

# AESE Annual Meeting FAQ

October 2–6, 2024

Olympia, Washington, U.S.A.

## How do I get from the airport to the hotel and how much will it cost?

There are two possible airports to fly into to reach Olympia. You have the option of flying into Portland, Oregon (PDX), and renting a car to drive the 1 hour and 45 minutes north to Olympia. PDX is a very nice airport and much calmer than Seattle, but there is no shuttle, so you must rent a car and make the drive yourself.

The easier option is to fly into Seattle–Tacoma International Airport (SEA). SeaTac is located about an hour's drive north of Olympia. You have a few options for getting from the airport to Olympia:

- **Most convenient but most expensive:** There is a private airport shuttle that will pick you up at the airport and drop you off at your destination. It is a convenient and comfortable option, but the expense is about \$100 one way, and the trip will likely take 2 hours as they have to drop each person off at the destination. See Premier Airport Shuttle → <https://premierairportshuttle.com/>
- **Less convenient but cheaper:** FlixBus now runs between SeaTac and the Olympia Downtown Transit Center (5-minute walk from the hotel). It runs about 2–3 times per day in the afternoon and costs only about \$14 one way. It will take about 1.5 hours. → <https://www.flixbus.com/>
- **Least convenient but cheapest:** You can take a public transit bus (#574, ~\$4) from SeaTac to get to a park-and-ride about a 30-minute drive north of Olympia, where you can take a free Olympia city bus (#620) to the Olympia Downtown Transit Center. Note that this bus does not run in the evenings, and the trip will take about 2.5 hours. Alternately, we may be able to arrange to pick you up at the park-and-ride.
- **Most flexible and fastest:** Rent a car at Seatac and drive yourself (if you arrive during rush hour, expect very heavy traffic!) As far as I can tell, it is free to park your car at the hotel.
- **Most convenient and free:** If there is enough interest and clustering of arrivals, we may be able to arrange to pick people up at the airport in our rental van.

## I've heard it rains a lot in the Pacific Northwest. What weather can I expect?

The start of October is the shoulder season for the PNW. That means it could be beautiful fall weather with colorful trees and mild temperatures or it could be pouring rain or some combination of the two. We are of course hoping for great weather, but you will need to come prepared with rain gear! I recommend a raincoat, rain pants, and waterproof shoes if you plan to attend the field trips. There is a cultural taboo against using umbrellas here in the PNW, but we locals all recognize that this custom is a bit silly, so bring an umbrella if you prefer that!

## What kinds of things are there to see in the area if I'm interested in staying a few extra days?

There are many things to do within a few hours' drive of Olympia. Here are some options:

- **Seattle:** Head north about a 1.5-hour drive to Seattle, where you can see sites such as the Space Needle, the downtown waterfront, and the Chihuly Garden and Glass Museum. I also recommend taking one of the local ferries across the Sound to Bainbridge Island or Bremerton.
- **Mount Rainier:** This iconic volcano is about a 2-hour drive east of Olympia. I recommend entering through the Nisqually Gate and heading up to the Paradise Visitor Center. If the weather is good, you will get breathtaking views, and there are many options for short and long hikes along the way. Note that depending on the weather, there may already be snow on Rainier at this time of year, so check the snow report first.
- **Olympic National Park:** Within a few hours' drive, you can be out at the coast exploring some of our spectacular beaches (I recommend Ruby Beach), walking through the famous temperate rain forest (see Lake Quinault and the Hoh Rainforest), or getting great views of the Olympic Mountains at Hurricane Ridge. Port Townsend is also a nice little town to visit, along with nearby Fort Worden State Park.
- **Eastern Washington:** If you are interested in taking a few days to go east of the Cascade Range, you can check out interesting geologic sites such as Palouse Falls, Steamboat Rock, Dry Falls, and Ginkgo Petrified Forest along the Columbia River.
- **The Columbia River Gorge:** Head a few hours south of Olympia to the Gorge on the border with Oregon, where you can see Vista House, the Bonneville Dam, and Beacon Rock.

Check out the Washington Geological Survey's geoheritage website for more inspiration:

<https://wa100.dnr.wa.gov>