

Overall Guidelines for Preparing A Scientific Poster

Your poster should be well-organized, self-explanatory and readable from a distance of 5 feet. The key to an effective poster is to present the major ideas without overwhelming the audience with unnecessary data and explanation. Your goal should be to have a reader understand:

1. the basic idea behind your poster
2. the significance of your methods and/or results and
3. an interpretation of your results.

Further the poster should provide information on where a reader can obtain additional details.

Poster Size

For our purposes, use no more than 16 sheets of 8.5x11 paper. One of these should be a title page containing your title, name and affiliations. Feel free to use a vertical or horizontal layout but be consistent! You do not need to have the poster professionally printed or mounted. Rather, the content and layout are of most importance. Bring your poster printed on regular paper, and we will tape them to the walls for display.

A Few Random Pointers

I provide some helpful suggestions below. I have also provided you with an example on the course web-site. This is a poster I gave about a year ago. I had less available space so it is shorter than what yours will be, but it does provide an idea of how to convey information in poster form.

- Your poster should look professional.
- Strive for a “less is more” philosophy when possible.
- Often readers will only spend a couple of minutes on your poster so make sure that the main points are not buried within the poster.
- You should provide a reference where readers can obtain more details about your work.
- It is often a good idea to provide a means of contact e.g. an email address.
- If it is possible to use visuals over text, do so!
- Well-organized bulleted lists are an effective way of summarizing results.
- Provide key references for the poster. Do not take up too much of space by listing all possible references.
- Posters are best divided into sections such as Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion
- You should have a balance between text and visual aids but be sure to avoid unnecessary detail. Real estate is at a premium!
- Handouts can provide a good means of networking. They can consist of the actual poster, an associated manuscript or a more extensive list of references.

Grade and Timing

Your poster will be graded based on the points detailed above and will be used as your final HW grade. We will use our class on March 11 for a poster session. I'll be providing donuts and refreshments so come hungry!