

Preparing a Scientific Poster for Chem 260

In addition to reports and presentations, posters are a means that scientists use to disseminate information to each other. At a conference or meeting, scientists often choose to present work that is still in progress through the vehicle of a poster.

Posters typically are hung side by side (sometimes by the hundreds) in large rooms. Over the course of a meeting scientists mosey around these posters on their own time or they choose to study the poster during dedicated “poster session” times when the communicating author is expected to stand by his or her poster to explain their work and to answer any questions. In either case, you can imagine that the poster should contain detailed, clear information that is easily visible and visually pleasing to ensure that it is easy to read and understand.

In place of a traditional, written report for your last experiment, your group will prepare a poster that describes the results of your experiment. You will not actually present these posters at a poster session; instead you will provide me with a pdf version that I can evaluate.

All sections normally present in a written report are included in your poster including an abstract, introduction, procedure, results/discussion, figures, tables, and references. In a written lab report your figures and tables support your narrative; in a poster, however, this role is reversed and your figures and tables are the focal point. In a poster, your goal is to share your work using figures and tables, annotating each with a succinct but meaningful description. It is also possible to incorporate your procedural information in the captions and titles that accompany your figures and tables.

There is a PowerPoint template for a poster on the course website that you choose to use. Note that the template has places for a title and a list of authors, as well as three columns that you can use to present information about your experiment. There is a sample figure from a poster in the middle column to give you an idea of how you might format your work. You will also find posters hanging in the hallways of Julian and Olin that you can review.

The template will make a poster that is 44 inches by 36 inches. Do not print a full version of your poster. If you want to see your poster on paper, open “Print Preview,” and select “Options” and “Scale to Fit to Paper” before printing. This will print a copy of your poster on a single sheet of 8.5×11 paper. Before submitting your final poster, be sure that it is legible at this scale.