

GSA 2025

Annual Scientific Meeting Prep Guide

Is this the first time you're attending a
GSA Annual Scientific Meeting?

Have you gone before?

Either way, you'll find helpful information to navigate the meeting
and make the most of your time.

This guide was created by GSA members who have attended at least one Annual Scientific Meeting, with some attending more than 20! They all expressed the same sentiment: *"This is information I wish I had when I went to my first meeting."*

Use this Guide as a reference and return to it often. It's intended to help you prepare for the meeting and also refer to when on-site.

For questions prior to the meeting, email meetings@geron.org. When you're at the meeting, head to the Information Desk in the registration area where a GSA staff member can assist you.

We hope this is the first of many GSA Annual Scientific Meetings you will be attending.

Enjoy the experience and know you are not alone!



*This guide was created by GSA's Behavioral and Social
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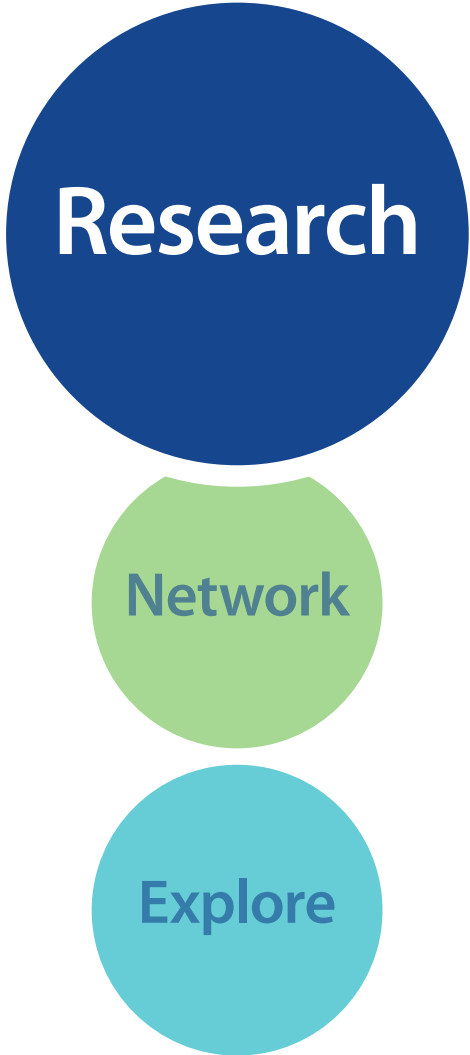
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GSA
GERONTOLOGICAL
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Research

Network

Explore

What do you want to accomplish at the Annual Scientific Meeting?

Whether you're here to sharpen your research focus, expand your professional network, or discover the next big question shaping the field, the GSA Annual Scientific Meeting is your launchpad for growth and discovery.

Find Your Fit

Curious about aging research and ready to experience it up close? This is your chance to dive in.

EXPLORE POSTERS

Walk through vibrant poster sessions and see the innovative work of students, faculty, and seasoned professionals.

ENGAGE IN SESSIONS

Attend symposiums and paper presentations that align with your interests—or challenge you with fresh perspectives that broaden your thinking.

SPARK CONVERSATIONS

Don't just listen, ask questions! Faculty, graduate students, and researchers are eager to share insights and exchange ideas.

Here, every session, poster, and conversation is an opportunity to sharpen your vision, fuel your curiosity, and find your place in a community that's shaping the future of aging research.



This is where ideas spark, connections form, and the future of aging research comes to life.

Build Your Circle

At the GSA Annual Scientific Meeting, you're not just meeting experts, you're stepping into the next stage of your own journey as one. Every conversation has the potential to spark collaboration, mentorship, or inspiration.

INTRODUCE YOURSELF

A simple "Hi, I'm an undergrad interested in..." can open doors you didn't even know were there.

SEEK OUT STUDENT AND EARLY-CAREER EVENTS

These gatherings are designed with you in mind—supportive spaces to meet peers, mentors, and future colleagues.

