

Poster Design Tips — Quick Reference

Know your audience

Ask yourself:

- Who is my audience?
- What do they already know?
- What should they know after they've visited my poster?
- How will I convey the “take-home” messages of my poster?

Poster = icebreaker



- Keep text to a minimum — let your visuals tell the story.
- Think of your poster as a way to start a conversation about your research, or as an outline for your oral explanation — don't make the poster do all the work!

Design considerations

Design around your message

- Allocate space according to what's most important

Think visually

- If you can, use graphics instead of text
- When using text, make it easy to read:

Long paragraphs of text are hard to read, especially at a distance. Your audience will quickly lose interest in your poster and move on. Remember, a poster is not a “mini-paper.” It's up to you to decide what essential information needs to be included, and to present it in a way that your audience will understand.

- Bullets are more concise & easy to read
- Break up your text with plenty of white space
- Ensure your text is large enough to read at a distance
- Use simple fonts

Use high-quality images

- Avoid stretching or distorting images
- Images should not be pixelated or fuzzy when printed at full size (use a minimum resolution of 150dpi at full size)

Colour

More isn't always better

- Stick to a few colours that complement one another
- For printed media, light backgrounds and dark text work best

- **Avoid using primary colours together—they can be hard to read**
- **Use contrasting colours to enhance readability**

- Colours on screen may not translate exactly in print
- Be careful with gradients & transparencies: not all large-format printers support them.

Need more help?

www.uri.ualberta.ca

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Undergraduate
Research
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Poster Design — additional resources

Design Ideas and Examples

Flickr poster sessions: <http://www.flickr.com/groups/postersessions/pool/>

Poster Templates

Colin Purrington's Poster templates (also has great poster design tips!) : <http://colinpurrington.com/tips/poster-design>

U of A Visual Identity Toolkit: <http://www.toolkit.ualberta.ca/Toolkit%20Downloads/Templates/PosterPresentations.aspx>

Bandwidth online: http://www.bandwidthonline.org/howdoi/effective_poster.asp (*good resource for non-traditional or qualitative poster formats!)

Creative Commons (or Similarly Licensed) Images

Creative Commons: <http://search.creativecommons.org/>

Morguefile: <http://www.morguefile.com/>

Flickr Commons: <http://www.flickr.com/search/?w=commons&q=&m=text>

US Government Works: <http://www.flickr.com/search/?w=usg&q=&m=text>

Open Clip Art Library: <http://openclipart.org/>

Data Visualization, Image Editing, Design

Kuler (online tool for generating colour schemes): <https://color.adobe.com/create/color-wheel/>

Picmonkey (free photo editing software): <http://www.picmonkey.com/>

Open Heat Map Generator: <http://www.openheatmap.com/gallery.html>

Plotly (online graphing/stats): <https://plot.ly/feed/>

Diagramly (diagrams/flow charts): <https://www.draw.io/>

Infographics: <http://piktochart.com/> (Note: free version only allows low-resolution export)

Voyant Tools (Text analysis & visualization): <http://voyant-tools.org/>

Word clouds: <http://www.wordle.net/> and <http://www.tagxedo.com/>

Wolfram Alpha (Knowledge Engine): <http://www.wolframalpha.com/>

Large-Format Printing

SUBPrint: <http://www.su.ualberta.ca/businesses/subprint/printing/>

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Recommended minimum font sizes for large-format posters:

- **Title** — at least 60pt bold
- **Headings** — at least 36pt bold
- **Main text** — at least 32pt
- **References/Captions** — at least 28pt

*Note, these are guidelines only. A good rule of thumb is that the text should be legible at a distance of 3ft (1 meter) from the poster.