

Conference Attendance Etiquette

Attending a Conference Presentation

- Be punctual. Arrive well before the panel begins to avoid distracting the presenters by coming in late.
- Remain attentive during the presentations: don't lay your head down or look around, don't look at your phone, but rather maintain eye-contact with the presenter.
- Keep cell phones on silent: remember that it is easy to become distracted while giving a presentation and a phone ringing might cause a presenter to lose his or her place.

Guidelines for Questions

- Offer courteous, insightful questions and comments: During the Q&A session, make sure you frame your questions in a non-confrontational and positive way. Make suggestions such as, "It might be helpful to mention insurance policies in your discussion of health care."
- Ask for clarification: It is entirely acceptable to ask a presenter to expand on a concept they mentioned in their presentation, e.g., "I found your discussion of Shakespeare's character Cleopatra really interesting. Can you expand on how you view her as an empowered female character?"
- If you disagree with an argument: Make sure your language recognizes the presenter's contribution and position on a topic, and articulate your question or comment in courteous language, e.g., "I'm not quite sure I agree with your premise that implementing a new recycling program at Baylor is feasible. Have you thought about the financial challenges that such a project would present?"

Presenting at an Academic Conference

- Practice your presentation as many times as possible before you present.
- On the day of the presentation, arrive early: this way you can meet with your panel chair and the other presenters, make sure all of your materials are organized, and you have water and other materials available.
- Adhere to your time limit. The panel chair will remind you when your time is up and might have to cut you off so that your co-panelists will get the chance to speak for the full allotted time as well. It is considered extremely rude to go over time at professional conferences.
- Have your PowerPoint or Prezi saved in multiple formats and in several locations just to be safe (e.g., flash drive, email, Dropbox, etc.). You (and the others on your panel) should try to have your slideshows loaded and ready on the computer so you can easily present one after another.
- Dress professionally: business professional to business casual is a good model to follow (e.g., slacks and a collared shirt or a dress). The adage that looking smart makes you feel smart is true.
- Respond to questions courteously: Make sure you acknowledge the question or comment and address it fully, even if you disagree. If you are unsure of how to respond, you can say, "Thank you for your question. I honestly have not thought about that particular issue yet, but I will be sure to consider your question in my larger project."
- Put a Works Cited in your slides at the end of the presentation.