GUIDELINES FOR COMPOSITION OF A STP 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.

POSTER SIZE

The area generally available for STP poster presentations is a landscape format 48-inch vertical x 96-inch horizontal (4'x8', or 1.2m x 2.4m) board. It is suggested that the poster be sized to occupy slightly less than the full horizontal space, to provide the presenter a place to stand and to present a clearer visual delineation between adjacent posters. Common sizes include 42"x 56" (1.05x1.4m), 40"x 60" (1x1.5m) or 48" x 72", though there is no specific required size.

Posters may be printed on paper, cloth, or other lightweight materials, as long as they can be hung from the board. It is recommended that, if possible, posters are printed on single large sheets, rather than individual smaller sheets, for ease of display and clarity. Pushpins are provided at the meeting.

Use your available space and arrange your poster so that the information flows and the sequence can be easily followed. Your most important images should be displayed in the top half of the poster if possible so that they are more accessible to readers. Alternative methods of poster arrangement are permitted but may be less suitable to a scientifically focused meeting.

COMPONENTS TO INCLUDE:

- Title
- Authors
- Abstract (Optional)
- Objectives/Hypothesis
- Background/Introduction
- Experimental Design/Materials and Methods
- Results
- Conclusions/Discussion
- Future Directions
- References
- Acknowledgements

Title

- Be **descriptive but not wordy**, one or two lines at most
- **Convey the issue** using an attention-grabbing title that will attract the passersby
    - Examples:
        - *Pathology of the Blood-Tumor Barrier in Brain Metastases of Lung Cancer*
        - *Interleukin-27 Acts on Macrophages to Tune Colon Epithelial Function*
        - *Spontaneous, Treatment-related and Iatrogenic Lesions in the Nasopharyngeal Ducts of Rats and Mice*

- *Potential Modes of Action for Perfluorooctanoic Acid (PFOA)-induced Hepatocellular Hypertrophy in Mice*

Authors

- Ensure that all authors contributed to the research represented in the poster
- The presenting author should generally be the first author for the poster and should have done the majority of the work on the project and in preparing the abstract and poster.
- Affiliations should be up to date
- All authors should have reviewed the abstract prior to submission and the poster prior to presentation at the meeting and agreed to the format and content.

Abstract

- The abstract does not need to be included on the poster but can be a useful component of the overall poster presentation and composition. Inclusion is up to the individual authors.
- Keep ***exactly as written*** in the submitted abstract
- For additional details, please refer to our guidance document on "*How to Write an STP Poster Abstract*"

Objectives/Hypothesis

- This portion can be included in the Introduction or can be a separate section.
- Clearly and succinctly **state your study objectives and/or hypothesis**
  - *What did you do and what were your expectations?*
- Bulleted lists work nicely for this section

Background/Introduction

- The Introduction should provide a **brief background** of the information you're presenting and engage the reader by helping them understand why you chose this topic
  - *Why is the issue important? Why should we care?*
- In some instances, it may be appropriate to have a **separate Background section** that gives the reader a more complete background summary regarding your topic, including pertinent findings from earlier published (or non-published) research
- Bulleted list or text with a suggested length of 200 words or less

Experimental Design/Materials and Methods

- Should be **simple and to the point**
- If your study involves complex procedures, provide a **brief summary** of the methods (e.g., techniques) and materials (e.g., types of samples) used and incorporate references to defer readers to more detailed descriptions
- Be sure to indicate the number of replicates, sample size, etc. on which your data are based
- Include information on statistical analyses here
- Bulleted list or text with a suggested length of 200 words or less

Results

- Briefly describe the qualitative (descriptive) and quantitative results using bullets or concise text
- Use **figures with figure legends, graphs and tables** to enhance the presentation of your results
- Tables may be used for presentation of data but should be condensed to present a limited amount of relevant data and facilitate understanding by the reader
- Successful posters contain **colorful, high quality images and diagrams** that entice passersby to pause and have a closer look

Conclusions/Discussion

- It's important to **tie-in your stated objectives and/or hypothesis** and remind the reader why you chose this topic
    - *Did you get the results you expected/anticipated? Why or why not? What are the implications of your findings?*
- Discuss the **relevance and impact** of your findings
    - *Why should we care? Why is this important?*
- Bulleted list or text with a suggested length of 200 words or less

Future Directions

- Can be a stand-alone section or incorporated into your Conclusions/Discussion
    - *What additional questions need to be addressed? Where will you go from here and why?*
- Bulleted list or text with a suggested length of 200 words or less

References

- Use standard biology format and limited to no more than 10 citations

Acknowledgements

- Very limited
- Recognition of individuals or institutions who aided the project
- Recognition of funding sources
- State conflicts of interest
- Maximum length of two to three sentences

Handouts:

- Handouts may be provided for attendees, though it is not required.
- Alternatively, copies of the poster or additional materials may be provided through a QRS code or website address.
- Presenters are reminded that the handouts are supplemental to the poster and the poster should stand clearly on its own as a scientific presentation. In short, it is not recommended to use handouts or external information to present key materials or information for the poster.

Additional tips:

- **Be brief and simple.** Do not include too many experiments. Condense or limit large amounts of data. **Busy posters overwhelm the reader** and make it impossible to present quickly.
- Use **few words and LARGE PRINT**. The reader should know **what you did, why you did it, how you did it and what you found** by examining your poster from at least 5 FEET AWAY and within TWO MINUTES OF READING TIME. Generally, a minimum font size of 16-18pt font is appropriate.
    - Use phrases instead of sentences as much as possible
    - Fonts at the same organizational level should be the same color, type and size throughout the poster (ie., All section headings should be 44pt. Arial and all 1st level bullet points should be 28 pt. Times New Roman, with all second level bullet points 24pt. Times New Roman, etc.).
    - Do not use ALL CAPS.
    - Don't mix a large number of fonts. If using more than one, make the headings/title a sans serif font such as Arial or Helvetica and the body text a serif font such as Times New Roman. Serif fonts are easier to read at smaller font sizes.
- **Bulleted lists help save space and tie everything together**. Summary diagrams or illustrations can also be helpful.
- **Be consistent!** Standardize all nomenclature and **define all abbreviations**. Avoid the excessive use of abbreviations.
- **FIGURES! FIGURES! FIGURES!** Color and attractive images/figures are key to a successful poster. Choose your very best photomicrographs (i.e., clear and in focus), your most brilliant fluorescence, your sharpest, darkest electrophoresis. **Label everything** (numbering figures appropriately, in sequence) and use arrows and symbols liberally. If using symbols to label key features in multiple images, be consistent throughout the entire poster. Include a figure legend for each figure, **defining labels and symbols** in the figure legend. Remember that your reader should be able to understand your poster without you providing any explanation.
    - Avoid visual chaos (e.g., jagged edges to text or image boxes, background images, various-sized boxes and font sizes, gratuitous images). These confuse the reader's eye and make it hard to get your message across.
    - Ensure that the images you use are either yours, public domain (not everything on the internet is public domain), or appropriately referenced.
    - Images should be used when they complement/explain the subject matter or when an image can replace words.
    - Ensure that images are of sufficiently high resolution to be clear when printing at full poster size.
- Don't use poster colors, color schemes or overly dark backgrounds that may distract the reader. **Choose a single background color**. Avoid patterned backgrounds. Dark colored text on a lighter background is generally most effective.
- **Refine your tables** so that they only contain the most important information

- Finally, **practice your 5-minute oral presentation**. You should be able to walk your reader through your entire poster, without interruption, within 5 minutes or less. Begin with a brief background and justification, touch on the materials and methods and then highlight the important results and conclusions.