

# MCJA Student Poster Competition Rules and Guidelines

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## Overview

The Student Poster Competition is designed to highlight visual presentation of research and scholarly work conducted by students at the undergraduate, master's, and PhD levels. The competition is divided into three categories:

- Undergraduate
- Master's
- Doctoral (PhD)

The highest academic classification of the lead student presenter will determine the poster's category. Faculty advisors may support the work but cannot present or participate during judged sessions.

## Competition Categories

### Undergraduate Poster Competition

- Open to current undergraduate students or those who graduated in May and have not yet enrolled in graduate coursework.
- Lead presenters for posters entered in this category must be, or have been, an undergraduate student at the time the work was completed.
- Accelerated program students are categorized based on the highest level of coursework at the time of submission.

### Master's Poster Competition

- Open to students enrolled in a master's program or those who completed undergraduate studies and are enrolled in summer graduate courses.
- Lead presenters for posters entered in this category must be, or have been, a master's student at the time the work was completed.
- Posters developed during the master's program are eligible, even if the student is currently a PhD student at the time of the conference.

### PhD Poster Competition

- Open to students currently enrolled in a doctoral program.
- Posters entered in this category must have a PhD student as the lead presenter.

## Poster Presentation Format and Judging

### Judged Poster Session (Thursday)

- A separate poster judging panel will be held on Thursday.
- Attendance at this session is mandatory for posters to be considered in the competition.
- Judged posters must also be presented during the Friday open poster session.

### Presentation Format

- Only student presenters are allowed during the judged session – faculty mentors cannot participate.
- Each student will have 3 minutes to present followed by 2 minutes of Q&A with judges.

## Open Poster Session and Reception (Friday)

- All posters, including those judged, will be displayed at the presidential reception on Friday afternoon/evening.
- This is an open-format session for general attendees, including faculty, professionals, and fellow students.

## Poster Requirements

- The size of the poster must be 36" x 48".
- It is the student's responsibility to ensure that their poster is printed and delivered to the presentation site on time.

## Poster Judging and Awards

- Judges will evaluate posters in teams of 2-3 during the Thursday judged session.
- Judges will not judge posters from their affiliated universities.
- Results will be announced at the General Business Meeting during the Presidential Reception on Friday.
- Judging forms and scores are confidential and will not be shared.

## Graduate Student Poster Winner Policy

- The winner of the graduate (PhD) poster competition will be invited to serve as a judge in the competition the following year.
- No student may win the graduate poster competition in two consecutive years.

## Student Classification for Submission

Students must indicate their academic classification at the time of submission (see Student Poster Submission Form). The classification is based on the status during the work's completion and submission, not the time of the conference presentation.

### Classification Guidelines

- If a student graduated in May and is not yet enrolled in graduate courses, they are classified as undergraduate.
- If a student graduated in May and is taking summer graduate coursework, they are classified as master's.
- If a poster includes authors from different academic levels (e.g., undergraduate, master's, doctoral), it will be judged according to the highest level represented among the authors.  
*Example: If a poster has three authors—two undergraduates and one master's student—it will be judged at the master's level.*
- Students enrolled in accelerated UG/grad programs are classified based on their highest level of course enrollment and majority contribution context.
- Class status must be declared on the submission site, with required documentation.

## Required Submission Form

Each submission must include a completed Student Poster Submission Form, submitted by the lead author. Only one form is needed per submission. The form includes the below components and must be fully completed:

### Class Status Documentation

- Indicate academic level at time of research and submission.
- Include a screenshot of the lead author's official enrollment status or transcript.

## Contribution and Authorship Statement

- Clearly state the percentage of contribution by each author along with each author's class status.
- Describe what each contributor did.
- Confirm that the student is the lead author and made significant contributions to the project.

