

## **DAMOP Meeting: What to expect at & how to get the most out of it**

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### **What is the DAMOP Meeting?**

The Division of Atomic, Molecular, and Optical Physics (DAMOP) is one of 17 divisions within the American Physical Society (APS); DAMOP has a membership of about 3500 worldwide. The division holds an annual meeting in late May to early June at various locations across the continental US, with attendance in recent years of about 1200 from across the globe.

The meeting covers topics including

- Structure and Properties of Atoms, Ions, and Molecules
- Atomic, Molecular, and Charged Particle Collisions
- Ultrafast and Strong Field Physics
- Lasers and Quantum Optics
- Quantum Information Science
- Degenerate Gases and Many-body Physics
- Cold Atoms, Ions, Molecules, and Plasmas
- General Precision Measurements/Fundamental Constants

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### **When does the meeting begin and end?**

For most people, the meeting begins on Tuesday at 8:00 am and ends at 12:30 pm on Friday. Most people who attend the full meeting will arrive on Monday and depart on Friday afternoon.

- Two special events on Mondays are for pre-registered attendees only, and have limited attendance. These begin Monday morning and generally involve arrival on Sunday.
  - The Graduate Student Symposium provides an opportunity for graduate students to hear four long-format talks, usually in a thematic area. This is organized by the DAMOP Education Committee
  - The GPMFC Symposium is an event of the topical Group on Precision Measurement & Fundamental Constants, which is a subunit of the American Physical Society. Its objective is to serve as a focus for research related to investigating and testing the fundamental laws of physics and their underlying connections, determining fundamental constants, and developing and improving basic measurement standards, with special emphasis on the high precision experiments that are characteristic of such research.

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## What is a typical day at DAMOP like?

- A typical day at the meeting begins at 8:00 am on Tuesday morning and ends at 6:00 pm. Friday sessions end at 12:30 pm.
- **Talks** are scheduled in three two-hour blocks:
  - 8:00 am - 10:00 am
  - 10:30 am - 12:30 pm
  - 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm (Tues - Thurs only)
- **Poster sessions** are scheduled from 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday
- Additional “extra” events are also scheduled during the lunch break and in the evenings

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## How do I find information about the talks and posters being presented?

**The epitome** (pronunciation: uh·pi’·tuh·mee) is found online and through the APS mobile app. It contains the detailed schedule for the week. It has an all-at-once version and day-by-day breakdown. In both cases, the schedule includes the room number, type of session, and title for the session. It also provides links to the detailed content of each session (speakers, times, and links to the abstracts). This is the main point of contact to know what happens when and where. Additionally, extra events can be found in each day’s schedule, including networking, educational/professional development, and administrative activities.

**Author index, session index** (found online and through the APS mobile app) and other search tools are available from the Epitome webpage and the app. These can be used to locate specific poster and oral presentation contributions in the schedule, using keywords or author/speaker names as search keys. You can also use tools available through these services to build a calendar of events, or to export these events to your online calendar

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## What are the different kinds of talk sessions (invited vs. focus vs. contributed)?

Each of the invited, focus, and contributed sessions are organized around a common theme, as specified in the session title. The work of organizing and scheduling these talks is done by volunteers on the DAMOP Program Committee. Session chairs also volunteer their time to introduce speakers and keep the speakers to their designated times. There are two types of talks:

- Invited talk speakers (usually faculty members) have been nominated by the community and selected by the Program Committee to give these talks. Invited speakers may not, in general, present at two consecutive DAMOP meetings.

- 30-minute talks (25 min talk, 5 min for questions)
- Contributed talk speakers have submitted abstracts to the organizing committee. These talks have been accepted and included in the program based on the information in the abstract.
  - 12-minute talks (10 min talk, 2 min for questions)

The three kinds of sessions differ by the number and length of the talks.

- **Invited sessions** are composed of four invited talks (30 min each)
- **Focus sessions** are composed two invited talks (30 min each) and five contributed talks (10 min each)
- **Contributed sessions** are solely composed of up to ten contributed talks (12 min each).

All talks are scheduled within “parallel sessions” (except the first block on Tuesday, which is the Prize Session) meaning that several sessions (of all three types) run at the same time in different (but usually nearby rooms). Many people will switch between rooms in-between talks, to catch a topic of interest from multiple sessions; for this reason, session chairs will do their best to adhere to the schedule. Rooms may vary drastically in size, and may be either a little empty or very crowded. It is okay to stand in the back of the room or along the side walls if all the chairs are taken.

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## How do the poster sessions work?

**Poster sessions** are scheduled from 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Each poster is presented on one day only; posters should be fixed to the proper (numbered) poster board, as designated by the Epitome, prior to 4:00 pm the day of the scheduled session, and removed after 6:00 pm that same day.

