

**“Meeting of the Minds” Student Research Symposium**  
**POSTER GUIDELINES**

Welcome to the Annual Meeting of the Minds Student Research Symposium! We are excited to showcase the diverse research endeavors of our student community through poster presentations. To ensure a successful and engaging event, please adhere to the following guidelines:

**Poster Content:**

1. **Title:** Include a clear and concise title that effectively communicates the essence of your research.
2. **Authors:** List all authors' names and affiliations. The presenting author's name should be underlined or highlighted.
3. **Introduction:** Provide a brief introduction to your research question or problem statement.
4. **Methods:** Describe the methods or approach used to conduct your research.
5. **Results:** Present your findings in an organized and visually appealing manner. Utilize graphs, charts, images, and tables to enhance clarity.
6. **Discussion:** Interpret your results and discuss their implications. Address any limitations and suggest avenues for future research.
7. **Conclusion:** Summarize the key findings and contributions of your research.

**Poster Design:**

1. **Layout:** Arrange content in a logical sequence, following the traditional layout of introduction, methods, results, discussion, and conclusion.
2. **Font:** Use legible fonts such as Arial or Times New Roman. Avoid using fonts smaller than 24pt for body text and 36pt for headings.
3. **Graphics:** Ensure that all graphics are clear, relevant, and effectively convey information. Avoid overcrowding the poster with excessive visuals.
4. **Colors:** Choose a color scheme that enhances readability and visual appeal. Maintain consistency throughout the poster.
5. **Whitespace:** Incorporate ample whitespace to improve readability and focus attention on key elements.
6. **Size:** Posters should be no larger than 48 inches (width) x 36 inches (height).

**Presentation Etiquette:**

1. **Presence:** Be present at your poster during the designated presentation times to engage with attendees and discuss your research.

- Engagement:** Actively engage with visitors by offering a brief overview of your research and inviting questions.
- Clarity:** Communicate your research findings clearly and concisely, adjusting your presentation style to suit the audience's level of understanding.
- Respect:** Respect the time and space of other presenters and attendees. Avoid monopolizing conversations or disrupting nearby presentations.
- Networking:** Take advantage of networking opportunities to connect with fellow researchers, faculty members, and industry professionals.

**Submission and Deadlines:**

- Poster Submission:** Submit your poster electronically by the specified deadline to facilitate printing and setup.
- Revisions:** Ensure that your poster is finalized and proofread before submission. Minor revisions may be allowed within a specified timeframe.
- Registration:** All presenters must register for the symposium by the registration deadline to secure their participation.

Thank you for your attention to these guidelines. We look forward to your participation and contribution to the Annual Meeting of the Minds Student Research Symposium.

To access templates for Academic Poster [use this link.](#)

**Put logos at the top of your poster to ruin poster aesthetics, reduce legibility of title, and undermine the ability of your graphs to visually compete for viewers' attention**

Colin Purrington  
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**Introduction**

Your reader was misled by the title, but you have exactly two sentences to hook them into reading more. Do describe exactly what your interesting question is and why it really needs to be addressed. Customize background information will come from the walk away.

Typographic research has shown that it is easier to read if you use a serif font such as Times. But use a non-serif font for titles, headings, etc. In subtle tag lines at different. Research has also shown that fully justified text (like this paragraph) is harder to read, so don't do this, even if it seems cool and professional looking.

**Results**

The overall layout in this arena should be visually compelling, with clear cues on how a reader should travel through the components. You might want a large map with most graphs. Or have questions on left and answers with supporting graphs on right. Be sure to separate figures from other figures by generous use of white space. When figures are too complex, viewers get confused about which figures to read first and which legend goes with which figure. Complicated content just looks bad, too. The big thing to remember is that a Results section on a poster does not need to look like a Results section on a manuscript, so feel free to be creative.

If you can add small drawings or icons to your figures, do so — these visual cues can be precision aids to orienting viewers. And use colored arrows or callouts to focus attention on important parts of graphs. You can even put text annotations next to arrows to tell reader what's going on that's interesting in relation to the hypotheses tested. E.g., "This outlier was most likely caused by contamination when I sneezed into tube." Also, don't be afraid of using colored connector lines to show how one part of a figure relates to another figure.

