

Research Posters

Students are often asked to give poster presentations to communicate research results or describe their current projects. A good poster, like a good report, conveys complex information clearly and effectively.

Planning

- Plan the layout on paper before starting the electronic version. A quick sketch provides a guide for aesthetics and emphasis.
- Identify the concepts that are the most challenging to convey and the most important.
- Articulate the significance of the research.
- Leave yourself lots of time for things to go wrong; do not wait until the last minute. Issues may crop up that will take time to fix.

Creating a Poster

- Posters are often created in Microsoft PowerPoint because PowerPoint slides can be created in any size.
- Most posters are 4' (48 inches) across and 3' (36 inches) high
- Creating a poster from scratch is challenging and takes some time. Use an existing template if one is available. A basic UNBC research poster template is available on the ASC website.
- Artistry is not a substitute for content; good images can emphasize information, but good content is essential.

Visuals/Layout

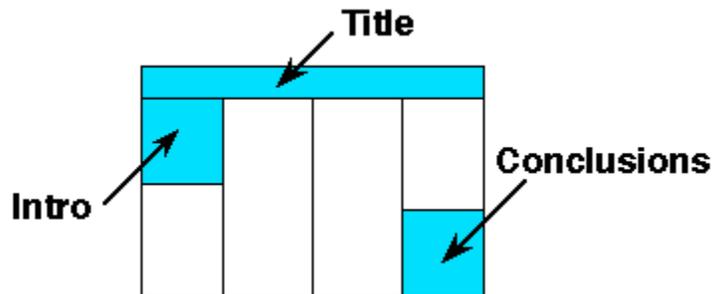
- ****White space is very important****. Many students are tempted to show their diligence and effort by filling every inch of available space with information. The resulting poster is difficult to read. In fact, during a poster session people spend more time looking at the posters with less writing. Save some information for discussion; a good poster causes the reader to want to enter into discussion about the topic.
- Text sizing is very important. All writing should be legible from at least 4' feet away, and the title should be visible from 20' away. Images should be legible from at least 6' feet away.
- Use a single font
- Use bullet points when possible
- Tables, figures, and images are efficient; they communicate a lot of information in a very small amount of space and are visually engaging. Flow charts displaying theoretical

models and experimental strategies are extremely effective. Having a layout sketch can help to create appropriately sized figures (re-sizing figures can take considerable time).

- Avoid noisy and busy backgrounds. Although using an image for a background may seem exciting, the resulting poster will be difficult to read.

Things to Include

- A descriptive title
- Author(s) information
- Author(s) affiliation
- Introduction: A description of the background and the research problem. List research goals or hypotheses as bullet points for emphasis. There should be no more than 2 related goals or hypotheses. If you have more, consider creating a second poster.
- Methods: Give a clear, high-level description of the research strategy. For research posters, the methods and results sections are given substantial space.
- Results: Include actual data with interpretation for the most important results. Figures and tables should be clearly labeled.
- Conclusions: Briefly explain and interpret results.
- Future Directions: Suggest experiments and studies that can be conducted based on the new information
- References: Bibliographic information for articles that were cited in the text.
- Contributions: Sources of Funding and people who contributed to the project.



Quality Control/Printing

- For printing, convert the document into a pdf. Most printers will not print from a PowerPoint document because of document size and liability issues.
- Due to their large size, posters are relatively expensive to print (10-80 times the cost printing on letter paper). Check everything over then print a colour proof on 8.5"x11". The proof will allow you to see if there are any flaws that are not visible on the computer screen (unsupported characters, spacing, or colour changes). After any changes, create a new pdf and print a new proof.
- Printing can take time. Printing a 4'x3' poster requires special equipment, and these services are not available 24/7. Leave a minimum of 2 days for printing. In an emergency, you can section the PowerPoint image into 8.5"x11" pages, cut the margins off of each print out and mount the individual pages together.

*This guide gives a general outline for creating an effective poster; instructors and conference organizers may provide more specific guidelines.