

Honors Poster Making Tips for Success!

Why use a poster:

- To provide visual assistance in disseminating ideas
- Engage others through discussion
- Advertise and summarize your work
- To reach across a broad collection of people

Characteristics of effective posters:

- Readable (from a distance)
- Highly visible
- Organized
- Deliver a clear and concise message

Starting from “Square One”

- Work closely with your faculty presentation advisor
- Have a clear understanding of your intended message
- Include pertinent research / scholarly information

What’s your point?

- In five minutes or less, how would you describe your topic? Answer the “So, what?” question!
- How well does the content of your poster match your scholarly / academic work or research?

Know your audience:

- *Experts:* Individuals with a relatively high level of disciplinary knowledge and interest. Can engage in in-depth conversation; using jargon and technical language in the discussion.
- *Wide-ranging discipline:* Individuals who may have some general familiarity with the field (or in related disciplines), but not enough to be considered an expert. Using minimal jargon and technical language is best.
- *General audience:* Individuals with little to no familiarity with the subject matter. Explain your work to them in the most basic way possible, completely avoiding jargon and technical language.

Academic/Research information to include:

- Your academic/research poster is a succinct description of your work. It essentially sets the tone for the discussion. Good posters should include:
 - Title heading
 - Student’s Name, Presentation Advisor’s name (with appropriate title)
 - Institution’s name or logo
 - Abstract
 - Context/background (if applicable)
 - Objectives
 - Methods / Protocols (depends on project and discipline)
 - Results/Outcomes – (data summary if applicable)
 - Conclusions
 - All appropriate citations and documentation

****POSTER COMPONENTS LOOK DIFFERENT FOR EACH DISCIPLINE – DEFER TO THE ADVICE OF YOUR PRESENTATION ADVISOR**

Creating a poster overview:

- Avoid excessive text; use phrases rather than full sentences. Keep each text element to approx. 50 words or less
- Avoid jargon
- Use graphics sparingly
- Use images only if you are citing the images
- Obtain Defiance College logos to include on the poster from Kristen Stelzer in the McMaster office
- With graphs, use easily distinguishable colors
- Don't forget the most important aspect: the work itself!

POSTER MAKING 101:

- Power Point is the most widely used program for creating a poster
- Open Power Point
 - Go to Design
 - Go Slide Size then Customize
 - Use the 24" x 36" and designate either portrait or landscape
- Hints
 - Maintain organization (with headers, numbers, bullets, etc.), avoid clutter
 - Stay away from the edges by leaving a generous border to prevent text or images from running off of the page when it is printed
 - View the poster details, alignments etc. by checking the 'slide' in the VIEW window and zoom in
- Fonts
 - For title use a large bold san-serif font between 72-120 points
 - Section headers (Abstract, protocols, etc) use 36-72 points
 - For text use 24 -48 points.
 - DO NOT USE MORE THAN 1(preferred) – 2 font styles – forget the word art
- Backgrounds
 - Use LIGHT colors!
 - Options
 - Color gradient
 - Image
 - Design templates offered with a custom color palate that is notably lighter
- While it is not mandatory to list references on a poster it is usually preferred so check with your faculty presentation advisor
- Organize your poster with a color palate of text boxes but too many different colors detract from organization and contribute to chaos – keep color themes to 2 – 3 colors

Presenting your poster:

- Bring handout for your visitors. Include detailed information about your work in a narrative form, your bio, as well as your contact information
- Have a 3-5 minute presentation prepared
 - Avoid *reading* your poster. Instead, describe it. Explain the key points, the importance of your research, the posters images, and the overall "big picture."