Creating Honors Research Posters

Purpose

A poster presentation is a way of presenting the results of a research project that allows for informal discussion between the researcher(s) and the audience. In a poster session, a number of posters are placed around the room and each researcher stands by his/her display to answer questions and discuss the findings.

Poster Templates

Please design your poster using the "Honors Poster Templates" (this is a PowerPoint file with which you will be provided). If you open the "Honors Poster Templates" file and click on "Layout" under the "Home" tab, you will be offered choices of poster templates.

You should begin by picking the template that best suits your project, and then fill in the "Title", "Authors" and "Affiliation" sections in the Header at the top of the poster template. For "Authors" be sure to include your APEX mentor. For Affiliation, put your major department. You don't need to include the university name or Honors College because those are already preprinted on the poster. Use the text boxes in the main poster to fill in the key elements of your project (using text, pictures and graphs).

Whether you choose 3 or 4 columns, students should not make changes to the width or height of the columns. It is not a problem if your text, pictures, and/or graphs do not fill in a text box completely – some white space is good. At the same time, avoid leaving very large areas of blank space that make the poster look empty or sparse.

The font is preset to Arial 26. Do not change the font settings for the general text.

The sections that are placed inside the white columns should be labeled as appropriate for your project. Some guidelines about section headers, content and style are provided below for projects in each of the three APEX tracks: Research, Experiential, and Creative.

Important File and Printing Requirements

- The Honors College will print one APEX Poster free of charge to all Honors students.
- Please save your poster with the following naming convention <last name, first name>APEX_POSTER. For example: **Hawking, Stephen APEX Poster**
- Email the file to your APEX Mentor for approval. APEX Mentors are to email approved poster to honors@info.umassd.edu
- Posters received from students directly will NOT be printed.
- Create a document containing a copy of your abstract in a separate .doc file (i.e. Word) using the following naming convention <last name, first name>APEX_ABSTRACT. For example: **Hawking, Stephen APEX Abstract** for use in the end of the year convocation program.
- The **due date** for posters and abstract **TBA**.

General Advice
- Use bullet points but write in complete sentences.
- Make sure to clearly label sections using headings and subheadings.
- Be consistent with punctuation (e.g., put periods at the end of bullet points).
- Be picky about the information you include. You do not have to include every detail of your study here, just the important aspects.

The Presentation
This is your time to shine! Poster presentations are a great way for people to learn more about your research in a relatively informal setting. In order to make this as stress-free as possible, you should develop a short (three minutes or less) "blurb" about your project.
- The purpose of this blurb is to quickly walk the listener(s) through your poster.
- The focus of your summary should be mainly focused on what you found and why it matters. Thus, avoid technical jargon and skip over small details.
- Be ready to answer questions from listeners. They may ask about details that are not included in the poster (e.g., specifics about your methods, other limitations of your study).

Poster Layout Guidance for Each APEX Track
The guidelines in each section are below are suggestions that work for many students. Each project is unique, however, so you and your mentor may find you need to create different headers or organize the poster a little differently. That's OK! Feel free to ask the Dean or Faculty Director to take a look at what you have before sending it to the College for printing.

Research Track Posters
In general, research posters will have the same sections as your thesis/project but in an abbreviated form.

- *Abstract*: Provide an overview of your work in layman's terms. It would be helpful if you could include 1-2 sentences summarizing each of the subsequent sections of your poster. Keep the abstract to 250 words or less.

- *Introduction*: The introduction should be a short overview of past research (or the rationale for the study or work) and the hypothesis. Keep it simple and use a bullet format if that makes it easier to read. What two or three pieces of background information on your topic should the audience know in order to interpret your project? If you are presenting an overview of prior research or literature, be sure to choose research articles or works that are most relevant to your project, and summarize each article in your introduction. Close out the introduction with your main hypothesis provided in a section clearly titled: Hypothesis.

- *Objectives*: This section usually contains a bulleted list of the full range of claims being tested. The section may also include assessment of the potential significance of the

claims being tested or themes being explored – that is, what it is hoped that the demonstration of the claims, or the creation of the work or artifact, will accomplish. It also provides you the opportunity to say something about the inspiration and/or aspiration of the project.

- _Materials and Methods_: This section should be a much abbreviated version of the "methods" section in your thesis. In the case of research involving a literary analysis or library research, you should discuss how you chose your sources for inclusion in the study, coded materials, assumptions made in the analysis, categorized sources, or other relevant information about your process. Again, use bullet points to make the information easy to read and follow.

- _Results_: This section will likely be the largest section in your poster. For a thesis paper, you should provide detailed information on how you did your analyses (e.g., what statistical tests you performed or arguments you offered) and the results of your analyses. Whenever possible, you should use figures, tables, or pictures to display what you are describing.

