

NEWCOMERS' GUIDE TO THE AAG ANNUAL MEETING

Welcome to the AAG Annual Meeting!

This guide has been created by AAG staff to introduce you to the meeting and help you make the most of it. If you have questions that are not answered here, come by the Meridian Space or Registration Desk for assistance.

General Tips

Manage your schedule. This is the largest geography conference in the world, so you'll find no shortage of activities that reflect your interests. With so much going on, you can't possibly do it all. Consider making a daily agenda using the AAG's free mobile app - a smartphone app that allows attendees to search the program for sessions, events, and other pertinent conference information.

Prioritize your activities. Search the app to identify topics, speakers, and sessions of interest. High-profile activities include plenary talks, keynote addresses, and session tracks organized around the featured themes of each 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 field trip or a spontaneous conversation with a promising new contact. Refresh the app to stay informed of important announcements, cancellations, scheduling changes, or room location updates.

Get out of your comfort zone. The Annual Meeting is a great opportunity to explore a facet of the discipline that has piqued your curiosity or to become acquainted with a topic or technique that is completely new to you. Most specialty groups (SG) highlight one session that showcases their focus, so these presentations are especially helpful for getting introduced to a new area of interest. Check the app Essentials section for a full list of SG highlighted sessions.

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. Lunch breaks are brief and conference facilities can get quite busy during these times, so consider having a snack and beverage on hand.

Dress for success. "Business casual" attire is appropriate for all conference events. Indoor temperatures can vary; consider wearing layers or carry a light sweater or jacket. You might need to walk short distances between conference venues, so comfortable footwear is recommended.

Find your friends. The Meridian Space near Registration is a convenient central meeting place. You can also read or post messages and announcements on bulletin boards or in the app.

Session Types

Paper sessions: Each presenter speaks for 15-20 minutes including Q&A afterwards.

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

Poster sessions: Posters are exhibited for informal browsing with opportunities for discussion with poster authors.

Guided poster sessions: Presenters give brief talks about their posters. Afterwards, attendees can get a closer look and ask questions.

Lightning paper sessions: Very short presentations in which attendees get a rapid and intensive overview of a topic, followed by a 30- to 45-minute interactive round table discussion.

Plenary sessions: Several plenary sessions featuring highly distinguished speakers are hosted by the AAG, and some specialty groups organize topical plenary talks.

Session Participation Tips

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 in the back.

Check out the room before you present, if you can.

Bring your presentation in two file formats in case a computer can't read your file. PDFs are always a good option.

Introducing yourself to your co-presenters is a good way to network and make connections.

Be respectful of 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!

Consider taking some "time off" before your session to maintain your focus and steady any last-minute jitters.

If you wish, bring some printed copies of your paper or presentation notes to share with audience members or new contacts.

As a presenter, it is polite to stay for the entire session.



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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 organizations or departments of interest to you. Badge ribbons will alert you to attendees' roles at the meeting 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 or specialty group activity to meet new people in a smaller group and a more relaxed, informal setting.

Events and Activities

Field trips and workshops: The program lists numerous 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 and workshops. Sign up early; these fill quickly. To inquire about availability or to register, visit the On-Site Registration booth.

Exhibit Hall: The Exhibit Hall is a good place to mingle while browsing the booths of exhibitors and vendors, including tech companies, government agencies, academic programs, and major geography journal and book publishers. Books and journals are offered for sale and are often discounted for conference attendees. Some exhibitors conduct demonstrations, informal classes, and book receptions at various times during the conference. Refer to the meeting app and watch for announcements with further details.

Jobs & Careers Center: The Jobs & Careers Center, located in Wilson A, B & C, Marriott, Mezzanine Level offers career advice, job postings, resources, and networking opportunities for professionals, students, and job seekers. Stop by the Jobs & Careers information booth for a schedule of activities and information about careers and professional development activities that will occur throughout the meeting.

Specialty and Affinity Group meetings: Even if you are not yet a member, consider attending a specialty/affinity group business meeting. Although these are not informational sessions, they offer the chance to learn more about the group's activities and to meet others who share your research interests. Most groups have student representatives on their boards of directors, so getting involved is an excellent way to gain experience and develop your professional network.

Join listservs and AAG Knowledge Communities to receive announcements about other social activities and events. For questions about joining, contact membership@aag.org.

Special Events

The AAG hosts a large International Reception where you can connect with friends and colleagues and meet new people. This year's event will take place on Thursday, April 4, from 7:00–9:00 PM in Ballroom Salon 1 & 2, Marriott. Two free drink tickets are included in your registration packet.

Many academic departments, specialty/affinity groups, and business meetings hold their own receptions, which are great networking opportunities. See the program and bulletin boards for details.

Winners of student awards and recipients of AAG honors are recognized at the Awards Luncheon, held on the last day of the conference. Tickets can be purchased at On-Site Registration.

The World Geography Bowl is a round-robin tournament featuring student teams from the AAG's regional divisions. It starts at 7:00 PM on Thursday, April 4 in the Maryland and Virginia Rooms, Marriott.

The AAG will host a networking social for students in the Marriott Ballroom Salon 1 on Wednesday, April 3, from 4:30–6:10 PM. The event will provide a venue for students to meet and interact with each other and organizations that offer opportunities and/or resources for students.

Planning for Denver 2020

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

The AAG provides a subsidy to registered conference attendees for qualified child care expenses incurred during the meeting.

Students and unemployed/underemployed geographers who are AAG members may apply to serve as conference volunteers to help offset their registration costs.

For more information, visit: www.aag.org/annualmeeting.

Events for Newcomers

Meridian Space

Visit the Meridian Space in the Marriott if you have more questions during the conference about the AAG in general

Career Mentoring Sessions

Drop-in advising for all conference attendees, with an emphasis on answering questions about careers

(Jobs & Careers Center, Wilson A-C, Marriott, Mezzanine Level)

Wednesday-Saturday, April 3 - 6

9:55-11:35 AM

Welcome to the AAG

An orientation panel for first-time and newish attendees

(Jobs & Careers Center, Wilson B, Marriott, Mezzanine Level) on

Wednesday, April 3, 8:00-9:40 AM