You are ready to make an academic poster – but how should you do it? It is common for students to use the program PowerPoint when creating a poster, as most students have easy access to this software. Here, we have included some advice from the University of Alabama to get you started on your poster in PowerPoint, but first, please look at the YouTube video, PDF, and poster tips section links below to get a general idea of layout, color scheme, and font that will really make your poster POP (and not in a bad way).

Goal: to create rapid, concise & visual communication of research. (Hoffman, 2010).

KEY PARTS: Title | Authors | Introduction | Materials & Methods | Results | Conclusion | Questions | Future Directions

Poster Design Advise/TIPS – the Better Poster Format and Berkley Guide

- **How to create a better research poster in less time!**
- https://guides.lib.berkeley.edu/posters

ADVICE FOR MAKING POSTERS WITH POWERPOINT

Information obtained from: https://icue.as.ua.edu/undergraduate-research/poster-guide/

Slide Setup

- Your poster will be created on **ONE** slide in PowerPoint.
- The page size of that slide must be your desired print size. You must do this step before you create your poster. Your print quality will be substandard if you design your poster and then change the size.
- To prevent cropping when printing, be sure you have a **1 inch** margin around the edges of the poster.

To Set the Slide Dimensions

- For PowerPoint for Windows:
  Select the **Design** tab, then **Page Setup**. Select **Custom** from the "Slides sized for" dropdown, enter desired size in inches.
- For PowerPoint for Mac:
  Select the **Design** tab. Select Custom from the "Slide size" dropdown, then Page Setup, enter desired size in inches.
- **USE the dimensions indicated by the Meeting venue**

- If no dimensions are provided, think about a 42” x 42” or possibly 36” x 48” (these are compatible with the Wabash printer)

Poster Template

There are poster templates available to you to use available at: https://osf.io/ef53g/files

Slide Design Tips

- Your poster should read from top left to bottom right, like you are reading a page.
- It’s important to maintain a good contrast between the background color and the text color. Consider using a light color background and dark text.
- A gradient color fill in the background, especially black, will print poorly. It will have very thin visible lines that you will not see on your computer monitor.
- The colors that you see on your computer monitor will not reproduce exactly the same on a printed poster, as monitor color settings vary. You can expect that there will be a color shift of 2 or 3 shades.

Graphics

- Images copied from the web are low resolution (72 dpi) images and are not proper quality for inclusion in your poster.
- Limit image resolution to 150 dpi to ensure their ability to print.
- All graphics should be pictures (e.g. .tif, .gif for transparency, .jpg for non-transparent images) inserted directly into PowerPoint (NOT linked from another program). The preferred image format for microscopy images is **TIF;** for others you can use .jpg if you do not need a transparent background.
- If you have graphs or charts from Excel to include in your poster, simply copy in Excel and paste into PowerPoint. If formatting is messed up, try Paste special as a pdf.
- If you are using picture from a paper, download the high quality image from the journal’s website (do not copy a picture from a pdf or it will appear horribly pixelated!
- To adjust an image and retain proportion, hold down the **Shift** key on your keyboard and click and drag with your mouse on one of the corners in order to scale it.
- Graphics – some graphics can be found at
    - https://thenounproject.com/
    - Google images (just make sure you copy the URL of the site that you take an image from) REMEMBER: Images are better than a lot of TEXT!

Text

- It is best to use a font that is cross-platform to ensure that your poster looks as you have designed it. The fonts suggested here are all cross-platform and should be found on most systems. If you use a downloaded font that is specific to one environment (i.e. only Mac or only Windows), embed that font in your PDF.
- The title should be approximately the entire width of the poster with the main text broken into multiple columns, usually three or four depending on the size of the poster. You may also want to use section headings within the columns at the start of each section. (The available template is designed in this fashion.)
- **Sans-serif fonts** are the best for posters, particularly for the title, subtitle, and headers.
    - This is a category of typefaces that do not use **serifs**, small lines at the ends of characters. Popular **sans serif fonts** include Helvetica, Avant Garde, Arial, and Geneva.
    - **Serif fonts** include Times Roman, Courier, New Century Schoolbook, and Palatino can be used for smaller text on your poster as these are nice to read when the type is small.
- You will have to adjust the font size depending on the amount of text in your poster and the style of font you choose. For readability, you should not use a font size any smaller than 18 points.
- For consistency, it would be best to make all the headers the same size and use the same font size throughout the poster for all body text.
- If your text is in a different file (e.g. in a Word document) be sure that it pastes into a text box in PowerPoint so it can be more easily edited. To do this, use the **Paste Special** command and choose **Unformatted Text** so that the text will become a PowerPoint text box. If you just copy and paste, your text will be an imported word processing object, which will not be as easy to edit in PowerPoint.
- Align texts that are in the same column or row. To do this, on the Home tab of PowerPoint, select the text boxes you want to align by clicking while holding the shift key. Then use the Arrange dropdown menu and choose how you want to align (to the right, left, top, bottom or center).