Figures are preferred but tables can sometimes be unavoidable, like death. If you must include one, go to great efforts to make it look professional (the table, that is). Look in a respectable journal and emulate the layout, line types, line thickness, text alignment, etc., exactly. A table looks best when it is a first composed within Microsoft Word, then translated as an Object. Use colored text or arrows to draw attention to important parts of the table.

Paragraph format is best, but so are bulleted lists of results:

- 9 out of 12 brazenized rats survived
- Brainstemized rats ate less
- Corned rats completed maze faster, on average, than rats without brains

This sample results section is way too wordy, in case you were wondering.

**Conclusions**

Conclusions should not be mere restatements of your results — that would be boring. You want to guide the reader through what you have concluded from the results, and you need to make the first several sentences understandable on their own and interesting, because many conference attendees will start reading this section first. If you don't hook them, they'll skip. These first several sentences should refer back, explicitly, to the burning issue mentioned in the introduction. (If you didn't mention a burning issue in the introduction, go back and fix that.)

A good conclusion will also explain how your conclusions fit into the literature on the topic. E.g., how exactly does your research add to what is already published on the topic? It's important to be humble and generous in this section, so assume that authors of previous literature may be at the conference, and further assume they are credible and authoritative. You can also draw upon key findings of context such as conversations you have had with smart and important people (God, personal communication).

Finally, you want to tell readers who have heard this long what needs to be done next, and who should do it. E.g., are you taking the next logical step, or should another discipline follow up on your amazing result? It's OK to put a bit of personality into this ending because viewers expect posters to be personal, and if you're not actually standing there to correct your conclusions, your poster should be doing that for you.

If you have a graphical way to express the next iteration of your hypothesis, by all means include it. For example, you might make a graph of hypothetical data that shows an expected result in a future experiment. That's something you couldn't do in a traditional manuscript, but it's a really fine fit for a poster.

**Materials and methods**

For people really want to know the granular details of what you've been up to, so be brief. And be visual. Use a photograph, drawing, or flow chart if possible, supplemented with only a brief overview of your procedure. If you can screenshot an object, an iPad, etc., that can involve viewers in active way, do so. Refer to the computer website (see before right section) for more ideas if you are creatively challenged.

**Figure 2:** Hand-drawn illustrations are preferable to computer-generated ones. Just for fun or for fun with an artist to get there to help you out. A photograph of you actually doing something might be nice.

**Figure 3:** Legends can describe the experiment, answer the questions, and even include statistics if you so desire (for a manuscript figure legend). But keep brief!

**Figure 4:** Label elements instead of using an annoying key that are defaults on most software. Add pictures of A and B if they are actually things (e.g., icons of aster and legends flowers).

**Figure 5:** For the love of God, don't be tempted to reduce font size in figure legends, axis labels, etc. Four viewers are probably most interested in reading your figures and legends.

**Figure 6:** For the love of God, don't be tempted to reduce font size in figure legends, axis labels, etc. Four viewers are probably most interested in reading your figures and legends.

**Literature cited**

Brewer, D.J., D.H. Byrne, and R.M. Brigham. 1996. Later condition influences covert (Cave) latencies. *American Midland Naturalist* 138:141-147.

Browks, L.D. 1988. The evolution of recombination axes. Pages 87-105 in *The Evolution of Sex*, edited by R.E. Michol and R.R. Levin. Stroud, Sunderland, MA.

Scott, E.C. 2005. *Evolution vs. Creationism: an Introduction*.

University of California Press, Berkeley; Society for the Study of Evolution. 2005. Statement on teaching evolution - <http://www.evolutioneducation.org/statements.html>. Accessed 2007, 9/9.

**Acknowledgments**

We thank J. Elder for laboratory assistance, Mary Ann for tools, and Herb for the greenhouse care. Funding for this project was provided by the Department of Theology. If you want to clutter your poster with annoying keys, think them down so that they can fit inside this area without smothering text too much. Note that people's titles are omitted... after we TMI!

**Further information**

More tips than you'll ever want can be found at "Designing conference posters," at <http://colinpurrington.com/academic-posters/>. Please the URLs should be stripped of automatic hyperlinks. Formatting prior to poster printing a poster: you can do that by right-clicking, then "remove hyperlink." This file and contents copyright Colin Purrington. Free for people to link to and use, but not for paraphrasing, adapting, or being elsewhere (thanks).