

# PEARC17

Practice and Experience in Advanced Research Computing 2017  
July 9–13, 2017 — New Orleans, Louisiana

## First-Timers Conference Guide

### Before the conference

**Contact your advisor, department head, or supervisor.** Ask for introductions to their colleagues who are attending the conference and who may be available to meet with, or mentor, you during the conference. When possible, schedule meet-ups in advance and then be sure to keep your appointments. Your advisors may also be able to direct you to travel grant opportunities.

**When booking your flight, plan to depart on Thursday afternoon.** Conference sessions go until noon, and are followed by the awards luncheon. After lunch, there are co-located training and workshop sessions that you may want to attend.

**Figure out which sessions you'd like to attend and who you'd like to meet.** Review the full schedule (<http://pearc17.pearc.org/program>) in advance to plan your time during the conference. Research the participants and drop them a note prior to the conference and schedule a meeting.

**Carry extra business cards.** If your institution doesn't provide them for you, make your own using any word-processing software and business-card stock. Or use one of the many websites that offer low-cost design and printing.

**Pack comfy shoes** to help you dash between sessions or explore the city.

**And a water bottle.** We've eliminated bottled water in keeping with our commitment to sustainability.

[pearc17.pearc.org](http://pearc17.pearc.org)

**Plan your thirty-second elevator introduction.** In other words, be able to summarize who you are and what you do professionally in the time it takes to reach your floor—about thirty seconds. Need tips on your elevator speech? Check out Monster.com for the latest on crafting your personal sound bite. <https://www.monster.com/career-advice/article/how-to-do-an-elevator-pitch>

If you're coming to the conference on a job search, polish up your interviewing skills and bring a current resume.

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## During the conference

**Post on social media using #PEARC17!** If you're heading to a session of interest or enjoying a particular event, let other people know. This will also get your name in front of other attendees.

**Charge your laptop, tablet, or smart phone every night, and remember to pack your charger in your bag.** Just don't leave your devices unattended when charging.

**Dress in layers.** The temperatures in conference session rooms can fluctuate, so be ready to change accordingly.

**Arrive with plenty of time on the first day to pick up your Conference Program and badge.** You can usually expect a line at registration—even registered in advance—so plan to arrive at least thirty minutes before your first session or event. Even better, if you are attending tutorials, you can pick up your materials on Sunday evening until 7:00 PM. You should also orient yourself to the hotel or study the hotel floor plan in case you are running late.

**Keep track of your badge.** Your conference badge allows you admission to all sessions, including meals and social events. Be sure to take it off when venturing outside the conference hotel. Wearing your conference badge identifies you as a tourist and makes you a target for scammers and thieves.

**Check meeting times closely.** The Conference Program you'll receive at registration lists the times and locations for all sessions, events, workshops, and exhibits. These times and locations, however, occasionally change—check the conference app or website for updates.

**Session-hop.** You don't have to stay for the full length of a session. The speakers for each session are listed in the Conference Program, and on the conference app or website, in chronological order and you are free to move around. If you play "musical sessions," grab a seat near a door so you can easily slip in and out without disturbing the speakers or other attendees.

**Allow enough travel time between sessions.** Although the most PEARC sessions are conveniently clustered on the second floor of the hotel, give yourself enough time to move from session to session—especially since you may have impromptu conversations with folks you meet in the hallways!

**You can use your laptop or smart phone during a session.** Typing notes during a talk is okay; so is tweeting. Just be mindful of your neighbors and respectful of the speakers. And don't forget to silence your phone and share your tweets using #PEARC17.

**Ask a question.** Chairs usually reserve time at the end of the session for audience questions. Write down your question in advance and make sure it's related to the discussion. Don't forget to state your name and your institutional affiliation so that people can remember you. If you'd like to respond to the presentations with your own comments, talk to a speaker afterward and get his or her email.

**Introduce yourself to the person sitting next to you.** A big part of attending the conference is networking. Before the session begins is a great time to introduce yourself and make a connection!

**Visit the Student Volunteer Lounge.** It is a place where you can meet friends and colleagues, network to make new connections, and relax with exceptional company.

**Partner with friends or colleagues to cover sessions happening at the same time.** It's not possible to do everything, so decide in advance who will attend each session and take notes for each other. You could then meet after the sessions, or wait until you get home, to regroup and discuss.

**Don't spend all your time with your friends.** You're at the conference to network, so leave your comfort zone and set a goal to meet at least two new people every day. Get their business cards and jot down where you met them and what you discussed so you'll remember later.

**Attend the evening social events.** Just because you're at a conference doesn't mean you shouldn't have a little fun, but be mindful, observant, and professional when interacting in a social environment. You never know who you might encounter!

**Remember to visit the Exhibitor's Forum.** This is another great way to expand your network. You may even get a lead on a job opportunity.

## After the conference

**Follow up with your new contacts.** Send an email to those you've networked with to follow up on a question or discussion—or just to say “It was a pleasure meeting you.” Connect with your new contacts on social media and extend your professional network.

**Complete the post conference survey.** Please take a few minutes to let the planning committee know about your experience. The PEARC18 committee will carefully review survey responses as it plans for next year.

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