INTRODUCTION TO POSTER DESIGN & CREATION

1. POSTER PRESENTATIONS: THE BASICS

What is a poster?

- An introduction to your project/research and a basis for questions
- A large document communicating your work to an audience (NB: presenters are normally given strict guidelines, e.g., poster size – frequently A0 (84.1 x 118.9cm) or A1(59.4 x 84.1cm), conventions for headings, word length)
- Shown in exhibition spaces and conference halls
- Presented by researcher, who stands by poster to answer questions

Why present a poster?

1. To develop and promote your work/research:
- Gain suggestions and ideas for future directions
- Receive feedback and criticism
- Initiate collaborations
- Personal interaction with those interested in your work
- Reach others not in your specific field

2. To promote yourself:
- Professional contacts (networking, collaborations, fellowships, jobs)
- Useful feedback
- Suggestions for future directions and focus
- Gain useful experience

Considerations when designing a poster

It's important to consider these factors when planning the language/style/accessibility of your poster.

1. The type of audience

Specialist (experts in same/closely related field)	• Close knowledge of your subject • OK to use jargon and technical terms
General discipline (specialists in related/ overlapping field)	• Familiar with generalities of discipline • Be wary of specialist jargon! Avoid where possible
General non-specialist (business or public contexts)	• No familiarity with discipline or subject area • Avoid use of jargon; define terms and concepts • Stress potential applications of research for the wider world

2. The kind of event

Large event	Small event
• Lots of delegates and lots of posters	• Few delegates with related interests
• Multiple time-limited poster sessions	• Limited posters, often displayed throughout
• Limited time for discussion	• Lots of time for discussion
• Can be impersonal & frantic	• Intimate & relaxed environment

3. The rules of the event
Most events have rules or guidelines for the presentation of posters (size / format / word length etc). Find out what they are, and adhere to them.

2. TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE POSTER DESIGN

A good poster…

captures the audience's eye ● rewards their interest ● is informative, clear & concise

Things to include

Essentials
- Title
- Your name & contact details
- Acknowledgements (inc. any collaborators/supervisors)
- Logo(s) of institution/sponsors

Recommended
- Introduction
- Overview of methods/approach
- Results
- Conclusion
- Your photo

Features of effective poster design
- Carefully chosen priorities / key points
- Tailored to audience
- Clear structure (e.g. abstract / introduction / main body / conclusion)
- Clear navigation (e.g. use of headings / numbering / colour / layout)
- Overall cohesion (connections between text and images)
- Co-ordinated design palette (text size; fonts; colour scheme)
- Professionally printed

Hints and tips – best practice

General
- Always print off and check at least one draft – if possible show it to your supervisor/colleagues
- Poster should be readable from a distance (approx. 6 feet (2m) away)
- Use sub-headings (headings in bold)
- Ensure that you have appropriate permission to include third-party copyright content & credit it
- Use the appropriate referencing method for your discipline

Presentation of text
- Avoid justifying text – it makes it harder to read
- Allow adequate line spacing – white space isn't necessarily wasted space
- Limit blocks of text (no more than 10 sentences)
- Limit use of ALL CAPS or Title Case

Images/diagrams
- Give your images a thin border – makes it clearer and more visually appealing
- Add a title/caption
- Colour blindness affects 8% of males and 0.5% of females. To test your poster, run it through the free 'Vischeck' service (http://www.vischeck.com/vischeck/vischeckImage.php)

Layout
A good poster layout is well organised and legible, with a simple, clear structure, a consistent style.
There are different ways of designing the layout; here are some advantages of 2 possible approaches:

1. Using a **design grid**
- Provides a foundation for page design
- Defines space
- Directs attention
- Boundaries maintain consistency & symmetry of layout

2. Building *ad hoc*
- Build up your poster using a number of separate panels/boxes
- Simple to do (uses familiar software)
- Can be effective for structuring your presentation

