



# FAQs & Tips for Panel Chairs

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## **What duties are expected of me as a panel chair?**

Panel chairs have three primary duties: 1) introducing the presenters in a session, 2) keeping time during the session, and 3) facilitating the Q & A at the end of the session. Panels are generally groups of four presentations, with each presenter allotted 15 minutes (please note: this amount includes time for reading the paper and playing clips, etc.). If your panel only has three presenters, each presenter may speak for 20 minutes. Presenter pairs (two people presenting a co-written paper) are allotted the same amount of time as an individual presenter.

## **Should I give the presenters time signals?**

Yes. Some chairs do so verbally, and some do so using small note cards. Generally chairs alert presenters when they have 5 minutes remaining and again when 2 minutes remain, although you may indicate other times at your or a presenter's preference. Chairs should advise presenters ahead of time that at the 2-minute warning, the presenter should start to wrap up his/her argument. Please convey to presenters how and when you will give them time signals before the panel starts.

## **Who keeps time for me?**

You may keep time for yourself if you are comfortable doing so. However, many individuals find it easy to lose track of time while presenting and ask a friend in the audience or another panelist to give time signals during their presentation.

## **If a presenter runs out of time but has not finished presenting, what should I do?**

You don't have to stop the presenter at exactly 15 minutes (or 20 minutes, for three-presenter sessions). However, if you have indicated to the presenter that her/his time is expired but s/he does not immediately conclude (say within a minute or so), you can and should kindly interrupt the presenter and verbally ask her/him to finish quickly so that the other panelists will have time for their presentations. If you are the presenter who runs out of time, please adhere to the time guidelines.

## **Can presenters in my panel switch the order of their presentations?**

We prefer if presenters stick to the printed order of presentations in a given panel. This allows individuals moving between panels during the session to have a better idea of when a given presentation will occur in the session. Of course, if a presenter is late/absent or there are extenuating circumstances, you may switch the order with the other panelists' agreement and at your discretion.

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**How/when do I obtain information about the presenters on my panel? What information do I need to introduce the panelists?**

A week or two before the conference, you should email your panel's presenters and ask them to email you a few biographical sentences or bullet points for you to use in introducing them to the audience. Introductions should include presenter name, position, affiliation, and paper title - but they may also include very brief statements regarding the presenter's research/teaching interests, major publications, etc. If the presentation is part of a larger project, like a dissertation or a book in progress, that could also be useful information for the audience. At the conference, you should plan to arrive at your presentation room at least 10 minutes early so that you can meet the other panelists and make sure you know how to pronounce their names, titles, etc. (The preceding panel should dismiss 15 minutes prior to the scheduled start of your panel.) Introductions should be brief. Some chairs introduce all presenters at the start of the session, but we encourage you to introduce each presenter right before s/he speaks to help audience members joining the session late to easily understand which presentation is underway at a given time.

**What is my responsibility in relation to presenters' media needs?**

You are not expected to have any specific technology-related skills or abilities. Each presentation room will be equipped with a projector and a DVD player, and the conference staff will be available for tech help. Presenters will need to bring their own laptops to hook to the projector if they have need of a computer (hook-up cords will be provided for PCs; MAC users will also need the adaptor to hook to the projector cord). Wifi is not generally available in presentation rooms. See: <http://www.swtxpca.org/documents/pages.html> for further information. If one of your presenters needs tech help when setting up before the panel starts, please locate an area chair or other conference staff for assistance.

**If a presenter's DVD/CD/media clip malfunctions, what should I do?**

Encourage presenters to test their tech before the session starts. If it malfunctions during a presentation anyway, instruct the presenter to continue with the presentation as best s/he can.

**Should the Q & A occur after each presentation or at the end of the session?**

At the end of the session! Please ask the audience to hold all questions until all panelists have presented. This provides a richer discussion time, and it prevents enthusiasm for discussing one presenter's paper from causing other presenters to run out of time.

**What is expected of me during the Q & A session?**

Given that all the presenters keep to time constraints, there will usually be 25-30 minutes at the end of each panel for questions. As chair, you will moderate the Q & A, which means you will call on audience members who have questions. You should also prepare a backup question or two about each presentation to ensure that all presenters are included and addressed in the Q & A. Sometimes the audience will be very excited about one presentation and ignore the others. It is appropriate for you to ask if there are questions for other presenters (and ask your own if there are not), even if there are remaining questions for the presentation that has already received questions. Further, if an audience member or panelist begins to dominate the Q & A, you should

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thank that person for their contributions and then redirect the conversation to ensure all are able to participate.

**What do I do if the session time ends but the Q & A is still going strong?**

Please be aware of the starting time for the next session. There is a scheduled 15 minute break in the program between sessions. Even if your session started late or there is great enthusiasm during the Q&A, you need to dismiss the panel at its scheduled conclusion time. This helps clear out the room for the next set of panelists to set up and prevents attendees at your session from being late to the next session.