Conferences

Conferences are a good place to share your research, learn new ideas and meet PEOPLE! It is important to learn how to network effectively in order to make a conference a good experience. If you don’t talk to anyone a conference could be quite boring.

Tips

- Take business cards and keep them handy to give out.
- Make contacts at activities at the conference, such as workshops and tutorials.
- Present a paper or a poster at a conference and talk to others about your research. This will make you an active participant in the conference.
- Make sure to prepare your abstract in advance of the submission deadline for the conference and give your co-authors time to review the abstract.
- Make up A4 sized handouts of your poster that you can handout during the conference. Place them in a folder that is posted onto the bulletin board where your poster is affixed.
- Ask informed questions
- Attend demonstrations or other activities at the conference. Some conferences will have tradeshows.
- Ask your supervisor or other colleagues to introduce you to other contacts in your discipline.
- It is a good idea to network with people key to your research early in the conference. For example someone on a committee or well known in your area of study. You may be able to arrange a chance to meet up again later in the conference. It would be good to think of some points to discuss with the person if time allows. Find out from them who you should meet at the conference.
- Talk to people sitting next to you in sessions. Find out about what they are working on.
- There is usually someone at a conference asking a question that is not designed to elicit information but to demonstrate that the questioner is quite clever. Don’t be that person.
- Some of the most interesting research may be presented by someone who is not the most polished speaker. Try to focus on the information, not only how it is presented.
- Make it a habit to have lunch with different people each day.
- Have a brief description of who you are and what you are researching prepared. This is also known as an elevator speech. If you only have one minute to introduce yourself to someone, what will you say?
- Keep promises you make to others while at a conference. Send out or email the paper or information you had indicated you would.
- Follow up conversations with a thank you email.
- If you didn’t get a chance to speak to a presenter at the conference, do so by email after the conference. Make sure to let the person know how you obtained their information and the conference you attended.
• When you receive the conference package look at the attendees list. Who would you like to meet? Are they presenting?

• Have a look at the sessions and plan your attendance. Which sessions do you not want to miss? When are there openings for networking?

• Before a presentation, skim or read the papers for the sessions you plan to attend.

• Have something to read with you if the session you attend turns out to be boring.

• While at the conference you may consider who would be an interesting guest speaker in your department. After the conference you could invite a contact to your institution to give a talk.

• While at the conference you may meet people that you can collaborate with in research projects. Keep an open mind to collaboration and working with others to improve your research outcomes.

• Make sure your email signature contains your contact information. This will help others to contact you after the conference.

Activities To-Do On Your Own

• Make business cards in advance.

• Prepare an elevator speech for someone in your academic field or peer group.

• Prepare an elevator speech for someone in the general public.

Other Resources