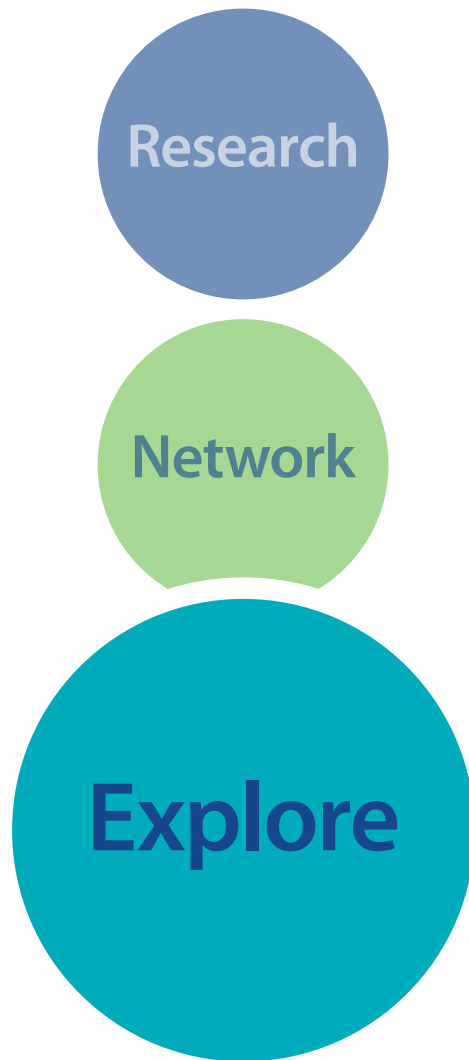
JOIN AN INTEREST GROUP

Find the GSA Interest Group that matches your passion and get involved. It's more than a meeting—it's your link to a community that continues year-round.

MAKE CONNECTIONS THAT LAST

Bring a friend, make a friend, and start weaving the network that will support you throughout your career.

This is your professional community in the making. Step in, engage, and start building relationships that will carry you forward.



Be curious, be confident, and enjoy the experience. Your future starts here.

Expand Your Horizons

Not sure what comes after your degree? That's exactly why you're here. The GSA Annual Scientific Meeting is more than a gathering, it's a launchpad for discovery, direction, and possibility.

STEP OUTSIDE YOUR MAJOR

Sit in on sessions beyond your field of study. Sometimes the most exciting passions, and career paths, are found in unexpected places.

LEARN FROM REAL JOURNEYS

Ask graduate students, postdocs, and faculty about how they got to where they are. You'll hear diverse stories of challenges, pivots, and successes that can help shape your own path.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF CAREER RESOURCES

From mentoring opportunities to dedicated career sessions, GSA has built-in spaces designed to guide your next step.

BE OPEN TO INSPIRATION

Every conversation, session, and connection can help you move closer to clarity, confidence, and maybe even your calling.

Your future doesn't have to feel uncertain. Let GSA open doors, expand your perspective, and help you imagine what comes next.

Scientific Sessions: Symposia, Papers, Posters

The bulk of the scientific programming consists of either symposium sessions, paper sessions or poster sessions. Read below for information about the different formats.

