

## COMPOSITION OF A SUCCESSFUL SCIENTIFIC POSTER

The following are suggested guidelines only. It is not mandatory that your poster strictly adheres to the following; however these guidelines are meant to produce a poster that is eye-catching, succinct, and conveys the most important aspects of your research to the reader.

1. Components to include are:
  - Title, authors, addresses (as originally submitted)
  - Objectives/Hypothesis
  - Introduction
  - Materials and Methods
  - Results
  - Conclusions/Future Directions
  - References (limited)
  - Acknowledgements (very limited)
2. The **title** of your poster should remain exactly the same as originally submitted in the abstract. The title should convey the “issue” and needs to attract the passersby and should be one or two lines at the most.
3. The **Objectives/Hypothesis** should clearly state the objectives and/or hypothesis (for most presentations a statement of hypothesis is appropriate, however this is not absolute). A bulleted list works nicely for this section.
4. The **introduction** should give a brief background of the topic you are discussing/presenting in your poster. The reader needs to very quickly understand why you chose this general topic (why is it important?) and get general background information (bulleted list or maximum length of approximately 200 words).
5. **Materials and methods** should be simple and to the point. For complex procedures, you can give a brief summary and use references to direct readers to more detailed descriptions (bulleted list or maximum length of approximately 200 words).
6. The **results** section should briefly describe qualitative (descriptive) and quantitative results using bullets or limited text. Use figures with figure legends, graphs and tables to enhance the presentation of your results, not just a textual description. Readers are far more likely to stop at a poster if there are colorful, high quality images.
7. The **conclusions/future directions section** is the place to remind the reader of the objective(s) of your study, state if hypothesis worked (if appropriate), discuss the relevance of your findings and discuss future directions (bulleted list or maximum length of approximately 200 words).
8. The **references** should use standard biology format and should be limited to no more than 10 citations.
9. **Additional tips:**
  - Be brief and simple. Do not include too many experiments. Condense or limit large amounts of data (readers are overwhelmed by a regurgitation of huge amounts of data and will not finish your poster).
  - Limit the number of tables and figures to only the most critical to bring out selected points.
  - Use few words and LARGE PRINT. The audience should know what you did, why you did it and what you found by examining your poster from at

least five feet away and within two minutes of time without an oral explanation. Bulleted lists help to save space, and tie everything together. Summary diagrams also help.

- Standardize all nomenclature and define all abbreviations. Avoid excessive use of abbreviations.
- Choose your very best photographs and clearest photomicrographs; your most brilliant fluorescence; your sharpest, darkest electrophoresis (use schematics if your gels or blots have faded). Use photomicrographs at the appropriate magnification to illustrate the lesion/issue. Label everything and use arrows liberally. Proof carefully; be sure arrows, etc., on photographs are in place and point to whatever the legend indicates. Your most important images should be displayed in the top half of the poster if possible, so that they are easily accessible to readers.
- Don't use poster colors or color schemes or dark backgrounds that may distract the reader. For the background choose a single color. Avoid patterned backgrounds because they make the poster difficult to read and review.
- Tables should only contain the most important information.
- Be sure to indicate the number of replicates on which your data are based and the statistical tests used (if appropriate).
- **Your poster board is 4 ft. high x 8 ft. wide.** Arrange your poster so the information flows and the sequence can be easily followed.

**Here are some useful links when making your poster** (sites may be ephemeral):

(Keep in mind that each meeting where you present a poster may have slightly different requirements, such as poster size, inclusion of an abstract, inclusion of references, etc., so the following links are just basic guidelines to give you some ideas).

<http://phdposters.com/gallery.php>

<http://phdposters.com/gallery.php>

<http://www.swarthmore.edu/NatSci/cpurrrin1/posteradvice.htm>

<http://www.swarthmore.edu/NatSci/cpurrrin1/posteradvice.htm>

<http://writing.engr.psu.edu/posters.html>

<http://writing.engr.psu.edu/posters.html>