

## Poster Presentations

The Poster Presentation is the most popular format. Typically, the conference holds four sessions of 1.5 hour poster sessions across two ballrooms at either end of the building that host these sessions. In each session there is research from at least four different 'research categories' and they are grouped by those categories. A typical session has around 60 participants presenting at a given time.

### Creating your poster

#### Before you Begin...

1. Remember who your audience is. The Student Research Conference is open to the public. Therefore your population to market to ranges from a complete novice to an expert in your field. Keep this in mind at every step of the process.
2. The first and most crucial step is deciding the best ways to consolidate information for your presentation. Many SRC projects (by no means all of them) are semesters or years in the making, it is not possible to fit every bit of your project into one poster or the elevator pitch you should have ready for presentation day. Consolidation can be done in many ways, the three most common ways are: Focusing on Methodology, Demonstrating the Relevance and Importance of this research, Talking about the Outcomes or Findings (this is not possible for all projects as they stand by the presentation date - one need not have findings to present).

#### Designing your Poster...

1. Design some visuals. Graphics come in all forms, maps, graphs, charts (numbers and/or words), images (microscopic, landscape, or otherwise), etc. Your information should be dynamic to draw a viewer in, and act as a jumping off point for the questions and conversations that develop with a viewer. Graphics can make the time a viewer reads before asking questions shrink and allow you to actually explain the images to the viewer.
2. Map it out. Below are the key ingredients for every great poster.
  - You will want to edit the abstract you already have or create a new one. Having an abstract gives the viewer a place to start. Once you have your abstract ready, you'll be able to begin mapping the path you would like a viewer's eye to take when they are looking at your poster.
  - Make sure you give credit where it is due. You should thank any sponsors or collaborators of your project or posters (incl. funding sources, your colleagues in your lab or field who assisted, and of course, your faculty mentor).
  - As well as including a work cited portion. You needn't cite every work that is in the bibliography for your project, but you should have anything on your poster credited as well as a hard copy of your bibliography on site in case you need to cite something in speech.
3. Picking your poster creation platform is the next big step. Many students use PowerPoint. Some students who are more confident in their design abilities or do not know how to or wish not to use PowerPoint opt for using a graphic design service like Canva or Adobe products. Whatever way that you make your poster, keep in mind the optimal dimensions for the poster board that is provided is 24"x36". If your poster is going to be larger than that, please contact the coordinator of the conference to make possible accommodation for a larger posterboard.

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4. Edit. Edit. Edit. It cannot be expressed enough the importance of taking a critical eye to all of your work but especially your presentation. Edit critically for spelling and for text length. Fewer than 800 words is best. Consider your poster as a jumping off point or a visual aide, not the presentation itself. If you are wondering if you've got too much going on or the information isn't clear enough, show your poster to a friend and count how long it take them to read it. Consider that amount of time with a stranger staring at your poster while you wait for their questions. Too long and it's awkward or way too long and they don't even bother trying. Consider:
  - **Fonts**
    - Can what you would like to be seen be seen from 4-feet-away? Most viewers will not come closer until they have a question.
    - Are your fonts complementary? Changing fonts can be helpful for highlighting information but often we take it too far, be sure your poster is not too chaotic.
    - For best viewing and reading, make fonts size 44 or larger.
  - **Colors**
    - Posters are visual! Use color, size, and layout to provide direction and emphasis. See UVM's Creative Narrative & Graphic Elements for tips.
    - Be wary of background color and dark colors: colors will appear darker on your poster than they do on your computer.
  - **Audience**
    - People learn differently from you, are you catering to only those that think like you?
    - What background information does a viewer need to understand your poster and is that asking too much?
    - Are there ways you could dial down the jargon and make it relateable? Einstein said, "If you cannot explain it to a six year-old you don't know it well enough."
    - Think of the message you are trying to get across as well as the audience who attend the event. The audience is likely to be someone interested in research but not necessarily familiar with your field.
    - People most often survey posters — interested people then read them. Have enough information for both kinds of viewer.
  - **Images**
    - Use high-quality images: when expanded to poster size they will lose some quality. Zoom in to 400% to get a sense of what your image will look like when printed.

### Printing your Poster...

We recommend printing your poster through the UVM Print & Mail Center. The typical size for the Student Research Conference is 24"x36". Ask for delivery and in the special instructions at the end of your order form, indicate that you would like your poster delivered to the Student Research Conference. We work with them very closely so they know just when and where to bring them.

Student Research Conference

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