

## Poster Session Guidelines and Tips

If you have any questions, please contact Theresa Murphy, [tbm2112@columbia.edu](mailto:tbm2112@columbia.edu).

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The poster session will provide an opportunity for authors to discuss their research with attendees as they circulate among the poster boards. We recommend that you remain by your poster for the duration of the one-hour session to answer questions and discuss your research.

The award for 'Best Poster' will be voted on by conference attendees and will be presented at the Gala Dinner on Saturday, June 24.

Posters should measure **36 by 48 inches**. We will provide adhesives to mount the paper posters on a foam board display.

Please note that posters should be set up at least 30 minutes in advance of the poster session. Display materials should be picked up by the end of the day on Friday, June 23. Materials not picked up by the end of the conference will be discarded.

You are responsible for printing your poster and we recommend that you do so in advance of the conference. Conference staff will not be available to assist you with printing your poster.

If you need to print the poster upon your arrival in New York, please note that there is a print services store located near the Columbia University campus: Village Copier, [1181 Amsterdam Avenue](http://www.villagecopier.com), 212-666-4777, [www.villagecopier.com](http://www.villagecopier.com). Please contact them inquire about their summer hours and turnaround time.

*Columbia University makes every effort to accommodate individuals with disabilities. If you require disability accommodations to attend an event at Columbia University, please contact Disability Services at (212) 854-2388 at least 10 days in advance of the event.*

### B. Design tips

Here are some suggestions when creating a poster presentation:

- Design should be clean and a strong title; making illustrations simple and bold; conveying only selected portions of your paper/research (key findings) rather than the entire research history.
- Converting tables to graphs for easier viewing.
- The poster should be readable from a couple of feet away.

A few key design tips that come up frequently:

1. Use the space on the poster wisely. Put less important sections (such as bibliography and acknowledgements at the bottom of the poster) and keep the prime real estate for items that most people will want to read or examine closely.

2. Keep the word count low—People will not want to read your paper in 10 point font on your poster. Highlight the most important pieces of information in each section.
3. Use graphs and tables wisely. The header should convey the content of the graph or table, all axes should be labeled, variable names should be informative, etc.
4. On a related note, tables of regression results (particularly if cut and pasted from STATA or SAS) may be difficult to read on a poster. Consider making a smaller table that provides the coefficients for the key variables and make the statistically significant coefficients a different color rather than using additional space to put in standard errors or t-statistics.
5. Interestingly, research suggests that poster titles should use sentence capitalization (only the first word is capitalized) rather than title capitalization (all words are capitalized) or all capitals. It tends to be easier to read.
6. Use light backgrounds and dark text rather than the other way around.
7. Proof your poster carefully!

### **C. Creating a poster**

You can use a variety of different software packages to create sophisticated posters.

Since most people have experience with PowerPoint, we are providing specific guidance for creating the poster in PowerPoint.

**Creating a poster as a "PowerPoint" file is straight forward. Follow these instructions:**

1. Open the program, and create a new document.
2. When the auto layout screen appears, choose the "blank" template.
3. From the "file" menu, go to page setup. Specify poster size as 36" wide by 48" tall or 48" tall by 36" wide. (If you are using Vista, this may be under the "Design" tab.)
4. You will see a rectangle that will fill your desktop. This is your "canvas".
5. To insert text, use the text tool to draw a rectangle of the approximate size, and start typing. You can change the proportions, type size and style later. Try to use a minimum of 24 point type. You can import text from other documents via copy and paste. You may have to change the formatting of the pasted text. It rarely survives the translation process unchanged. If you are using a large header, try to keep it to 3 or 4 lines, a final type size of less than 150 point for the main heading, and less than 100 point for subheadings.
6. Inserting Charts & Graphs: To bring in charts and graphs from Excel, Word or other applications, go to EDIT>COPY to copy your chart, come back to PowerPoint, and go to EDIT>PASTE to paste it on the poster. You can scale the charts or graphs as needed.
7. **Suggestion:** Press the SHIFT key as you scale your charts or graphs to scale them proportionally.

8. Scanned pictures (scan as tiff or jpeg files **ONLY**, RGB if possible) may be inserted by choosing "insert picture" from the "insert" menu. You may resize the imported picture by clicking/dragging the corner selection bars. Any other image manipulation should be done before importing.
9. **Scan resolutions for acceptable viewing at poster size:**
  8. Once you have all of your text and pictures located properly, you can change backgrounds, borders, lettering colors and style. To change the entire background, choose "background" from the "format" menu. Individual text box backgrounds can be changed by selecting the box and changing the "fill" colors.
  9. Use lettering effects such as outline or shadow sparingly. Be sure they are much lighter, or use the transparent feature. Otherwise it may look like double print when printed at full size. Bold, italic, and underline are OK.

#### **D. Most Common Problems and how to avoid them**

##### **1. Final printed size not proportional to page set up**

PowerPoint defaults to 10"x7.5" (on-screen show). Double check to change this to the size you need before you invest time in creating your poster.

**2. Imported Graphics at insufficient resolution** Image looks fine on your screen but is pixilated on the poster. It is important to start with the best image you have and avoid low-resolution images taken from the Web. For best results, do not copy and paste images. When assembling your poster from other existing images use INSERT>PICTURE>FROM FILE

**Avoid unwanted surprises:** Always preview images at the magnification they will appear at on the finished poster. This will reveal any resolution (pixilation) problems.

##### **3. Best Practices**

1. For effective viewing we recommend 24pt type when creating your poster at 100%. 2. San serif fonts are easier to read than serif fonts in large sizes (Arial vs. Times Roman for example)
2. It is best to use light background and dark type.