Poster Guidelines (6-foot x 4-foot posters)

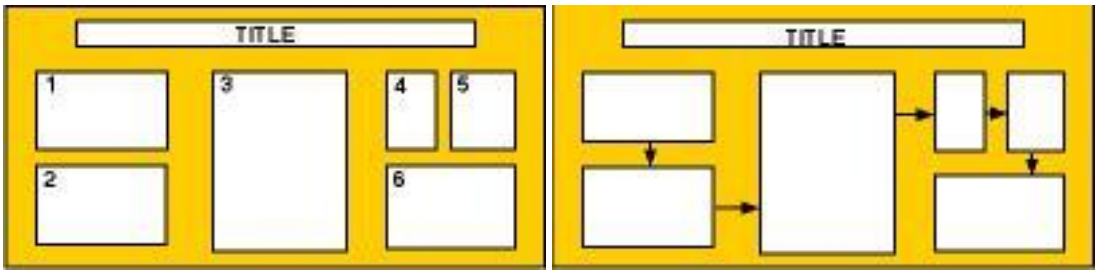
Goal

Poster preparation should be fun and creative, but it takes time to do well. We recommend budgeting two weeks to prepare, review, and print your poster **after** collection and assembly of all data. Finalized posters should be eye-catching, scientifically accurate, and thoughtfully laid out. A good poster will:

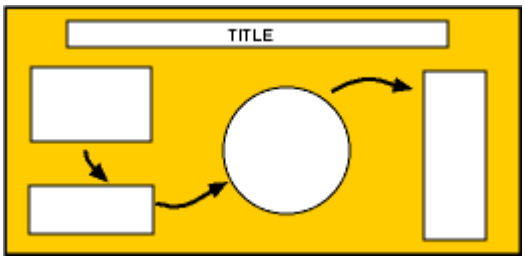
- tell an interesting research story grounded in sound science,
- facilitate an exchange of ideas at a more individual level than can be achieved through a formal presentation to a group,
- hopefully be displayed in your office and shared with colleagues before and long after the conference.

Size, Space, and Overall Design

- **Posters should be a maximum of 6-feet wide by 4-feet tall.** Posters can be smaller if desired. Poster boards will be 8-feet by 4-feet to allow for supplemental materials to be pinned to the board (more details on supplemental materials below).
- **Important tip: Less text is better!** Do not rely on words alone to tell the story. Posters should use images, graphic representation, and minimal text.
- Designs should be simple, clear, and legible from at least 3-feet away. Avoid clutter and unnecessary data.
- Organize content into sections. For research posters this typically includes: Abstract, Introduction, Objectives, Methods, Data/Results, Recommendations, Conclusions, Acknowledgements, etc.
- Arrange written material into columns.
- Determine a logical sequence to tell the story. Consider using numbers (36 to 48-point type), lines, and arrows to guide the viewer through the flow of sections in the poster.



- Use elements of different sizes and proportions or shapes to increase visual interest.



- Consider creative layout ideas that help clearly communicate your take home message. See the links at the end for more information on the following examples and downloadable templates. For example, you could have a large image in the middle instead of, or in addition to, the main finding.

- For Abstract, Introduction, and Objectives: Succinctly state the problem, the proposed solution or intended information, and how the project will achieve the goal.
- For Methods: Use photographs, diagrams, or illustrations. Minimize text. Consider using a smaller font size (18-point) for Methods text.
- For Data/Results: Use figures, charts, line graphs, or tabular data. Use color to distinguish between and/or unify data series.
- For Conclusions: Present your central message clearly. Consider using a larger font size (36-point) for Conclusion text.

Title

The title should grab the viewer's attention like a newspaper headline. It should be readable from about 15-feet away.

- The title should be concise while clearly indicating the poster's subject
- Title text should be bold and at least 5 cm tall (84-point font), preferably larger.
- Smaller text under the title should include the authors' names and institutions or organizational affiliations. Subheadings should be about 1 to 3 cm tall (36 to 72-point font).
- If space permits, use first names for authors to facilitate interactions. Middle initials (John Q. Public) and titles (Ph.D.) are less necessary.
- Use abbreviations where possible in institutional affiliations. (ex: University of California, San Francisco can be listed as UCSF)
- Some authors include the logo of their institution or organization and their own photo. This can help viewers identify authors at the poster session.

Text

Keep text concise and to the point.

- Use 36-point, bold type for section headings (Conclusions, Methods, Results, etc.).
- Use 18 to 24-point, bold type for supporting text and captions. 18-point type is the smallest size you should use.
- Use 1.5-line or double-spacing between lines of text. Use left justification.
- Use one font consistently. San serif fonts (fonts that have characters without "tails" or other embellishments) are easiest to read. Recommended fonts include Calibri, Helvetica, Arial, Geneva, Palatino, Century Schoolbook, Courier, and Prestige.
- Avoid all capitals as it is more difficult to read. (ex: TITLE should be written Title)
- Add emphasis by using a larger font size, bold type, underlining, or color. Avoid overuse of outlining or shadowing.
- Avoid italics except when needed, e.g. with Latin species names.

Visual Elements

Posters are primarily visual presentations. Thoughtful, self-explanatory visual elements make a successful poster. Whenever possible, use graphs, diagrams, illustrations, charts, figures, photographs, tables, or lists instead of text to get your points across. If you use someone else's graphic material, get permission and acknowledge the creator on the poster.

- Larger images are better. Visual elements should be easily viewable from at least 6-feet. Line drawings (e.g., maps, diagrams, conceptual models, etc.) should use a line weight at least 1 mm thick (2-point stroke width). Bolder lines are better.
- Use colors and contrast for emphasis and to distinguish different data groups in graphs.
- Remove non-essential information from graphs and tables (data curves not discussed by the poster; excess grid lines in tables, etc.).
- Label data lines in graphs directly using at least 18-point type.

Travel Tips

- If possible, laminate the poster to prevent damage during travel.
- Transport your poster in a sturdy tube.
- If flying to the meeting, carry the poster with you as carry-on luggage.
- Carry a digital copy of the poster so it can be re-printed locally if disaster strikes.

Presenting Your Poster

- Plan to hang your poster before the first break on day one of the conference. Take down the poster on the second day, just after lunch (which ends at 1:20pm). Push pins will be available, but you are responsible for additional material if needed (ex: double-stick tape, Velcro, scissors, marking pens, envelopes, etc.)
- You may attach a folder or envelope to the board containing your abstract, smaller prints of the poster, business cards, or other information.
- Document the event. While your poster is still hanging and in pristine condition, ask someone to take a photograph of you in front of your masterpiece.
- **Have at least one of the presenting authors available to stand with the poster during the evening reception on March 12 and towards the end of lunch on March 13.**

Helpful Links

For more detailed information and additional sample posters, please refer to the following:

- Scientific Poster Design (Cornell University)
- Preparing and Presenting Effective Research Posters (Jane Miller, Health Service Research)
- How to Make an Effective Poster (Undergraduate Research Center)

Mike Morrison of Michigan State University developed a new scientific poster approach we encourage you to consider and modify as needed for your project.

- Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RwJbhkCA58&t=4s
- Template downloads: https://osf.io/ef53g/

Derek Crowe of the University of Rochester created the following guide (butter poster) that builds off the Better Poster idea, while focusing on the visual and user experience design guidelines. The link also has template downloads:

- https://derekcrowe.net/butterposter