

Recommendations from the AACR Associate Member Council or Navigating the Virtual AACR Annual Meeting 2021 as an Early Career Researcher

This year, for the second time in its history, the AACR Annual Meeting will take place virtually over the course of two weeks. The first week of the AACR Annual Meeting 2021 occurred from April 9-15, 2021. Catch up on Week 1 highlights and On-Demand sessions when logged into the Virtual Annual Meeting Platform. Week 2 will take place from May 17 - 21, 2021.

Complementing the activities of Week 1, the second week will include Educational Sessions and Methods Workshops, Meet the Expert Sessions and Professional Advancement Sessions, with even more sessions specifically focused at early career researchers (ECRs). Here we outline tips and recommendations for how to get the most out of Week 2 of the Annual Meeting and how best to navigate the Virtual Meeting Platform to plan session attendance and create networking opportunities to interact with fellow attendees and senior leaders.

Navigating the Virtual Meeting Platform

The [Virtual Annual Meeting Platform](#) is now available online, which can be accessed by logging in with your [myAACR](#) credentials following [registration](#) for the meeting. The platform gives you on-demand access to all content from both Week 1 and Week 2 through Monday, June 21, 2021. Here you can access the entire meeting program, where you can search for both Live and On-Demand sessions as well as poster topics, speakers, and abstract titles to find content that suits your interests. Through this process, you can add content to your calendar, set reminders, and access past content. Multiple [AACR Videos](#) are also available to explain how to access the Virtual Meeting Platform.

How to Network on the Virtual Meeting Platform

Networking is an aspect of our careers that has been greatly altered throughout the last year. Yet, we must continue to adapt to reach our ultimate career goals, and the Virtual Meeting Platform offers four different avenues to do so.

Under the “**Networking**” tab on the platform, there are four tabs you should explore to expand your network. The first is the “**Networking**” tab where you can complete a short profile that the platform will use to suggest potential connections based on your areas of interest, or you can search and browse for specific attendees and start making connections. Use this opportunity to connect with any of the many thousands of scientists at this meeting. Secondly, is the “**Channel Chat**” tab, where discussions can be found throughout the meeting in different working groups. Be sure to check out the, “**Early-Career Associate Members**,” channel where you can interact with other ECRs and members of the Associate Member Council, as well as the, “**Professional Advancement (Mentor-Mentee Engagement)**,” channel to interact with mentors from the Personalized Career Conversations Platform.

The third option, especially if you are looking for your next career move, is the [Virtual Cancer and Biomedical Research Career Fair](#), which will take place on **Monday, May 17, 2021 from 9**

A.M. to 3 P.M. (EST). Registration for job seekers attending the virtual AACR Annual Meeting 2021 is FREE, and if you did not sign up when registering for the meeting, do not hesitate to contact careerfair@aacr.org to get signed up. Finally, job seekers can check out the “**CancerCareers**” tab, which will take you to CancerCareers.org powered by AACR. Here you will find hundreds of job postings in different cancer careers as well as blog postings on navigating the job hunt.

Finally, follow the same guidelines that you would at an in-person meeting. Be sure to ask questions during Live Q&A sessions following presentations and panels. If you find a talk or poster interesting, email the presenter, leave a comment on the poster or request a meeting through the Networking tool. If you hit it off with someone in the Direct Chat, follow up afterward via email, LinkedIn, Twitter, or another platform. The Virtual Meeting Platform allows you to network in ways like never before, use it to your advantage during this season of virtual conferences.

Sessions to attend as an Associate Member and Early Career Researcher

Professional Advancement Series

Be sure to attend the many Professional Advancement Sessions available for ECRs. These sessions will cover a number of topics relating to career development and offer opportunities for networking with fellow ECRs and established scientists.

Registration for these sessions is available in advance and we encourage you to sign up as soon as possible to secure a spot as spaces are limited. Registration for all sessions can be found by logging into your [myAACR Account](#) and clicking on “**Applications/Awards**,” where you will see the heading, “**Professional Advancement Series Sessions During the AACR Annual Meeting.**” More information on the available sessions is listed below, and each link will take you to an event summary and registration. Once your registration is confirmed you can add these sessions to your online itinerary. Please contact pas@aacr.org with any questions.

