Poster Presentations: Thinking through posters
With reference to University of Leicester (2019) guide *Poster presentations*

Purpose: What To Consider

A poster presentation is the presentation of research information in the form of a poster, which uses a visual element that can help the audience understand the topic better.

Posters may be used to present quite complex material from your research, so it is important that the information on them is well laid out and presented.

Posters are usually read at a viewing distance of more than one metre. You will need to make sure that your poster is legible, and easy to scan at this distance so that your information is understood quickly.

Avoid the temptation to fill the space with as much material as possible; poster presentations are not as dense as a printed page.

When making posters it is essential that you give careful consideration to their visual appearance as well as their content - use titles and subheadings to guide your basic poster design.

Planning Ahead: Poster Design and Content Considerations

What is the type of information that you should include to explain your topic?
What is the purpose of your poster - are you reporting 'findings', or presenting an argument?
Who is your audience? Usually, an audience is likely to be one of the following: peers; public; academics; other interested parties.

What do you want your audience to get out of your poster? How much information do you want them to take away? Everything you include must relate in some way to your project or idea including graphics and text. Make sure to include web links, references, and contact details for further information.

Where will your poster be displayed - will you invite your audience to come close or stay further away?

'The answers to these questions will influence the nature and amount of material you display. If you think that you are including too much information, think about what can be taken out; remember that 'less' is often 'more' in visual displays' (University of Leicester, 2019).

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The layout of your poster should be both visually appealing and easy to follow. The poster should be well organised with clear headings and subheadings. Depending on your content, you might choose to structure your poster in a variety of ways.

The overall structure should be clear and logical so that the viewer's eye naturally follows the flow of information. To establish a clear sequence of information, think about planning your poster on a grid system. A series of columns can be an effective way of ordering information as demonstrated in newspapers and magazines. In English speaking countries, the way people read a poster is commonly from top to bottom and from left to right.

Reading Order:
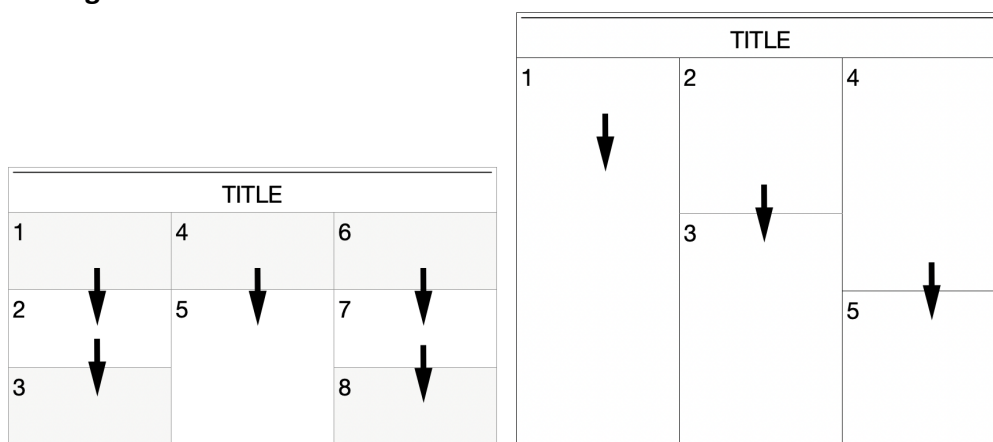
The best posters are well balanced. This means arranging text and images in such a way that both elements are balanced across the poster. Placing illustrations throughout the poster breaks the text up into easily readable chunks and allows for smoother flow. Balance can also mean ensuring that the poster is not cluttered. Blank space is not the enemy. In fact, like images, it serves to make text easier to read, allowing the reader to pause and take note.

Effective use of Text:
Total text should be between 300 - 600 words and should be concise.
Be consistent with style. You should use a maximum of two fonts per poster. Sans serif fonts are recommended for titles and headings as they can be read more clearly from a distance. Set headings in BOLD and make them concise. Try to use *italics*, <u>underlining</u> and CAPITALS sparingly.
Group text according to subject matter but do not make paragraphs too long. Break up large paragraphs.
Bullet points can be used to define simple statements.
The title needs to be clearly readable from a distance. Recommended text size is 70-100 pt.
Body text should be 18-20 pt. No single spacing (1.15 at the very least).
The clarity of text can be improved by using increased line spacing. Left justified and not fully justified text is easiest on the eye.

Effective use of graphs and images:
When presenting numerical data, use charts and graphs rather than tables as these can be more effective for illustrating data trends.
For images try to use a high-resolution JPEG (.jpg) with a resolution of at least 300 pixels per inch for sharpness (images copied from the web are usually 72 pixels).
Include relevant logos of institutions/organisations where appropriate.

Effective use of graphs and colour:
Try not to use too many colours, or colours which clash, as this can be visually distracting: use 2 or 3 colours, plus black.
Think about people who are colour blind and have difficulty differentiating colour.
Use complementary colours: pairs of opposites on the colour wheel e.g. red and green, blue and orange, yellow and violet.

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Check List:
1. Read your poster over carefully to check for spelling mistakes.
2. Make sure the main message is clear.
3. Show it to someone who has not seen it before and gauge their reaction.

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Further Resources:
CIRT Center for Innovation in Research and Teaching (n.d.) 'Effective Poster Presentations', accessed at: https://cirt.gcu.edu/research/developmentresources/tutorials/posterpresent

Erren, Thomas C., and Philip E. Bourne (2007) 'Ten Simple Rules for a Good Poster Presentation', accessed at: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1876493/

Ivory Research (2018) 'How to do Poster Presentations', accessed at: https://www.ivoryresearch.com/library/other-articles/poster-presentations/