



Poster Presentations

Radford University
Office of Undergraduate Research and Scholarship



RADFORD UNIVERSITY

What is a Poster Presentation?

- Considered a snapshot of your work
 - Highlight the project's “take-home message”
 - Clearly articulate what you did, how you did it, why you did it, what it contributes to your field and to the larger field of human knowledge
- A visual representation that “talks” for the researcher
 - Visual presentations are direct, can connect easier with viewers and hold attention better
- Allows for one on one interaction with people interested in your work

Design Software

- Do NOT use Microsoft Word
 - Common Programs
 - PowerPoint- most used, most accessible
 - Illustrator
 - InDesign
 - Photoshop
 - Publisher
- Preferred submissions are *.pdf files for printing (for apple computers **highly suggested**)

Size

- A typical poster is 48 inches wide by 36 inches high
- OURS is equipped to print posters with one edge either 36 inches or 42 inches (we will not print longer than 60 inches) – smaller than you'll have to hand cut it down after printing

Title

- The name of your project should be large (72 pt font), descriptive and concise
- Include the individuals involved and their affiliation (54 pt font)
- A title can be important to “sell” your poster; make audience want to come visit; draw their attention
- Near the title or top of the poster, must include an RU logo

Coloring

- Lighter background with dark text
- Max 2-3 colors, if possible
- Avoid overly bright colors; straining to the eyes
- Color can be used to add interest, emphasis, and differentiate - sparingly

Font

- Large enough so that an audience can read your poster from 6 feet away
 - We recommend a text size no less than 36 pt for the body and 44 for headings
 - Remember captions, footnotes, graph tick marks, axis labels, and legends should also be readable from a far
- Do not mix many different fonts; can get distracting
- Creative typeface selections can also be distracting. Choose a font that is easy to read, especially in high dense areas. “Creative” fonts can be reserved for titles of section or graphics (Arial is a safe, good choice)

Formatting

- Arrange your poster in a logical order with a balance of text, graphics, and charts
 - Numbered sections are visually appealing and easy to follow; ensures the audience will read your poster in the correct order
- Check alignments – text boxes, columns, pictures should be in line
 - Poster should look clean cut, neat, sharp
 - Avoid clutter/chaos
- Cohesive headings for each section – same color, font, size
- Bullets are easy to follow
- Use of ALL CAPS, underline, or italics for emphasis should be minimal

Content

- Do not overwhelm readers with too much information
 - Use phrases instead of sentences when possible
 - Do not use too much text; you want viewers to be able to skim your poster and easily make out significant points
- Remember, a poster conveys only the highlights of your work, not every detail
- Overall, you should include less content than you would like
 - Talk to your audience about the work in more detail
- Include citations in a style appropriate to the field

Pictures/Graphics

- Pictures, graphs, charts are a great way to communicate a message quickly!
 - Equations should be kept to a minimum and concise as possible; large enough to read with an explanation of each variable; diagrams labeled
- Avoid using background graphics (i.e. watermarks)
- Don't be afraid of whitespace; don't overwhelm the page with graphics
- Always check the resolution of images
 - Import graphics by INSERTING and PLACING them in your presentation program
 - Be wary of cutting and pasting images from the web. These items are often low resolution and small in nature – when they are printed they can look jagged and unprofessional. If at all possible, obtain digital images of logos or photographs that have a high enough resolution to withstand upscaling

Professional Etiquette During Presentations

- Dress professional and wear a nametag; comfortable shoes – you will be standing for long periods
 - You are on display as well as your poster!
- Be on time (better yet early)!
- Stay close to your poster to be available for questions
- Greet viewers, but allow them adequate time to read your poster without interruption
- Don't get too involved with one viewer and ignore others
- Consider bringing a short handout – have a sign up sheet if you run out and email to those on the list as soon as possible
- Consider bringing an envelope for business cards
- Don't take criticism personally
- Never read off your poster. You should be familiar enough with the material that you talk about the project freely; pointing to visuals, charts, graphs as necessary

Keep in mind

- An interesting/attractive poster can draw viewers not necessarily in the field
- Great networking opportunity – consider handouts, resumes
- ALWAYS SPELL CHECK – errors look very unprofessional (want to reflect well on your credibility, also credibility of the University; numerous errors can discredit your work)
 - Ask your mentor, family and friends to review your work to make sure it is high quality and understandable by a wide audience
- Not something that should be left to the last minute; great posters take time and could be products of multiple revisions
- Check your capitalization of titles – is it the same everywhere?
- Check your columns do they have the same justification, same leftmost edge, same rightmost edge?
- Does it look ok everywhere at 100% view? Captions, pictures, logos, etc.

Keep in mind

- Do not change the size of the poster once you begin
- Leave a $\frac{3}{4}$ inch margin
- Overlapping powerpoint files will corrupt your files (as will going between different operating systems)
- High resolution pictures

Reminders - when submitting to OURS for printing

- If possible send a .pdf file
 - Will insure text and graphics appear as you'd like
 - Be sure the .pdf file is the same physical printable size as the originating poster (we can modify this if you have problems)
- Create the entire poster on one computer and try not to paste from one file into another— this tends to corrupt the file and there is no option but to rebuild it from scratch. Mac to PC transfers seem to always corrupt the file.
- Submit to ours@radford.edu or jiwirgau@radford.edu
- Request poster printing at least 2 weeks prior to the date of needing the poster