Navigating the Path to a Successful Career in Cancer Research

Monday, May 17, 11:45 am-1:45 pm ET

This session will provide students, postdoctoral candidates, and junior faculty with the opportunity to discuss important career development issues and survival skills with senior established scientists. The session will include small group breakout sessions with experienced senior cancer experts as mentor who will facilitate discussion on various topics. Attendees will be able to participate in different breakout sessions with different mentors for additional networking opportunities. [Learn more.](#)

Important Strategies for Success in Cancer Science: Keys for Early-Stage Investigators

Monday, May 17, 11:45 am-1:15 pm ET

This session will include an interactive panel discussion and will provide a unique opportunity for new investigators at the junior faculty/equivalent level to learn skills and strategies for addressing questions that can affect their success in the first independent leadership position. Designed specifically for those who have already made the transition from trainee to the next career stage inside and outside academia, this is a must-attend session for early-stage investigators. [Learn more.](#)

Personalized Career Conversations

Tuesday, May 18, 11:45 am-1:45 pm ET

Exclusively for early-career Associate Members who are graduate students, medical students and residents, and clinical and postdoctoral fellows, this unique session allows participants to pre-register for the opportunity to individually speak with one (1) preferred senior scientist for 15-minutes each at the AACR Annual Meeting 2021. Additionally, the session co-chairs, Drs. Antonio Baines, Danny Welch, and Victoria Richon, will be participating in a virtual panel to discuss and answer questions about professional and career development such as negotiations, interviewing tips and tricks, and getting the most of your mentor, and more! [Learn more.](#)

Advancing Your Career in Cancer Research

Wednesday, May 19, 11:45 am-1:45 pm ET

The session will focus on informal breakout discussions between distinguished cancer research mentors from academia, industry, and government and the participants. The mentors will facilitate discussion with small groups of attendees at varying career levels/stages. Two rounds of discussion will allow participants to informally meet with mentors and peers for networking. [Learn more.](#)

The Critical Role of Physician-Scientists in Advancing Cancer Science – Recommendations for Continued Success

Wednesday, May 19, 11:45 am-1:15 pm ET

This session will include an interactive panel discussion that will offer key insights and pointers from a diverse group of successful physician-scientists on career development and funding mechanisms as well as perspectives from a cancer center director. [Learn more.](#)

Communication Skills For Cancer Researchers

Thursday, May 20, 11:45 am-1:15 pm ET

This session will include an interactive panel discussion that will introduce participants to the basic components of effective and concise communication while also defining the difference between “scientific” and “science” communications. [Learn more.](#)

Career Discussions

Organized by the Associate Member Council (AMC), Career Discussions are informal networking and discussion opportunities during which early-career researchers meet with recently transitioned physician-scientist and junior faculty/equivalent to obtain advice for career transition and professional success. [Learn more.](#)

In Transition: From Early-Career Researcher to Leader

Thursday, May 20, 11:45 am-12:30 pm

During the session speakers will provide early-career researchers with advice and guidance on ways they can become recognized as leaders within their field and within their current position (either academia or other).

Careers and Collaborations in Academia and Industry

Thursday, May 20, 12:45 pm-1:30 pm

During this session, speakers will address how to initiate and establish a successful collaboration, differences between these approaches for academia and industry, how to identify and avoid red flags for bad collaborations, and how to deal with unsuccessful collaborations. The industry speaker will also address their career industry.

Keep an eye out for Daily Alerts directly from the AACR to your email each morning of the conference to share information on events of the day ahead. Also keep an eye out for your daily email from 'AACR News' which will provide a recap and summary of the meeting highlights from each day. Be sure to tag your meeting experiences and follow updates from this year's virtual Annual Meeting on social media using the hashtag #AACR21.

AACR Associate Member Council 2020-2021