

## What Next after #UACES2016?

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*With the UACES 2016 conference coming to a close, **Viviane Gravey** and **Anna Wambach** offer some suggestions for postgraduate researchers on how to make the most of a conference once it has finished. They recommend maintaining the momentum, both for one's research and network, and planning ahead for future conference opportunities.*

The run-up to a conference can be quite stressful – preparing and sharing your paper, ironing out your presentation, reading as many papers from other authors as possible. The conference itself is often so hectic that you have no time to think beyond which panel to attend next. Now that [UACES 2016](#) is coming to a close, here are a few tips to making the most of your conference experience!

### 1. Keep your network going

You have met lots of new people, or perhaps caught up with colleagues you have not seen since last year's conference. Once the conference finishes, delegates often lose contact, but this does not need to be the case. In fact, you will get a lot more out of your conference if you make an effort to stay in touch. There are a few things you can do to maintain your newly woven network:

- Even if you were not particularly active on Twitter yourself, you can check #UACES2016 and the [Storify](#) to find people who contributed and who you find interesting. Follow them to keep up to date with developments in the field, upcoming jobs and conference opportunities.
- If you found a presentation particularly interesting, don't hesitate to email the author(s) to ask for their papers or, if you already have the papers, to provide additional comments.

### 2. Keep your paper going

Finishing off your paper in the run-up to the conference may have been taxing, and it's quite tempting to simply shelve it and move on, especially with the beginning of term and teaching duties around the corner. Turning your paper into a publication can take a long time, and a number of further iterations, but there are a few steps you can take in the short term to keep the momentum going:

- After your panel, or in the days following the conference, take some time to think about the feedback you received and how you plan to address it. Write down a to-

do list which you can easily go back to, even if you find no proper writing time for a few weeks or months.

- Keep it manageable: if revising the entire paper appears too daunting at first, you can focus on key issues, or a single section. This can also be helped by writing a blog post on this topic, which will allow you to get targeted feedback from your peers. This blog, for example, is very keen to publish ongoing research by PhD students in EU studies.
- Finally, it is a good idea to present your paper – especially if it's one of your first papers – in different settings: at another conference or in your own departmental seminars, for example. The UACES Student Forum conference, held annually in spring/early summer, is a good opportunity to test-run your paper before the general conference season in early September. Presenting to multiple audiences can help you receive feedback on the paper's progression, on specific issues you had at earlier stages, as well as get a variety of views (eg from different disciplines).

### 3. Plan your next steps

UACES 2016 may be over, but now is the time to start planning your upcoming conferences. Calls for Papers for next year's conferences have either already opened or will open in the next few months.

- Look out for smaller events in the forthcoming months. These can help you keep contact with your PhD peers or with scholars working in your field. For example, the UK in a Changing Europe initiative frequently organises [events](#) across the UK, and the forthcoming UACES Student Forum [Seminar](#) (18 November in London) will bring together PhD students from across the EU to discuss teaching, fieldwork and how to adapt to the post-Brexit world.
- Take a hard look at all the conferences you attended this year. Is it worth submitting an abstract for their next edition? Did the conference work for you? Did you receive sufficient feedback, or was your paper the odd one out? Shop around for conferences that fit your research.
- Once you have chosen one (or many) conferences you would like to attend, consider organising your own panel. This can be a great way to strengthen your professional network and to guarantee useful feedback for your paper. Well-organised panels can also lead to publishing together in special issues or other forms of collaboration. Conference organisers are always thankful for pre-organised panels, but keep in mind that for general conferences panels mixing PhD students with more established academics is preferred.

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