

LSA Poster Hints and Tips

Graduate School Guidelines:

Poster boards will measure 1m x 1m. This is standard A0 size, either portrait or landscape. Posters of different dimensions are discouraged and will be difficult to display.

Your poster should be designed to convey the essence of your research in a clear and eye-catching way, to appeal to colleagues as well as non-specialists. When presenting, aim at 2 minutes maximum to deliver the important points and communicate clearly and concisely so that those with little or no prior knowledge can understand what is being communicated. If you bring a “layman's” summary sheet to go with your poster, this will help to make your poster accessible and enjoyable to everyone, whatever the subject matter.

The ideal poster will:

- attract passers-by to stop and take an interest
- convey one or two key points to non-specialists
- make a good impression
- enable the viewer to remember key details of your research (what, why, how, who?)
- encourage viewers to contact you for more information about your research

General tips on how to present your poster:

Title

Should be meaningful but not complicated. Try not to baffle the readers (especially the non-specialists).

Clarity

Your display should be visually clear and easy to follow, with a clear description of the aims, method and conclusions.

Colour

Good use of colour is helpful. Even if the majority of the material is in black and white it is important to highlight with colour. However, bear in mind that too much colour can be visually confusing.

Message

Ensure that the general overview of the poster is clear, and that the more detailed information is not too complex. Keep the text as concise as possible with short, telegraph-style sentences.

Relevance

Demonstrate how your research fits in with the world as a whole, to help viewers relate to it.

Images

Make sure the images you use are clear and of good quality.

Graphics

These must be sharp and relevant to the presentation. Charts, drawings and illustrations should be simpler and more heavily drawn than those you would use for slides. Use of colour is encouraged to add emphasis effectively.

Font-style and size

Be consistent in your choice of font, limiting yourself to one or two. Ensure that the font sizes are legible from at least one metre distance.

Logo

The Imperial College logo should always be placed in the top left-hand corner of the poster.

Grouping

Text and graphics should be grouped together in relevant and visually stimulating sets.

Layout/flow

Guide the viewer's eye in an orderly way. Ensure that there is a logical path of items to be followed. It may be appropriate to link sections with lines or arrows.

Borders

Adding an outer border to your poster, and bordering any sections contained within, generally helps to define your display clearly.

Contributors

Identify any contributors other than those shown at the top of your display.

Contact point

Provide your contact details to encourage people to find out more about your research. This could involve adding leaflets or cards for readers to take with them.

Summary

A concise summary may be useful. This could be done by giving a set of key points.

Tips to make your poster memorable:

Gimmicks are worth considering providing they are not banal. Some possible ideas are:

Use of analogies

Use an analogy which is easy for the viewer to remember. Relate your problem or its solution to the likely common experience of the viewer.

3-D

You may want to attach relevant three-dimensional models to the poster to add impact.

Interaction

Consider making the poster tactile. However, take care that viewers are not likely to cause damage.

Leaflets

You may wish to attach a leaflet dispenser to provide your contact details.

Try to Avoid:**Window pane effect**

Straight rows and columns of information are not visually stimulating especially if the size and content of each appears similar, giving a window pane effect. Use a pattern of sections - this need not be regular.

Sparseness

Make sure that enough information is included on the poster. Don't make up for lack of information by using exceptionally large fonts and figures.

Clutter

Conversely, avoid having so much information that the sections presented are unable to stand apart.

Too much detail

Don't be tempted to include all you know on the subject - remember that the viewer has a limited time to look at your poster.

Irrelevant detail

Try to avoid inappropriate side issues which may detract from the main subject.

If you are preparing a new poster for the first time, various "templates" (in PowerPoint) can be found at: <http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/graphicidentity/templatesandresources/pcrunningwindows/posters/competitionposters>

These templates include the correct positioning of the Imperial College London logo. The colours and general layout used on these templates are only suggestions and you are free to change them if you wish. Posters in other formats are also acceptable.

The Graduate School usually runs poster presentation and communication skills workshops. For dates and further details please see the Graduate School website at:

<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/graduateschool/transferableskillsprogramme>

You may also like to refer to the poster presentation course help sheet on the web site at:

<http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/graduateschool/transferableskillsprogramme/coursehelpsheets/posterpresentations>