

Poster Design Tips

A well-designed poster is eye-catching, attractive, and communicates information effectively and economically. Here is a general guide to poster design, but always check the guidelines for the conference where you will be presenting your poster for specific requirements.

Content

- Include title, authors, author affiliations, email or other address, an introduction, a description of the methods used, and conclusions. References and acknowledgements may also be included. Abstracts are essential and should be highlighted.
 - Select only the most pertinent data to report on the poster.
 - Bring handouts that include the abstract and any supplementary information.
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Text

- All text should be legible at a distance of 3 to 4 feet. Use at least a 24-point type size for the main text. The title type should be at least 1.5 inches high.
 - The title should be kept as short as possible so that it can be read quickly.
 - Use upper and lower case type throughout the poster. ALL UPPER CASE TYPE IS MORE DIFFICULT TO READ.
 - Serif fonts (such as **Times**) are generally easier to read in the body of the text. Sans serif fonts (such as **Arial** or **Tahoma**) are best used in titles, headings, and captions for emphasis.
 - Print all text using a laser printer.
 - Use **bold** and/or *italics* for emphasis.
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Graphics & Illustrations

- The poster is a visual format. Use plenty of graphical elements.
- Keep graphics as simple as possible. More complex data can be presented in a handout.

- Photographs should be enlarged to be discernible at a distance of 3 feet and printed with a matte finish (to reduce glare). They are more effective when used sparingly.
 - Avoid hand drawings.
 - Make sure you have permission to use photos and graphics created by others. See [I found a photo on the web. Can I use it?](#)
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Layout

- Keep at least a 1-inch margin on all sides.
 - The main body of the poster should be between waist and shoulder height. The title, authors and author affiliations should be higher.
 - Paragraphs should be no longer than 10-20 lines long. Break up longer sections of text with graphics or bulleted lists.
 - Arrows can be used to guide the reader's eye from one section to another.
 - Use blank space to avoid a cluttered look, and to separate the elements of your poster.
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Color

- Use color to emphasize elements and draw attention to your poster, but don't use too many different colors. Using colored borders can increase the poster's visual appeal.
 - Text should be printed on a contrasting background (dark text on a light background, or light text on a dark background).
 - Avoid harsh colors, such as neons.
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Presentation

- Check the instructions for the conference where you are presenting your poster for the size and type of board that will be provided. Some types of boards require you to use either push pins or Velcro; with others, you may be able to use either.
- Arrive 20-30 minutes before the session is scheduled to begin to give yourself enough time to set up the poster.

- Set up the poster on the board with the number that corresponds to number of your presentation as it appears in the program.
 - Stay at your poster board for the entire poster session so attendees have a chance to talk with you about your work.
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Software & File Formats

- [Creating a Poster in Adobe Illustrator](#)
 - [Creating a Poster in PowerPoint](#)
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PRI/Penn State Graphics & Acknowledgement

We have prepared a graphic (preview below) that you can insert in your poster to identify your affiliation with PRI. If you prefer not to use the graphic, you can acknowledge PRI's support by including this [text](#):

Adobe Illustrator (.ai) files*
for use in Adobe Illustrator

PNG (.png) files
for use in PowerPoint and other applications

PRI graphics

You can find all of the available Penn State graphics on the [PSU Web Style Guide](#), as well as more helpful information for using these images.