

Newcomers' Guide to the RSA Annual Conference

Welcome to the RSA Annual Conference!

This guide has been created by the RSA office team to introduce you to the conference and help you make the most of it. If you have questions that are not answered here, stop by the Registration Desk for assistance.



General Tips

Manage your schedule. This is our largest conference of the year, so you'll find no shortage of activities that reflect your interests. With so much going on, you can't do it all. Consider making a daily agenda to print or transfer to a smartphone and keep your conference programme handy to confirm session details.

Download RSA's Mobile APP, just search for **RSA Events** on your usual app store - a smartphone application that allows attendees to search the programme for sessions, events and other pertinent conference information.

Prioritise your activities. Search the online or printed conference programme to identify topics, speakers and sessions of interest. High profile activities include plenary talks, keynote addresses and special sessions organised around the featured themes of the conference.

Be flexible. Don't schedule your time so rigidly that you have to miss out on unexpected opportunities, such as a last-minute opening for an exciting excursion or a spontaneous conversation with a promising new contact. Refer to daily updates, to stay informed of important announcements, cancellations, scheduling changes or room location updates.

Get out of your comfort zone. The annual conference is a great opportunity to explore a facet of the field that has piqued your curiosity or to become acquainted with a topic that is completely new to you. Each special session focusses on a particular topic so these presentations are especially helpful for getting introduced to a new area of interest.

Pace yourself! Rest up so you can fully appreciate the conference's offerings. Be sure to set aside time to explore the city, make new contacts and reconnect with friends and acquaintances as these can be valuable learning and professional development experiences.



Find your friends. The bulletin boards near registration are a convenient central meeting place. You can also read or post messages and announcements on the bulletin boards. There is also a chat feature on the conference app which allows you to message other delegates before the conference.



Session Types

Paper sessions: Speaker presentation times vary so make sure you have checked how many speakers are in your session.

Panel sessions: After preliminary comments, the panellists engage in a discussion with Q&A from the audience.

Plenary sessions: Several plenary sessions featuring highly distinguished speakers are hosted by the RSA.

Meet the Editors: Conference participants have the opportunity to meet some of the editors from RSA journals, after a preliminary presentation the editors engage with Q&A from the audience.



Session Participation Tips

As a presenter, it is polite to stay for the entire session. Leave and enter quietly if you come or go during a session. If the room is full, find a seat on the floor or stand at the back.

Consider taking some “time off” before your session to maintain your focus and steady any last minute jitters. Check out the room before you present, if you can. Bring your presentation in two formats in case a computer can’t

read your file.

Be respectful on time limits and come well-prepared, having thoroughly rehearsed your presentation. You never know who might be in the audience, so be sure to put your best foot forward! Introducing yourself to your co-presenters/chair is a good way to network and make connections. Bring a few printed copies of your paper or presentation notes to share with audience members or new contacts.



Networking Tips

If networking with specific people is high on your list of priorities, try to attend their sessions, or email them ahead of time with a request to connect during the meeting. Carry business cards to give to new contacts.

Conference badges include participants’ affiliations, so keep an eye out for representatives of organisations or departments of interest to you. The stripe on the left hand side of the badge will alert you to attendees’ roles at the conference and within the association. If you attend an excellent talk, or if you have to miss a session of interest, consider following up with the presenter(s) after the meeting by phone or email. Many presenters are willing to share a copy of their presentation or paper upon request. If you are a shy or introverted person, try a field trip to meet new people in a smaller group and a more relaxed, informal setting.



Events and Activities

Field trips and workshops. The programme lists some opportunities to explore the city and surrounding regions with knowledgeable guides and to participate in workshops on a variety of topics. Advance registration and a fee are required for most field trips. Sign up early; these fill quickly. To enquire about availability or to register, visit the Registration Desk.

Exhibition Area. The Exhibition area is a good place to mingle while browsing the stands of exhibitors, these will include major journal and book publishers. Books and journals are offered for sale and are often discounted for conference attendees.

Early Career Session. We hold special sessions for Early Career Researchers during the conference, please remember to check the programme for more information.



Social Events

The RSA hosts a Welcome Reception where you can meet with friends and colleagues and meet new people. Winners of the Best Early Career paper/International paper will be announced at the conference dinner, which is included in all participants' conference fee.

Planning for the next Annual Conference

Register for the conference as early as possible to take advantage of discounted rates. If you plan to present at the conference, remember that abstracts are due several months in advance.

The RSA provides a number of bursaries (free conference place) for the conference, it is advisable to apply early as places are limited and are awarded by the conference bursary committee on the basis of quality. For more information, visit: www.regionalstudies.org/conferences

