

Guidelines for Designing Posters

The purpose of the poster should be to convey highlights of a study or project in an attractive format that can be easily read and comprehended in a short period of time, i.e., 3 to 5 minutes. The body of the poster will have 300 to 400 words. A key feature of the poster is that it can be easily read at a distance of 2 m. Authors will need to minimize the amount of text in the poster, and to do so, use of bulleted phrases rather than complete sentences is best. Graphs need to be carefully designed so that they are readily comprehended.

Elements of the Poster

Title:

The title should be short and fit across top of poster on one line. Authors' names and affiliations appear below the title.

Abstract:

This section is optional. See below for additional information.

Introduction:

Keep this section short.
Limit it to a few statements.
Clearly state the objectives.

Methods or Experimental Design:

Keep text to a minimum.
Use graphics where possible.

Results:

This section should take up most of the space.
Graphs (figures) are preferred over tables.
Keep graphs simple.
Include captions with graphics.
Include credits on photographs taken by someone other than the authors.
Tables should not exceed four columns.
Keep statements brief.

Conclusions or Implications:

Limit this section to a few bulleted statements.

References:

This section is rarely included.

Acknowledgments:

Include this section when appropriate.

Abstract Option

A 200-word abstract in 28-point font will require 10% of the available space. Authors may decide that this space could be more effectively used for other material. Rather than require authors to include an abstract on the poster, this section is optional.

Design Specifications

Overall size:

The preferred size of a poster is 91 cm x 112 cm (36" x 44") in a landscape format.

Column arrangement:

A 3-column format best fits this size poster in landscape format.

The flow of material should be from top to bottom of each column and left to right among columns.

Deviations from this pattern require careful planning.

Leave 3.8 cm (1.5") between columns

Highlighting the sections:

One can use thin-lined borders around sections or blocks of subsections to emphasize how items are grouped.

Light-colored background fill can also be used to highlight different sections.

Photograph backgrounds:

Use of photographs as backgrounds is not recommended, because legibility is usually compromised.

Text boxes with a background fill can be superimposed on photographs.

Text printed directly on photographs should be avoided.

Background:

Light pastel backgrounds are attractive and allow use of contrasting font colors, such as black, dark blue, and red.

White backgrounds are acceptable, though they are less attractive than colored ones.

Font type and size

Sans serif typeface such as Arial is best for good visibility at a distance; use the same font type throughout.

Title - 72 point or larger; keep it short, not more than 80 characters including spaces.

Authors' names and affiliations - 48 point.

Section headings - 36 point, bold.

Text - 28 point.

Graphs and tables - all numbers and labels 28 point or larger.

Graph bars and symbols – use colors; avoid cross hatching.

Acknowledgments – 20 to 24 point