

# Navigating a Radiology Conference: A Comprehensive Guide for Trainees

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## Purpose

To share a comprehensive guide for trainees detailing considerations before, during, and after a radiology conference.

## Introduction

- National radiology conferences allow trainees (medical students and residents) an opportunity to expand their education and network, but trainees often lack the guidance necessary to optimally navigate these meetings.
- To our knowledge, there is no literature that focuses on informing trainees' radiology conference experience.
- We aim to share a comprehensive guide for trainees detailing considerations before, during, and after a radiology conference.

## Overview of Conferences in Radiology

- Dozens of academic radiology conferences occur annually. Some are broad in scope, offering events in various subspecialties of radiology, whereas others are subspecialty-focused.

Table 1. Overview of Types of Radiology Conferences

	Examples	Benefits
<b>Broad Meetings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Radiological Society of North America (RSNA) Annual Meeting</li><li>American College of Radiology (ACR) Annual Meeting</li><li>American Roentgen Ray Society (ARRS) Annual Meeting</li><li>Society of Interventional Radiology (SIR) Annual Meeting</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Broad in scope</li><li>Well-established educational programming for medical students and residents</li><li>Ideal for trainees looking to explore the breadth of radiology</li></ul>
<b>Subspecialty Meetings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Society of Abdominal Radiology</li><li>Society of Radiologists in Ultrasound</li><li>American Society of Neuroradiology</li><li>Society for Pediatric Radiology</li><li>Many others</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ideal for trainees with a subspecialty interest</li><li>Generally a smaller, close-knit conference</li></ul>
<b>Regional Meetings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>ACR annual chapter meetings in each state</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>May be more accessible</li><li>Regional networking opportunities</li></ul>

## Considerations Before the Conference

### Travel and Research Awards:

- Variety of grants available, geared solely toward trainee travel and research.
- Several conferences such as RSNA, ACR, and SIR offer medical student travel scholarships. Any trainee who meets the basic eligibility requirements can apply, with no requirement of a research presentation.
- Some conferences, such as RSNA, offer trainee research awards and grants.
- Other sources of travel funding include the trainee's home radiology department or the medical student research office, if available.

### Abstract Submissions

- Trainees involved in research should consider submitting their work as an abstract to a national conference.

- If selected for a presentation, great opportunity to engage with a national audience, to network, to make new connections, to enhance one's curriculum vitae, and to develop a strong foundation for future journal submissions.
- Accepted research presentations may also open opportunities for research grants or research-based travel funding.
- Important to consider the breadth and the subspecialty focus of various conferences when considering which conference is the most suitable for abstract submission.

### Registration, Travel, & Lodging:

- Several conferences offer free or discounted registration fees for trainees.
- Many large conferences, such as RSNA, often partner with airlines and local hotels to offer discounts, often listed on the conference website.

### Planning Your Conference Agenda:

- It is imperative to plan out an agenda in advance of the conference to make the best use of time. Detailed programming is usually available in advance on the conference website.
- Larger conferences generally also offer an app, which allows one to save events for easy access. We suggest that trainees plan to attend various types of events (see below).

### Reaching out to Your Network:

- Before the conference, trainees should reach out to their personal network in case they plan to attend. Often, experienced attendees are willing to guide trainees on how to best navigate a radiology conference.
- Additionally, one's personal network is also an easy way to expand their network, as a mentor is often willing to introduce the trainee to colleagues.
- Sometimes there are institution-specific evening receptions.

### Preparing for Any Presentation Responsibilities:

Q&A portion is often the most engaging, with opportunities to connect with the audience. An audience with a similar project interest can open doors for future collaborations.

## During the Conference

### Networking Opportunities:

One of the most important items to take advantage of for a trainee!

- Both formal and informal networking opportunities include meet and greets, social hours, evening receptions, institution-specific receptions, DEI events, and exhibitor fairs.
- During scientific or educational sessions, attendees can often approach a speaker after their presentation.
- Poster sessions are a relatively simple way to interact one-on-one with others.
- Always exchange contact information after any engaging interactions.

### Trainee-Focused Sessions:

Offered at some conferences, but an excellent way to engage in events and opportunities geared specifically toward students and residents.

### Leveraging Social Media:

- X (Med Twitter) is one of the most popular social platforms amongst the radiology community.
- Large conferences often have conference-specific hashtags one can use to create posts during the conference or to find posts by others attending the same conference.
- Simple and quick way to engage with other conference attendees and find potential events and socials to attend.<sup>1</sup> Also a unique way to follow conferences that one is not able to attend.

## After the Conference

### Staying in Touch with New Contacts:

- Must keep in touch with new contacts after a conference to maintain and develop the relationship.
- Long-term contacts are beneficial to develop a mentor-mentee relationship and open doors for future collaborations.

### Becoming a Member of Radiology Societies<sup>2,3</sup>:

- Many large radiology organizations offer a trainee membership, which is generally discounted or free.
- Membership benefits include discounted conference registrations, scientific journal access, access to forums, educational materials such as clinical cases, and more.

### Becoming Involved in National Committees:

- If a trainee would like to get involved in a radiology organization at a deeper level, serving on a national trainee committee or editorial board is a great opportunity. Organizations such as RSNA, ACR, SIR, AAWR, SAR, and many others offer medical student or resident committees that lead national projects focusing on medical education and outreach, mentorship, membership recruitment, research, DEI, communications, and much more
- While competitive, these committees offer opportunities for national leadership roles, to work closely with other trainees and mentors in the field, and to contribute your passions at a national level.

### Planning For Your Next Conference:

- It is never too early to start planning for the next conference. Consider whether you would like to explore another conference or return to the same conference. The choice may also depend on pending research projects that need to be submitted.
- As a trainee and beyond, it is important to regularly attend conferences, if possible, to stay current with the evolving field of radiology, gain educational insight, and maintain and form in-person relationships with colleagues.

## Conclusions

- Overall, trainees should prepare for a radiology conference in advance to optimize time during a conference and take the necessary actions both during and after a conference to ensure an engaging and productive experience.
- The art of navigating a conference can expand a trainee's network, radiology education, open doors to mentorship, research experiences, and future collaborations, among numerous other benefits.

## References

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