Guidelines for a successful Poster Presentation

To reduce the number of oral presentations to a number that congress participants can manage in one week, FEPSAC decided many years ago to give poster presentations more weight in the congress programme. Indeed, Poster Sessions are the main forum for presenting scientific research and facilitating exchange during FEPSAC Congresses as it allows for direct communication between the presenting author and the interested audience without time restrictions.

A poster will only be noticed if it attracts and keeps the audience's attention. The following elements are essential to a successful poster design:
1. Overall graphic design and visual appeal
2. Readability and clarity
3. Time needed to process the content
4. Content presented

The following guidelines intend to help you design a successful poster:

1. A poster title has to be catchy!
- For those who prepare their visit to the poster session by reading the programme booklet, the title has to be both informative and catchy to attract attention.
- A short and maybe provocative title may elicit the strolling audience's curiosity.
- The title must be large and clear to be read from about 5 m. Use bold letters at least 5 cm high.
- Do not use upper case letters, these are more difficult to read from a distance.

2. A poster has to attract visual attention!
Three main tools may help attract attention:
- Colours. Coloured paper, coloured writing, photographs make a poster stand out from the ordinary black-and-white presentations.
- Proper layout. A variety of different fonts, a mixture between italic, bold or underline, and non-carefully designed graphs bias the viewer to expect a sloppy content and attract only negative attention.
- Well-structured arrangement. A well-planned alternation of different contents and empty space increases the visual impression. Mixed-up parts of the poster or text distributed regularly over the whole poster discourage or bore at first glance. Plan enough time to hang the poster carefully.

3. A poster should be readable from a distance of 1.5m!
If it is crowded, even those who stand in the back row should be able to puzzle out the information. This refers not only to the text, but also to scale information in diagrams or legends and titles. Therefore:

- 5 mm should be considered as the smallest font size on a poster even in figures and tables.
- Line spacing should be minimum 1.5, especially for smaller fonts.
- In case of doubt, choose the bigger font.
- Avoid text or titles in capital letters, this is more difficult to read.

4. As little text as possible!

In order to get your message even to the non-experts in your field, try to find ways to replace lengthy text by figures, tables, diagrams, photographs, or schemes. Examples:
- The design of an experiment may be presented as a scheme.
- The experimental situation may be understood immediately when presented on a photograph.
- Results may be understood more easily when presented in a diagram instead of a table.

5. The message of a poster should be conveyed in 3 to 5 minutes!

Time is typically limited during congresses and the number of posters is high. Only few congress participants may be motivated enough to spend more than 5 minutes on a single poster. If you want the strolling audience to read your poster, you better be brief. Tips:
- Do not present basic theoretical considerations.
- Limit yourself to the most interesting findings and conclusions instead of presenting them all.
- Guide the reader with arrows through your poster (e.g. Problem → Experimental Design → Experimental Situation → Results → Discussion).
- Prepare and photocopy a hand-out for those who are interested. Here you may also go more into details, e.g. giving tables with all values in addition to diagrams.
- Those who are more interested should get the chance to contact you. Therefore, include your address and email on the poster as well as on the handout.
- Cards may be hold at disposition.

6. Respect the guidelines of the organizers!

Read carefully the instructions especially for the size and orientation and when and how to hang up and dismount your poster.
- **Important: The FEPSAC Congress poster format is VERTICAL**
- Size A0 (118.9 cm / 46.8" height x 84.1 cm / 31.1" width)
- If you need additional material, e.g. a table to set up a laptop, contact the organiser in advance.