

Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting Guidelines for Volunteer Chairs

Contact panelists ahead of time – the earlier the better

It is important to coordinate with panelists in advance of the meeting and to let them know how you will conduct the proceedings.

- *Introductions:* Ask for a brief bio for the purposes of introductions. Consider finding out additional information such as how they would like to be introduced. This may be their first conference presentation, or possibly the first time presenting at MESA, and you could offer some additional guidance on what to expect.
- *Clarifications:* Clarify the length of presentations and the Q&A format. We recommend 10-15 minutes be allocated for each presentation in order to retain audience attention and to allow sufficient time for questions and answers. Although we have allotted the usual two hours for each program session, we do not expect participants to use the full time. Also ask beforehand if they will have slideshows or other screensharing needs.
- *Timekeeping:* The chair is primarily responsible for keeping track of time. Keep track of presentation times and transitions by giving presenters gentle reminders if they are approaching or go over the allotted time. It is important to ensure that you end the panel on time, and that the time for the session is divided equitably among the participants.
- *Moderating:* If taking questions from the audience after all of the formal presentations have concluded, the chair can solicit and direct questions. Try to take multiple questions at once, in order to serve as a filtering mechanism. The chair is best positioned to ensure that question askers do not take over the proceedings with long-winded, self-aggrandizing comments. As a moderator, consider dividing up the questions among the panelists as much as possible so that all remain involved and get feedback from the audience.
- *Reporting:* If any panelist is absent, please email meeting@mesana.org with that information. We especially need to know if a presenter does not show up. Some may have communicated with you, and not the MESA staff, so we do need to know if anyone unexpectedly did not participate.

Please note that as chair there is no expectation for you to read the papers or comment on them as a discussant. If there is a discussant assigned, then the discussant comments on the papers and the overall panel topic *after* the presentations have been made. The chair is still of course welcome to ask questions of the panelists on the basis of their presentations, particularly if there are none forthcoming from the audience.

Obtaining panelists' names and emails from myMESA

Here are detailed instructions for finding the email addresses of panelists:

- Log in to your myMESA account (my-mesa.org/login)
- Select Annual Meeting under the MEETING tab
- Follow the link to your session by selecting the title of your panel displayed under SESSIONS
- Lastly, click PARTICIPANTS to see a list of all panelists and their email addresses.
- Selecting PRESENTATIONS will show you the abstracts.

Thank you for serving as a chair at the upcoming MESA Annual Meeting. You play an important role in making the conference a success.