Section	**Font Size**
Title	72-120
Subtitle	48-80
Section Headers	36-72
Body Text	24-48

Other Things to Put on your Poster:

- your picture, email, contact information, link to abstract, your LinkedIn profile, etc. (some of these things can be included in a QR code using QR Code Generator)

Presenting a Poster

Crafting the perfect poster is only half the battle, now it's time to describe that work from start to finish.

Stay close to your poster, just off to the side. This gives passers-by the chance to step in and look at an interesting graphic.

Smile and greet everyone who walks by. Look them in the eyes and ask if you can share more about your research. Welcome others who step up to read your poster. When possible, position your body and make eye contact with a newcomer so that he or she feels like part of the conversation. Remember that you're the link between your poster and the person who's interested in your story.

"Prepare a brief oral synopsis of the purpose, findings, and implications of your work to say to interested parties as they pause to read your poster," writes Jane E. Miller in Preparing and Presenting Effective Research Posters. Your synopsis (keep it to three sentences!) briefly covers three topics: What you're researching, your findings, and their significance. You're simply giving your audience a taste of your research—piquing their interest so they'll want to hear more!

Timing is Everything

Walking a viewer through your presentation should take roughly five to seven minutes. That doesn't seem like a long time, but it's an important target. Many presenters take too long to share the poster, leaving the audience bored, uncomfortable, and searching for a way out.

By telling your story in five minutes, you let the audience guide the conversation. If they're satisfied with your description, or bored out of their minds, they can move on to another poster.

If they're excited and want to learn more, they can ask questions or probe the results more deeply.

During this five minutes:

- Keep the big picture in mind. When you're working in the lab, you're focused on the small (and exciting!) parts of your research that will help you develop your conclusion based on your results. You may have just left the bench to come present your poster, so your mind may be focused on the details. Remember that your audience doesn't have the background to be excited about the details yet! Focus on the big picture so your audience can understand the significance of your research first.

Act Like an Actor

As you present, remember that you mustn't turn your back on your audience! You'll be tempted to turn to look at the poster yourself, closing off the conversation. Instead, keep an open stance and point out relevant sections off to your side.

Also, check your enthusiasm. Too many poster presenters seem bored, tired, or listless. If they don't think their work is exciting, why should their audience?

Stop a moment to notice your energy level, and try to step it up as you present. Make eye contact, welcome new viewers as the approach, and modulate your voice.

Your enthusiasm for your work can be contagious.

Tailor Made

Because most poster presentations occur one-on-one, it's imperative that you actively tailor your pitch to the person standing in front of you.

Remember that attendees are not all experts in your field. How might you speak with a professor or colleague from another department?

- When they step up, you can briefly ask about their background or interest in the subject. If they're a neophyte, you'll want to avoid jargon and check that they've understood each section before moving on. If they're an expert, they may want to skip straight to the results!

Be aware of their cues and body language and let them help steer the conversation.

Welcome feedback from attendees. If they ask a question that's tangential to your research, be open and friendly. Chances are good that the question is an attempt to relate to your research. Scott W. Plunkett, professor of psychology at California State University, Northridge, cautions presenters to stay clear of statements like, "My research isn't about that." Instead, say "Hmm . . . interesting. Could you tell me more about why you think this?" Or say, "That is interesting. I hadn't thought of that. I will definitely consider that."

https://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/connections/presenting-research-poster
http://hellophd.com/2018/11/104-how-to-give-a-perfect-poster-presentation/