Scientific poster checklist

What conferences reject posters for, and the type sizes that survive a two-metre reading distance. Free to use and pass on — this sheet and the templates beside it.

> **What is in this kit.** Twelve PowerPoint templates: three layouts — traditional three-column, billboard and single-figure — each at A0 landscape, A0 portrait, A1 and 36 × 48 inches. Every one is built at true size with the type hierarchy already set, so the sizes hold when you replace the text. Open the one that matches your board, type over the placeholders, and do not resize the text.

Type sizes that work

Measured at final printed size. These are the floors, not targets.

Element	Size	Why
Title	60–90 pt	Has to be findable from five metres, in a row of eighty boards.
Key finding	54–66 pt	The one line a passing delegate reads before deciding to stop.
Section headings	36–44 pt	Carries the reading order without anyone having to work it out.
Body text	24–32 pt	Readable at two metres. Below about 20 pt on A0 it is decoration.
Captions	18–24 pt	And nothing on the board smaller than this, anywhere.

Before you send it to print

	Check
■	Board size and orientation match what the conference specified. Check the instructions, not your memory.
■	Under 600 words on the whole board. Over 800 and it stops being read.
■	The finding is high and large — not in the bottom-right corner where a paper would put it.
■	Body text is 24 pt or larger at final size.
■	Figures rebuilt at board size, not enlarged from the manuscript.
■	Nothing depends on colour alone — add shape, pattern or direct labels.
■	Reads in greyscale. Print one page in black and white to check.
■	Title, authors, affiliations, funding and conflicts all present.
■	Ethics approval or trial registration where applicable.
■	A QR code or contact address for the people who want more.
■	Fonts embedded in the PDF. Ask the printer what else they need.
■	Looked at it at a tenth of its size. If nothing reads, nothing will read.

> **The test that matters.** Print the poster on one sheet of A4 and pin it to a wall. Stand back two metres. Whatever you can still read is what your poster says; everything else is texture. Most authors find this out at the conference, which is too late to do anything about it.

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