



**pidop**

Processes Influencing Democratic Ownership and Participation

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## **GUIDELINES FOR POSTER PRESENTERS**

**Posters should be put up on the poster boards between 13.30 and 15.15 on 16<sup>th</sup> April, and they must be in place by the start of the Poster Session at 15.30 on that day.**

### **What is a poster session?**

At a poster session, presenters display posters which summarise their research on large poster boards. These boards are usually set up in a room or a large hall where the conference participants can circulate freely and read the information in the posters. The poster presenters stand next to their posters during the poster session, so that they are on hand to offer clarifications or further explanations of the work which is described in the poster, and to answer any questions.

Poster sessions enable conference participants to access a wide range of material in a relatively short period of time. They also enable conference participants to engage in informal conversations with those presenters whose work is of most interest to them. They are an excellent forum in which to receive feedback on your work, and to generate one-to-one discussions between presenters and conference participants. Poster sessions usually generate far more discussion than oral presentations, because they are very much more relaxed. They are therefore an ideal means through which to meet new people and to network with other people who have related research interests.

### **How to prepare your poster**

The poster boards will measure **3ft (high) x 4ft (wide)**. They are placed on stands at eye-level. The poster which you bring to the conference must therefore not exceed this size.

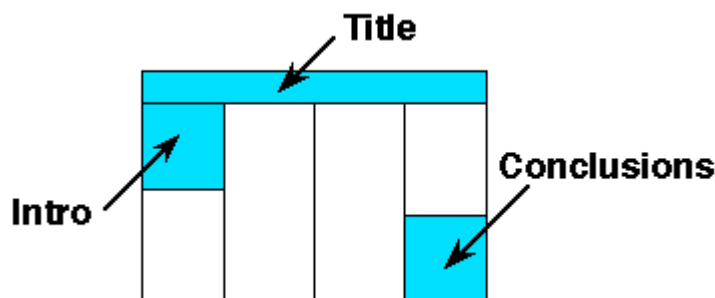
Posters often have a similar structure to a research paper or journal article: an **introduction** (i.e., brief rationale or review of relevant research), a **method** section, a **results** section, and a **conclusion** or summary. You may also want to list key **references**. If your poster is more theoretically-orientated, you may want to use a different format, but breaking the material down into clear sections with unambiguous headings will help readers understand your poster easily and quickly.

Designing an effective poster requires careful thought and preparation. Posters which are simply short manuscripts do *not* work well. In designing your poster, you should aim to produce something which will:

- attract attention
- provide a clear overview of your work
- provide enough material to explain the essential features and the outcomes of your research without the need for an additional oral explanation
- provide enough material to initiate discussion and questions

In the busy and crowded environment of a poster session, most people do not have the ability to read and process long sections of text. Therefore, keep your text to the bare essentials and only include the most important information. Wherever possible, use schematic diagrams, graphs, tables and other strategies to direct the visual attention of the viewer, rather than explaining detailed issues using lengthy text as you would in a journal article. You can convey details via discussion when you are standing by your poster.

The layout of posters often varies, but the following format is frequently used because it is very effective:



The title of your poster presentation, and your name and affiliation are usually placed at the top and in the centre of the poster. The title should be printed in a large font size (perhaps 36 point font), while your name and affiliation may be printed immediately underneath it in a slightly smaller font. Viewers will need to be able to read these easily from a distance, so that they can find your poster from its title and from your name as these are printed in the conference programme.

