



University of Vermont Graduate Writing Center Poster Presentation Guidelines

Posters are generally created in PowerPoint, but also in more advanced programs, such as Adobe Illustrator. If you are presenting your poster at a conference, the requirements of size and other information may vary.

Overall Design

Right at the Start

- Before you start composing, design your PowerPoint slides to be poster-printing ready. This will save you many headaches.
- Typical poster sizes are 36" x 48" (3 x 4ft) or 24" x 36."
- In PowerPoint, design your file at full size (100%). For a 36" X 48" poster, select the Design/Slide Size/Page Set Up/Custom Slide Size/. Choose landscape and set the dimensions to 48" width and 36" height.

Layout

- Sample poster sizes include
- Position the title and authors at the top of the poster
- Arrange the body of the poster in 2, 3, or 4 columns
- The orientation can be portrait or landscape

Appearance

- Needs to attract people across the room
- Avoid "cute" gimmicks; use interesting, pertinent graphics and one to two-toned color schemes
- Organize sections in a logical manner, i.e., from top left to bottom right
- Avoid crowding—NO large blocks of text
- Use bullet points to present your objectives and conclusion clearly
- Separate sections using blank spaces
- User proper graphics with captions that communicate your data clearly (graphs, figures, etc.)
- Colored borders around graphics and text can enhance contrast, but use sparingly

Font

- Readers will be 3-6 feet away from your poster, so print must be large and legible
- Sans serif font like Arial are good for titles (72 to 48 pt font)
- Serif fonts like Times New Roman are better for extended blocks for text
- The text itself should not be smaller than 28pt font

Make sure to **proofread** your poster, including your graph legends and captions. Sometimes printing your poster on an 8x11" piece of paper can be helpful to get an idea of the overall visual appeal and gaps in layout.

Sections of the Poster

Try to use *informative headings*, rather than just naming your section “methods, results, etc.”

Title Banner

- Short but descriptive title (no more than 65 characters)
- Incorporate your most important conclusion in the title: e.g., “TRRAP Is an Essential Cofactor for the c-MYC and E2F Oncoproteins.” This is the first and most important section to attract viewers
- Underneath title include the author name(s) and the institutional affiliation(s)

Abstract (if requested by the conference)

Introduction

- Consider using a short statement of the topic or introduce the topic as a question
- Underneath, briefly explaining the existing state of knowledge of the topic, why it is important to study and what specifically you intend to demonstrate
- A bullet list of objectives may be a good way to present some of the information

Materials and Methods

- Explain your methods with enough details so that someone with basic laboratory techniques can understand.
- Flow charts or some kind of visual are a great to convey your methods with minimal text

Results

- Consists mostly of visuals (graphs, images, figures, etc.).
- Should announce each result with a heading
- Written text should concentrate on general patterns, trends, and differences in the results, and not the numbers themselves.
- Avoid tables with large amount of data; you can prepare handouts of big tables that you think are important.
- Figures can include some statistical values (means, standard error and minimum and maximum values).
- Use the same font size for the axis labels and the key as you use for the text (24-28 pt).
- Pictures are a great way to make things more visual, but make sure the quality is good. Recommended resolution is at least 240 ppi (pixels per inch). Be careful resizing pictures, sometimes enlarging images can results in blurry picture.

Discussion or Conclusion

- Interpret the results in relation to the original objective or hypothesis: How have you answered your question/objectives and why does this work matter?
- Discuss any surprising results
- Discuss the future needs or direction of the research, including experimental design improvements if necessary
- Use bullets rather than large blocks of text

Literature Citations/References

- These usually appear in very small font on the bottom right of the poster

Acknowledgements

- Organization that provided funding and thanks to technicians, colleagues, and others who have made significant contributions to work.

These guidelines are adapted from Chapter 7: Poster Presentations, *A Students Handbook for Writing in Biology*.

Check out these helpful online resources with templates, examples, and more do's and don'ts:

<https://colinpurrington.com/tips/poster-design>

<https://colinpurrington.com/tips/figures>