Posters with PowerPoint
Design Notes

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1 Designing an A0 sized poster

A Poster is a visual medium that will help you present an overview of your research. You are then free to talk to the people that come to view the poster and answer any questions that they may have. Viewers of your poster should walk away understanding your work and feeling they have learnt something.

This short guide will give you some useful tips to creating a professional looking, readable poster.

*Designing a suitable poster takes time; do not leave it until the last minute. Remember to allow enough time to design and review your poster, as well as time to print (and reprint if you spot any errors!)*

Have a look at other people’s designs for some ideas – look in your department or look online e.g. [http://phdposters.com/gallery.php](http://phdposters.com/gallery.php) Take note of layout designs, colours, size of text, amount of graphics etc.

### 1.1 Poster Sizes

Design your poster at actual size. This is advisable if you have lots of charts/images so that scaling it up later does not lose any quality. To set a poster in PowerPoint to the correct size: From the ‘Design’ tab, click ‘Page Setup’, then type in the width and height required and choose orientation required for the slide.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Width</th>
<th>Height</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard A0 portrait (tall)</td>
<td>33 inches 84.1cm</td>
<td>46 inches 118.9cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard A0 landscape (wide)</td>
<td>46 inches 118.9cm</td>
<td>33 inches 84.1cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1 portrait</td>
<td>23.4 inches 59.4cm</td>
<td>33 inches 84.1cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1 landscape</td>
<td>33 inches 84.1cm</td>
<td>23.4 inches 59.4cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2 portrait</td>
<td>16.5 inches 42cm</td>
<td>23.4 inches 59.4cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2 landscape</td>
<td>23.4 inches 59.4cm</td>
<td>16.5 inches 42cm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 1.2 Layout of your Poster

There are a variety of different layouts you could use for your poster. Some people suggest that having 6-9 main areas on your poster is a very effective layout - making it simple to read and less confusing. In general:

- Keep the layout so it is *readable* in columns (top to bottom, then across from left to right)
- Layout does not have to be *rigid* - parts of a diagram may overlap areas (just don’t let it block any text)
• Remember to keep a certain amount of **white space** – to help separate the columns and not overpower the reader with too much text

• Items at the top/middle of the poster are **more likely to be read** than the lower parts of the poster - maybe keep the bottom few lines for ‘Acknowledgements’ and ‘Contact details’ etc.

• Try to **balance** the items you put on the poster – for example, do not have all the diagrams, charts and pictures in just one column - spread them out as evenly as possible

• **Avoid putting images behind text** – it makes the text harder to read and you do not want people to strain their eyes reading your work

• Usually the **Title** is at the top – either top centred or top left aligned

• **Edges** - keep away from the edges of the poster because:
  o The eye likes a margin - putting text and images hard up against the edge of the poster makes it look crowded and it becomes harder to read
  o When you print the poster a small area round the edge may not be printed

### 1.3 General Design Principles

**Text**
- Keep text to a minimum (less is more principle) and do not ‘over fill’ your poster
  - Recommend maximum of 900 words on A0 poster
- Too many words and people will not read it – they will lose interest and often just look at the parts that stand out – such as headlines and figures
- Omit complex analyses and formulae if not all viewers will understand it
- When writing about data, write it as “data are...” instead of “data is...” because data is a plural noun
- Avoid blocks of text longer than 15 lines
- Minimise use of Underlining – use *italics* instead
- Do not write entirely in CAPITALS – it is harder to read

**Line Spacing**
- Set line spacing at 1 or 1.1 size
- It is important to have consistent line spacing throughout the poster for a professional image and easier readability - it also helps when displaying superscript or subscript data

**Graphics**
- It is advisable to use some graphics on your poster such as pictures, charts, SmartArt, flow diagrams - these will help break up blocks of text and make the poster more attractive
- Graphics obtained from web pages may have low resolution (this is so they can load up quickly on the internet) however, you may find they are unsuitable images once you have resized them – some quality of the image will be lost
- Avoid using complex 3D charts – it makes it harder for some people to interpret the values and this may become confusing

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Page 3
• **Colour**
  - Most people prefer to read dark text on a light background
  - If you have a dark background, ensure you have light text on top so it is readable
  - Try and have a theme of colours to use – about 2 to 4 colours
  - Avoid too many over bright colours - although they are attractive and eye catching, they may give readers a headache and they may strain to see them (depending on background colour)

• **Review**
  - It is important that you prepare the poster in advance and get some other people to review it and provide you with suggestions
  - Other people may spot grammatical/typing errors, or point out sentences that are difficult to understand. What you understand, others may not – so it is important to gain other peoples point of view.
  - It’s rather embarrassing at a Poster Presentation when you have a typo on your poster - so double check and then check again!
  - Consistency is important for flow and image of the poster
  - A poster can be a visual summary of your work, so be brief, specific and keep to getting the main points across - think of this when reviewing the poster and checking whether what you have put is really needed.

1.4 What sections to include?

1. **Title** - one to two lines maximum. Avoid use of colon here. Title should be *catchy* – says what research is about / findings. Below the title in the same font, but much smaller, add your *name(s)*.

2. **Abstract** – this is not always included. You may have already sent this to the exhibition and they may have already printed it in the ‘catalogue’. If not, include with the Introduction.

3. **Introduction** – About 200 words. Explain in here about your work, why it matters (importance/relevance), have a/some picture(s) to emphasis research if possible. If people find this part boring, they could move away from your poster without reading the rest – so spend time making it interesting!