Poster presenters may or may not be standing next to their posters to explain and answer questions about their work. DAMOP poster sessions are generally very well attended and can be a little crowded, depending on the venue, but also a generally social event and good networking opportunity.

- Beverages and light snacks are generally available during the poster session from bar stands and tables at the edges of the room

Various evening events may begin during or after the poster session; see more below

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## When and what do I eat?

**Most meals are not provided.** It is up to attendees to find food from local restaurants, usually within walking distance of the conference venue. As such, attendees whose travel is being paid may generally require meal allowances/per diems.

The designated timing for meals is as below, but there is no strict attendance rule for the meeting, so there is no obligation to use these windows:

- **Before 8:00 am:** Attendees may choose to pick up their own breakfast, or wait for the coffee break
  - **10:00 am -10:30 pm:** A coffee break, including coffee, tea, and pastries is provided at the conference venue. This can involve long line-ups, but there is usually enough for everyone and staff will replenish supplies as needed.
  - **12:30 pm - 2:00 pm:** Lunch break. Limited grab and go options are available inside the convention center for lunch. Most attendees will leave the conference site for nearby restaurants, often in small groups. This is a good time to find new or old friends and join together for a meal and informal conversations.
  - **4:00 pm - 6:00 pm:** Beverages and (very) light snacks are generally available during the poster session from bar stands at the edges of the room
  - **Dinner time:** While there are some receptions with food, most attendees will gather in small groups to dine at a local restaurant at some point following the poster session.
    - The one exception is the optional DAMOP banquet on Thursday evening, which attendees may choose to add to their registration for an additional cost (see more below).
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## What are some of the “extra” events to look out for?

Look at the schedule for details and what is offered, as new events are added year-to-year, and this information is not necessarily complete. Some of the common events are:

### Networking/Social Events:

- **Welcome Reception**
  - When: **Monday evening** (about 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm, drop-in)
  - Target audience: everybody. This event is well-attended and an excellent chance for networking, connecting with new and old colleagues.
  - What: informal meet-and-greet of participants. Beverages and snack food is provided
- **Diversity/Community Reception**
  - When: Tues or Wed evening (about 5:30 to 7:30 pm)
  - Target audience: Women and gender minorities, ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ members, allies (everybody welcome)
  - What: an informal gathering with networking opportunities. This started as a “Women in DAMOP” event and has broadened to include other equity-deserving groups in AMO, and allies.
- **Vendor Reception(s)/Parties**
  - When: usually Tues or Wed evening (about 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm)
  - Target audience: Everyone, usually well-attended by graduate students and postdocs
  - What: one or more of the larger vendors/corporate sponsors may host a “party” at an off-site location, involving beverages, snacks, or swag. Invitations are generally circulated with details by the company representatives before the event
- **DAMOP Banquet**
  - When: Thursday evening (about 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm)

- What: a fixed-course meal is served in a large ballroom banquet hall. Requires pre-registration and pre-payment. This is an opportunity to network.
  - Seating is “rush style” and guests may sit at any table; often individuals or small groups will join with other (unknown) groups at tables that seat 8-10 people. Most guests may want to find someone to sit with before entering the hall.
  - Guests with dietary restrictions may need to be quite vocal with conference centre staff to ensure their meal is made available.
  - Traditionally, speeches would be made after dinner, though these may be phased out moving forward

## Educational, scientific, and professional-development activities

- **Graduate Student Symposium**
  - When: **Monday (all day)**
  - Target audience: graduate students
  - Requires separate, pre-paid registration. This usually fills up.
- **GPMFC (Group on Precision Measurement & Fundamental Constants) Workshop** (every two years, in EVEN years)
  - When: **Monday (all day)**
  - Target audience: DAMOP members interested in precision measurement and fundamental constants; members of the GPMFC
  - What: Workshop with dedicated talks in this topical area
- **Career session(s)**
  - When: Tues, Wed, or Thurs lunch breaks; the specific name and format can change from year to year.
  - Target audience, students and postdocs (?)
  - Note: There may be more than one such session; do check the schedule.
- **Tutorial for Authors and Referees**
  - When: Tues or Wed evening (about 5:00 pm); check Epitome for day and time
  - Target audience: Students and postdocs
  - What: Advice from Physical Review editors on how to write and review manuscripts, including how to get involved in the reviewing process. It also generally includes a Q&A.

## Administrative and organizational activities

- **GPMFC (Topical Group on Precision Measurement & Fundamental Constants) Business Meeting** (every two years, in EVEN years)
  - Target audience: DAMOP members interested in precision measurement and fundamental constants; members of the GPMFC
  - What: Discussion for the Topical Group on Precision Measurement & Fundamental Constants on administrative/business matters
- **TAMOC (Theoretical AMO Committee) Business Meeting**
  - When: generally Tues or Wed evening;
  - Target audience: theoreticians
  - What: Business meeting of the theoretical AMO community. It generally includes discussions of the state of TAMOC and presentations from project managers at various funding agencies.

