

Designing an Effective Poster

In addition to the guidelines provided on the [CSURF website](#), please consider the following as you begin to prepare your poster:

1. Give yourself plenty of time to prepare and print your poster! Once you have completed the [Printing Request Form](#) and emailed it to csurf@uncw.edu, allow at least 2 days for your poster to be printed. **Before you begin, visit the website for the conference/meeting you will be attending for specific poster guidelines.**

2. Define your target audience. Ask yourself the following questions before beginning your poster and tailor it to meet the needs of your audience:

- Who will be viewing your poster?
- Are your audience members classmates, professors, or the general public?
- What is the purpose of this presentation?
- Are you sharing the findings of a research project, are you arguing for a certain course of action, or defining a new problem?

3. The standard size for most posters is 34" x 46". In arranging information on your poster, text boxes should range from 10-16" wide. If your poster orientation is portrait (vertical, or taller than it is wide) use two columns; if your poster is oriented landscape (horizontal, or wider than it is tall) use three columns. Leave at least 1" between columns. Open space on your poster will help your audience navigate to key elements.

4. Keep your poster simple; it should display information in a self-explanatory manner. People should be able to read and understand your poster in your absence. Keep a logical flow from left to right and top to bottom.

5. The background for your poster should be white and your text should be black.

6. Use headings such as "Introduction", "Methods", "Results", and "Conclusions" to set-up a logical flow for your poster. Set the headings in a larger font or in bold to make them stand out from the rest of your text.

7. Use "non-footed" fonts on your poster (Arial is the most commonly used) for the ease of reading, especially at a distance. Use large enough fonts so that people will not have to squint, or stand too close to read your poster. For

headings, use a font no less than **48-point**, and no less

than **20-point** elsewhere on your poster. Be consistent with style, font, and spacing.

8. Be sure your title is placed prominently on your poster along with your name (and your advisor's name, if applicable) and school. Your title should be readable from approximately 10 feet away, use a font of **56 to 90-point**.

9. Make your poster visually appealing; use photographs, graphs, and charts. No picture, graph or chart should be less than 4" x 6". Be sure your visuals are simple, contain only relevant information, and are laid out in a logical manner according to your text. Color on a poster should accent, not over-power. In a conference setting you may have as little as 3 seconds to attract someone's attention; a colorful, well-designed poster is more likely to attract attention.

10. **PROOFREAD! PROOFREAD! PROOFREAD!** Your poster not only displays information, but represents you (and your program) to your audience.

11. Presenting your poster:

- Always bring poster hanging supplies with you in case they are not provided (this may include a water bottle, pen and notepad.)
- Remain at your poster for the entire length of your allotted session
- Avoid reading your poster to your audience, give the big picture.
- Be prepared to, and offer to "walk your audience through your poster"; you should be able to explain the content of your poster including your research problem, hypothesis, and methods and provide a context for your results in 2-3 minutes.

For more helpful hints on poster design, check out:

<http://www.nchchonors.org/poster-guidelines.html>

<http://www.ncsu.edu/project/posters/NewSite/index.html>

References

<http://www.nchchonors.org/poster-guidelines.html>

<http://www.ncsu.edu/project/posters/NewSite/index.html>

http://nursing.unc.edu/departments/programs/undergrad/docs/effective_posters_08.pdf

