

**American Arachnological Society**  
**STUDENT PAPER PRESENTATION AWARD GUIDELINES**

Revised June 2021

**ELIGIBILITY**

- A. To participate in the student paper competition, the student must be a student member of the American Arachnological Society (AAS). Membership information, including information on sponsored memberships, can be found at <https://www.americanarachnology.org/society/membership/>.
- B. On the Abstract Submission form, the student must indicate whether the work to be presented is part of a master's thesis, a doctoral dissertation, and whether it is the culmination of the graduate project or just a small component of that project. An abstract must be submitted by abstract deadline to be considered in the competition.
- C. The presentation must represent a completed body of independent or joint research in which the student's contribution has been substantial. If co-authored, the student must be first author.
- D. Entry is limited to one poster *or* one oral presentation but *not both*. If the student is planning to present both a paper and a poster, the student competitor must choose one category for which they wish to be judged.
- E. Student presenters may only win once in a particular competition (poster or paper), that is, previous first-prize winners in the Student Paper Award Competition during past American Arachnological Society meetings are not eligible for future student paper competitions. However, second place or honorable mention winners are eligible, and past winners in one category may compete in the other category (a poster winner can later compete in the paper competition or vice versa).

**MEETING HOST OR PROGRAM ORGANIZERS**

- A. The Meeting Host or Program Organizers must provide the Prize Committee Chair with a list of student registrants taking part in the student competition.
- B. The Program Organizers must indicate on the online abstract submission site which presentations are part of the student competition.
- C. The Program Organizers and Meeting Host should also indicate which presentations are part of the student competition in the meeting program.

**MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY**

The membership secretaries of the AAS will verify membership of the students entering the student competition and will notify the Prize Committee Chair.

**AWARD CATEGORIES**

The student competition will be subdivided into the Oral presentation and Poster presentation categories. The winner and runner-up in each category will receive an award.

## JUDGES

- A. The award competition chair will appoint a panel of judges representing different disciplines prior to the meeting and provide them abstracts, judging guidelines, and other forms, as necessary.
- B. To avoid bias or conflict of interest, judges should not have competing students or, if unavoidable, should abstain from voting on their own students.
- C. The award competition chair must provide one score sheet per student competitor for all judges. Judges can opt to use the score sheets or use other criteria for judging presentations.
- D. Judges should meet beforehand to review guidelines and afterwards to vote, with at least one hour between the last eligible presentation and the award announcement.

## EVALUATION

- A. Judges will rate presentations based on the criteria listed below. In co-authored papers, the judges will carefully evaluate the student's contribution to the presented research. In case of a tie or very close ranking, the judges may decide on a joint award.
- B. Judges should consider returning score sheets to the award competition chair so that appropriate feedback can be provided to student participants.

## CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES FOR A GOOD PRESENTATION

- A. Each section below will be given a numerical score from 1 (worst) to 10 (best)
  - 1. Overall organization (logical/appropriate progression, includes necessary background, summary material, met time limits, minimal text for maximal effect)
  - 2. Delivery (effectiveness of poster/slides, poise of presenter, effectiveness of audio-visual aids, lucid graphics/clear labels/legible tables, minimal jargon, responded well to questions)
  - 3. Purpose of study (Are the research goals clear? Is there a broader conceptual framework? Hypothesis/predictions clearly presented?)
  - 4. Methodology and analysis (Do the procedures seem adequate/appropriate to support the study's objective? New use of techniques/tools? Statistics clear and appropriately applied?)
  - 5. Results and conclusions (Are the results clearly stated? Do the conclusions seem valid and/or realistic? Are conclusions well supported?)
  - 6. Discussion and significance (Is the significance clear? Does this research offer a practical application or a scholarly contribution to the field? Does the work extend beyond advisor's other projects or is this minor increment to work?)

## ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES

Traditionally, the award is announced at the conference banquet. Students are strongly encouraged to attend this event. Banquet costs are included in the registration. Everyone (including those attendees who received waived registration) are invited to the banquet.