

## AZEF Poster presentation guidelines

### General

Posters are judged on their presentation as well as their content. They are supposed to be concise communication tools. They should attract attention and provoke curiosity. Remember, that the poster's audience often has distractions of noise and movement of other people.

Don't make the poster too long – as a test, get a friend to read it and time them – they should be able to read the poster in 3-5 minutes. The poster should be able to tell a passer by what it is about at first glance. This is usually done using the title and supporting images. Make sure the information is properly arranged, that the poster is graphically appealing, and that data are clearly represented. Bear in mind that the clarity of the presentation stems from proper arrangement of information, and that to make the poster appealing, you need to keep the design of your poster simple.

Different people will read your poster with different levels of interest, based on their fields of interest and expertise. Many will only read the background and objectives and then move on to the conclusions. Others, with a deeper interest, might read the entire poster. To facilitate both these groups of people, make sure that the specific sections are clearly labeled and easy to find. It should also be possible to read the individual sections of your poster quickly – in other words, avoid large blocks of text. Also avoid long sentences.

1. **Don't say too much.** The temptation is always great to give as much detail as possible in presenting your work. This ultimately results in a poster with too much small text. Not only is this not visually appealing, it demands too much from the audience.
2. **Before you even start to think of design, plot the research story.** What details are needed to make your point, what is extraneous? Make sure the information flows logically. Plot the flow of information, first, on scrap paper, so that you know what you want to say and how.
3. **Make sure there is a conclusion or take home point.**
4. **The information should follow a narrative.** Tell a story; use words, tables and graphics to lead the reader through the presentation.
5. **Effective posters can be both viewer-friendly, but contain complex data.** The trick is using design cleverly to present these data. Posters may be simple, but shouldn't patronize the audience.

### Tips towards "viewer-friendliness":

1. It often helps to state the conclusion of the investigation in the title
2. Lettering for titles should be readable from at least 2m away.
3. Avoid abbreviations, if you do use them, be sure to explain them on first use.
4. Heading should include authors' names and affiliations
5. Text, tables and graphics should look integrated. The same typeface should be used throughout. Try to choose a "user friendly" typeface (i.e. one that is clear, not, say, Blackadder font).
6. Lettering for the body of the poster should be legible from 1.5m away.
7. Be careful with colour, avoid garish contrast.
8. Use figures and tables whenever possible to help illustrate your point.
9. Graphics tend to look better if they are wider than tall. Some put this at 50% wider than tall. Try to avoid elaborately coded shadings and cross-hatchings, try to rather use very definitely different colours, with clear patterning, if necessary. Bear in mind members of the audience who may be colour blind.
10. Use explanations to explain diagrams and other graphics, wherever possible. You can place these explanations on the graphic – using callouts, if you are short of space.