- _Conclusions_: In bullet fashion, state your main conclusions or findings. For theses, this means the main conclusions, implications, and limitations of your study. Questions to answer here are: What do your findings mean for theory? Are there important applications of your findings? What questions remain unanswered? If you were to do the study again, how would you change it? For more creative projects, what possibilities and limitations does this project reveal? What insights does it suggest? What does it offer and ask of readers, viewers or users?

- _References_: If you used any references, give the citations for your references in the correct format. If using a QR code for references or other information, QR codes should be no larger than 3" X 3".

Experiential Track Posters
In general, experiential posters will have the same sections as your APEX but in an abbreviated form. Some ideas for sections are suggested here, but you should work with your mentor to decide the best headings and sections for your individual project.

- _Abstract_: Provide an overview of your work in layman's terms. It would be helpful if you could include 1-2 sentences summarizing each of the subsequent sections of your poster. Keep the abstract to 250 words or less.

- _Introduction_: The introduction should be a short overview of the field and topic of your work (or the rationale for the guiding question you chose). Keep it simple and use a bullet format if that makes it easier to read. What two or three pieces of background information on your topic should the audience know in order to interpret your project? If you are presenting an overview of prior research or literature, be sure to choose research articles or works that are most relevant to your project, and

summarize each article in your introduction. Close out the introduction with your main question or theme, provided in a section clearly titled: Guiding Question or Theme.

- *The Internship*: This section should provide information about where you conducted the internship, the number of weeks or months it spanned, the major duties you performed, what section of the organization you were placed (e.g., accounting office, data management department, etc.), and any other details of the placement that readers will find helpful or relevant.

- *Objectives*: This section usually contains a bulleted list of the full range of the subjects of examination. The section may also include assessment of the potential significance of the claims being tested or themes being explored – that is, what was hoped the project would accomplish. It also provides you the opportunity to say something about the inspiration and/or aspiration of the project.

- *Materials and Methods*: If you used a survey or completed a project in your internship, this section should be a much-abbreviated version of the "methods/approaches/materials" section in your APEX. Again, use bullet points to make the information easy to read and follow.

- *Results*: This section will likely be the largest section in your poster. If you collected any qualitative or quantitative data, you should provide detailed information on how you did your analyses (e.g., what statistical tests you performed or arguments you offered) and the results of your analyses. For a more qualitative project such as a comparison of two companies at which you interned, or an analysis of how coursework prepared you for the internship, focus on what you see as the message or accomplishment of your work. Whenever possible, you should use figures, tables, or pictures to display what you are describing.

- *Conclusions*: In bullet fashion, state your main conclusions or findings. For theses, this means the main conclusions, implications, and limitations of your experience. Questions to answer here might be: What do your findings mean for education in your field? What insights does it suggest? Are there important applications of your findings? What questions remain unanswered? If you were to do the project again, how would you change it? What does it offer and ask of readers or viewers?

- *References*: If you used any references, give the citations for your references in the correct format. If using a QR code for references or other information, QR codes should be no larger than 3" X 3".

Creative Track Posters

In general, research posters will have the same sections as your thesis/project but in an abbreviated form.

- *Abstract*: Provide an overview of your work in layman's terms. It would be helpful if you could include 1-2 sentences summarizing each of the subsequent sections of your poster. Keep the abstract to 250 words or less. **To submit your abstract, see important file and printing requirements on Page 1.**

- *Introduction*: The introduction should be a short overview of past research (or the rationale for the study or work) and main theme. Keep it simple and use a bullet format if that makes it easier to read. What two or three pieces of background information on your topic should the audience know in order to interpret your project? If you are presenting an overview of prior research or literature, be sure to choose research articles or works that are most relevant to your project, and summarize each article in your introduction. Close out the introduction with your main theme, provided in a section clearly titled: Theme.

- *Objectives*: This section usually contains a bulleted list of the full range of the subjects of examination. The section may also include assessment of the potential significance of the themes being explored – that is, what is hoped that the creation of the work or artifact, will accomplish. It also provides you the opportunity to say something about the inspiration and/or aspiration of the project.

- *Materials and Approaches*: This section should be a much abbreviated version of the "approaches" or "materials" reflection section in your project. Again, use bullet points to make the information easy to read and follow.

- *Results*: This section will likely be the largest section in your poster. Focus on what you see as the message or accomplishment of your work. Whenever possible, you should use pictures or graphics to display what you are describing.

- *Conclusions*: In bullet fashion, state your main conclusions or findings. This means the main conclusions or implications, and limitations of your study. Some questions to answer here are: What possibilities and limitations does this project reveal? What insights does it suggest? What does it offer and ask of readers, viewers or users? If you were to do the project again, how would you change it?

- *References*: If you used any references, give the citations for your references in the correct format. If using a QR code for references or other information, QR codes should be no larger than 3" X 3".