4. **Methods / Procedures Used** – About 150 words. Briefly describe the methods/procedures used and how they will help you find out about your hypothesis. Could use flow diagrams to help illustrate your procedures (this will help break up your text and make the poster look more interesting). Ensure you label diagrams if needed.

5. **Results** – don’t forget to say if it worked/not worked then say why. Try to be descriptive and focus on key points. About 150 words.

6. **Discussion and Conclusion** – Without sounding like you are repeating yourself start by reminding the viewer of your hypothesis and result. Then discuss your results, why they are interesting, how the conclusion links back to your hypothesis and what could be the next step in this research in the future. About 250 words.
7. **Acknowledgements** – a section for thanking people:
   a. Short list of your sources in a ‘Literature Cited’ section. Ensure these are written in the correct format for referencing.
   b. Acknowledge department / individuals who gave assistance.
   c. Acknowledge Funding Sources.

8. **Further Information** – where can people find out more information about your project – include your email, possible a link to a website or PDF version of your poster.

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### 1.5 Font Size and Style

For an A0 poster:

- **Title** Text - Bold, Large size (72 – 84pt if working on actual size A0). Sans serif font. Viewable from 5 metres away. **Sentence** case for the Title.
- **Author** Text - Same font as title, smaller, perhaps Italic.
- **Side Headings** – Larger than the main text, often in Bold as well. Sans serif font. Keep consistent. Viewable from 3 metres away.
- **Main Text** – Minimum of 24pt on an A0 poster, so readable from of distance of 2 metres. Serif font.
- **Reference** Text – can be a bit smaller to fit the poster. Serif font. Same font style as Main text.
- Do not write entirely in CAPITALS – it is like you are shouting at someone and is harder to read.

**SERIF FONT** – font styles with little lines at the end of the stroke of the letter. E.g. Times New Roman, **Bodoni**, Baskerville Old Face.

**SANS SERIF FONT / NON SERIF FONT** – font with no little lines at the end of the stroke of the letter. E.g. Arial, Calibri, Trebuchet MS, **Comic Sans MS**.

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### 1.6 Colour

- Most people prefer to read dark text on a light background
- If you have a dark background, ensure you have light text on top so it is readable, also, it is suggested that you frame figures in white boxes so they are easily distinguished from the background.
- Approximately 8% of Males and 1% of females have a colour vision issue – so avoid too many greens/reds together.
- Try and have a theme of colours to use – about 2 to 4 different colours. Avoid having all colours over bright (although they are attractive and eye catching, they may give readers a headache and they may strain to see them (depending on background colour).
1.7 Storing a Poster

- Do NOT folder your poster - you do not want crease lines
- Roll your poster, put some elastic bands around it if necessary – not too tight
- Ideally place in a tube – to protect it from damage occurring from travelling or the weather

2 Printing your Poster

This service is run by Lancaster University Design Print and Photographic service at the print room located on County Avenue.

You can submit your poster in person on a USB drive at the reception desk in the ‘Design Print and Photographic service’ print room located on County Avenue. Here the file can be checked for errors. You will be able to choose from a variety of different papers and levels of service.

A0 prices on 100g start from £8.00 and there are special offers for Purple card holders.

If you want to submit your poster by email you can do so by sending the pdf to printunit@lancaster.ac.uk - make sure you quote your library number and mobile or contact number in the email along with the size you need the poster. Payment can be made on collection.
3 Presenting a Poster Guidelines

When you are presenting your poster you will need a **positive** and **confident** manner. Many people will look at your poster throughout the day and you need to have a ‘welcoming’ attitude so they do not walk away. You confidence will hopefully come through as you talk with people and this could (hopefully) make them more interested in your research.

Therefore, presenting a poster is as important as getting the poster design right. It’s all about captivating an audience – but before you can do that, you must get the viewers to your poster first.

### 3.1 Recommendations

1. **What to wear?**
   - Be **smart** and **professional** looking
   - Try and wear clothes that ‘**coordinate**’ with your poster
   - Have a **name badge**

2. **Preparation for the day:**
   - Have some **spare paper** for notes
   - If you leave your poster **leave a note** to viewers explaining when you will be back
   - Prepare a **2-5 minute speech** you can give to viewers – have an interesting point to captivate them and then summarise your findings (you could point to specific details/figures on the poster)
   - Perhaps have some **copies** of your research/manuscript available for others to take away with them if they are interested (only give them if they are really interested and you want to give copies out, be wary of someone stealing your ideas).
   - Keep a **black pen** and some **tipex** handy just in case you spot a mistake on the day.

3. **Posture and Positioning:**
   - Stand **next** to your poster – do not block main text
   - **Smile** – look pleased to show your research to others
   - Keep **hands out of pockets**
   - **Don’t slouch**

4. **Be aware** of people taking details of your work or photographs of your poster. They may publish them without permission on the internet. If you are unsure of letting people take photographs you can always politely say **“No, thank you”**

5. **If you are half way through your talk and more people arrive – keep talking to the first lot of people- it would be rude not to, you’re “spiel” won’t last too long**

6. **Don’t forget to thank people** for taking the time to look at your poster

7. **If they stay for a few minutes – it is a good sign that your poster is a success 😊**
Information System Services

t: 01524 5 10987   e: iss@lancaster.ac.uk