

AAPT National Meeting Moderator Information

Typical Formats for AAPT sessions

- Regular contributed oral talks are 12 minutes.
(10 minutes for talk + 2 minutes for questions and answers - changeover to next talk to start during Q&A) - These are typically organized into one-hour blocks
- Invited oral talks are 24 minutes
(20 minutes for talk + 4 minutes for questions and answers - changeover to next talk to start during Q&A) - These are typically organized into one- or two-hour blocks

Other Session Formats

Often other sessions are organized that may vary in length and specific format. Time allotments will generally be specified in the meeting program and meeting app. Examples include:

- Panel Sessions: Usually 3-4 panelists who may agree upon a specified intro presentation and then participate in facilitated discussion with attendees
- Hybrid Invited Talk + Poster Session: Usually 1-2 Invited speakers with a specified time, with attendees then invited to engage in discussion of posters presented in the session room.
- Interactive Session/Workshop: Usually 1-2 workshops with a specified time. Attendees participate as invited.

Logistic Responsibilities of Session Moderators

Session moderators of all session types are responsible for the implementation of the rules governing presentations established by the AAPT and the success, defined broadly, of the session they are moderating. Along with implementing the fair application of the time limits for presentations and questions, session moderators should also be familiar enough with the audiovisual equipment and support resources to assist individual presenters when needed. Staff members are typically available to assist session moderators with solving minor problems, but session moderators must also familiarize themselves with the room and equipment before their session begins to ensure success. Typically, each session room will be equipped with a screen, laptop, projector, laser pointers, microphone, timer, and podium but this is subject to change. Moderators should check in advance to see what equipment is provided.

Professional Behavior Responsibilities of Session Moderators

Additionally, session moderators are responsible for ensuring a professional atmosphere in each session, consistent with the [AAPT Event Participation Code of Conduct](#). Session moderators are charged with being attentive to any harassment of speakers or attendees, particularly for early-career presenters. Harassment includes overly challenging or humiliating questioning, or questions posed that may be deemed unprofessional or inappropriate for the presented topic. The session moderator may choose to handle the situation in several ways (discussed below). In addition, session moderators should be sensitive and mindful of offensive images or text that may appear in slides. In instances where sexist, racist or other offensive images are presented, session moderators should intervene in real time, state publicly that the image is inappropriate, and move on from the slide as quickly as possible.

Accessibility Responsibilities of Session Moderators

Finally, it is the session moderator's responsibility to ensure that all members, regardless of disability, can participate in and benefit from the sessions. Those with disabilities, whether permanent or temporary, should be provided seating and resources necessary to fully engage in the session, when appropriate. AAPT meeting staff members are often able to provide resources when presenters provide their requirements ahead of the meeting. AAPT staff will work with session moderators to provide necessary resources on short notice but this depends entirely on the session moderator communicating the need via email, text, or through the meeting app as soon as they learn about the need and on whether the resources are available.

Key Points: SESSION MODERATOR GUIDELINES

1. Before the meeting (or prior to the session)

- a. Review session presentations in advance to be familiar with topics.
- b. Learn to pronounce the presenters' names. Consider contacting presenters ahead with questions about pronunciation.
- c. At the meeting, be sure to check the program or app for withdrawals from the session.

2. Adherence to Schedule

The session should be started on time. Session moderators should arrive 10-15 minutes prior to the session whenever possible.

- a. Prior to the session, make sure your equipment (microphone, timer) is on hand. (Important) Require that all presenters use the microphone. If the presenter's voice is too soft, encourage them to speak up or change the microphone position.
 - b. Prior to beginning the session, poll the room to ensure that all scheduled speakers are present.
 - c. The session moderator should introduce themselves and the session name/number at the beginning of the session, establish the timing for each presentation, ask that all attendees silence all communication devices, and inform speakers and attendees of how speakers will be alerted to maintain timing.
 - d. The session moderator should keep the program on schedule by having each speaker begin at the designated time. This practice facilitates parallel sessions and "session hopping."
3. The session moderator introduces each presenter by reading the title of their contribution, name, and affiliation.
 4. The session moderator is expected to treat all participants equally, allowing for their fully allotted time. Session moderators should ensure that more established speakers or people who will just not stop talking are not given special consideration over early career speakers, or speakers from marginalized groups. Moderators should be firm in cutting off a speaker who has gone more than 30 seconds or so beyond the allotted speaking time because the next presenter needs time to get equipment set up.
 5. Session Moderators should be prepared to help facilitate discussion of each oral presentation by having a question ready (as time allows) if none are presented by the audience.

Session moderators should ask attendees to use the microphone for questions so that the entire audience (and the speaker) can hear questions. Moderators should repeat questions from the floor if needed to make them audible. Try to get as many questions in as possible from as many participants as possible.

a. Please be sure to recognize and call on diverse questioners over the course of a session. Do not let anyone questioner dominate the Q&A period. The moderator should be explicit about wanting to have many different people ask questions. It is helpful for the moderator to move away from the front of the room and stand amongst the audience with a microphone in hand. That strategy seems to help quite a bit in encouraging more participants to ask questions or provide comments.

6. Scheduled presentations may not be rearranged. Presentations may not be added to a session without the explicit approval of the AAPT Executive Office. If a paper at any point in the session is withdrawn, use the allotted time for extra discussion on earlier papers so that those moving between parallel sessions will arrive in time for a paper that they wish to hear. Similarly, in the event of a last-minute or unannounced cancellation, call a brief break as a courtesy to those planning their moves between the parallel sessions. If the talks in your sessions do not fill the entire time block, you can choose to have an extra discussion period after the last talk or end the session early.