

Virtual Poster Presentations

Poster presentations are a great way to showcase your research using visuals, figures, and text accompanied by a brief verbal description to hook your audience.

Tips & Tricks for Poster Presentations

- 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 in the process.
- 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 your audience. Consolidation can be done in many ways, but the three most common ways are: **1)** Focusing on methodology, **2)** Demonstrating the relevance and importance, **3)** Talking about your outcomes/findings. The final example is not possible for all projects, as some projects are still in progress. Final outcomes are not required to present.
- **Design 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 encounter your poster. However, they should not be superfluous and should not distract from your content. Instead, they allow you to show your work in a different way. Remember the benefits of blank space as well!
- **Map it out:** **1)** Edit the abstract you already have or create a new one. Once you have your abstract ready, you'll be able to create the visual path you want your viewers to follow while looking at your poster. **2)** Include a works cited section. You don't need to cite every work that's in the bibliography of your project, however, you should cite anything that's used on your poster. **3)** Acknowledgements - Make sure you give credit where it is due. You should thank any sponsors or collaborators on your project or poster (including funding sources, colleagues in your lab or field who assisted and, of course, your faculty mentor).
- **Poster creation platform:** Many students use PowerPoint, while others opt for using a graphic design service like Canva or Adobe products. Whatever you choose, keep in mind the optimal dimensions for a traditional poster (24"x36").

Creating your poster

Edit. Edit. Edit. The importance of taking a critical eye to all of your work, but especially your presentation, cannot be expressed enough. 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 aid, not the presentation itself. If you're wondering if you've got too much text or the information isn't clear enough, show your poster to a friend and count how long it takes for them to read it. Your audience will typically spend a few minutes gazing over your poster before formulating questions.

- **Fonts:** Select fonts that are clear and easy to read. Are your fonts consistent? Changing fonts can be helpful for highlighting information, but too many inconsistencies can make your poster chaotic and confuse your audience. Make your font size 44 or larger so that your text is highly visible and clear.
- **Color:** Posters are visual! Use color, size, and layout to provide direction and emphasis. For additional tips, visit https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/UVM_StyleGuide.pdf. Be wary of background colors.
- **Audience:** People learn in a variety of ways - Present your poster with this in mind to encourage a diverse audience to engage with your poster. Consider what background information a viewer needs to understand your poster. Requiring too much background information may discourage some from engaging. Are there ways to minimize jargon and make your poster relatable? Einstein once 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 your 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, some images will lose quality. Zoom in to 400% to get a sense of what your image will look like when your poster is expanded.