POSTER SESSION
RESOURCE GUIDE

POSTER SESSION ETIQUETTE

At the Poster Session

- Come prepared; arrive 10-15 minutes early with your poster
- Remain for the entirety of the session & stand by your poster
- You can greet people walking by with a "Hello", if they look like they are reading your poster but not engaging you can say "Would you like me to walk you through my poster?". Some people might just want to read it quickly and that's OK!
- Be enthusiastic and greet people as they join; don't start over when a new person joins - let them know you will circle back
- Be cognizant of volume and background noise - speak loudly enough for poster viewers to hear, but not so loudly that you disturb other presenters
- If you don't know the answer to a question, feel free to speculate (but make sure you don't make anything up - "I don't know, but I'd be happy to get back to you with an answer later" is perfectly fine!)
- Don't take credit for someone else's work
- Use this opportunity to share your work and gain new perspectives from those with whom you engage!

Wear professional, business attire

What to Wear: Dress slacks or khaki pants (not cargo pants), button-up shirt, blouse, cardigan, sweater, suit jacket, blazer, sport coat, dress shoes, knee-length skirts & dresses, heels or flats

What Not to Wear: Jeans, shorts, sweatpants, sweatshirts, t-shirts, sneakers, flip flops.

SUGGESTED TIMELINE

1 wk before abstracts due
Give your mentor a draft of your abstract for any edits

2-3 wks before poster session
Start work on your figures & poster text; consult mentor

1 wk before poster session
- Start assembling your poster file to size and import your figures correctly
- Come up with your pitch (5 min walk-through of your poster) & consult your mentor

1-2 days before poster session
Print poster & practice your pitch - have it memorized and ready to go

Poster session day
Hang your poster and enjoy your moment of glory!

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ABSTRACTS

The title should clearly indicate the nature of the research in succinct terms - use key words but not abbreviations or acronyms

Title: Bold, Centered, Times New Roman, 14 pt, 30 words max

Authors, Centered, Times New Roman, 12 pt, Includes research advisor

Institution, Department, City, State, Zip Code

Abstract body: Single space, 1 inch margins, Times New Roman, 12 pt font, 200-250 words max. The abstract should include an introductory sentence describing the general topic of your work. The abstract should also include a statement of your hypothesis, your thesis, the research's purpose, or the question of your study. The middle of the abstract should go over your general methods, the study's procedures, as well as any sources of data or media used in your methodology. Your abstract should then explain your primary results, findings, or arguments, followed by your primary conclusion or implication of the work. Finally, your abstract should end with a general statement of the significance of the research or project.

No graphics included

The abstract should be accessible to non-experts, using clear language and avoiding jargon

How do I write an abstract if I don't have results?

For an institutional symposium, it is usually understood that your research may be in progress. For national or regional discipline-specific research conferences, one typically submits completed research.

Recommended language for an abstract without results:
- "Preliminary results indicate that..."
- "We expect our results to confirm..."

Be sure to check with your advisor!

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POSTERS

What is a research poster?

- A narrative of your research project using visual & textual content such as tables, graphs, and citations to present at academic conferences, symposia, & meetings
- An opportunity to get real time feedback and questions through conversations with poster visitors
- A chance to reach out to the larger scientific community outside of your lab!

TITLE: Poses a question, defines your project, or previews key results, 1-2 lines
Author One, PhD, Author Two, MD, Author Three PhD (Talk with research advisor about the proper order)
Institution of Authors - City, State, Second Institution - City, State

INTRODUCTION

Introduce and provide relevant background information for your topic of study. A few sentences/bullet points, 18 pt font, double-spaced.
**Hypothesis**: Introduction ends with your hypotheses(es)

METHODS

Describe the materials and/or subjects used & methods employed to test hypotheses(es). Several sentences or a bulleted list is appropriate. Include diagrams or figures to help clarify. 18 pt font, single or double-spaced.

RESULTS

Describe data collected & statistical methods used for analysis. Clearly label tables, figures, images to present the data. Refer to tables or figures in the text. 18 pt font, double-spaced.
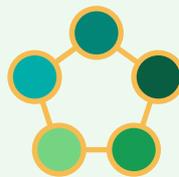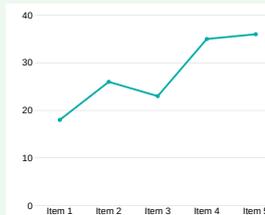
CONCLUSIONS

State whether results do/don't support the hypotheses(es) & resulting significance. Relate your research to other research in the area & your contribution.
Suggest future questions & relevance to other areas of science. 1-2 paragraphs, double-spaced, 18 pt font.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Acknowledge & thank individuals, departments, programs, & funding sources that contributed to the research. 1paragraph, 14-16 pt font.

REFERENCES

1. *Citation 1 referenced in the text, APA 6th ed. format*
2. *Citation 2*
3. *Citation 3*

Graphics

- Consider what you are communicating for which graphic best tells your story
- 50/50 of text to graphics a good ratio
- Left-justfied text (title centered), avoid vertically-oriented text, & include a simple legend, leave empty space
- Limit data in tables to key information, use graphs for relationships & trends

Color

- Use color to add visual appeal & attract viewers
- Choose your palette wisely - avoid going overboard with too many colors
- Choose a muted background color that will make text stand out (black or very dark text)

Text

Serif
Sans Serif
Bold
Italics

- Keep text SHORT - your poster shouldn't cover every detail, you'll fill in the gaps presenting
- Fonts should be 18 pt (or larger), readable 5 ft away
- Use only 1-2 fonts, limit variation in color, size, etc.
- Titles: usually sans serif
- Text: usually serif fonts

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PRESENTING YOUR POSTER

DESIGN

- Look up any poster size requirements; ask mentors for past poster examples & templates.
- Common software used to create posters includes PowerPoint, Adobe Illustrator, Adobe InDesign, Corel Draw, and Canvas.
- Creating your own poster in PowerPoint is easy:
  - Start by creating a new blank presentation
  - Go to "Page Setup" (usually found in the "Design" tab) and create a custom size
  - From there you can insert text boxes, images, and graphics to suit your need
- Keep in mind the resolution of images and graphics; if an image is pixelated when you view it at 100%, it will be pixelated when printed.
  - Use vector graphics whenever possible; when not, the lower bound on print quality raster images (e.g. png or jpeg) should be ~150-300 ppi (pixels per inch).
- Brainstorm essential information that needs to be included in an outline, then sketch a mock-up of your poster and ask your advisor for feedback

Get inspired! Check out examples of posters done by other students to get ideas for what layouts and visuals you prefer: **http://bit.ly/posterexamples**

PRACTICE

- Think about how you want to tell your story, starting broad and moving to more focused information
  - Beginning (background, problem/research question)
  - Middle (your findings, problems overcome)
  - End (conclusions, new questions arising from your work/next directions)
- It's impossible to anticipate all the questions you could be asked, but to become comfortable discussing your work and answering an unpredictable barrage of questions, practice with friends, advisors, and mentors ~3-4 times

PRESENT

- Ask if people want the short (30 sec) or long (2-5 min max) version
- Non-experts should be able to understand so avoid jargon/acronyms!
- Make sure people are following along (ask if you've explained well enough)
- Give your audience ample opportunities to ask questions on aspects of your project that most interest them
- Enjoy the opportunity to engage with others enthusiastic about your research!

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