Guidance for Creating an Academic Poster

Creating an A1 poster:

- Create your poster in Powerpoint
- You will be presenting this on Teams, so I would recommend landscape orientation.
- Your main text should be between 300-600 words.
- Save and upload as a pdf file.

Why a Poster?

This is an important medium for communicating research and is used widely by academics at talks and conferences.

Posters have a number of different functions: they are particularly used by young researchers (doctoral students and early careers) to draw attention to their research. Equally they might be used as a discussion point in a poster session: to spark debate and raise awareness of specific issues. As an assignment we use posters to see how you have engaged with material and to assess your oral, visual and written communication skills.

How to Create an Effective Poster

First you need to consider what is your poster trying to do and what audience is it aimed at?

1. You want to get the attention of your audience amd to generate interest in your research topic. This you will achieve through, through the effective use of text and imagery, to entice people to want to look at your poster.
2. You want to get over your research concisely and informatively. There should be a strong central message, but you should not drown your audience in words. Instead, you should also think about the effective use of text, images and other graphics to convey information.
3. Think about who your audience is: are they specialists in the field, other researchers, students, your peers, the general public. Your poster should be tailored accordingly: think about their knowledge level, the use of appropriate terminology (and jargon!), what information you need to include, and what information you can leave out.

Content

Think carefully about what material you need to include. Everything should relate in some way to your research project and also needs to be meaningful. In particular think about the use of images and the amount of text. Be selective! You cannot include

everything so focus on the relevant aspects of your topic, which will be meaningful: think about how much text you need to set aside for explaining background information, your research questions and results (interpretation).

Organisation of Poster

How should your poster be organised? (Orientation: landscape). Think about the visual impact of your poster. Within the first three seconds of looking at your poster, your viewer/reader will decide whether they want to stay and explore your research or move on. Your poster therefore should have a strong impact and be easy to navigate.

You should organise your text into short blocks and use clear headings and subheadings. Group text according to subject matter and use shot paragraph. You should use the visuals and the text to report on your research, present data clearly and succinctly. Your narrative might be linear, following the route of your research, or thematic. Think about the reading order: effective academic posters provide a logical reading order communicating material in a clear sequence. Think about using columns and ordering information from top to bottom and from left to right (as we would read any text).

To achieve a balanced poster that is visually appealing you need to think about how you arrange your text and images. You should use your graphics, white/blank space (as well as subheadings) to break the text and image into easily readable blocks. Do not clutter the poster!

Text

- Your total text (excluding headings, captions and references) should be between 300-600 words. Keep to the point and be succinct
- Avoid font sizes below 24 point and use a sans serif font (e.g. calibri, corbel). Avoid serif fonts such as Times New Roman. The main body text should be black.
- Be consistent with style. Use italics, underlining and capitals sparingly. which will force the reader to stand very close. • Be consistent with style. Keep text left justified.
- Set headings in bold (or use colour blocks). These should be larger (e.g. 72 point for main heading)
- Left justify your text boxes.

Graphics

- Use charts and graphs rather than tables to present numerical data and keep to 2_D graphs (3-D can be confusing).
- Use high resolution images, JPEG format and at least 300 pixels.

Colour

- This should not obscure or detract from the text and graphics.
- You should use subtle background colours and have a consistent theme throughout the poster.
- Do not use too many colours or garish, bright colours.
- Use black for your background text, and probably laos your main text.