

Virtual Speaking at APPAM: Best Practices



ASSOCIATION FOR
PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSIS
& MANAGEMENT

Best Practices for Presenting Academic Papers

- ▶ Presentation Style
- ▶ Visual Aids
- ▶ Content
- ▶ Timing
- ▶ Audience Engagement
- ▶ Zoom Meeting Basics
- ▶ FAQs

Presentation Style:

How to Share Your Paper

- ▶ **DO: Map out your paper to reiterate key points, arguments, and findings**
 - ▶ Share your work in a format that is easy to follow.
- ▶ **DO: Summarize your work to make it obtainable for all audience members**
 - ▶ Simplify the more intricate details so that every audience member can understand your arguments and findings
- ▶ **DO: Utilize and reference visual aids**
 - ▶ Use visual aids such as PowerPoint slides to share the high-level points. This helps the audience follow along through your presentation
- ▶ **DO: Speak slowly, loudly, and clearly**
 - ▶ You want everyone to not only hear you but understand you. Speak slowly and clearly for attendees who may speak English as a second (or third!) language.

Presentation Style:

How to Share Your Paper

▶ **DON'T: Read your paper word-for-word**

- ▶ This is a sure way to lose your audience's attention. Instead, summarize and reiterate the key points in an easily comprehensible way.

▶ **DON'T: Rush through important points**

- ▶ Remember, you may know this information like the back of your hand, but your audience doesn't. Give them a chance to learn from you.

▶ **DON'T: Try to include every tiny detail**

- ▶ It's more important that your work is understood rather than just thrown at the audience. Cover only the most important details and give highlights of the others.

▶ **DON'T: Read straight from the PowerPoint Slides**

- ▶ Visual aids should be an aid, not a lifeline. Only include your key points so audience members can easily follow what you're saying.

Visual Aids

Map Out Your Work for the Audience

- ▶ **Background** - Simple backgrounds that will provide visual interest without being distracting.
- ▶ **Font Types**
 - ▶ Stick with the classics: Times New Roman, Arial or Calibri.
 - ▶ Use the same font throughout the entire presentation.
- ▶ **Font Colors** - Ensure fonts contrast with the background and they are easy to read.
- ▶ **Font Sizes** - Body text should be a *minimum* of 20-point for easy reading.

Visual Aids

Map Out Your Work for the Audience

▶ **Layout**

- ▶ Go easy on the amount of text. Less is more!
- ▶ Always use bullet points.
- ▶ Avoid full paragraphs. Use key points then share the paragraphs orally.

▶ **Keep it Simple** - Use a new slide for each key point of the presentation (don't forget a title!). This keeps the audience engaged and prevents them from skipping ahead.

▶ **Graphics** - Use images/charts/tables on every page. Text should compliment the graphics, not the other way around.

Content

What to Include in Your Presentation

▶ **Follow a basic formula for sharing your work:**

- ▶ Introduction/Background – this is your hook!
- ▶ Research Question/Framework
- ▶ Methodology
- ▶ Data & Results
- ▶ Analysis
- ▶ Conclusion/Questions

Content

What to Include in Your Presentation

▶ **Introduction/Background**

- ▶ What is the main point of the work?
- ▶ What is currently known in this area?

▶ **Research Question/Framework**

- ▶ What are you trying to accomplish?
- ▶ What is the core of your project?

▶ **Methodology**

- ▶ How did you collect and analyze your data?
- ▶ Is your description clear enough for others to understand and duplicate?

Content

What to Include in Your Presentation

▶ **Data/Research & Analysis**

- ▶ What did you find?
- ▶ Did you reiterate and answer your research question
- ▶ Be sure not to overwhelm the audience. Simplify this information using charts and graphics.

▶ **Conclusion**

- ▶ Are you satisfied with your findings?
- ▶ Do you have plans for future work?
- ▶ Acknowledge those that assisted in the research.

▶ **Questions** - Always have a slide for questions!

Timing

The Clock Never Stops

▶ **Virtual Session Time Limits**

- ▶ 13 - 21 minutes to present, depending on the total number of speakers or papers.
- ▶ Check with your session discussant for exact timing.
- ▶ An example session format can be found in our Zoom Meeting Speaker Guide.

▶ **Follow the Cues** - Session Discussants will provide 5, 2, and 1-minute verbal alerts to indicate your remaining time.

▶ **Practice**

- ▶ Good presentations take skill. Practice before you start the live Zoom Meeting.
- ▶ Test your video, audio, screenshare, and internet before the live session.
- ▶ Do a dry-run with a peer for feedback on clarity, volume, and content.

Audience Engagement

Keep Them Hooked!

- ▶ **Tell Them What to Learn** - Keep your points clear so the audience knows exactly what they're going to hear.
- ▶ **Utilize Video** - Since the session is not in-person, having your video turned on is the next best thing. Don't forget to smile for both the live audience and for the recording.
- ▶ **Use Silence to Your Benefit** - Pause periodically, especially after in-depth explanations, to allow the information sink in.

Zoom Meeting Basics

▶ Test Equipment & Internet

- ▶ Test your Zoom audio and video, located in your Zoom account profile settings, before the practice and live sessions.
- ▶ Test your internet connection before the practice and live session.

▶ Video Tips

- ▶ Position yourself in front of direct or natural light. Backlighting will make your video dark.
- ▶ Ensure visible space is tidy or use a Zoom virtual background so the attention stays on you and not your surroundings.
- ▶ Ask nearby individuals to keep background noise and distractions to a minimum for the 90 minute session.
- ▶ When you are not presenting, you should be on mute to prevent disruptions.
- ▶ Don't forget to smile! The Zoom meeting recording starts as soon as the session is activated.

▶ Zoom Features

▶ Bottom left toolbar:

- ▶ **Audio (microphone icon)** – Please mute your audio when you're not presenting or answering a question directed at you from the discussant.
- ▶ **Video (camcorder icon)** – Please always share your video for the best audience experience.

▶ Bottom center toolbar:

- ▶ **Chat (single chat box icon)** – All participants and attendees will be able to use the "Chat" feature. You can send a message to "All Panelists," "All Panelists and Attendees," or you can send a direct message to someone by name. The chat box is shown below on the right side of the screen.
- ▶ **Share Screen (green upwards arrow)** – When it's your turn to present, click the green "Share Screen" icon, select your slide deck (please do not share your entire screen), then select the blue "share" button to begin. Once complete, select "Stop Share" at the top center of your screen.

▶ Zoom Meeting Speaker Guide - For more detailed information on Zoom, please reference the [Zoom Meeting Speaker Guide](#).

FAQs

Extra Tips & Tricks

▶ **What Should I Say?**

- ▶ Write out what you want to say during the presentation and use this to practice. For the actual presentation, use note cards with only the key points for reference so you don't have to rely on your slide notes.
- ▶ For a 15-minute presentation, your script can be about 7 pages, double-spaced.

▶ **What If I Don't Know the Answer to a Question?**

- ▶ Simply say, "I don't know the answer to that right now. Can I get your information after the session so I can get back to you?"
- ▶ Just make sure you get their email address and that you follow up with them in a reasonable amount of time.

▶ **What if I'm nervous?**

- ▶ Everyone started somewhere and that's exactly why the Student Research Seminars were created. Your abstract was peer reviewed and accepted into this event series so use that to boost your confidence!
- ▶ Attend other presentations to watch your peers, arrive to your session room early, and take deep breaths. You'll do great!

Thank You!

For any questions about your presentation or the conference, please contact:

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References

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