

# Designing a Poster for Conference Display *In 10 Steps*

## Why a poster?

*The purpose of a poster presentation is to create rapid, concise & visual communication of research. (Hofmann, 2010)*

**To achieve rapid communication** – structure your content logically, clearly label each section and lay it out in order.

**To achieve concise communication** – limit your word count (300-800). Include only key findings.

**To achieve visual communication** – keep it simple, use images and plenty of white space.



## Physical Requirements

Generally a conference poster is size A0 or A1. Check this with the conference organisers and whether the poster can be landscape or portrait.

	Height (mm)	Width (mm)
A0	1189	841
A1	841	594
A2	594	420

## Powerpoint

*Essential Powerpoint tasks you need to create a poster*

DESIGN> Page Setup : set poster width and height / landscape or portrait

HOME > Arrange > Align > Grid Settings

INSERT > Picture /Clip Art / Shapes / Text Box

Rulers / Guides - Zoom in/out -

Right-click: Send to front/back : Format shape/text : Size and Position

- 1 Decide on content.** How will you tell a story of your work? Use a mind map to identify key elements (and use these as headings). also identify where images can be used effectively.
- 2 Create your text content.** Pitch your content to your intended audience. Tip: Use MS Word for creating text content so you can keep an eye on word count and to make it easy to edit and proof.
- 3 Gather your images** including charts and graphics (*see Images*)
- 4 Start Powerpoint** and setup your page (*see physical requirements*), view gridlines (*see Powerpoint*)
- 5 Apply a layout :** divide your page into 2,3 or 4 columns and create spaces to hold the content. *You can use a ready-made layout or create your own.*
- 6 Insert your text** into the layout in an order that runs left to right or top to bottom. Apply fonts/colours. (*see Fonts and Colours*)
- 7 Insert your images / graphs etc** into the layout and size these to fit neatly with the text.
- 8 Save As Adobe PDF** for sending to the printer.
- 9 Email PDF file to printer** with print instructions including: Print size, number of copies, full-colour, and if you want it laminated. Ensure you give sufficient turnaround time for printing and laminating.
- 10 Transport and Display:** Plan for how you will deliver your poster (in a cardboard tube?) and how it will be affixed to the wall or boards provided (BluTack, pins?)

### *Extra fancy Powerpoint tasks*

**Apply exact colours:** Select object > Right-click > Format Shape > Fill > Colour > More Colours > Custom > RGB vlaues

**Apply special effects:** Select shape > FORMAT > Shape effects > Reflection / Shadow / Glow etc

**Place an image inside a shape!** Select picture > FORMAT > Picture Shape

**Create graphical representation of information blocks** INSERT > SmartArt

Search Google for Powerpoint Poster templates

## Fonts

Use only 2 or 3 fonts and Sans serif eg Tahoma, Arial and Calibri are clean and easy to read

Avoid overuse of Upper Case

Size Guidelines:

A0: Title: 120 pt, bold; Section headings: 36-56 pt Body text: 26 pt

A1: Title: 96pt, bold; Section headings: 36-48 pt Body text: 20 pt

Type  
face

## Colours

Use only 2 / 3 Colours. Use light hues for body text backgrounds because strong colours can distract. For a professional look, apply exact colours (for example , to match a central image) by setting custom colours in Powerpoint. You can determine exact colours by using Pixie (free colour tool from nattyware.com)

Remember that print colours are generally duller than screen values and beware of Out of Gamut colours (very bright or neon-like) that can appear mucky when printed.

## Images

Be aware of COPYRIGHT on images.

Use high resolution images ie 300 dpi

Screen shots can only ever be low resolution so don't do any scaling of screen shots for best quality.

ALWAYS use high resolution logos for your institution and/or affiliates.



- ☆iStockphoto /stock.xchng ☆ office/images
- ☆ Photoshop, pixlr.com , Powerpoint
- ☆ Draw / scan ☆ photographs ☆ screen shots
- ☆ SmartArt ☆ charts ☆ graphs

*Tips: If you are short of images, source one excellent quality photo or graphic and build your design around it. Use SmartArt in Powerpoint to create graphical elements.*

By Miriam Allen miriam.allen@dit.ie

In conjunction with "Designing a Poster for Conference Display" workshop by Muireann O'Keefe muireann.okeefe@dit.ie

