Oral Presentation Guidelines*

*Guidelines based on the American Association of Physical Anthropologists Guidelines for Poster and Oral Presentations.

**General Comment:** good oral presentations should:

1. define the problem or state the central question being addressed;
2. indicate its importance;
3. tell what was done;
4. state what was found; and
5. consider the broader implications of the findings.

It is not possible to cite all previous work, provide detailed descriptions or methods, or include all the data obtained in a 10-15 minute talk. A good presenter seeks to make a single point, and to make it simply, clearly, and concisely. Oral presentations are greatly enhanced by the use of good visual material. Good visuals convey the essential material of the talk, including key points and research results. They allow the listener to both see and hear; this enhances understanding. To maximize the effectiveness of your oral presentation, please consider the following guidelines.

**Specific Suggestions**

*Clear purpose:* Effective visuals and talks make a single main point and tell a unified, coherent story. Organize your talk around a central theme. Develop a clear train of thought that does not get bogged down in detail. Provide a conclusion that summarizes the main points, and raises the important issues posed by the material you presented.

*Freedom from non-essential information:* Unless the purpose of the talk is to present research methods or techniques, omit all but the key methodological details. Save non-essential information for responding to questions during the discussion period.

*Graphs, diagrams, and tables:* Study results are best presented in graphic form. Diagrams can be used to present research design or study hypotheses. Avoid tables, especially those with more than a few rows and columns. Simplify your presentation so that you do not have to tell your audience “I know you can’t read the table in this slide but …” Keep graphs and diagrams simple. Avoid gratuitous three-dimensional graphs that provide no more information than their two-dimensional equivalents.

*Projection of presentations:* Windows PCs will be available at the podium for projection of PowerPoint or Adobe Acrobat presentations. Do not bring a personal laptop to the podium! Please bring your presentation on a USB device. Macintosh users must add the “.ppt” extension to the end of the filename. Use common fonts such as Times Roman, Arial, and Helvetica. Please virus check your entire USB device. A final word to the wise: Always check your presentation on a Windows PC other than the one on which you prepared the presentation. This is the easiest way to detect compatibility “issues” before heading to the airport/podium.

*Audio-visual equipment:* We will provide equipment for computer projection. Overhead and traditional slide projectors will not be available.
Poster Presentation Guidelines*

*Guidelines based on the American Association of Physical Anthropologists Guidelines for Poster and Oral Presentations.

**General Comment:** poster presentations provide more opportunities for discussion with interested viewers – several hours instead of the 15 minutes that are available for podium presentations. An oral presentation can be heard at one and only one time; a poster presentation is available for several hours, and thus its viewing can be tailored to fit the interested person's schedule. Therefore, the opportunities for reaching a large audience, receiving useful feedback, and discussing your research are at least as great for a poster as they are for an oral presentation. Good oral and poster presentations entail equal effort.

**Specific Suggestions**

**Dimensions:** The maximum poster size is A0 or 84.1 by 118.9 centimetres. Minimum poster size is A1 or 59.4 by 84.1 centimetres. Preferred poster orientation is landscape. Bring your own pushpins or thumbtacks.

**Single page posters:** Effective posters can be prepared using software such as Powerpoint. It is recommended that posters be rolled with the text to the outside for transport. However, be careful to protect the ink from being scratched. If you prepare your poster with a graphics program, the background of the poster should be a solid colour, not a pattern or a distracting photographic image.

**Organization:** Make an initial sketch of your poster presentation, allocating space for Introduction, Materials and Methods, Results, Summary and Conclusion. Focus attention on a few important points. Try different styles of presentation to achieve clarity and simplicity. Graphs and diagrams provide a clearer statement of your research results than tables. Use limited text to convey the essential information concerning the problem under investigation, methods, results and salient concluding points.

**Legibility:** The title should be legible 2.5 meters away; viewers should be able to easily read the remaining words from 1.5 meters away. Poster legibility suffers greatly when the type you use is to small. The letter size should be at least 18 point, with 20-24 even better. Smaller point size is strongly discouraged. Headings (e.g., Materials, Methods, and Results) should be bold type. Heading letter size should be larger than the text (30-36 point). Use short, informative ("headline" style) titles to state the essential point of each figure. Avoid abbreviations, acronyms, and jargon. Use consistent type styles and letter sizes throughout. Some individuals have the misperception that posters are simply mounted papers (as though the author attaches a paper to a poster board). However, this is not the case. You will need to simplify the text of your paper to create an effective poster presentation. Avoid presenting lengthy bibliographies. These take up space and are distracting. The presenter might provide photocopies of figures and tables for distribution.

**Create a balance between figures, tables and text:** Figures and tables should occupy approximately half the viewing area. If you have only a few illustrations, make them large. Try to limit the amount of text in your poster to 1500–2000 words so that it can be read in less than 10 minutes. Studies have shown that most people can read technical text at a rate of 250 words per minute or less.

**Eye movement:** The pathway travelled by the eye should be natural, either top-to-bottom or left-to-right.