

SAWE Student Poster Requirements, Guidelines, and Judging Criteria

To guide students as they create their poster, the SAWE Student Poster Judging Committee would like to outline the poster requirements and judging criteria used to analyze student posters. Questions can be directed to Head Poster Judge, Professor Ali Elham, at ali.elham@SAWE.org.

Each student, or student team, creates a poster that describes your entire project. It should be able to describe the key elements of your project on its own, but it also serves to attract attendees to stop by and discuss the project in more detail with team members. It should be dominated by interesting graphics and reflect a strong engineering basis for the design. Key design aspects of the project should be emphasized, i.e., the poster should convey not just what was built, but why this was a good design choice and how it meets key requirements, including the results of testing. This format does not lend itself to detailed data presentation, but most important results should be summarized in a few key tables or plots. Text should be limited to large bullets or labels, since it is very hard to read at a distance.

Poster Dimensions and Set-Up Procedure

- **Maximum** poster dimensions = **28" height x 40" length**
- Poster assembly can be performed Monday afternoon in the Enchantment Ballroom
- Font size must be readable from a distance. *Recommended* font sizes are:
 - 44 pt for headers
 - 38-40 pt for body text
 - 18-24 pt for captions beneath figures
 - 18 pt for references
- The SAWE will provide standard-size, white, tri-fold foam poster boards of 28" height and 40" length, as well as push pins, tape, and glue with which to attach your poster to the board. Any other method of attaching the poster (such as clips) must be provided by the student. A smaller poster board is allowed but must be supplied by the student.
- Two poster board tabletop stand holders will also be provided for each poster. If more than two stand holders are desired, these must be provided by the student.
- The SAWE will provide tables of 6 ft in length by 2.5 ft in width (72" x 30", or 1.82 m x 0.76 m); each team is allowed HALF of that area (3 ft x 2.5 ft) for their poster display.
- Teams are allowed to display supplemental materials at their poster station. These displays may include laptop/tablet presentations, testing samples, 3-D printed models, etc., and must be displayed on your allotted table space. Be aware that there will be no access to power outlets at the poster session location. Any supplemental displays will not be factored into the judging of the poster.

Poster Judging Process

- The posters will be critiqued by a team of poster judges during the poster session. The judges will be visiting the posters and discussing the projects with team members. Evaluations of both the displayed poster and the oral presentation of the poster factor into the poster score.
- Posters and displays need to be set up by the deadline provided.
- At least one team member should be present throughout the poster session.
- Teams should not select a single spokesperson for the team, nor should a single team member monopolize the oral presentation of the poster to the judges; differing team members have expertise in various components of the project.

Required Poster Components

Poster judges will expect the following components to be present in some manner:

- Title with Authors and their Affiliated Institution(s)
- Abstract
- Introduction and Background
- Methodology
- Testing
- Results and Major Findings
- Conclusions
- Recommendations and Future Work
- References and Acknowledgments (including funding contributors, if applicable)

Judging will also include:

- Poster Design and Layout
- Scientific Content of Poster
- Presenter Communication

Poster Recommendations

The following criteria are recommended in crafting your poster:

- **Ability to Stand Alone:** The poster should be able to stand alone as a clear communication of the project without the student(s) present.

- **Balance**: The poster should be a balance of text, figures, and space. Excess text should be avoided - figures should play a dominant role in communicating the project on the poster. There should be adequate space around text and figures to avoid a crowded appearance.
- **Overall Visual Appeal**: Color and font changes should be used appropriately. The use of too many colors creates an unprofessional appearance. There should be consistent use of color throughout the poster to represent the same concept - the colors should not be randomly switched.
- **Legibility**: The poster should be easy to read. The background should not be busy and distracting. The resolution of the printed poster should be high enough that the text is clear and there is sharp detail on the figures. Avoid use of inadequate quality micrographs and other images on the poster. Poster text and figures may appear clearer on screen than on paper; therefore, a printout of the poster should be viewed prior to display.
- **Quality of Graphics**: Figures should be well labeled and have clear legends. It should not be necessary for presenters to explain the figures.
- **Conciseness**: The content of the poster should be technically written. It should take no longer than 5 minutes for someone to skim through the poster.
- **Flow**: The poster content should follow a logical sequence. The reader should be able to navigate the poster with ease.
- **Accuracy of Information Presented**: The scientific content of the poster should be accurate. Models should be free of mathematical error and include statistical analysis.
- **Grammar/Spelling**: Posters should be critiqued before printing for spelling and grammar errors. Nothing ruins a reader's confidence in the poster's validity faster than misspelled words.
- **Acknowledgements**: The poster is an opportunity to give credit to contributors who may not be present.
- **Oral Presentation of Poster**: The poster presentations provide judges with the opportunity for detailed analysis. The team should be able to answer in-depth questions. This opportunity lets judges find out whether teams really understand the project.