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

Applicants are strongly encouraged to follow these guidelines. Failure to do so does not automatically exclude an abstract from being accepted, however it reduces the likelihood of the author receiving a J. Howard Brown Award for Outstanding Graduate or Undergraduate Student.

1. Abstracts for posters describing scientific studies involving microorganisms or related fields such as immunology as they pertain to microorganisms or infectious diseases are appropriate for the annual ASM Maryland Branch poster session

2. Abstracts **MUST** contain four sections (**BACKGROUND**, **METHODS**, **RESULTS**, **CONCLUSION**) as described below and while it is strongly recommended that these sections be identified with bolded headers, per ASM Microbe abstract guidelines this is not a requirement

BACKGROUND

- 1-3 sentences describing the phenomenon, problem or hypothesis your poster will address

- Avoid lengthy BACKGROUND sections; history and details of your study's subject matter belong in the introductory section of the poster itself

METHODS

- A description of the materials and methods used in your study

- Statistical analyses should be identified by name (t-Test, ANOVA, etc.) but any further details should be in the poster text; *P*-values for statistical analyses should be in the RESULTS section

- Inclusion and endpoint criteria should be in this section, as should quantitative study information such as sample size, number of replicates, etc.

- Give the names of specific tests, not general terms such as "genomic analysis" or "microsome-based assay"

- If specific kits, products and/or instruments are integral to the study, then trade names may be used

RESULTS

- Data should be quantitative (numbers! "Science is measurement"); historical and epidemiological data should also be presented in terms of numbers, rates and trends that will be presented in the poster as tables and charts

- 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"

CONCLUSION

- 1-3 sentences summarizing the conclusions drawn from the results

- Ideally this section would include a single sentence with the "take home message" telling your audience what the results of the study mean

- Do NOT mention future research directions in the abstract; save that for the discussion section of the poster

3. Abstract authors do not have to be members of ASM or the Maryland Branch, but at least one author or their designated representative must attend the poster session, stand by the poster, and if the submitting author wins a 1st-place Brown award but is unable to attend, stand in for them and give their presentation

4. Eligibility for the J. Howard Brown awards:

   a. For an abstract submitter to also be eligible for a J. Howard Brown award for outstanding undergraduate or graduate student, they must be an undergraduate or graduate student on the date of the annual poster session, or have graduated no earlier than the most recent month of December before the date on which the poster session is held

   b. Only the submitting author of a given abstract may be eligible for a Brown Award; a Brown Award may not be shared between two or more authors on a single abstract with the exception of an undergraduate abstract where the faculty advisor agrees that two co-authors contributed equally to the research, abstract and resulting poster

   c. Poster presentation is required for Brown Award eligibility; submission of an abstract is not sufficient for Brown Award consideration

5. Abstracts may be submitted even if they have been submitted or accepted to other conferences, or the posters were presented at other conferences within the past two years

6. Abstracts for posters already presented at a previous ASM Maryland Branch poster session will not be accepted

7. Branch Officers and the Board of Directors will select J. Howard Brown award winners by a vote; if a student directly supervised at an academic institution or workplace by an Officer or BOD member submits an abstract, then that Officer or BOD member will recuse themselves from voting on that particular Brown award but may still vote on the award (Grad vs. Undergrad) for which there is no conflict of interest

8. An easily-read font (Times New Roman or Arial) is recommended for abstracts and posters; use 12-point font for abstract submissions and $\geq$ 14-point font size for the poster itself so it can be easily read

9. Poster size is at the discretion of the authors, but it is recommended that they not exceed 60 × 40 inches as poster board dimensions are not always available prior to the poster session; posters in portrait rather than landscape format may be advisable

10. Abstract character counts should be less than 2500 characters (this does not include spaces, title, authors or institution)

11. Abstracts must be submitted using the form provided by the Branch; the event notification and submission instructions portion does not need to be removed

12. The abstract when placed within the poster itself does not need to be in this format, so posters already printed with abstracts in another format are acceptable but in such cases the abstract should be re-formatted on the Abstract Submission Form

13. Do not convert your submission form into PDF format; leave it as an MS Word file.

14. The abstract title, author and affiliation information will be directly carried over into a PDF that will be made available shortly after the Brown Awards meeting, and as such spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors are the responsibility of the submitter

15. The person listed as "submitting author" on the submission form must be eligible for a J. Howard Brown award and if the abstract is selected, then the award would go only to the submitting author; in the case of a split undergraduate award this criterion applies to both co-authors

16. An author may present more than one poster provided they are hung side by side at the poster session, but an author can only win one Brown Award per poster session

17. Affiliations should list the institution, department, city, state/province and country where the authors generated the data from which the abstract was written

18. **General abstract recommendations**

   - BACKGROUND or CONCLUSIONS sections should each comprise less than 25% of the abstract word count

- Your audience is interested in what you did (METHODS) and what the outcomes were (RESULTS), so together these two sections should comprise about 75% of the abstract word count

- Performance parameters (controls, accuracy, acceptable results ranges, CLSI QC criteria, etc.) should be in the METHODS section, and outcomes of testing in the RESULTS section

- Do NOT state results for which testing is not described in the METHODS section, or draw conclusions for which no testing or data are listed

- Do NOT include statements such as "will be discussed" or "will be presented" in lieu of actually presenting data

Last updated: May 2, 2022