

Information for Poster Presenters

AMEE 2009: Malaga, Spain

Posters are an important part of the AMEE conference and much valued by participants, as evidenced from the evaluation forms. They are a useful method of communicating ideas about new approaches to education and reports of research studies and other work done in the area. They are highly visible, being available throughout the conference. Themed sessions are scheduled in the programme, where presenters introduce the key messages of the poster to the group, and a discussion takes place at the end of the session.

Please see the following sections below for further information:

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1 Poster mounting and specifications

When to erect your poster: Please bring your poster with you – Please do not send it to us in advance. Posters should be mounted at the Palacio de Ferias y Congresos de Málaga on Sunday 30 August from 1400-1800 hrs or between 0730-1030 hrs on Monday 31 August (in order to qualify for entry to the Poster Prize competition – see (4) below). Posters should be removed between 1300-1600 hrs on Wednesday 2 September.

Where to erect your poster: Please see the final programme (available on the website from early August) for details of the session in which your poster will be presented and the location of the board. Each board will be labelled with the identification number, poster title and name of author(s). Fixing materials will be provided.

Size of poster: Posters should be a maximum height of 150cm and maximum width of 95 cm (i.e. portrait).

2 Poster sessions at AMEE 2009

Structure of the programme: The simultaneous sessions contain a mix of symposia, short communications, posters and workshops.

Structure of the poster session: The entire session will take place around the boards. Posters will be grouped into themes, with discussion sessions scheduled on 31st, 1st or the morning of 2nd September. Presenters should meet the Chairperson by the poster boards ten minutes before the scheduled start of the session. The Chairperson will lead the group around the boards, each presenter giving a 2 minute introduction of his/her poster to the group. This will be followed by a short period for questions and discussion. The Chairperson will introduce each presenter and keep the session to time. Any time at the end of the session could be used for discussion or for individual viewing. No audio-visuals will be available other than the poster itself.

Availability of poster presenters: In addition to the formal poster presentation session, presenters are encouraged to be available by their poster at some time during lunch and/or coffee breaks. It is helpful to fix a note to your poster board indicating when you will be available if anyone wishes to discuss your poster outside of the scheduled session.

3 Hints on preparing posters for AMEE 2009

AMEE welcomes variety and ingenuity in preparing posters. The following suggestions and recommendations have been compiled based on published literature and by reference to various websites, but are not intended to be prescriptive.

General

A successful poster provides just enough information to convey the key point(s) clearly and succinctly. It is important to get the message across quickly – you may only have a short time to capture the viewer's attention. Too much information on a poster causes confusion and will be time-consuming to read. It may be better to focus on one key point, unless subsidiary points are essential to its understanding. Those sufficiently interested can always request further information via the contact details given, or discuss the work at the poster session.

The poster should be attractively laid out, and logically sequenced, with visual representation preferable to large chunks of text. Thinking of a poster as an "illustrated abstract" (Hess and Liegel, 2004) may help. Careful use of colour and size of text is important.

Question and answer type posters work well, and interactive posters are frequently well-rated by participants.

Content Guidelines

Posters may report research results, or may be descriptive, eg, presenting a theory, a new curriculum/course or teaching method.

Research posters: The following components are usually included:

- Introduction and identification of need;
- Objective(s), purpose(s), research questions(s);
- Methodology (sample, methods for data collection and evaluation): It is more important to communicate the results and conclusions than to go into detail about the methods. If participants show a particular interest in the methodology they can always request further details to be sent, eg a copy of a questionnaire used in the study;
- Data analysis;
- Results/Discussion: It may be appropriate to report only some of the more important results, in the interests of space. Complex argument is not appropriate for a poster. Tables and figures are a good way of communicating results rather than blocks of text as they are frequently easier to understand, visually more attractive and less space-consuming.
- Conclusion(s)/Take home message(s): It is recommended that only conclusions clearly supported by the results are displayed on the poster, and more speculative conclusions should not be included.

Descriptive posters: The content and structure of descriptive posters are more flexible and will largely be decided by the purpose of the poster. It is suggested however that the following aspects should be considered in relation to content:

- Introduction to the topic/identification of need;
- Objectives/purposes of the work;
- Description of what was done;
- Discussion of what was achieved and how the work has advanced understanding of the topic;
- Conclusions/take-home messages.

