

Creating an academic poster – some things to consider

An academic poster is a method of showcasing your research. The purpose of a poster is to present a piece of work that colleagues can easily view and which can stimulate an exchange of ideas between the presenter and the audience reading the poster.

Academic posters are often displayed at conferences and other academic forums, with times allocated for presenters to be available to discuss the content with attendees. A poster is an excellent way for presenters to introduce their work to peers and can allow for valuable networking opportunities.

Planning your poster

- **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 about your topic?**
- **How will your poster be displayed, and how much space will you have?**
- **How will you get your poster to the venue?**

Use of text and colour

- 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 or bold 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 text
- Use colour to add interest and break up your poster but only use 3 or 4 colours that work well together.

Gathering your information

- As with all other academic work, you will need to acknowledge and reference the work of others that you have used (references can be on the back of the poster or on a separate sheet)
- Be aware of copyright issues (if using images from other sources) and privacy issues (if using images you have taken yourself)

Design Issues

When you are designing your poster you will need to think about a number of issues with the aim of making your poster session eye-catching and easy to read.

- How are you going to structure your information? (e.g. is there a logical sequence)
- Prioritize your information. Decide what the most important element of your poster is and provide this first or make it stand out.
- How are you going to layout your information? (you might want to sketch out the layout by hand first to see where things should go)
- How should you use and combine text, graphics and colour?

Use of Graphics

- Using graphs, charts, pictures or photographs adds interest to a poster and helps to break up the text
- Only use graphics that illustrate or support your argument