

Presenting Research Posters at Conferences

Here are some useful tips on how to effectively interact with your audience when presenting your poster at conferences and research symposiums.

- You are guaranteed to receive variations of the question: "What is your research about?" Prepare an elevator pitch that sums up your poster's main ideas and conclusions in three to four sentences, about 30 seconds. Also prepare a more detailed explanation of 2-3 minutes.
- Be prepared to start your elevator pitch from different sections of your poster, depending on the observer's interest. Consider which sections will be the most difficult to explain. Be prepared to field questions about every poster section.
- You must be able to convey your project to experts in your field AND a non-specialist audience. Prepare an elevator pitch for both groups of people.
- When people first read your poster, there will be slightly awkward periods of silence. This is normal! People need time and space to understand and engage with your poster, and think of questions and comments.
- When presenting, it is fine to gesture and glance at your poster, but do not read directly from it. Always keep your attention on your audience.
- You will inevitably be asked the same questions repeatedly, which could become monotonous. Remember though, the person asking is curious and hearing your answer for the first time.
- If people approach your poster after you have begun explaining it, acknowledge them with a nod and a smile and indicate where you are in the explanation so they know where to look on the poster.
- People are more likely to remember you and your explanation of your poster than the poster itself. The more affable, self-confident, attentive, and articulate you are, the more memorable you'll be.