

Scientific Poster Design

Posters are a key component of communicating your research. In poster presentations at conferences, the presenter usually stands next to their poster, thus allowing for passers-by to engage in one-on-one discussions with the presenter. In other situations, such as the hallways of universities and corporations, posters are stand-alone presentations for passers-by.

“How do I get months and years of research onto my poster?”

Tip: See it as an “illustrated abstract”

(See the UCT FHS Writing Centre hand-out on “How to Write an Abstract”)

An abstract (and your poster!) should answer the following questions:

What is the problem I am addressing?

Why should anyone care?

What am I adding to current knowledge?

What methods did I use to solve the problem?

What results did I obtain and what do I recommend for the future?

The Dos for a great scientific poster

DO keep your title short, snappy, and on target. The title needs to highlight your subject matter, but need not state all your conclusions. Some good titles simply ask questions. Others answer them.

DO make your title large enough to be read easily from a distance.

DO put the names of all authors and institutional affiliations just below your title.

DO limit the poster content to about 250 words. Avoid excessive text

DO describe only the most important aspects and findings of your research. One should be able to read your poster in under 5 minutes.

DO use clear, jargon-free terms

DO lay out the sections, with titles, in a logical order (much like a scientific article).

DO pick a font that is easy to read and keep the font size large.

DO keep posters visual - images and graphs say much more than words!

DO choose a simple colour scheme and neutral background

DO include acknowledgments

DO include references (no more than 2-3 important ones)

Adapted from:

- Cornell University, Centre for Materials Research. 2015. Scientific Poster Design. [ONLINE] Available at <http://hsp.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/ScientificPosters.pdf> [Accessed 26 February 2015)
- Block, SM. 1996. Do's and Dont's of Poster Presentation. *Biophysical Journal*, 71(6):3527-3529.

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