**How to Prepare and Design your Poster Presentation**

Adapted from <http://www2.napier.ac.uk/gus/writing_presenting/academic_posters.html>

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| **Poster Deadlines: Draft Due April 15 Final Draft: April 29** **Size Guidelines**: (hxw) 36” x 48” A tri-folding poster board will be provided to you. You will have space for 12 8.5x11 panelsSample templates will be available on the aar.pausd website |

Posters are an effective way of communicating concisely, visually and attractively, and can be a powerful way of getting information across. Academic posters summarize information or research concisely and attractively, to help publicize it and generate discussion.

* Academic posters can reach a wide audience as they may be displayed for several hours or days, at national or international conferences.
* They may also be published online as part of conference proceedings, becoming part of a permanent record of research activity.
* An effective poster can make a strong impact, so it's worth developing your poster planning skills.
* A good poster should be:

• well researched

• effectively organized

• self-explanatory

• visually attractive

**Planning your Content**

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| It takes skill to summarize a complex topic without losing meaning or connections. Since a poster must communicate concisely, you need to spend some time identifying your key points.* Decide what you need to communicate, and how.
* What is your main message? What does your viewer need to know?
* Identify the key points, always keeping your topic or task in mind.
* Note the graphics you might need, such as photos, diagrams, graphs or charts.
* Once you've decided on the main content, make a rough draft of the information you need.
* Decide on the main title.
* Academic posters need to show evidence of reading and research, so you must *always include* [*references*](http://www2.napier.ac.uk/gus/managing_information/referencing.html)*.*
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**Structure / Format** – depends on your content and what you’re trying to communicate

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| **Reporting on research**If you are reporting on a piece of research, your structure may be similar to a research report1. Introduction
2. Methods / Materials
3. Results
4. Discussion
5. Conclusion
6. References
 | **Reporting on a solution to a problem**If you are illustrating how a particular problem was solved, or how a challenge was addressed, the structure may be:1. Title
2. Background
3. Definition of problem
4. Possible solutions
5. Rationale for choice of one solution
6. Implementation
7. Evaluation
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**Planning your Design**

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| Once you've identified your main content and structure, you need to identify the [graphics](http://www2.napier.ac.uk/gus/writing_presenting/academic_posters.html#graphics) and formatting which will communicate your message best. * How will you [organize](http://www2.napier.ac.uk/gus/writing_presenting/academic_posters.html#layout) your content visually?
* How might you use [color](http://www2.napier.ac.uk/gus/writing_presenting/academic_posters.html#colour) and [type](http://www2.napier.ac.uk/gus/writing_presenting/academic_posters.html#text)to enhance visual impact?
* It's usually best to design from the outside in, thinking about the general purpose before the details.

**Remember: It's important to be very clear about the purpose of your poster.** **Keep returning to this as you plan your design.** |
| **Visual Impact**Posters are designed to convey a message quickly and efficiently. What should your viewer see and understand first?* Think what will communicate your key points most clearly.
* Find a focal point that will help draw your viewers in. This might be a key flowchart or diagram, or simply a clear main title.
* Make sure important graphics or information stand out clearly in your design.

**Remember, you may not need graphics if words are more powerful**.Tip: In an academic poster, the priority is to be clear, concise and professional. | **Layout**What visual arrangement will suit your content best, and how will you lead the reader through it?* Try to provide a clear entry point for readers, and a logical visual flow.
* Group related information.
* Use numbering or arrows if linked content should be read in a particular order.
* Avoid either oversimplifying (too little useful information) or overcomplicating (too much information).
* **Macintosh HD:Users:angelamerchant:Desktop:layout.gif**Use 'negative' space and margins to give your content room to breathe.
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**Fonts**

* A poster should be legible from about one meter, and attract interest from about five meters.
* Aim for a word count of about 300 to 800 words. 300 words leaves plenty of room for graphics, while 800 words would be more text heavy.
* For clarity, use a Sans-serif font like Arial or Helvetica. Make sure there is good contrast between text and background.
* To be legible at a distance, the main title should be around 70-100 pts, subheadings around 40 pts, body text around 24 pts.
* Be consistent in formatting headings and subheadings. This helps structure your information visually.

**Graphics**

An academic poster should be both professional and concise, so a general rule is only to include graphics that really support your content.

* Use diagrams, graphs or flowcharts to help explain complex information visually.
* Try not to use too many different or strongly contrasting colors. A limited color palette can be very effective.
* Avoid using unnecessary and distracting background textures or decoration.
* To print effectively, images should be high resolution (150-300 dpi)
* If your topic has a central statement, graphic or diagram, make this prominent in your design. Don't hide it in a corner!
* Every graphic should have a purpose.

**Final Tips….**

* Allow plenty of time to prepare and [produce](http://www2.napier.ac.uk/gus/writing_presenting/academic_posters.html#produce) your poster – it’s going to take longer than you think!
* Make sure you know the time, date, and location of the session.
* Think about [what you will say](http://www2.napier.ac.uk/gus/writing_presenting/presentations.html), anticipate likely questions and practice your responses.