



HIP GUIDE TO DESIGNING & PRINTING A SCIENTIFIC POSTER

A poster session advertises your research. It combines text and graphics to make a visually pleasing presentation. Typically, a professional poster session involves presenting your work to numerous researchers at a conference or seminar. A Poster should quickly draw the attention of viewers, clearly communicating the research performed. Unlike the fast pace of a slide show or verbal presentation, poster sessions allow viewers to study and review research information, and discuss it with you one-on-one. You may also be required to give short presentations on your research every ten or fifteen minutes. The purpose of the poster at these sessions is to present general information and invite viewers to ask more detailed questions of the presenters.

Purpose of a Poster:

- Allows researchers to present their work and get feedback
- Role of the poster presenter: provide a “guided tour” through the poster to answer questions about the research

What a poster should include:

- Title: project title
- Authors: intern’s name, mentor’s name, names of collaborators, and hosting organization
- Standard format for scientific poster is **IRMAD**
 - **I**ntroduction or Purpose
 - **R**esults or Findings
 - **M**ethods and Materials
 - **A**cknowledgments: include any sources of funding you’ve received
 - **D**iscussion

Ways of Making a Poster:

- Matte board:
 - Print out segments on a regular printer and cut/paste them onto matte board
 - Can use any software program (MS Word, PowerPoint, etc.)
- Plotter printing:
 - Design and print a large-scale poster (e.g. 36” high, 48” wide)
 - Software: PowerPoint (easiest method)

Making a Full-size Poster with PowerPoint

- Start PowerPoint and open “new presentation”
- From the menu bar, select File > Page setup
- In the box that appears, the first section is “size”
- Next to the heading “slides sized for,” select “custom” from the pull-down menu

- Enter dimensions (e.g. width 48”, height 36”). Click “OK.” 4-ft x 3-ft
- Enter dimensions (e.g. width 48”, height 72”). Click “OK.” 4-ft x 6-ft
- You will see this prompt: “the current page size exceeds the printable area of the paper in the printer.” It will offer three options: cancel, OK, and fix. Click “OK”
- Set the slide layout to “blank.” This is done differently in different versions of PowerPoint. If you are having difficulty, type “layout” in the PowerPoint help menu, and you will find instructions on how to create or change slide layouts
- You can look at the poster at different sizes. Using a smaller size (e.g., 25%) will allow you to see the whole poster at once. Using a larger size (e.g., 75%) will allow you to read your text more easily
- If you find it difficult to keep track of what you are doing, create a second PowerPoint file, with a regular sized PowerPoint slide presentation. You can make a series of slides and then copy the text boxes and pictures from those slides into the custom poster file.
- Save your poster: 2015HIP_project no_your mentor_your name_poster for example, HIP_15_040_Schwartz_Aller_poster

Tips for Designing a Poster: Keep it Simple!

- Arrange your material in a logical progression
- Arrange materials in columns
- Don’t try to cram too much on to the poster

Selecting Colors and Fonts

Use only 2 or 3 colors in the poster: too many colors can be distracting

- Select font colors and background colors to maximize contrast
 - A dark font on a light background is more easily read than vice-versa
 - White letters on a black background are particularly difficult to read
- Choose a font size and style that can be read easily from several feet away
- To emphasize a point, use **bold** or italics rather than underlining, as underlined words can be more difficult to read

Text for the Poster

- To add text, click on “insert” on the menu bar and choose “text box.” Then click where you want the text box to be, and start typing
- Text boxes can be resized by clicking on a corner and dragging
- Avoid large blocks of text, and limit or eliminate jargon and technical terms
- Organize and reduce text by using subheadings, key words, and bullet points
- A figure or graph often convey information more efficiently than paragraphs of text

Graphs

- Graphs can be added with copy and paste commands or by importing (same as pictures)
- Keep graphs simple
 - Avoid “chart junk”: 3-d, shadowing, multiple grid lines, labeling every tick mark
 - With multiple graphs, combine information (e.g., share axis labels, titles, legends)

Pictures and Photos

- Pictures and photos can be added with copy and paste commands or by importing

- To import: select Insert on the menu bar, then choose “Picture” or “Photo (depending on your version of PowerPoint). Select the option that includes the phrase “from file” and then select the file from wherever it is stored on your computer
- Images should be at least 100dpi and the same size they will be on the poster (see “addendum on image size below for more information)
- Save the image as a “JPG,” as this format is easier to insert into PowerPoint
- Pictures and photos can be edited using the picture tools. Access to the picture tools varies by PowerPoint version. Use the help menu if you are having difficulty finding the tools:
 - Resizing: click on the corner of the picture/photo and slide the mouse to resize
 - Cropping: choose the crop tool and crop from any side
 - Framing: click on the picture to select it, then choose “colors and lines” or “border” (depending on which version of PowerPoint you are using)