The main body of the poster should then try to follow these general rules:

- Use a large size font (e.g., 30 point font) for section headings, and a medium size font (e.g. 24 point font) for text (do not use anything smaller than 18 point font, as this will make your poster very difficult to read)
- Use a sans serif font (e.g., Arial), not a serif font (e.g., Times Roman)
- Use bullet points to simplify sections, especially the Introduction and the Conclusions.
- If possible, use a newspaper headline style for bullet points, which maximises the amount of information while minimising the number of words
- Make effective use of underlines and **bold** typeface
- Keep sentences as short as possible
- Avoid long paragraphs, as these will often not be read by viewers
- Avoid acronyms, abbreviations and jargon
- Use graphs and figures whenever possible; however, these should be self-explanatory, so make sure that you provide clear legends including symbols
- Avoid using large tables of numbers - try to use graphs instead
- If possible, include photographs and illustrations
- The Introduction and the Conclusions are the most important sections to get right: many viewers read these sections first, and so they need to be relatively easy to understand (if not, they may be the only parts of the poster which viewers attempt to read)
- Identify a limited number of key messages which you want your viewer to take away (three is often the maximum number possible), and focus the content of the poster around these; these key messages should be clear, novel, and important
- Ensure that the information flows logically from one section to the next
- Make your poster visually pleasing and attractive
- Consider using colour in your poster, but bear in mind that: (i) text should be in dark colours on a white or light background; (ii) combinations of red and green are difficult for people with common types of colour blindness to read, and so should always be avoided; (iii) too many colours can make a poster look too “busy” and make it very difficult for viewers to find the critical points
- Include lots of white/blank space in the poster
- Design your poster so that it flows logically from top to bottom and from left to right, and in such a way that the viewer knows exactly what to read first, second, etc.
- Prepare the entire poster before coming to the conference
- Before you come to the conference, ask your colleagues or peers to review your poster to give you feedback on its content
- Before you come to the conference, check that your poster is readable from 3 feet away, and that the colour contrast is sufficient

## **What to do at the poster session**

Poster presenters must stand next to their posters for the duration of the poster session. Wear your name badge. Be enthusiastic about your research. Greet visitors to your poster, and approach anyone who appears interested. Introduce yourself, and ask if they would like you to explain the work to them. Conference participants may want to hear a brief (1-2 minutes) summary of your research and your poster. They may ask you to tell them about your work, explain your methods, or discuss various aspects of your results and conclusions. Rehearse your presentation before the poster session. Do not read your poster verbatim. Be prepared to answer questions about your research. Do not worry about having an answer for every question. Unexpected questions can point you to new directions for your research and uncertainties can elicit feedback, insights and helpful suggestions from others. Finally, do bear in mind that viewers may want to see other posters as well, so give them lots of opportunities to walk away!

In addition, you should bring multiple copies of handouts containing the contents of your poster in a reduced size format (e.g., A4 size) to give to interested conference participants to take away with them. Make sure that you include your contact information on the handout. Also, it may be helpful for you to bring a pad of notepaper and some pens with you to help you in conversations with poster viewers. You will not be able to write on the poster boards.

At the end of the poster session, you should pin up a sheet of paper next to your poster which has the heading "If you would like to receive a copy of this poster and related work, please write your name and contact details here", so that interested people who only get to see your poster at a later time can write their contact details on it for you to send them a copy of your poster at a later date. You could also pin up an open envelope for people to drop their business cards into it for you to send them a copy of your poster; if you do this, write "Please leave business cards here" on the front of the envelope. If you run out of copies of your handout during the course of the poster session itself, pin up this sheet of paper and envelope during the session, so that you can send copies by email or through the post to interested viewers at a later date.

## **Additional information**

- The poster session will take place in AP Building (Room No to be confirmed)
- The poster boards will display Poster ID numbers, which will match up to the number assigned to your poster in the conference programme; please put your poster up on the correct board, to enable interested viewers to find it
- Posters should be attached to the poster boards using velcro pads; supplies of these will be provided by the conference organisers in the poster hall
- Posters should then be left on the poster boards for the remainder of the conference, so that conference participants can return to them to read them at their leisure
- Poster presenters are responsible for removing their own posters at the end of the conference; posters left behind after the conference ends will be discarded
- Make your poster sufficiently sturdy and robust to withstand your trip to the conference
- Cardboard shipping tubes are often a convenient way to carry and protect your poster
- The poster boards are rented and may not be written on or defaced in any way

Finally, enjoy your conversations at the session!