARCH IS RELEVANT TO THE CONFERENCE AUDIENCE

Also, you should consider why your work would be of interest not only to other members of your field in general, but to the audience at this conference in particular. For example, if you work in psychology in the field of mental health, and you are applying to a conference with a strong clinical focus, then you could describe why your work would be useful to clinicians for their practice. Or if you are applying for an **interdisciplinary conference**, describe the relevance of your work to the other fields represented at the conference.



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2. PREPARING FOR CONFERENCES





5 APPS


THAT EVERY
CONFERENCE
ATTENDEE
NEEDS TO HAVE



THE OFFICIAL CONFERENCE APP

Some conference organisers now put out their own app for the conference, which might include information on the times and locations for talks, venue room plans and maps, information on travel, and lots more.

CONTACTS+



While your phone almost certainly has a built-in contacts app, these are often rather limited. A dedicated contacts app such as Contacts+ gives you lots more features to manage contact data.

TRIPADVISOR

TripAdvisor will show you listings and reviews of hotels, restaurants, tourist attractions, and lots more. The reviews are crowd-sourced, so take each one with a grain of salt, but the app is a fantastic starting place for ideas about places to visit during your conference.

TWITTER

There will often be a conference-specific hashtag which you can use to tweet out commentary on the conference events. This gives other conferences attendees a way to find your tweets and to connect with you.

GOOGLE MAPS

Finally, don't underestimate the usefulness of a maps app to help you find your way around an unfamiliar city. Google Maps can do a lot more than just display maps. It can also give you directions between two points, show you useful nearby services like cash points or public transport stops, and recommend restaurants, hotels, or tourist attractions in the vicinity to you.



WHAT TO WEAR TO ACADEMIC CONFERENCES

MEN

The basic rule: a bit smarter than usual

When it comes to conferences, you should aim for what is typical for attire in your field, but a little bit smarter. If you usually wear trousers and a shirt, for example, you should consider adding a tie for a conference.

A go-to conference outfit

If you're unsure what to wear, then you can't go wrong with a simple outfit of dress trousers in a black, navy, or khaki colour, and a decent quality collared cotton shirt in light blue or another pale colour. Bring a jacket and tie with you in your suitcase, so that you can add either or both of these items if you feel underdressed.

Making your outfit your own

If you enjoy interesting fashion, or if you're just bored of everyone wearing the same thing to conferences, then you can adjust your outfit to make it more your own while still being smart. Accessories like colourful ties or bow ties, tie pins, or pocket squares are fun ways to add a bit of individuality to your look.

Consider climate-appropriate clothing

Where in the world is the conference that you're travelling to? Check what the local weather conditions are likely to be and adjust your clothing accordingly.

WOMEN

The essential outfit

Find narrow leg or slightly bootcut trousers in black, grey, or navy, and a fitted shirt in a lighter colour like pale blue, pale pink, or pinstripe. Tuck in your shirt, select a slim belt in a neutral color, and choose slip-on shoes in black or grey. This basic outfit will be appropriate for almost any professional situation.

Choosing shoes

At a conference, you'll often be on your feet all day, moving from one area of the conference location to another or standing for long periods at events or while you're presenting. Stay away from open toes, heels over three inches, boots over the knee, or brightly coloured shoes unless you're sure that they will be appropriate for the occasion.

Advanced level outfits

A dress or skirt can be a great conference outfit, as long as the fabric is heavy and not too floaty, as this generally looks too casual. Try a patterned dress with skin-toned tights and a bright cardigan, which will bring a touch of colour to a summer conference. Generally a skirt or dress that falls anywhere below your mid-thigh is fine, but in some more conservative fields you might want to opt for something knee-length instead. You can also play with your look by adding a statement necklace, scarf, or handbag, to give your outfit a bit of personality while still keeping it smart.

HOW TO WISELY PLAN A BUDGET FOR YOUR CONFERENCE TRIP



Planning a budget for a conference trip is fairly straight forward, but if this is your **first conference** then you need some basic information to help you with your planning. Here are some tips on how you can plan your budget.

CHECK UP ON YOUR INSTITUTIONAL FUNDING

Your conference costs should be covered by your institution – either by your program, your department, or your university – so find out who is providing the funding. You need to contact the finance department or find the relevant set of guidance about expenses on the university website. Different organisations will have different rules about exactly what is covered, how much you can spend, and what level of expenses are acceptable. There might be rules such as a maximum amount that can be spent on accommodation per day.

SPECIFIC EXPENSES

You should allocate money the following items for your budget, provided they are covered by your institution:

- **Travel costs**, including flights, transfers from the airport, bus fares while you are there, and possibly taxi fares
- **Accommodation costs**
- **Cost of registration** for the conference
- **Costs of conference events** such as the conference dinner
- Possibly a **daily allowance** for small daily expenses

TRAVEL

Conference expenses should usually cover an economy class flight to the nearest airport to the conference, plus the cost of transfers from the airport to the location. Don't forget to take account of the travel costs you will incur during the conference week, such as the costs of taking a bus from your hotel to the conference venue.

If you want to travel to the conference location a few days early or to stay on a few days afterwards, it is usually not a problem for expenses claims. You can only claim accommodation costs for the days of the actual conference, but if there is not a big difference in the cost of the flights when they are a few days apart, then it will be fine to claim the costs.

ACCOMMODATION

You will generally be expected to find the most affordable accommodation, within reason. For academics who are postdoctoral or more senior, it would be typical to stay in their own room in an affordable hotel. Masters and PhD students might sometimes be expected to stay in a cheaper hostel, however, even in these cases it is usually possible for them to have their own private room in the hostel.

