

Poster Presentations

Typically, the conference holds four-1.5 hour blocks for posters inside the Grand Maple Ballroom. In each session there is research from several different research categories and the posters are grouped by those categories (Humanities, Social Sciences, Biological Sciences, etc.). You are expected to arrive 30 minutes before the start of your time block in order to set up on the poster board and easel provided (we also give you the thumb tacks). A session may have as

Before you Begin...

1. Remember who your audience is. The Student Research Conference is open to the public, therefore your audience will range 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 way to consolidate information for your presentation. Many SRC projects are semesters or years in the making, It is NOT possible to fit every bit of your project onto one poster or into the pitch you give to visitors to your poster. Consolidation can be done in many ways, but the three most common ways are: Focusing on Methodology; Demonstrating the Relevance and Importance; or Talking about the Outcomes/Findings. The final example is not possible for all projects as exist by the presentation date, but remember, one need not have final outcomes to present.

Designing your Poster...

1. Design some visuals. Graphics come in all forms: maps, graphs, charts (numbers and/or words), images (microscopic, landscape, satellite), etc. Visuals act as a conversation starter. Your information should be dynamic to draw in a viewer as they are walking by. They act as a jumping off point for conversations that develop. But they are not superfluous and should not distract from your content. They allow you to show your work in a different way.
2. Map it out. Below are a few things not to forget:
 - 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.
 - Include a works cited section. You needn't cite every work that is in the bibliography for your project, but you should have anything used on your poster credited as well as a hard copy of your bibliography on hand in case you need to cite something directly (or your audience is curious).
 - Acknowledgments. Make sure you give credit where it is due. You should thank any sponsors or collaborators on your project or poster (incl. funding sources, colleagues in your lab or field who assisted, and of course, your faculty mentor).
3. Picking your poster creation platform is the next big step. Many students use PowerPoint, while others 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 board and easel we provide is **24"x36"**. If your poster is going to be larger than that, please contact the SRC Coordinator prior to the day of to make possible accommodations for a larger poster board.

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Creating your poster

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 takes 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 and they may get confused. 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 consistent? Changing fonts can be helpful for highlighting information but take it too far, and it becomes 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. For tips, look here: https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/UVM_StyleGuide.pdf
- Be wary of background colors. Colors appear darker on your poster than 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? Is that too much to ask of them?
- Are there ways you could dial down the jargon and make it Relatable? 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 share with this audience. They are likely interested, but not necessarily familiar with your particular expertise -try to get them excited.
- Most people survey posters; some people read them. Have enough information for both.

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 on your poster.

Printing your Poster...

We recommend printing your poster through the **UVM Print & Mail Center**. The size for the Student Research Conference is 24"x36". Ask for delivery to the SRC on the special instructions at the end of your order form. We work with them very closely. If sent to them **NO LESS THAN** one week prior to the conference, it will be delivered to Davis and be waiting for you on April 16.