	PRESENTATIONS (Symposium or Paper Session)	POSTER PRESENTATIONS
What it is	Symposium and Paper sessions are both 90-minute oral presentations held in a meeting room. Paper sessions consist of four to six individual paper presentations organized around a common topic. Symposium sessions consist of 3-5 presentations organized by a chair around a common theme. A symposium session can also include a discussant who will facilitate the discussion between the speakers and the audience and may synthesize key themes following the presentations.	Poster sessions are 75 minutes, held each day in the exhibit hall. Each day will feature 400+ posters displayed on poster boards organized by session topics. Poster sessions allow for face-to-face time for speakers to present to attendees visiting the posters.
Format & Timing	Each speaker gets 10-15 minutes to share findings using slides (PowerPoint) in a 90-minute session. All presentations are delivered consecutively, followed by a joint Q&A session.	Speakers stand by their poster during a 75-minute session. Attendees move through aisles at their own pace, choosing which posters to engage with.
Setting	Medium-sized meeting room with projection equipment and a session chair who keeps time and facilitates Q&A.	Massive exhibit hall with rows of posters grouped by topic. The environment is lively and filled with exciting and fruitful conversations. See the "Exhibit Hall" section for more information about the Exhibit Hall.
Presentation Style	More structured and linear. Speakers guide the audience through their research with presentation slides, often including background, methods, results, and implications.	More conversational and visual. Speakers guide attendees through their poster and adapt the depth and focus depending on attendees' interests and feedback.





	PRESENTATIONS (Symposium or Paper Session)	POSTER PRESENTATIONS
Interaction & Engagement	Interaction is limited to the Q&A period at the end of the session. Some follow-up may happen informally afterward.	Highly engaged and interactive throughout. Attendees ask questions at any time, giving speakers a chance to explain, clarify, and even brainstorm future directions. Many connections happen on the spot.
Feedback for Speakers	Feedback is typically shared during a designated Q&A period and may be brief due to time constraints. It tends to be more structured and focused on clarifying points raised during the presentations.	More immediate feedback from a range of people. Attendees give suggestions, ask questions, or share similar work.
Networking	Networking usually happens after or outside the session. Attendees who are interested may follow up with speakers after the Q&A or later during the Annual Scientific Meeting. If you are presenting, it is also a great opportunity to connect with fellow speakers or the session chair. These connections can lead to future collaborations or mentorship opportunities.	This is an excellent opportunity to meet people who share an interest in similar research topics, discuss potential collaborations, and connect in real time with those in the field of aging.
Preparation Tips (for Speakers)	Practice delivering your presentation within the allotted time (10-15 minutes, depending on the size of your session), and design clear, easy-to-follow slides. Use large, readable fonts and aim for fewer words and more visuals on each slide to keep your audience engaged. Be prepared to answer questions after all presentations have concluded. Be sure to read the GSA Speaker Procedures.	Design your poster to clearly and quickly communicate the core of your study. Use large, readable fonts and highlight key findings with minimal text. Visuals like charts, figures, and diagrams are often more effective than dense paragraphs. Prepare a 1-2 minute verbal summary and be prepared to tailor your discussion to address the interests of each attendee. Be sure to read the GSA Speaker Procedures.



Other session types you will see at GSA's Annual Scientific Meeting

KEYNOTE (OPENING SESSION)

The meeting opens with a high-profile keynote from a nationally or internationally recognized scholar. These talks set the stage with big-picture ideas and broad topics that inspire the entire community. It's a large session, so arrive early to grab a good seat.

MOMENTUM SESSIONS

Momentum Sessions cover a wide range of aging topics, highlighting the latest research and innovative solutions. They're interactive and encourage audience participation, making them a space to spark new ideas.

FLASH POSTER SESSIONS

These fast-paced sessions showcase emerging research in a lively, concise format. They're a great way to sample new projects, discover trends, and connect with presenters whose work interests you.

INTEREST GROUP MEETINGS

GSA's 65+ Interest Groups bring together members around shared topics and demographics. These informal sessions are open to all and offer community, mentorship, and ways to stay involved both at the meeting and year-round.

NETWORKING EVENTS

Receptions, meet-ups, and mentoring programs make it easy to connect with peers, mentors, and future collaborators. Don't hesitate to attend, introductions often turn into lasting connections.

WORKSHOPS

Led by top experts, workshops offer hands-on, in-depth learning on methods, datasets, publishing, and more. They're especially useful for early-career researchers. Most run four hours, require sign-up in advance, and sometimes an additional fee.

What can you find in the Exhibit Hall?

