Creating and Presenting Your Poster

Poster Basics
Effective posters:
- Provide a visual explanation of your work
- Focus on a single message
- Highlight key points
- Act as a conversation starter

Tips for Developing Your Poster
- Use a title that is attention grabbing—short, sharp, and compelling
- Keep text minimal and use phrases rather than full sentences when possible
- Use a column format to increase readability
- Use visuals to help explain relationships, steps in a process, or anything that is difficult to explain in a narrative
- Make sure graphics and images support the theme of your poster
- Use charts for tabulated data
- Create balance between your text, images, and charts, as well as white or “blank” space
- Guide the reader through your “story” using headings for main points
- Ensure the poster is readable from 4 to 6 feet away; make text size at least 24 points and 36 points for headings
- Ensure poster size, including borders, meets your sponsor’s specifications
- Use fonts that are easy to read—a serif font is recommended for text and a sans serif for headings
- Contrast the background and text colors—a light background with dark letters is a safe choice
- Provide sources for text and images that are not yours
- Include your results, conclusions, insights, future directions, or next steps

Your Poster Presentation
Presenting your poster gives you an opportunity to
- Share your exciting findings
- Make connections with people in your field
- Obtain feedback on and reactions to your work

Tips for Presenting Your Poster
- Promote your poster in advance—tell people who work in your field about your research or innovation project
- Prepare and practice a concise, focused, 2–3 minute “elevator pitch” summing up your work’s key points and why they’re important
- Prepare and practice a 5–10 minute version of your talk for people most knowledgeable about and interested in your field. Include
  - The “big question” you examined
  - Data you needed and used
  - Your conclusions and what they mean
- Anticipate potential follow-up questions
- Don’t be shy in showing your passion for your work
- Ask questions that will encourage feedback, positive and negative. For example,
  - Do you think this is the best way to measure this?
  - How would you have done it?
- Consider creating a handout summarizing your key points for people who express interest in your work
- When speaking, don’t look at the poster or your notes—look at the viewer(s)
- Pass out your business cards


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