

MODERATOR/ CHAIR/ DISCUSSANT GUIDANCE

Successfully serving as a moderator, chair, or discussant in a session requires some advance work. Read on for guidance on their roles and key tips.

THE ROLE OF THE MODERATOR/ CHAIR

The moderator/ chair provides a brief overview, introduces each speaker, and facilitates a general discussion between the audience and speakers through a Q&A session.

Here are some tips to successfully moderate:

Managing Time and Questions

- Introduce presenters or ask them to introduce themselves (in 30 seconds).
- Announce time limits to the audience. Agree with presenters on Q&A slots – after each presentation or at the end of all the presentations.
- You will have cards to show presenters how much time they have remaining (e.g., 5 minutes, 1 minute, DONE).
- Ask the questioner to state their name and affiliation.

THE ROLE OF THE DISCUSSANT

Discussants provide a brief review of, or counterpoint to, the main topics or issues covered by the panel.

Here are some tips on being a successful discussant:

- Summarize the presentations and offer evaluative comments on the arguments posed.
- Highlight more significant implications for society at large based on the ideas raised in the session.
- Provide a framework for discussion, with potential topics for the audience to explore in their questions.