Style Guidelines

Layout:

- The title of the poster, name(s) of authors, address where the work was carried out and contact details should be prominently displayed, together with a logo if appropriate;
- It is not necessary to cover the whole poster with information – use of ‘white space’ provides a pleasing contrast, particularly where a large amount of colour is used on the poster;
- “Reader gravity” – the natural way in which the reader’s eye is drawn to look at the poster, suggests that information should be laid out either from top to bottom, or left to right;
- Small blocks of text of up to 75 words are recommended, and use of appropriate level of headings makes the poster easier to read;
- Abbreviations should be explained the first time they are used;
- Bulleted lists are frequently a good alternative to blocks of text;
- Visual representation is preferable to text wherever possible. Diagrams, tables, photographs, arrows etc can aid readability and add to the attractiveness;
- An appropriately sized poster is preferable to a number of A4 sheets put together.

Font and colour:

- Sans serif fonts such as Arial or Helvetica are generally considered to aid legibility for posters. Between 20-28 point is recommended for text and at least 72 point for the title. The title should span the width of the poster. Font should be consistent throughout the poster, and appropriate levels of headings should be used. References should be limited to 5, and the font size should be smaller than the poster text.
- Judicious use of colour is recommended, with a maximum of two or three primary colours (eg, red, blue, green or yellow) introduced (however some shades of yellow may be difficult to read). Black type on a white background is standard practice, and patterned backgrounds should be used with care.

Figures and graphics:

- Figures and graphics should be of good quality and should be appropriately labelled with short legends;
- Graphs and charts should have an appropriate scale and labelled axes.

Additional information not on the poster:

It is helpful if presenters can have the following additional information available by the poster board:

- Printouts of their posters or handouts of the key points, and contact details, for participants to take away. Around 50-75 copies would be appropriate;
- A note on their poster board of the time(s) they will be available by the board for those who would like to discuss the poster outside the formal presentation time.

Bibliography:

- Durai R and Venkatraman R (2005) How to prepare a good poster. Hospital Doctor, 19 May, p38;
- Hess G and Liegel L (2004) Creating Effective Poster Presentations. <http://www.ncsu.edu/project/posters> (accessed 02 June 2004);
- Nicol A A M and Pexman P M (2003). Displaying Your Findings: a practical guide for creating figures, posters and presentations. Washington DC: American Psychological Association.

4 Medical Teacher Poster Prize

Concept: Recognising the importance of posters, a prize will once more be awarded for the best poster, as judged by an invited committee, and based on a set of criteria indicated below. The aim is to select examples which, in the opinion of the committee, reflect good practice in preparing posters. Ten posters will be shortlisted, from which one winner will be chosen.

Committee: The committee will consist of conference participants including teachers and students, led by Professor Herman van Rossum from Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam.

Criteria for judging posters: Posters will be assessed on their ability to communicate the key messages clearly and succinctly. The following criteria will be used to judge the poster as displayed (the abstract in the conference abstract book and the oral presentation of the poster during the conference will NOT be used to judge the poster):

- Attraction: does it attract the viewer's attention and is it visually appealing?
- Design: does it meet the required specification and does it conform to good practice in terms of content and style?
- What was done: is the description clear?
- The message itself: is the message clear?
- Relevance of the message: is the message useful and are the take-home messages clear?

Prize: AMEE is grateful to the publishers of Medical Teacher, Taylor & Francis, for once more providing the poster prize, consisting of £250 plus one year's free AMEE membership, which includes a free personal copy of Medical Teacher. Alternatively the winner may choose free registration for AMEE 2010. Please note that:

- Only posters mounted before 1030 hrs on Monday 31 August will be considered for the Poster Prize;
- During the afternoon of Tuesday 1 September, a rosette will be attached to the board of the 10 posters selected by the committee for the short list from which the winner will be selected. Participants can therefore see the posters that, in the opinion of the Committee, best reflect the aspects of a good poster;
- At the end of the final plenary on Wednesday 2 September the three posters judged the best will be announced, and the prize awarded to the overall winner.

5 AMEE Poster Quiz

All participants, whether poster presenters or not, are eligible to enter the poster quiz, consisting of questions that can be answered by looking at the posters as mounted. A copy of the quiz will be included in each registration pack, and should be completed and returned to the AMEE desk by 1800 hrs on Tuesday 1 September. The winner will be announced at the end of the closing plenary on Wednesday and will receive free registration for AMEE 2010 in Malaga (29 August to 2 September 2009).