

# Poster Session Presenter Information

## A. Poster session logistics

Because the poster session does not conflict with other sessions, posters generally get lots of attention.

Posters should measure 36 by 48 inches in either landscape or portrait orientation.

Posters should be printed and brought to the conference.

You are responsible for printing your poster and we recommend that you do so in advance of the conference. Conference staff will not be available to assist you with printing your poster.

## B. Design tips

Here are some suggestions when creating poster presentation:

- Design should be clean and a strong title; making illustrations simple and bold; conveying only selected portions of your paper/research (key findings) rather than the entire research history.
- Converting tables to graphs for easier viewing. Less (details, that is) is often more.
- The poster should be readable from a couple of feet away.

There are several sites online that provide detailed design tips. There has actually been research on how to design a poster to get more people to read it and learn from it. A useful starting point is:

<http://fms-itskills.ncl.ac.uk/posters/fullcourse.html>

A few key design tips that come up frequently:

1. Use the space on the poster wisely. Put less important sections (such as bibliography and acknowledgements at the bottom of the poster) and keep the prime real estate for items that most people will want to read or examine closely.
2. Keep the word count low—People will not want to read your paper in 10 point font on your poster. Highlight the most important pieces of information in each section.
3. Use graphs and tables wisely. A picture can tell a 1,000 words, but only if it is well-designed and completely understandable without reading the text. The header should convey the content of the graph or table, all axes should be labeled, variable names should be informative, etc.
4. On a related note, tables of regression results (particularly if cut and pasted from STATA or SAS) typically make for poor posters. Nobody

is going to sort through a page of regression output. Consider making a smaller table that provides the coefficients for the key variables and make the statistically significant coefficients a different color rather than using additional space to put in standard errors or t-statistics.

5. Interestingly, research suggests that poster titles should use sentence capitalization (only the first word is capitalized) rather than title capitalization (all words are capitalized) or all capitals. It is easiertoread.
6. Be sure that all text and graphics are legible from six feet. People will be milling around and you want to make sure they can see, and become interested in your poster without having to be right on top of it.
7. Use light backgrounds and dark text rather than the other way around.
8. Proof your poster carefully!

## C. Creating a poster

You can use a variety of different software packages to create sophisticated posters. Since most people have experience with Powerpoint, we are providing specific guidance for creating the poster in Powerpoint.

**Creating a poster as a "PowerPoint" file is straight forward. Follow these instructions**

1. Open the program, and create a new document.
2. When the auto layout screen appears, choose the "blank" template.
3. From the "file" menu, go to page setup. Specify poster size as 36" wide by 48" tall or 48" tall by 36" wide. (If you are using Vista, this may be under the "Design" tab.)
4. You will see a rectangle that will fill your desktop. This is your "canvas".
5. To insert text, use the text tool to draw a rectangle of the approximate size, and start typing. You can change the proportions, type size and style later. Try to use a minimum of 24 point type. You can import text from other documents via copy and paste. You may have to change the formatting of the pasted text. It rarely survives the translation process unchanged. If you are using a large header, try to keep it to 3 or 4 lines, a final type size of less than 150 point for the main heading, and less than 100 point for subheadings.
6. Inserting Charts & Graphs: To bring in charts and graphs from Excel, Word or other applications, go to EDIT>COPY to copy your chart, come back to PowerPoint, and go to EDIT>PASTE to paste it on the poster. You can scale the charts or graphs as needed.

**Suggestion:** Press the SHIFT key as you scale your charts or graphs to scale them proportionally.

7. Scanned pictures (scan as tiff or jpeg files **ONLY**, RGB if possible) may be inserted by choosing "insert picture" from the "insert" menu. You may

resize the imported picture by clicking/dragging the corner selection bars. Any other image manipulation should be done before importing.

### **Scan resolutions for acceptable viewing at poster size:**

Size of Original	6" x 9"	12" x 18"	24" x 36"
35mm slide	scan at 600 dpi	scan at 1200 dpi	scan at 2400 dpi
2" x 3"	scan at 300 dpi	scan at 600 dpi	scan at 1200 dpi
4" x 6"	scan at 150 dpi	scan at 300 dpi	scan at 600 dpi
8" x 10"	scan at 90 dpi	scan at 180 dpi	scan at 360 dpi

**8.** Once you have all of your text and pictures located properly, you can change backgrounds, borders, lettering colors and style. To change the entire background, choose "background" from the "format" menu. Individual text box backgrounds can be changed by selecting the box and changing the "fill" colors.

**9.** Use lettering effects such as outline or shadow sparingly. Be sure they are much lighter, or use the transparent feature. Otherwise it may look like double print when printed at full size. Bold, italic, and underline are OK.

## **D. Most Common Problems and how to avoid them**

### **1. Final printed size not proportional to page set up**

PowerPoint defaults to 10"x7.5" (on-screen show). Double check to change this to the size you need before you invest time in creating your poster.

**2. Imported Graphics at insufficient resolution** Image looks fine on your screen but is pixilated on the poster. It is important to start with the best image you have and avoid low-resolution images taken from the Web. For best results, do not copy and paste images. When assembling your poster from other existing images use INSERT>PICTURE>FROM FILE

**Avoid unwanted surprises:** Always preview images at the magnification they will appear at on the finished poster. This will reveal any resolution (pixelation) problems.

### **3. Fonts too small**

1. For effective viewing at six feet never go below 24pt type when creating your poster at 100%
2. San serif fonts are easier to read than serif fonts in large sizes (Arial vs. Times Roman for example)

### **4. Dark backgrounds with color type**

1. It is best to work with dark type on a light background for printed material
2. If you must work on a dark background always use light colored type and be especially sure to check anything you may import into

your document, e.g. black type will disappear into a dark blue background.

3. Be sure to check any drop shadow you may use. If the color of the shadow is too close to the color of the lettering, it will appear like double print.

**5. Use one platform to create your poster – Do not shuffle back and forth between MAC and PC**