



Dear APPAM Members and Attendees,

As we get closer to the end of March, we would like to clarify plans for our rescheduled 2021 Fall Research Conference in Austin. As we said when APPAM moved the conference from November 2021 to March 2022, the value of face-to-face networking and presentation of original research in person cannot be overstated. Our members



have told us many times this is what they prefer, and we will do everything within our power to accommodate that preference. With vaccine and booster availability, we can have our conference with COVID mitigation strategies in place to support a safe experience for everyone. However, we are aware this will likely be a smaller conference than we are used to, especially if other variants emerge or omicron sticks around until the end of March.

We are offering 20% of our sessions either virtually or in a hybrid setting to ensure that a virtual attendee can have a substantive experience, even if they choose not to attend in person. Finally, we recognize that this approach will not please everyone. Unfortunately, it appears that COVID, in some form or another, will be with us for the foreseeable future and continuing to wait for it to end is not a viable strategy. We must adjust our planning to support COVID-safe meetings.

Here is what we plan to do in Austin to keep everyone safe:

Vaccines

Vaccines will be required for in person attendance. We will have our attendees upload a vaccination card into our database during the registration process. If a registrant does not upload the card prior to arriving onsite, they will be required to show it in person at the registration desk before picking up their badge. If an attendee indicates that they are not vaccinated and do not plan to become vaccinated by the conference, they will be offered the option of virtual attendance.

Masks

Masks will be required, and we will encourage attendees to respect their colleagues by making sure they are always masked indoors. Since Texas does not have a mask mandate, we will make sure that our attendees know that the requirement is in our meeting space only, not the entire hotel, but that we encourage them to wear masks throughout the hotel and anywhere they visit in Austin.

Health Checks

We will not perform temperature checks for attendees nor offer rapid COVID tests, although we will encourage people to take a home test before they travel.

Sessions

We are offering almost 50 sessions, or about 20% of the total sessions, in a virtual or hybrid format and are streaming our marquis events for virtual attendees. We cannot allow any more presentation changes as we do not have the space or resources to manage more hybrid or virtual sessions, all while managing an in person conference. We understand that this will mean that some attendees pull their papers from the conference and some session reformation will have to occur.

Deposits and Fees

We are waiving the [registration](#) cancellation fee as well as the non-refundable first night's deposit for the [JW Marriot Austin](#). This will help attendees who might be waiting to see how omicron plays out before deciding to attend in person.

Food and Beverage/Social Distancing/Networking Events

We will make every effort to encourage social distancing, offer individual wrapped or single serve food and beverage items and/or have hotel staff serve food to attendees to limit contact.

We hope this communication helps you decide whether to attend the conference in person or virtually. Please visit our website for more information, [including our FAQ](#). Updates to any of these policies, should they be necessary, will be communicated [via email and our website](#). We remain confident that we can have a robust conference, filled with opportunities to network, hear the latest topical research and connect with the APPAM community safely. Two years has been too long, and we are SO EXCITED to see you in Austin!

Sincerely,

John Martinez, APPAM President