



## **Abstract and Poster Guidelines for the Annual Poster Session of the American Society for Microbiology, Maryland Branch Ltd**

**Overview:** General guidelines for abstract submission to the ASM Maryland Branch Annual Poster Session and eligibility requirements for the J. Howard Brown Award for Outstanding Graduate or Undergraduate Student.

### **1. Eligible Abstract Topics**

Posters **must** relate to microbiology or closely related fields (e.g., immunology, infectious diseases).

### **2. Abstract Structure**

Abstracts must include four sections: **BACKGROUND, METHODS, RESULTS, CONCLUSION**

(Use bolded headers if possible, per ASM Microbe guidelines.)

- **BACKGROUND:**  
1–3 sentences on the problem, phenomenon, or hypothesis. Keep it concise; full background goes on the poster.
- **METHODS:**  
Describe procedures, tests (name them specifically), inclusion/endpoint criteria, and key study details (e.g., sample sizes, replicates). Include statistical test names (e.g., ANOVA), but full details and trade names belong on the poster.
- **RESULTS:**  
Present quantitative data. Include numerical values and P-values for significance. Avoid vague terms without measurement.
- **CONCLUSION:**  
1–3 sentences summarizing findings. Include a clear “take-home message.” Do not mention future research.

### **3. Formatting Guidelines**

- Use an easily readable font such as Calibri or Arial, 12 pt for abstracts; posters should use at least 14 pt.

- Recommended poster size: no more than 60 × 40 inches
- Abstracts should be under 2,500 characters (excluding spaces, title, authors, and institution).
- Abstracts will only be accepted if submitted using the link on the Branch website's registration page.
- Posters may use a different abstract format than the four-section format, but submitted abstracts must follow the required format.
- Spelling, grammar, and formatting are the submitter's responsibility.

#### **4. Presentation Requirement**

- If an abstract is chosen for a Brown Award, the poster must still be presented at the poster session.
- Abstract submission is not the same as meeting registration. If an abstract is submitted, whether eligible for a Brown Award or not, submitters and other authors must still register for the meeting on the Branch website in order to attend.
- Registration and abstract submission must be done ahead of time (no walk-ins).
- At least one author or a designated representative must attend and present the poster.
- An author may present more than one poster (must be displayed side-by-side),

#### **5. Previously Presented Work**

- Abstracts may be previously submitted/presented elsewhere in the past four years.
- Abstracts from previous *ASM Maryland Branch* sessions will not be accepted.

#### **6. Content Emphasis**

- BACKGROUND and CONCLUSION should be brief (<25% of total).
- METHODS and RESULTS should make up ~75% of the abstract.
- Ensure METHODS describe all tests referenced in RESULTS.
- Don't include vague statements like "will be discussed" instead of real data.

#### **7. Author Affiliations**

- Include institution, department (if applicable), city, state/province, and country.
- Abstract authors do not have to be members of National ASM or the Maryland Branch to submit an abstract, present the subsequent poster, or be eligible for a Brown Award.

## **8. Brown Award Eligibility**

- Must be a current undergraduate or graduate student or have graduated on or after the previous December.
- Only the submitting author eligible to receive the award.
- Abstract submission form must be submitted by the deadline.
- Abstract authors do not have to be members of ASM or the Maryland Branch
- Co-awards only allowed for undergraduates with equal contributions, and faculty confirmation.
- Abstract submission alone does not qualify; poster presentation is required.
- An author may present more than one poster (must be displayed side-by-side), but can win only one Brown Award per session.
- 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place winners in each category are required to present their poster and an oral presentation with slides (1<sup>st</sup> place 15 min presentation and 5 mins for questions, 2<sup>nd</sup> place 5 min presentation and 5 min for questions)
- If the submitting author wins a Brown Award but is absent, a stand-in must present.

## **9. Judging and Conflicts**

- Board members will vote on awards.
- Those with a conflict (e.g., advisor to a participant) must recuse themselves from judging that entry.

## **10. Additional Guidelines**

- If specific kits, products and/or instruments are integral to the study, then trade names may be used
- Statistical analyses should be identified by name (t-Test, ANOVA, etc.)
- Any result described as “significant” MUST also contain a P-value, and a statistical test should be named in the METHODS section
- Provide numbers along with terms such as “over-production” or “depletion of”; for example: state “5-fold up-regulated” instead of just “up-regulated”