

Are you thinking of Presenting at the Brisbane Conference?

The next OAA Annual Conference will be held in beautiful Brisbane in November 2009. We are hoping to be able to embrace the diverse nature of our profession in this conference. So many Orthoptists practice in specialised areas that no other eyecare professionals have the skills to work in. We would strongly encourage you to consider sharing your experiences with us. Remember a presentation or poster doesn't have to be centered on quantitative research which involved data & statistics. We are interested to hear about your area of work, research you might be doing or even an interesting case that highlights what you do.

It is often tricky to know how to put a presentation together. The Scientific Committee is keen to help out and has written guidelines that you might like to review & utilize. This will ensure presentations are professional and that your message is conveyed to the audience.

Guide for Designing PowerPoint Presentations

The format of the Conference will follow themed sessions in which presentations can be given lasting approximately 10 minutes, including questions, or as rapid fire sessions lasting a shorter period.

Presenters will be asked to use PowerPoint even for a rapid fire presentation. If you are presenting on behalf of an institution or group you should check if they have requirements such as their own PowerPoint template, which you may need to use.

Before putting your PowerPoint together you might like to consider the following points.

- Aim for one PowerPoint slide per minute of your talk – this might not seem like many but by limiting yourself you will avoid overloading & rushing through your presentation to get to the end when time is called. The audience need time to look at each slide and absorb the content as you are speaking.
- One mistake presenters make is to put too much information on a PowerPoint slide – remember the audience are trying to listen to you whilst also reading your slide – it is easy to get lost if too much appears on the slide – simple is best. Slides are a good medium for depicting an idea graphically or providing an overview, not for detail and reading. Avoid paragraphs, quotations and even complete sentences. Use words and phrases to make your points. The audience will be able to digest and retain key points more easily. Don't use your slides as speaker's notes or to simply project an outline of your presentation.

Consider the points below when creating your slides:

- Don't use more than 2 different font styles on a slide
- Don't use lower than a 28 font size
- Make sure there is a sharp contrast between the font colour & the background slide colour.
- Don't use more than one graphic image or chart per slide
- Don't use more than 6 words per bullet
- Don't use more than 4 bullets per slide
- Don't use more than 6 slides just with text in a row
- Don't overwhelm the audience with special effects – these are a distraction from the point you are trying to make
- Tables of data & facts can be very hard to read & understand – only present the key findings
- Keep the background, colours & images consistent with the point you are trying to make.

It is helpful – but may not be possible – to view your presentation on a screen or projected somehow before the Conference. You can then judge how well the print & images are seen on the background, are the colours & style of the font ok, are the slides too busy or plain? Try to get feedback from other people if you can – be ready to change things!

You will find a handy web based PowerPoint tutorial at:
http://presentationsoft.about.com/od/powerpoint101/a/begin_guide.htm.

When presenting, avoid just reading from your PowerPoint. Refer to it & use notes if necessary. The audience will feel more engaged with you & your presentation if you can present with a conversational style – practicing your presentation in front of other people prior to the conference might be helpful. The more familiar you are with the content of your presentation, the more confident you will be on the day. We often write presentations well ahead of time. Make sure you review your presentation and PowerPoint beforehand, so you are comfortable with all aspects of what you are presenting. If you ask for feedback from others – be prepared to take this feedback on board & change what you have planned.

To ensure that Conference sessions run to time a facilitator is appointed to introduce presenters and to time keep. Presentation time spent on the podium goes very fast so timekeeping is essential to allow for all presenters to have their share of the session.

You should meet with your facilitator in the break before your session & they will inform you of how they will time keep during your presentation, e.g. they may give you a 2 minute warning.

The Scientific Committee are happy to provide feedback to presenters ahead of time. Please feel free to email Mara, Sue or Kristen for help.

One last tip – think back to conferences you have attended & speakers which were enjoyable & also not enjoyable – can you remember what they did in their presenting skills which you did or didn't like?

The conference venue will provide technology that is compatible with PCs & Macs. Make sure that you bring your presentation in two different forms, e.g. on a USB & CD in case one fails.

Posters

The conference will provide facility for people to do presentations and also to display posters. If you haven't presented before or feel too nervous to present, then a poster can be a great way to be involved in the conference's scientific program. If enough posters are submitted there will be time allocated on the program for conference delegates to speak with you about the content of your poster. There will also be a prize for the best poster! Posters are a great way to showcase the beginning of your research – you might be involved in a pilot & can display this on a poster.