- **DAMOP Business Meeting**

- When: usually Thurs evening, before banquet
- Target audience: Everyone, those interested in the administrative side of DAMOP, or those with questions or feedback for the DAMOP executive
- What: Update from the leadership on the status of DAMOP (unit members, finances, meeting attendance, etc.)

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## Where will I be staying for the DAMOP Meeting?

Accommodations are **not included** in the DAMOP conference registration, and **attendees are responsible for booking and paying for their own accommodations.**

As such, attendees may stay at any location of their choosing, depending on their desired comfort level, price point, and distance from the conference site. Many attendees choose to share a room with a colleague(s) to offset costs associated with accommodations.

Generally, particular conference hotels will be designated by the organizers of the meeting, which will be near (or accessible to) the conference center. There is usually a financial incentive for the DAMOP organization to have as many attendees as possible booked into these hotels, as there is an offset to the conference venue fees based on occupancy at the designated conference hotels. Usually, this also means that the rates at these hotels are discounted for attendees, up to a certain number of room bookings. However, **attendees are not required to stay in the designated conference hotels.**

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## How do I get to and from the meeting?

### From transportation hubs

Most DAMOP attendees will be arriving from long-distance locations, via the airport or train station. Directions from these transportation hubs will generally be available on the DAMOP Meeting website, and **attendees are responsible for their own transportation to the hotels and conference center.** Taxis, rideshare, and public transportation are generally available at DAMOP locations, and attendees are encouraged to plan their local transportation plans before arrival to ensure their mode of choice is available.

### Daily transportation hotel-to-conference center

Most DAMOP meetings are held within walking distance of several hotels, and most attendees will walk to the meeting location. Public transportation and taxi/rideshare services may be used for attendees staying further away from the conference site, but will be responsible for covering these transportation costs, unless specific arrangements have been made (such as in Portland in 2025).

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## How do I interact with exhibitors?

Exhibitor tables are generally set up throughout the hallways of the conference venue. Many are vendors of the kinds of scientific equipment used in AMO laboratories, though there are also others including national laboratories, companies looking to hire AMO scientists, and APS or other non-profit booths. For all of these, the people standing at the booths are happy to talk to you and tell you about what they have to offer - product information and demonstrations, explanations of the work done by the company/non-profit/organization. Feel free to walk up, say hello, and introduce yourself. Many booths may also offer you some “swag” when you are truly engaged with the organization (candy, promotional items, etc.).

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## What advice is there for new and/or junior attendees?

### Network, network, network

DAMOP is a medium-sized meeting with several opportunities each day for networking (especially during designated coffee breaks, meal times, and receptions). This is a chance for old colleagues to meet each other, but also a chance to meet new people. Many graduate students will meet future colleagues, advisors, or employers for the first time at DAMOP (and meetings like it), and it is an excellent opportunity to start new collaborations or to seek out next career opportunities. Visibly wearing your name badge is encouraged to help people learn and remember names.

Some tips for meeting new people:

- Start a discussion with a poster presenter by introducing yourself, and then asking them “Can you tell me about your research?”
- Introduce yourself to a speaker whose talk you enjoyed after the talk by saying something like “Hi, I’m <<name>> from <<XYZ university>>; I really enjoyed your presentation,” and then ask a small question about the talk, or about what the next steps will be.
- During the coffee break, meal time, or reception feel free to walk up to someone and introduce yourself. Some good small-talk lead-ins include asking them about themselves:
  - Where do you work/study? What is the AMO community like there?
  - What area/topic are you working on these days?
  - Have you seen any new or interesting results at the meeting so far?
- It’s also a good idea to be ready to answer questions like this yourself: Have a one- or two-sentence answer ready to the question “What are you working on?”

### Be ready to absorb a lot of information

There are a lot of talks and posters to take in at DAMOP; be ready to take notes in your preferred format, in order to have a key for looking up information later. Writing down paper references and a quick note is a good way to capture a lot of information quickly. On the flip side, know that you can’t learn everything there is to learn in one week: successful outcomes may include taking away the

knowledge that a certain kind of research is happening, or that there are others interested in a topic you are keen on.

One way to focus your attention at the meeting is to come to the meeting with one or a few specific questions in the field that you would like answered, for example: where a certain line of research might be going; how you might accomplish the next steps in your research (overcoming specific technical or conceptual steps); or learning about a new subfield of AMO research. Then, consider attending talks that might answer this question, and seek out the people who are experts or have experience in this area.

### **Don't forget to take care of yourself**

The meeting is also a fun time for many, a chance to meet people with very similar interests from all around the world, and to take some time out of your regular routine to enjoy unique social and scientific opportunities. However, the meeting can be an intense and tiring experience; remember to take care of yourself in the ways you do at home; get as much sleep, nutrition, exercise, and downtime as you need.

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