Using fonts
- Use a limited number of fonts (ideally only two per poster)
- Use sans serif fonts (e.g. Arial, Calibri, Tahoma) instead of serif (e.g. Times, Garamond) – they're easier to read and more accessible
- Font Size (examples for an A1 poster):
  - Title: make big, e.g. 60-72 point
  - Headings: make **bold**, about 36-44 point
  - Body text (e.g. text within each section & figure captions): about 24-32 point

Using colour
- Always choose a simple colour palette: 2/3 colours + black
- Select colours that co-ordinate rather than clash
- Use the colour wheel (see http://www.tigercolor.com/color-lab/color-theory/color-theory-intro.htm#Color_Wheel)
- **Analogous colours** (easy on the eye): three colours, side by side. Usually one of the three dominates.
- **Complementary colours:** opposite to each other on the wheel – these create the most contrast
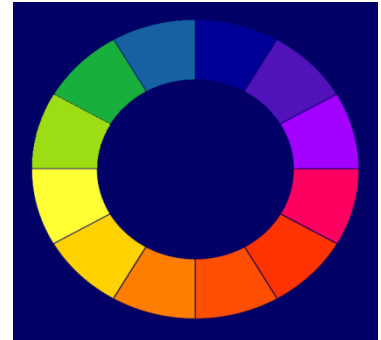

Logos and images
- Download the corporate elements (logo, marque, crest etc) at: http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/communications/corporate/core/
- Don't cut & paste from web pages
- Careful not to stretch the logo or over-enlarge it

Getting started with PowerPoint
We recommend PowerPoint as a simple tool for poster creation, though other programmes are available.
1. Open PowerPoint (choose Blank Presentation)
2. Make sure Slide Layout options appear on right of screen. If not, go to Format and select Slide Layout
3. From Slide Layout choose Blank Page
4. Go to File -> Page Setup
5. Enter the width and height you want (according to event guidelines), usually:
   A0 (84.1cm x118.9cm), or
   A1 (59.4 x 84.1cm)
6. Choose Portrait or Landscape orientation
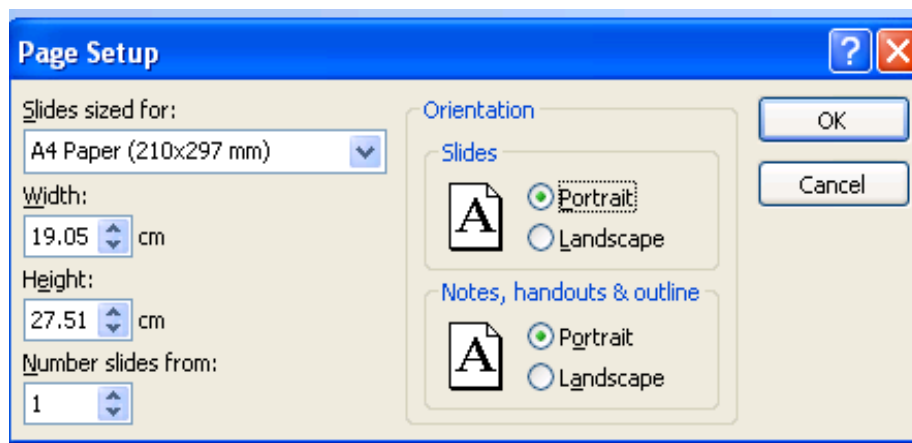
3. DISPLAY AND PRESENTATION OF YOUR POSTER

> **Your poster is most effective when you're there to present it.**
> **A good presentation combines enthusiasm, clarity and knowledge.**

Here are some things to keep in mind:

Before:

- Check mounting arrangements before the event – will fixings be provided etc
- Wear a name badge (may be provided) and dress professionally
- Consider providing handouts with more information or A4 versions of poster
- Practise presenting a brief summary of your poster – no notes

During:

- Introduce yourself
- Welcome your viewer and find out what they know & what they want to know
- Point to specific parts as you explain them
- Keep it brief, and ask questions
- Continue even if new viewers turn up
- Thank your viewers for visiting – if they stay longer than 4 minutes you have succeeded!

4. FURTHER ADVICE AND RESOURCES

Find further advice on creating posters, including instructions on using Powerpoint via the Research Student Skills Programme website: http://goo.gl/DjPYX