

Guidelines for an effective poster presentation

Congratulations on having your poster selected to participate at the SBN's poster session! In this document, we provide you with some tips for an effective poster presentation. If you are participating in the poster competition, you may want to pay special close attention to it, as the judges will be looking for the following attributes in your poster presentation.

Presenter attributes: Overall, avoid presenting for more than 3-4 minutes. Remember that your guests probably have other posters to visit. Also, conferences can be quite mentally taxing, so keep it *short and sweet* for your audience.

1. Presentation style

- Present information in a logical order, from introduction to conclusions.
- Pace yourself and make sure your volume and intonation are adequate.
- Try to establish eye-contact with your audience. This will help keep your audience engaged.
- Use your hands to point to any relevant information. For example, when presenting your method's timeline or data graphs.
- Show your excitement about your work (don't be afraid)! This can be accomplished by using hand gestures, facial expression, or emphasizing your words.

2. Knowledge and preparedness

- Demonstrate this by avoiding reading from your poster or from notes.
- Make sure that all the information you present is accurate. For this, review everything about your project ahead of time, such as rationale for methods used, stats used, hypothesis tested, etc.
- Answer questions to the best of your knowledge. It is OK to say that you don't know the answer to a question.
- Be respectful and polite when answering questions.

Poster content attributes: The overall goal here is to have a poster that speaks for itself, being laid-out in such a way that is clear even in the absence of the presenter.

3. Research question/Objective

- State clearly what is your research question/objective. If there is a hypothesis, state it as well. This information should be presented as part of the introduction section.
- Make sure your research question/objective is directly linked to the background information you provide.
- State clearly the connections between previous literature and broader issues (broader issues = why should we care).

4. Methods

- Describe the study design or procedures clearly, without the use of excessive text. For this, use timelines, flow charts, diagrams, and figures.

- Avoid giving too much detail about procedures (give the bare minimum). Keep in mind that a poster in this sense is different from a research paper. For this, bullet points will be your friends.
5. Results
- This section should directly address the research question/objective (that is, they should match).
 - Label figures clearly, providing data labels, abbreviations, scale bars, etc.
 - To emphasize your findings, try summarizing the main take home message from a particular figure or table in the title (or figure legend).
6. Conclusion/Discussion
- This section should connect directly with the research question/objective.
 - Moreover, this section should exhibit a level of significance to the discipline/broader audience. For this, think big picture!
 - Important, this section is about the “so what” of your research so it shouldn’t be a mere summary of your research findings.
 - Future directions could be mentioned here or as a separate section.
7. Layout and readability: Your goal is to have your audience be able to clearly read text and figures from at least 3-5 feet away from your poster.
- Avoid cramming your poster with too much text. Good practice: text should not occupy more than 30% of your poster. The use of bullet points can help with cutting words.
 - Be consistent, use same font throughout poster, including in figure legends and labels.
 - Font size: 90-120 pt for title, 48-60 pt for authors, 40-60 pt for headings, 36 pt main text. Font to be used should be “sans serif” (it is easier on the eyes).
 - Avoid using blurry or warped figures.
 - Avoid using distracting background designs. Try to avoid using neon colors, or colors that a color-blind person may not be able to see (e.g., avoid red/green for images). This applies to backgrounds as well as fonts.

If you have questions about these guidelines, do not hesitate to contact us.

Your 2022 Poster Judging Committee:

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