

A Graduate Student's Guide to the APSA Annual Meeting & Exhibition

Prepared by the APSA Committee on the Status of Graduate Students in the Profession

CONFERENCE LOGISTICS

Q: How can graduate students cut food costs at the conference?

Eating in Boston can be expensive, but there are a few ways for grad students to save money. Groupon or LivingSocial can be an affordable way to experience the city's food and cultural scene. A quick Google search of "cheap eats Boston" brings up recommendations from [TripAdvisor](#), a [Buzzfeed listicle](#), and [Eater Boston](#). Come to the meet and greet with the Committee on the Status of the Graduate Student at the Career Fair! Learn more about the committee and grab some snacks! In addition, bringing some of your own snacks that don't require refrigeration, such as granola or energy bars, or whole fruits, such as apples or bananas, can also help reduce costs.

Q: What family friendly resources are available at the Annual Meeting?

The Annual Meeting has subsidized **child care** available for children ages 6 months to 12 years. For more information, please view the convention's [Child Care webpage](#). The meeting's page on all [family-friendly resources](#) has more information about **mother's rooms**, **changing table locations**, and suggestions for **family excursions** in Boston.

Q: What is the purpose of the Exhibitors Hall?

The Exhibitor's Hall features publishers, research centers, think tanks, and other organizations related to the profession. The Hall is a great place to preview recent releases of textbooks, monographs, and other publications related to the profession. It's also a great place to network with recruiters from various government agencies, think tanks, research centers, and publishers to learn about opportunities for internships, employment, and publications. Finally, exhibitors are always giving out free swag, like USBs, tote bags, water bottles, and the like! For more information about who will be at the Exhibitor's Hall at this year's convention, see [here](#).

SECTION MEMBERSHIP

Q: Why should graduate students be a part of sections? What are some of the benefits?

Many graduate students are curious about a particular subject, but lack the exposure to develop these interests. Being a part of a section gives us access to current research, conferences, and mentorship from more senior members in the field. Graduate students are also excellent candidates for junior leadership roles. Whether it's copyediting the section newsletter, representing the graduate experience, or finalizing the business meeting agenda, a graduate member can offer invaluable service to the section, all while developing important professional skills that will prepare them to take on more senior leadership roles in the future.

Q: Who can attend business meetings?

Anyone who has paid a conference registration fee is allowed to attend business meetings. This might be a good way to introduce yourself, make first connections at the section, and find if it is a good fit for your research interests.

Q: Can graduate students attend events of sections they're not a part of?

Of course! Students are welcome to attend panels and meetings of any organized section, so long as the event is listed in the Annual Meeting program.

CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE

Q: Who can attend the APSA Annual Meeting?

Anyone who has paid the conference registration fee is eligible to attend. If finances allow, attending the conference at any time could be beneficial to graduate students, but is often most beneficial for networking for future employment and finding collaborators.

Q: How can graduate students afford the APSA conference?

There are many ways for graduate students to fund APSA travel. One source would be from professional and graduate associations at your home institution. APSA also offers several resources, available [here](#). Oftentimes, sections also offer travel grants for students ahead of conferences (another reasons to enroll in them!).

Q: Where should we stay while attending APSA?

Hotel arrangements can be made through APSA; however, these are often costly for graduate students. Many graduate students use Airbnb or deal websites, such as Priceline Express Deals. Consider sharing rentals with other graduate students from your program or city.

Q: What's the dress code?

Dress code can vary for the conference and more social events, such as happy hours. For the conference, attire should be business formal, either with dress pants, blazers, nice cardigans, and collared shirts or blouses. The dress code relaxes for happy hours but still should be business casual.

JOB SEARCHES AND INTERVIEWS

Q: How can I use the Annual Meeting to help me find a job?

The annual convention is a good time to network with academic departments, universities, and any private sector entities for employment. You should first do your homework—review the meeting guide. Consider which academic departments have receptions, booths, or interviews at the conference. Don't forget your business card! Ask your academic department if they will print one for you, or consider cheaper options at [Vistaprint](#) or [Moo](#). The APSA Career Fair (co-sponsored by the Committee for the Status of Graduate Students in the Profession), held in the Marriott (Arlington), from 4-6pm on Thursday, August 30, is a great place to network—and put those business cards to good use! Find out more about the Career Fair and other professional development opportunities at the annual convention [here](#).

Q: Why do some students and job-seekers interview at APSA? How does this process work?

The interview scheduling process often works in one of three ways. Some colleges and universities reach out directly to candidates (who they find through the eJobs site, where candidates can indicate they are on the market and can also upload their CVs). Other institutions, through their eJobs posting, invite interested job-seekers to contact them in advance of the APSA meeting to schedule an interview (see the job listings on the [APSA e-Jobs website](#) and [e-Jobs Interview Service FAQ](#)). Finally, some colleges and universities do not make it clear how to go about an interview. In these latter cases, we suggest emailing the search committee chair directly to request an interview. Unless specifically requested by a search committee, you will not need to submit a full application before setting up an interview. For instance, if reaching out to a search chair to request an interview, it's highly recommended that you include a cover letter and a CV. In both cases, the interviews at the convention help search committees narrow down their list of potential fly-out candidates.

Q: Where is the job interview room?

The job interview room is usually a large ballroom in one of the main conference hotel buildings. If you have an interview, the search committee may give you directions to the room, but you can also ask the staff at the registration desk for help finding it. This year the interview service is located at the Marriott Gloucester. You can find more information [here](#).

Q: What tools/resources should student and job-seekers bring along to these meetings?

Standard procedure is to bring copies of all of your job materials (CV, cover letter, teaching statement, writing sample, syllabi, etc), though it's likely that the search committee will have copies of their own in hand. Prepare as if you were going to an on-campus interview, with talking points about your research and teaching. Most interviews last anywhere between 10 and 30 minutes.

NETWORKING

Q: Which receptions should I attend?

Many groups hold receptions at the annual convention, including academic departments, APSA committees, and APSA sections. Most receptions—unless specified as “invitation only”—are open to all annual meeting participants. Which one you attend depends on your own interests.

Q: What questions should you ask journal editors?

This depends on your own interests and your own experience with the publishing process. If you have no familiarity with the publishing process, don't be afraid to mention you're new to the process. Some journals accept graduate students as reviewers, so you can inquire about their process for applying. Being a reviewer can give you a unique, in-depth perspective to the publishing process.

Q: Is the hackathon a good way to network and/or meet people?

In short, yes! You can sign up to participate as part of an existing team and meet other APSA participants that way. At the event, “teams will develop strategies that address key challenges facing the profession, build partnerships, and plans to move forward.”

According to their website, the hackathon's main goal is to "build on past and present efforts by APSA and its component organizations to promote diversity and inclusion by creating a collaborative, diverse, and inclusive space for annual meeting participants to come together". Check out the [hackathon website](#) for more information.