

How to prepare as a panellist

A panel presentation is not the same as a conference paper. In other words, a panel is not a solo performance; it is more of a conversation that is part of a community of knowledge production. This means that an invitation to join a panel requires different preparation.

1. Think about why you have been asked to join a panel
 - Have you been selected for a particular point of view?
 - If so, do you accept this or challenge this?
 - Think about what is unique about your contribution and what you can offer.
2. Being a panellist means thinking through what your key messages actually are (e.g. no more than 3-5 points).
 - Stick to these.
 - Add in personal experience and perspectives.
3. Try to provoke thinking amongst the audience; aim to generate discussion which will include the audience and not just be confined to the panel.
4. If you are speaking later in the panel, listen to other's comments; if they make the same points as you are going to, don't repeat them but either reiterate swiftly or build on them.

Good panels are about good criticism – they are about unsettling knowledge production and moving it on, in productive ways.

Adapted from:

Bærenholdt, J., Gregson, N., Everts, J., Granås, B., and Healey, R. (2010) 'Performing Academic Practice: Using the Master Class to Build Postgraduate Discursive Competences', *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, 34: 2, 283-298. |