**Getting Ready for Conferences**

December 14, 2010, 3:00 pm

By [Mark Sample](http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/author/msample)

The end of the fall semester is nearly upon us, which means it’s the start of a very special season—the conference season. Several major scholarly organizations hold their annual conferences this time of year, and if you’re a regular ProfHacker reader, the chances are that you or somebody you know will be at one of these conferences. Maybe you’re presenting on a panel. Maybe you’re interviewing for jobs. Maybe you’re conducting interviews. I suppose it’s conceivable—though not enviable—that you’re even doing all three!

We’ve written a great deal about academic conferences on ProfHacker: Erin’s given tips on [writing abstracts](http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/the-conference-abstract/23051) for conference papers; Brian’s explained how to [hack a conference](http://www.briancroxall.net/2009/12/21/at-profhacker-how-to-hack-an-academic-conference/); Heather’s helped us [eat well](http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/a-few-strategies-for-eating-well-at-conferences/23958) at conferences; and Natalie’s suggested ways to [work in exercise](http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/add-exercise-to-your-conference-schedule/23017) at conferences.

*But what about getting ready for a conference?* Forget the easy stuff like writing a paper or preparing for interviews. What about packing? What do you need to bring? What are you afraid you’ll forget? What odds and ends do you need to take care of before you go?

Here are a few items to consider as you’re getting ready for a conference:

* If you’re receiving travel funding, have you filled out and signed all the necessary forms? Do you understand what’s covered by your funding and what kind of receipts you’ll need for reimbursement?
* If your conference badge and program are being mailed to you, have you received them? Do you need to print your own?
* What sort of tech do you need to bring? Do you have all the correct cables, chargers, and dongles? If you’re presenting, do you have [a backup](http://chronicle.com/blogPost/Back-Up-Your-Essential-File/24765/) of your work in the cloud?
* Have you figured out the most economical way to get from the airport to your hotel?
* Have you checked the weather and packed accordingly?

This list is only a start. And rather than remembering what I forgot when I’m up in the air, halfway to the conference, I’m asking you to help me—and everybody else. **What would you add to this list?** How do you get ready for a conference? What essential items do you pack? What’s the **single most important piece of advice** you’d give somebody preparing for a conference for the first time?

Reader tips here:

<http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/getting-ready-for-conferences/29530#comments>