FOOD EXPENSE

In some countries, such as Germany, it is common for institutions to have strict rules against paying for food expenses. Therefore, you will be expected to cover your own food costs as you would if you were at home. In other places, however, you may find that a food budget can be provided for a conference trip.

CONFERENCE COSTS

The final set of costs you should consider is the costs of the conference itself. There will typically be a registration cost which you will have to pay in advance, and for which you should get a receipt so that you can claim the money back later. There may also be costs for events such as the conference dinner, or for joining **extra workshops**.



3. AT CONFERENCES





HOW TO MAKE THE
MOST OF YOUR
CONFERENCE TRIP

Attending a conference can be a fun and exciting chance to visit a new place, to connect with peers and senior figures, and to learn about the latest development in your field. But it can also feel overwhelming to have a lot of events packed into a few days. Here we share tips on how to make the most of your conference experience.



Preparation

One of the best ways that you can make the most of your conference trip is by putting in some preparation before you go. The week of the conference, find some time to check the organiser's website, which should have a list of the keynote speakers, other speakers, and maybe even an advance timetable of presentations. You can look through notes or the program and highlight talks which are of interest to you, and find the names of people in your field who will be attending and who you wish to get in contact with. If you see any names of people who you know and would like to connect with, drop them an email inviting them to get coffee or dinner with you during the conference.

On your arrival

Once you arrive, take a few minutes to walk around the conference area, taking note of the different lecture venues and other locations. This way you won't be getting lost while you're in a rush to get to an important talk! Make sure that you get hold of a map of the area, and mark both the conference location and your hotel on it. Also have a look at the transportation options to and from the conference location, and check out the local area immediately around the conference centre. Finding a cafe nearby with wifi will give you somewhere to escape to for breaks or if you need to send some work emails.

Weekly Conference Tips on



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Asking questions after others' presentations

Attending presentations lets you hear about brand new work, straight from the researchers themselves. You can hear about empirical work that has not yet been published, and discuss theories which are still in development. There will likely be both organised talks and more informal poster presentations, and both of these offer you the opportunity to ask questions of the presenter. If you want clarification of a concept or a methodology, or more details on a specific area that is relevant to you, then don't be shy about asking for this information after a talk or during a poster presentation. Use this chance to really get to know a topic in depth, straight from an expert.

Getting feedback on your presentation

If you're **giving a talk or poster presentation** yourself, then you can avail yourself of the knowledge of all of the conference attendees. Bring a notebook with you, and after you complete your presentation and discussion, take note of the questions which were asked of you, and any salient points which arose in the discussion. Perhaps a questioner will suggest a link to a different area of research which could be relevant to you, or suggest a paper which you did not know about before. In any case, thank people for their feedback.

Socialising & networking

The social aspect of a conference is also important; both in terms of networking and in having an enjoyable time for yourself. There will likely be organised social events such as dinners, drinks receptions, or visits to local tourist spots. Do try to make time for these social events, as they offer the opportunity to get to know your fellow conference attendees in a more casual environment. While you're at these events, don't be afraid to strike up conversation with people you don't know, even if they are more senior than you or from a slightly different field – the point of these events is to get to know new people and to hear about their work.

5 Biggest Mistakes Conference Attendees Make

**Make your conference experience better
by avoiding these five common mistakes:**

1. Trying to do too much
2. Attending only academic events or only social events
3. Partying too hard in the evenings
4. Not being technologically prepared for a presentation
5. Leaving no time to explore the city the conference is held in

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Conference Monkey



SMART NETWORKING

**DURING
ACADEMIC
CONFERENCES**

Conferences are a great opportunity to network as well as to hear about the latest research in your field and to present your own work to the academic community. But how can you make the most of your networking opportunities while you are at a conference? What's the best way to make contacts and to keep in touch when you meet someone who could be a part of your network? Here are our tips on smart networking during academic conferences.

Ask questions after talks

When you go to see a talk at a conference, there will almost always be time at the end for comments, questions, or feedback from the audience. This is the time at which some of the most informative and productive discussion occurs, so don't be afraid to join in! You could ask the presenter about their methods or about other studies which they are planning for the future. Some of the most interesting answers come from asking the speaker to speculate on an open question in the field, or to share some of their newest ideas which are currently under development.

Attend the social events

As well as the academic events, don't underestimate the importance of social events such as dinners, parties, or sight-seeing trips. These events are usually more casual and informal than the academic events, and they can be a great chance to get to know the other conference attendees in a more low-key setting. Here you can have more relaxed **conversations**.



Bring business cards

Among **many things to bring** to conferences, it's always helpful to bring some business cards with you. They needn't be fancy, but a simple card with your name, university affiliation, and email address on them will make your networking much smoother. When you've had a productive conversation with someone and you'd like to keep in touch, offer them a business card so that they'll have your email address should they ever want to contact you.

Put your email address on your materials

Another great tip for sharing your email address is this: if you're giving a presentation, then make sure that your email address is visible either on your poster or on your slides. This means people can note down your contact details and get in touch with you after the conference if they have questions about your work.

Network with people of all levels of seniority

When academics are just starting out their career and are going to their first conference, it's common for them to feel as if it's only appropriate for them to talk to other junior academics. But in fact, that's not the case. Senior academics and even full professors will usually be quite happy to talk to academics at any stage in their career, and you can learn a whole lot from someone who has extensive experience of working in your field.

For a successful networking connection, find a balance

So here's the big question: what does networking look like in practice? Well, the good news is that it isn't terribly complicated – you just have to find people to talk to who might be able to help you with issues related to your career. Try to find a balance when talking to people for networking purposes. You want to spend a roughly equal amount of time discussing your work and their work, so that you both gain something.

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