

## Creating an Academic Poster: Tutorial

- Planning your poster
- Gathering your information
- Producing your poster using Microsoft Powerpoint
- Design issues
- Evaluating your poster

### Planning your poster

Before creating your poster session you need to consider the following issues:

- what is the aim of your poster?
- what is your key message?
- is there a logical sequence in which your information should be presented?
- who is your audience, what do they know of your project/research?
- how will your poster be displayed and how much space will you have?
- how will you get your poster to the venue?

You will hopefully be able to quickly answer the first two questions, but if you are unsure of the answer to any of the other questions, ask the organisers of the event at which your poster session will be displayed.

In addition to being able to tell you how much space you will have and what facilities, event organisers should know a great deal about the delegates attending the event - who they are, their background etc.

### Gathering your information

You may well already have some of the material you need to produce your poster in the form of text or graphics. Collect all the material together into a folder on your PC. You can then copy and paste any material you will need into this folder. You may also want to use some graphics in your presentation. A good source of pictures and photos which are not copyright protected can be found on the Microsoft Clipart website. This site is an extension of the clipart resource built into Microsoft Office (e.g. Word, Excel, PowerPoint) but with much more resources).

### Using PowerPoint to create your poster

#### Why PowerPoint?

You can create your poster using a variety of software including Microsoft Word and

Publisher, however, we would recommend you use Microsoft PowerPoint. In addition to presenting your poster session at a conference, you may want to present it in a lecture or meeting. Using PowerPoint will enable you to easily present your poster as a "slide show" either using transparencies or a data projector.

### Design Issues

What do we mean by design issues?

You will need to think about a number of issues before you create your posters, with the overriding aim of making your poster session eye-catching and easy to read.

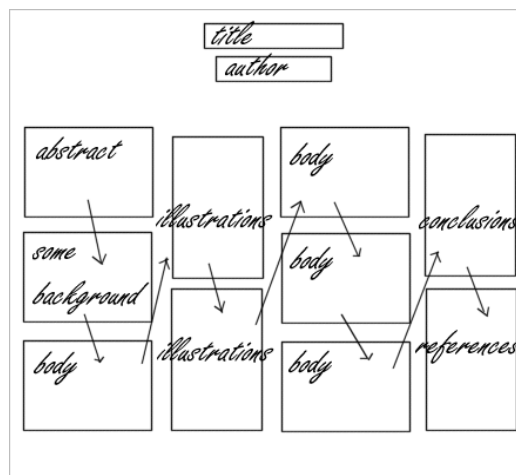
- How are you going to structure your information?
- How are you going to layout your information?
- How should you use and combine text, graphics and colour?
- How should your information be structured?

Prioritize your information. Decide what is the most important element of your poster and provide this first or make it stand out.

Consider what information your audience needs before they read each section of your presentation, e.g. begin your presentation by summarising the aim your research/work and then provide a brief background.

How are you going to layout your information?

Once you have a good idea of the structure of your information, you can begin thinking about its layout. The layout of your poster session should reinforce the order in which your information is structured. Why not do a rough sketch at this stage, like this:



## Use of Colour

As with your font styles, use colour to break up information and make your presentation attractive, but only use a maximum of 3-4 different colours that work well together.

## Use of text

Break text down into small chunks that are easy to read - use paragraphs and lists to do this. Begin new sections with headers, using larger text.

Use fonts which are easy to read. If you use different fonts, use no more than two or three. You could use one font style for major headers, another for sub-headings and another for your text - as we have on this page.

## Use of graphics

What do we mean by graphics?

-Graphs, charts, pictures and photographs. Do use these in your presentation, they break up text and make your presentation more aesthetically pleasing. As the phrase suggests "a picture paints a thousand words".

## Evaluating your poster

How will you know if your poster is a success?

You can use this check list to help you evaluate a poster which you have made:

Click the tick or the cross to see how your poster shapes up!	✓	✗
Is your poster clear and easy to read?		
Is progression around the poster signposted?		
Can it be read easily within a few minutes from a distance of approximately 2 metres?		
Is your message clear in itself without the need for verbal explanation?		
Have you proof-read for grammar spelling?		
Is material referenced appropriately?		
Have you considered any copyright issues on the material you have included?		
Have you considered confidentiality issues, both personal and corporate		
If the poster forms part of an academic assessment, does it comply with the assignment guidelines		
Is there a contact address/point for readers who wish to pursue the topic further with you?		