General Guidelines on Poster Production

Your poster should be designed to convey the essence of your research, coursework or topic in a clear, eye-catching and appealing way. Your audience will be colleagues, academics and other students; many will be non-specialists in relation to your discipline.

A good poster will

- attract passers-by to stop and take an interest

- allow the viewer to remember key details of your project

- be accessible to a non-specialist and enable them to learn about your subject

- draw in your audience and get them asking questions

- stimulate discussion

Poster size
The most common poster sizes are A0 & A1 and the orientation may be landscape or portrait, although portrait would be preferable so as to fit the poster boards that will be provided.

Viewing distance
You should ensure that your poster can be read clearly from a distance of 1 metre or more.

Viewing time
It should be possible for the viewer to absorb the general information in your poster in a short time (up to 3 minutes).

Key information
Your name, your supervisor's name, your department.

Presenting your poster

Title
Meaningful but not complicated. The purpose here is to communicate your work to a non-specialist audience.

Clarity
Your display should be visually clear and easy to follow. Whatever the focus, there should be a logical flow which guides the reader through your discussion /argument/idea.

Message
Ensure that the general overview of the poster is clear and that the more detailed information is not too complex. Any specialist/technical terms should be explained. The poster format requires you to condense detailed work into key points, so you will need to be selective; however, you must demonstrate knowledge, display understanding and develop an argument or a narrative thread.

Relevance

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

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.

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 the indicated viewing distance.

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

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

Contact point

Encourage people to find out more about your research. Provide contact details/leaflets/cards for readers to take away.

Summary

This may be useful and could be done by giving a set of key bullets.

Making your poster stand out

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
Relevant three-dimensional models could be attached.

Interaction
Consider making the poster tactile.

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/ Clutter
Make sure that enough information is included on the poster. Don't compensate for lack of information by using exceptionally large fonts or images. Conversely, avoid having too much information, so that different sections are not clearly identified.

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.

More helpful advice about poster making and production can be found on the KUDIS website