

# Moderator Instructions for AALAS National Meeting

Moderators play an integral role in the success of the National AALAS meeting. Moderators are emissaries for AALAS. They set the tone for the session and help showcase AALAS as a professional organization. A trained Moderator can respond quickly to issues that arise during a session and make important decisions to restore the flow, timing and tone of a session. An adept Moderator can smooth over difficult situations confidently, allowing both audience and speaker participants to feel comfortable and get the most out of the session.

The Program Committee (PC) can facilitate this process by encouraging session leaders to choose their Moderators carefully and ensuring that Moderators are trained properly. The PC can also facilitate this process by ensuring that breaks are scheduled during platform and seminar sessions, which are the most likely sessions to experience time delays. These breaks serve an important function by allowing Moderators to encourage discussion on interesting topics, catch up, or squeeze in a late-show or last minute addition.

## Guidelines for Moderators

Please plan to attend the Facilitators & Moderators meeting on **Sunday from 3-4pm** in the convention center. This will be an overview of the duties for both facilitators and moderators. Also any updates on any open session's still needing facilitators or for cancellations of facilitators.

### Before the meeting

Moderators are encouraged to contact (email, phone, pre-session meeting) their respective speakers prior to the National Meeting. By introducing themselves, Moderators can set expectations to ensure timing, speaker order, and flow of the session. Meeting-specific information is typically provided at this time. Moderators should remind speakers to: (1) pre-load their talks at least 24 hours before the session is scheduled, (2) bring a backup copy of their talk on a disc or flash drive, (3) show up in the meeting room at least 15 minutes before their talk, (4) have timed their talks appropriately to finish in the allotted time.

### At the meeting

Try to arrive ~ 20 minutes prior to the scheduled session. Introduce yourself to the AV engineer (if one is present), the Facilitator (if one is present) and any speakers who may be present. Show all speakers how to use the podium, how the timer works, what the green/red lights indicate, etc. Ask them how long their talk is and remind them of your desire to keep the program running on schedule. Make sure you know how to pronounce their name.

Check with the AV engineer to see that everyone's talk has been uploaded. If not, you'll need to start thinking about alternative plans. Ask the AV engineer about the process for uploading talks. Work with the Facilitator, if one is present, to track down missing speakers and assist them with last minute uploading. Go to the Speaker Ready Room and see if they are present.

Microphones may not be present or work properly in all rooms. As Moderator, you or the Facilitator should check all of the microphones before your session and contact the AV engineer or an AALAS staff member if there are problems.

1. If someone doesn't show up early for their scheduled talk, make an announcement during the introduction of your session to ascertain whether they are present. Even late comers may have an opportunity to pre-load their talk; direct them to the AV engineer or Facilitator.
2. During your introductory remarks
  - a. Thank everyone for coming
  - b. Remind them of what session they are attending
  - c. **Remind them to turn off cell phones, pagers or other electronic devices**
  - d. **Ask that people who have questions use the microphone.** If you tell the audience that this will facilitate everyone being able to hear their question, they will often comply. During the question/discussion period, don't be shy about reminding people with questions to step to the microphone so that everyone can hear. If everyone cannot hear the question, ask the speaker to repeat the question.
  - e. If all your speakers have not previously checked in with you, please review expectations during your introductory remarks, in case they are in the audience, "Talks will be approximately X minutes and questions will occur as time allows, etc."
3. **Introduce the speaker by name, title, place of work and title of their talk.** Write this down if it helps.
4. **Keep everyone on time.** The meeting is scheduled by the minute and experienced AALAS attendees tend to move between presentations, attending only those specific talks with which they are interested. If the speaker is running long, indicate to them to finish up their talk. Techniques to use include flashing the red light, pointing to your watch, or even getting up and stand on the podium. If you have extra time, be prepared to ask a question or two, extend a break, or give a brief intermission.
5. **Do not allow speakers to begin until their allotted time in the program.** If you have to make a difficult decision (add a break, add extra time at the end, work through the break); tell the audience what will happen. Audience participants understand this and will appreciate your working to keep the session on time. It is not desirable to "get done early" as this may result in someone showing up for a scheduled talk only to find the session ended.
6. **Know what is occurring in your room directly after your session.** It may be that you can let speakers run longer if there are no plans to use the room afterwards and the discussion seems particularly robust. You might query the audience to gauge whether they want to continue a particularly good discussion at

the conclusion of the planned session. Don't make the assumption however, that the room is available. It will be disastrous if people are trying to get into the room and your session is running over.

7. If the discussion waxes long, and you don't have the option of running late, don't be shy about stepping in and saying "We only have time for one more question" or "This will be the last question." The audience knows you are trying to keep the session running smoothly.
8. If someone shows up late for their time slot – try to squeeze their presentation in at the break or perhaps the audience can stay late to hear the presentation after the scheduled session (see above about room availability). Try not to back-up the entire session because one person shows up late. It's more professional to keep on schedule and allow them an opportunity at the end, if time permits. If you cannot squeeze them in during the break and there is no time available at the end of the session, the talk should be canceled.