The Exhibit Hall is more than just a space with booths. It's your launchpad for exploring graduate programs, research data, career opportunities, and more. Plus, it's a great spot to take a break, grab a snack, and recharge.



Academic Institutions

Thinking about grad school? You're in the right place. Many universities are here to share in-depth info about their programs—more than you'll find online. Swing by, introduce yourself, and ask questions.

Additionally, some may even have job openings!

Data & Research Resources

Data is key for researchers – and we've got it! Find booths offering access to large, high-quality datasets and learn how they can support your research goals.

Some even host annual data workshops. Data workshops would be greatly helpful for researchers, particularly trainees and early career researchers. Ask them when and where those workshops are taking place.

Industry & Vendors

See the real-world side of aging and gerontology! Explore booths featuring the latest tech, services, and innovations in aging research and care. You'll see how organizations are driving change and promoting successful aging.

You may also discover job openings, internships, and career opportunities. Many exhibitors are actively recruiting or open to informational conversations.

Academic Publishers

Check out the latest books, journals, and publishing opportunities! Whether you're looking to publish or just browsing, this is a goldmine for scholars.

Rest & Snack Break

Need a break? We've got a lounge area with a chill vibe and snacks! Come rest, refuel, and meet other students and professionals.

Special Programs, Activities and Services

There's even more! Check out the meeting website and online meeting program to learn about other exciting and interesting happenings in the Exhibit Hall, such as free headshots and maybe even a Pickleball Tournament!

How to approach a booth?

Your conversations in the Exhibit Hall could open doors – graduate school, data workshops, research collaborations, and job opportunities.

It might feel intimidating to walk up to a booth, but don't worry! Everyone here is excited to meet you and answer your questions. Here are some easy openers:



"Hi, I'm Xxxxx from XYZ University. I'm looking into grad school options and your Gerontology program caught my interest. Could I get a brochure and ask you a couple of questions?"



"Hello, I've been working in community programs as a student assistant for the past two years. I'm graduating soon and was wondering if your organization has any entry-level opportunities I could explore."





The Power of Networking: Tips for making the most of your networking opportunities at the GSA Annual Scientific Meeting

Opportunity for networking is one of the most valuable benefits of your membership in GSA and your participation in the GSA Annual Scientific Meeting! Networking can be intimidating. Challenge your inner introvert and build your professional network using some of the tips below.

1. Review the meeting app and online program at the start of the conference to identify sessions and speakers particularly relevant to your work. Target your search by exploring the program by the special category groupings, such as “By Topic,” “By Program Area,” “GSA Special Sessions,” and “Interest Groups.”
2. Prepare your “elevator speech”—a 1-2 minute description of your interests to share with others as you network. Be honest about your interests and intentions.
3. Attend a session and sit with people that you don’t know. Introduce yourself and ask about their interests.
4. Choose a scientific session that you are interested in. Introduce yourself to the speakers and thank them at the end of the session.
5. Find an interest group whose interests you share and attend the interest group meeting. These meetings are open to all attendees and bring together those with common scientific interests. You can attend, just listen, contribute ideas – it’s up to you. If asked for input you can say, “I’m a student. I’m learning.”
6. Participate in a poster session. Introduce yourself to speakers whose work you are interested in. If you are presenting a poster, collect contact information for those you discuss your work with to grow your network.
7. Especially for early career scholars and students, participate in activities organized by ESPO designed to facilitate networking and professional development, including the Informal Chats held in the ESPO Lounge, the ESPO Breakfast and Community Meeting, and the Fellows, International and ESPO Reception. (Check the meeting app for dates and times).
8. Send out follow up e-mails after the Annual Scientific Meeting to continue to build relationships initiated at the meeting. Use the meeting program contact list or GSA member directory on GSA Connect to find contact information.

Networking is one of the most valuable parts of GSA membership and the Annual Scientific Meeting. It can feel intimidating, but with a little courage, and these tips, you can confidently build connections that last.

