

POSTER PRESENTATION GUIDELINES

Poster presentations offer researchers and scholars a unique opportunity to disseminate the findings of their work. While formal paper presentations involve verbal sharing with large groups, poster presentations rely on visual impact to communicate with viewers on a more informal, individual basis. You will be assigned space to display your poster. To assure consistency in presentation format, your poster must be assembled on either a 30" x 40" or 36" x 48" poster presentation board available at the VU bookstore or other area office supply stores. Once you know the size and configuration of the display board, you can begin planning your presentation.

Planning a poster presentation can be fun and allows you a great deal of creativity and ingenuity. The poster display consists of the title and other sections related to your project, and posters include both text and graphics. Text refers to information presented as reading material in a narrative format. Graphics refers to anything that is not text and may include charts, graphs, tables, illustrations, photos, and/or other artwork. Consider what combination of text and graphics you wish to use to highlight key points and add variety to your poster. One of the most difficult decisions for your poster concerns what specific information to include from your research project.

- Consider the questions of Why, Who, What, When, Where, How, and So What to help you make decisions about what to include. Outline your project to identify key ideas that
- Provide an organizing format by dividing the content of your project into purposeful sections with headings. Most scholarly presentations include sections labeled as Introduction or Problem, Methods or Methodology, Results, Discussion, Conclusions, Acknowledgments, and Literature Cited. Other components such as Review of Literature or Theoretical Framework may also be appropriate. Your name and department/college should be included in the title display.
- Balance clarity with brevity. The content must be sufficient to explain the project but readable and concise enough to fit on the poster legibly. Too much information on a poster discourages viewing.
- Aim for self-containment. Plan a poster that can stand alone requiring no additional explanation. Viewers should ask you to elaborate on your project, not explain it.
- Plan to have copies of your abstract available for distribution to interested viewers.

A quality poster presentation should meet the three criteria of readability, visual appeal, and logically organized content.

1. **Readability:** Your materials should be readable from a distance of 4-6 feet. Use large print; close, compact text discourages readability. The entire poster

Office of Sponsored and Undergraduate Research - Valparaiso University should be comprehensible in less than 5 minutes, so more than 3 or 4 minutes of reading material may overwhelm the viewer. Headings for sections should stand out from the text to provide an important visual guide through the poster's content. The title should be prominently displayed at the top of the poster, highly visible and dominant to catch the viewer's attention. Print the title in large enough type so viewers can read it easily at a distance of 5-10 feet.

1. Visual appeal: Your creativity is an important element of visual appeal. Plan an innovative design to provide the visual appeal that is critical to attracting the viewer's attention. Use color combinations and the arrangement of white space and borders around sections to provide contrast, visual interest, and a strong impact. However, overuse of color can detract from the message and overwhelm the viewer. Keep the design simple; avoid design distractions that cause confusion and clutter.
1. Logically organized content: Understanding the content of the poster is the main concern for the viewer. Impressive visual appeal cannot compensate for content that lacks clarity and accuracy. Arrange materials logically and systematically. Design a layout of both text and graphics that helps the viewer grasp your project's main message quickly and correctly. Ask a friend to review a rough draft before you create your final copy. Elicit specific feedback to determine if your selection and arrangement of content have captured the essence of your project.

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