## Faculty Sign-Off

- A faculty advisor and/or faculty co-author must sign the form to confirm:
  - The accuracy of the classification and contribution.
  - That the poster qualifies for the appropriate category.
  - If the student completed the poster entirely independently, the faculty must still verify and sign off on the submission.

## Important Notes

- Submissions will be disqualified if the classification, contribution, or faculty sign-off are not properly completed.
- Posters will be judged on content, complexity, appearance, organization, and clarity appropriate to the student's level as well as on the delivery of the oral presentation and responses to the judges' questions.
- Awards will be given in each category (UG, Master's, PhD) based on the quality of submissions. The committee may choose not to give an award in one or more categories in any given conference year.
- Questions should be directed to [mcja@mcja.org](mailto:mcja@mcja.org) with "Student Poster Competition" in the subject line.

# MCJA Student Poster Competition Judging Rubric

Judge's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Possible Points: 60**

Presenter's Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Poster Title \_\_\_\_\_

Undergraduate    Master    Doctoral

Category	12-10	9-7	6-4	3-0	SCORE
<b>Poster Content</b>	Strong material. Well summarized. Clearly shows development of study or research. Material appears to accurately support purpose of study, hypothesis, or research question. Strong conclusion and implications presented.	The content was adequately presented but support for the study, hypothesis or question(s) is somewhat general. Conclusion and implications were reasonable.	Content presented was difficult to understand and did not sufficiently convey a connection to the study, hypothesis, research question(s), method, conclusion, and/or implications.	Connection not found between poster content and purpose of study, research hypothesis/question(s), method, conclusions, or implications.	
<b>Research Complexity</b> <i>Expectations of complexity based on division</i>	Complex research project. Purpose of the study was completely defined and results displayed in a manner interpretable by the general audience.	Complex research project. Purpose of the research and results were difficult to interpret by the general audience.	Less complex research project. However, propose of the study and the results easily interpreted by the audience.	Less complex research project. Purpose of the study and analysis of results not easily interpreted by the audience.	
<b>Poster Appearance, Clarity, and Organization</b>	The poster is clear, creative, and easy to read. Effective use of fonts, colors, and white space enhances presentation. The topic is evident, and the layout follows a logical sequence from introduction to conclusion.	The poster is clear but could improve with better use of space, fonts, headings, and white space. The topic is apparent, but the presentation and organization of information need refinement for better clarity and impact.	The poster is acceptable but lacks strong visual appeal and effective structure. Fonts, colors, headings, and white space need better use. The topic is not entirely clear, and the information is somewhat confusing or disorganized.	The poster is not visually appealing. The connection between the information presented and the research topic is unclear or difficult to understand.	
<b>Presenter's Oral Presentation</b>	Presenter was confident and professional. Established eye contact. Clearly conveyed research problem, methods, conclusions, and implications. Discussed research in layman's terms or appropriate to judge.	Presentation and demonstration of understanding was acceptable. Demonstrated some problems (speaking too softly, using jargon, hesitation, etc.)	Presenter did not convey a sense of confidence or ability to clearly discuss research problem, methods, conclusion, and implications. Additional practice would be helpful.	Presenter was not prepared. Demonstrated problems in several areas (no eye contact, no clear discussion of research, lack of professionalism).	

<b>Category</b>	<b>6-5</b>	<b>4-3</b>	<b>2-1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>SCORE</b>
<b>Time</b>	Presenter is on time or within a 30 second range of the 3 minutes limit.	Presenter is within a 1 minute range of the 3 minute limit.	Presenter is within 2 minute range of the 3 minute limit	Presenter is more the 2 minutes over or under the 3 minute limit.	
<b>Response Quality to Questions</b>	Responses are clear, thorough, and demonstrate a strong understanding of the topic with well-supported explanations.	Responses are mostly clear and accurate but may lack depth or detailed support.	Responses are vague, incomplete, or show limited understanding of the topic.	Responses are unclear, incorrect, or not provided.	
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b> (maximum of 60)					

**Additional Comments:**