

How to help AAPT avoid hotel attrition during its National Meetings

What is attrition?

When a venue is secured for a national meeting, AAPT reserves a number of guest rooms at one or more hotels. The more guest rooms that are booked, the better the rates AAPT receives, not just from the particular hotel, but also from the convention center and other facilities AAPT might need during the meeting (bus service, etc.). Guest rooms are reserved for each night of the meeting, usually starting the Thursday before the meeting starts and ending the Thursday after the meeting. We also try to contract just enough rooms, so that a large percentage of people attending the meeting will be able to reserve guest rooms up to the registration deadline. In previous years, organizations were not penalized for overbooking, as long as the rooms were released several months before the meeting.

At the end of the meeting, the hotel adds up the total room-nights (the sum of the number of rooms used each night) and compares this to the number of room-nights promised (often in a contract) by the association. If the association has not utilized the number of guest rooms contracted, it is liable to pay the hotel for the guest rooms unused. This fee can be quite large.

How can you help?

There are a number of things you can do to help prevent the association from incurring attrition fees. These include:

- Book your guest room reservation early and as accurately as possible. We recognize that unforeseen conditions may alter plans, but the earlier you let the hotel know of changes, the more likely it is that another member will be able to fill the nights.
- The more individuals who book within the AAPT block, the better our rates will be, and the less we will be charged for use of meeting rooms, etc. In addition, Annual Meeting registration fees for each year are based on results from the past 1-3 years results. If we need to budget attrition fees and other costs into the registration fee, it will rise. The higher the percentage of attendees who use the hotel registration service, the better we will be able to accurately book room blocks for upcoming years.

With your cooperation, AAPT will continue to be successful in negotiating good contracts for the association for the National Meeting, and AAPT will be able to maintain the conference and activities that members have come to enjoy.

What can AAPT do to prevent Attrition Fees?

As an organization, AAPT depends upon the Annual Meeting to produce a sufficient amount of revenue to support its conferences. A large attrition penalty could significantly affect the profitability of the National Meetings, and result in the under-funding of these events.

To prevent attrition fees, the answer is for AAPT to reduce the number of room-nights booked for the National Meetings. Unfortunately, this can result in increased costs to AAPT and to the attendees for the meeting, as well as some inconvenience. Based on the number of rooms in the block, other facilities in the hotel (meeting rooms, banquet space, complimentary rooms, etc.) are made available to AAPT for little or no cost. As the number of room-nights is reduced, rates for that space, as well as the rates offered to attendees, will rise. Additionally, since AAPT has normally 'sold-out' at the current number of rooms, many members will find they are unable to reserve a room, particularly in some of the more popular cities.