

Policies on Annual Meeting Cancellations and Refunds

The American Society for Aesthetics Board of Trustees is alarmed at the dramatic increase in the number of cancellations by program participants for the 2017 Annual meeting, far more than in the past. Of special concern are cancellations by presenters that left scheduled commentators in the lurch. Although chairs can read the paper in a presenter's absence, the possibility of dialogue at the session is a loss to all. Also of concern were late cancellations by student presenters who were receiving subsidies that could have gone to another student. When cancellations are received early in the summer, it is possible for the program committee to substitute another person in that time slot from their list of alternate presentations. The Board understands that some last-minute cancellations are due to serious emergencies that cannot be avoided. We hope to impress upon people that letting us know as early as possible of their inability to attend the meeting will be greatly appreciated and is an important professional courtesy.

In view of this problem, the Board adopted on February 27, 2018, a new policy on Annual Meeting Cancellations. We hope that this will be a sufficient deterrent that problematic cancellations and no-shows will be minimal at future meetings. Here is the new policy, which goes into effect for the 2018 Annual meeting:

1. Context

Confirmed conference participants sometimes cancel their appearances quite close to the time of the meeting or simply fail to appear. These late cancellations and no shows are disruptive and leave gaps in the program that are a source of frustration for attendees. This policy aims to discourage these disruptions.

2. Deadlines

Presenters may cancel without risk of penalty no fewer than 60 days before the first day of the meeting, Wednesday. The program committee representative should include instructions for cancellation in all notification emails sent to presenters and session chairs. The policy shall also be publicized in the ASA Newsletter and on the ASA Web site.

3. Scope and exceptions

A cancellation is late if it occurs fewer than 60 days before the first day of the meeting.

A scheduled presenter who does not appear at all and who does not notify the Program Chair of their inability to present will be judged a no-show.

Presenters with understandable and unavoidable reasons for cancellation or absence will be exempt from any late cancellation or no-show penalties. Reasons warranting an exemption include but are not limited to the following: medical issues, family emergencies, unforeseen and unforeseeable travel problems, and similar situations outside of a presenter's control. Presenters should email the ASA Secretary-Treasurer or the Secretary-Treasurer's designee and briefly indicate the relevant considerations. The exemption requests will be reviewed by the S-Treasurer and one other officer (President, Vice-President, or Immediate Past-President).

Late cancellations due to a presenter's inability to secure funding to attend are considered avoidable. Presenters in uncertain funding situations should cancel by the cancellation deadline.

4. Penalties

Confirmed participants who, without notice, fail to appear for a scheduled presentation will be barred from presenting at national meetings for two years.

Confirmed participants who cancel their presentations after the cancellation deadline will be barred from presenting at national meetings for one year.

During the presentation ban, the program committee will not consider any paper or panel proposal that lists the penalized author as a presenter. The banned presenter may still be listed as a coauthor or attend the conference. The ban is for presenting a formal talk or panel presentation or serving as a commentator only.

The ASA Divisions are not bound by this policy, but are free to adopt their own, as they wish.

5. Other recommendations

If unavoidable circumstances prevent attendance for a scheduled presentation, scheduled presenters should do the following:

- A. Attempt to find another person to make the presentation on their behalf. A coauthor is ideal, but the substitute speaker does not necessarily need to be a coauthor.
- B. The program chair for the meeting, the Secretary-Treasurer, and the session chair should all be notified at the earliest opportunity of the proposed substitution or the inability to find a substitute.

After the meeting, the Program Chair and Secretary-Treasurer will compare records of cancellations for the meeting and compile a list of those warranting penalty. Each person on the list will be notified privately by the Secretary-Treasurer to inform them of the penalty and provide an opportunity to correct the record, as appropriate, within 10 calendar days. The final list of persons receiving penalties shall be forwarded to the Board of Trustees for its information and to the Program Chair for the following two years. The names shall not be recorded in public minutes of the ASA, but data on cancellations may be included in public reports and minutes.

NOTE: This policy does not apply to requests for refunds of prepaid registration fees, which are handled separately, below.

At its meeting November 15, 2017, the Board also adopted a new policy on refunds of annual meeting registrations, beginning in 2018, as follows:

- (a) If the refund request is received no later than 30 calendar days prior to the first day of the Annual Meeting, the refund will be paid in full using the same method as the original payment (credit card or check), with the Wednesday arrival day and reception counting as the first day of the Annual Meeting;

- (b) If the refund request is received within fewer than 30 calendar days prior to the first day of the Annual Meeting, refunds will be made only in extraordinary emergency situations and shall be subject to the review and approval of the Secretary-Treasurer and one other officer of the ASA (President, Vice-President, and/or Immediate Past President);
- (c) No refunds will be paid for special events or meals for which the ASA has already paid the vendor and cannot itself obtain a refund.