

PGR Tips on preparing for conferences

Conference season is upon us. Are you going to any? Are you fully prepared to make the most of the experience? Below are some tips to help you prepare

Choosing the conference

You will attend only a finite number of conferences so try to choose the best one(s) for you. Discuss what you are hoping to get out of a conference with your supervisor. Are you hoping to broaden or deepen your knowledge? What aspect of your research? (as it may well straddle different conference themes) . Is it a priority to hear the great and the good speak or to present your own research? Would a large or small number of attendees best suit you?

Funding

Make sure you apply for funding to cover different aspects of the conference. Many charities, institutions and professional bodies offer grants to cover travel and other expenses. Gaining such funding is good evidence to put on your CV....

Make your abstract is the best it can be

If you are submitting an abstract it will be your advertisement, so the more exciting it is the more likely you'll generate interest. If your abstract is for a poster presentation, bear in mind that many conferences will choose some poster abstracts to become oral presentations, which is a great opportunity.

Prepare for the content of the talks

Ever listened to a talk you'd really looked forward to only to get lost during the introduction? You can avoid this by reading articles on the same subject or by the same author(s) in advance. This will make you familiar with the background and allow you to absorb the new information presented.

Shortlist the people you'd like to meet

Don't leave who you talk to completely to chance... Draw up a list and prioritise. Plan to speak to people at their poster if they are taking part in a poster session. If they are presenting, asking a (relevant) question is a good introduction.

Twitter

Twitter is becoming very popular as a conference tool. It can help you to discuss the content of presentations while they are going on and can improve networking. See ['How people are using twitter during conferences'](#) for more information on this.

Consider some personal marketing tools

Having business cards or summaries of your poster or research gives people something to take away and remember you by. Similarly, help people to shortlist you on their wish list by having your research interests easily findable online. Your institution might make eportfolios or similar available.

